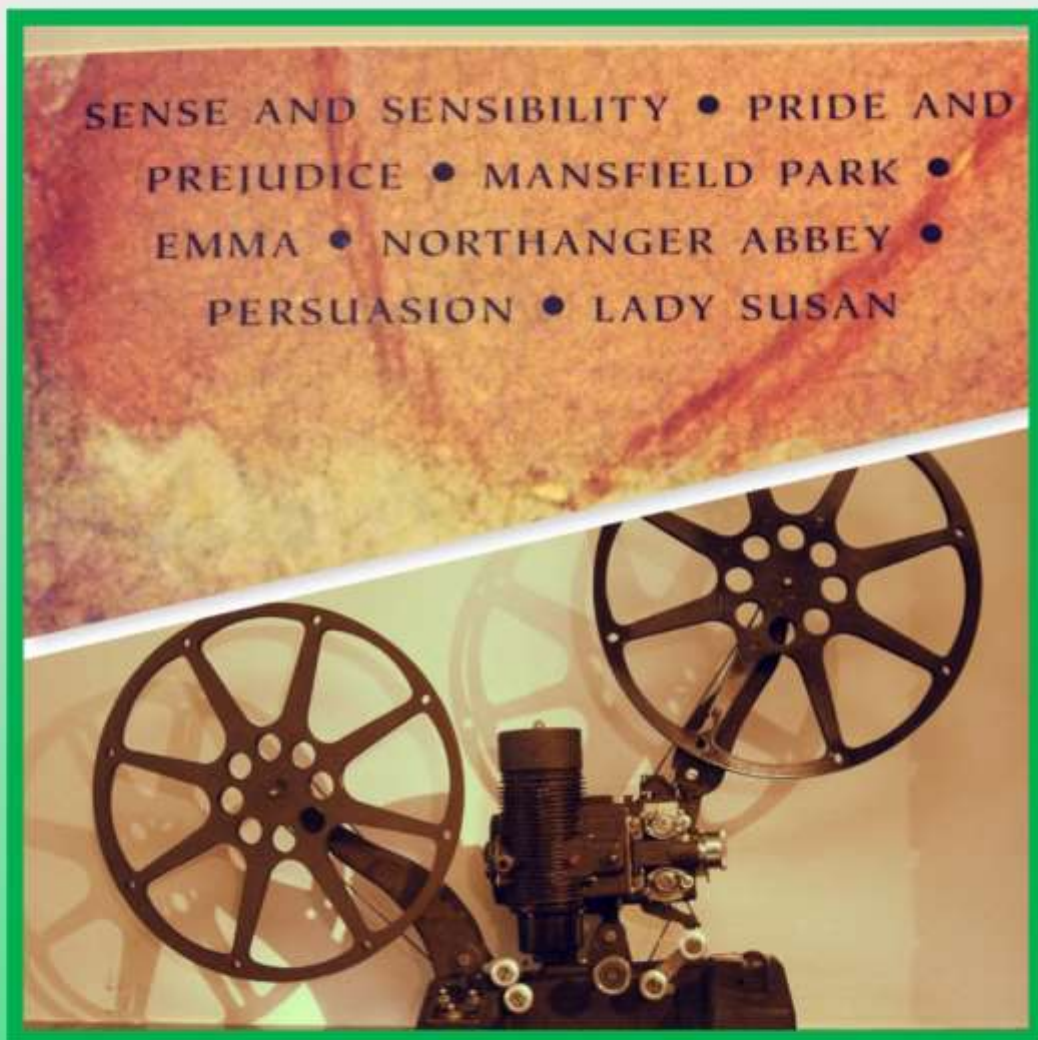


The ESSE Messenger

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY • PRIDE AND
PREJUDICE • MANSFIELD PARK •
EMMA • NORTHANGER ABBEY •
PERSUASION • LADY SUSAN



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- Book Reviews

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The Book-to-film Debate in the Age of Visual Commodities

‘An adaptation is a derivation that is not derivative – a work that is second without being secondary. It is its own palimpsestic thing.’ (Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*)

‘Did you read the novel?’ – ‘No, but I saw the film.’ This is a dialogue that often takes place today. Besides being common, this short conversation is also very revealing about the relation between the printed text and its visual representation as a film or TV series. And, obviously, it couldn’t be otherwise in a world dominated by TV sets, computers, tablets and smart phones with video facilities incorporated, and by video games, rock videos, home cinema, and many other appliances that reproduce images. More than that, the new commercialism could not but take advantage of such a reality and turn everything into commodities and try to extract profit from them. Novels about Harry Potter or Games of Thrones would probably not have achieved such rocketing success if they hadn’t subsequently had their visual adaptations. J.R.R. Tolkien might still be resting on dusty library shelves surrounded by his Middle-earth if he hadn’t been (re)discovered by film makers and adapted for the silver screen.

Today’s reality is that every day we have to face a flood of adaptations, not only in the domain of cinema and television but also in that of virtual reality, thematic parks, clothes, mugs, pens, and household and furniture objects, an impressing array of accessories, etc. We live in a world where everything is adaptable and, in fact, today we become more and more aware of the practice of watching adaptations. Paraphrasing Linda Hutcheon with her fundamental *A Theory of Adaptation* (Routledge, 2006) – quoted extensively in this Rationale – we can say that anyone who has ever experienced an adaptation (and who hasn’t?) has his or her own theory of what an adaptation means, whether voluntarily or involuntarily.

Watching book adaptations tends to replace the reading of novels, or, on the contrary, to accelerate the selling of the books, when the viewing precedes the reading experience, because the watchers want to compare the adapted text with the film. The responsibility of producing and receiving an adaptation of any kind becomes even more noticeable in the case of novels that are part of the literary canon.

Though films may have their limitations, being unable to dig into the depths of psychology or emotional consciousness, or to render the nuances of voice and tone in spite of good acting on the part of the performers, if understood as cultural translation, the process of adaptation becomes a distinctive, individual work of

art. Each adaptation is the product of a cultural context through which various worldviews are expressed, and therefore the adaptation can be contradictory once it has been taken out of its own cultural background. Its existence is not only conditioned by the cultural context that created it but it stays alive within such a context.

What film makers have to decide when they start out on a project of adaptation is not only *what* to adapt but also *how*, namely whether their aim is to merely recreate visually the story of the book or to depart from it and offer their own creative vision of that particular story. This double nature of any adaptation is what Linda Hutcheon refers to when she states in *A Theory of Adaptation* (6) that '[a]n adaptation's double nature does not mean, however, that proximity or fidelity to the adapted text should be the criterion of judgment or the focus of analysis. For a long time, "fidelity criticism," as it came to be known, was the critical orthodoxy in adaptation studies, especially when dealing with canonical works such as those of Pushkin or Dante. Today that dominance has been challenged from a variety of perspectives [...] and with a range of results. And, [...], when a film becomes a financial or critical success, the question of its faithfulness is given hardly any thought.'

But, for Hutcheon, what is of further interest when adapting a novel is not so much the act of deciding between fidelity or creativity as the fact that 'the morally loaded discourse of fidelity is based on the implied assumption that adapters aim simply to reproduce the adapted text [...]. Adaptation is repetition, but repetition without replication.' (7). The result is what she sees as the urge to consume and erase the memory of the adapted text or to call it into question and problematize it. This is the case when the dictionary meaning of 'adaptation' as a process of adjusting, altering or making suitable becomes almost literal.

The aim of the present issue of *The ESSE Messenger* is to discuss different instances of what Hutcheon suggests as 'distinct but interrelated perspectives' (8) of a contemporary process of adaptation:

- i. as a *formal entity or product*, an announced and extensive transposition of a recognizable particular work;
- ii. as a *process of creation*, an interpretive act of appropriation which involves both (re-)interpretation and then (re-)creation;
- iii. as an *extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work*, with the stress on its process of reception, when adaptations are perceived as palimpsests which make our memory of other works resonate through repetition with variation.

Adrian Radu,
The ESSE Messenger Editor

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Animal Similes and Metaphors in *Great Expectations*

From Novel to Screen

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Abstract. This contribution analyses one of the most challenging aspects related to the reception and adaptations of Dickens's *Great Expectations*: the transposition of its symbolic and metaphorical network, focusing on animal metaphors and similes which express the dehumanisation of the main characters. The recurrence of these visual metaphors in transpositions activates a two-way exchange that begins from the target text and illuminates the source text, complicating the dialogic process implemented by each adaptation, which involves not only “the work we already know with one we are experiencing” (Hutcheon 21), but also the platform of works orbiting around it.

Keywords: Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*, animal, metaphor, adaptation.

Introduction

One of the recurring issues in recent studies on adaptations concerns the definition of the source text. Already with the advent of postmodernism, and even more with the spread of the ideas of convergent culture and transmedia storytelling¹, the concept of source text has been undermined, since each text is now conceivable as a transmedia platform on which a multiplicity of versions of the same narrative universe, realised with different aims and destined for different audiences and different contexts, intersect (Hutcheon 31). This complicates the dialogic process implemented by each adaptation and involves not only “the work we already know with one we are experiencing” (Hutcheon 21), but also the platform of works that orbit around it.

If, on the one hand, in centuries past Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* was already considered challenging by its adapters given its “mad proliferation of textuality” (Brooks 132) and its well-known polyphony, on the other hand the challenges today are even greater given the large number of media that have dealt with this classic since its publication: the imaginary around this novel over the decades has been enriched with illustrated versions, graphic novels, theatrical, radio and cinematographic transpositions, TV series, animated versions, literary rewritings, fanfictions². Moreover, screenwriters and directors of the adaptations in recent years have taken into account the multiplicity of *Great Expectations*'s critical readings in gender, postcolonial, cultural perspectives and they have addressed a “model viewer” who not only knows the Dickensian story, but has also seen TV series or film adaptations: therefore, the most influential critical readings have become over time part of the semiosis of the text along with rewritings and transpositions. This obviously also influences the “encyclopedia” somehow implied by the target text in its construction of the model viewer³. Adaptations constantly wink at this ideal viewer through a network of allusions

and references to previous works and critical interpretations which continue to shed light on this classic.

For these reasons the following analysis of *Great Expectations's* cinematographic and television adaptations is grounded on the premise that adaptations are not conceivable as autonomous products, but instead are based on recognition and memory. Indeed, this analysis will not only highlight how the adaptations enrich the reading of the Dickensian novel, but also to what extent in each transposition absent texts are brought into play. The analysis will be limited to TV series and cinematographic transpositions from 1998 to 2012, examined alongside the transposition identified by McFarlane as the second hypotext for every screen adaptation, the 1946 version by David Lean (McFarlane 73). Given the richness of transpositions of Dickens's classic, in this case Linda Hutcheon's definition of an adaptation as an act of repetition with variation is particularly relevant. For Hutcheon, adaptation is characterised by "the comfort of ritual combined with the piquancy of surprise. Recognition and remembrance of the pleasure (and risk) of experiencing an adaptation; so too is change" (Hutcheon 4).

Another level on which the Dickensian text challenges adapters regards its semantic stratification, particularly with regards to his use of details and symbols: Dickens has always been considered a visual author capable of inspiring cinematic editing and framing techniques because of his attention to detail⁴. *Great Expectations* offers an emblematically dense network of symbols that continually challenges its adapters through different media⁵. As with all forms of *shown* representations⁶, it is interesting to see to what extent and in which ways TV and cinematographic adaptations succeed in realising the "interlinking of description, narration, and explanation that is easy for prose narrative to accomplish" (Hutcheon 23). The first aspect to take into consideration is that "in the move from telling to showing, a performance adaptation must dramatise: description, narration, and represented thoughts must be transcoded into speech, actions, sounds, and visual images" (Hutcheon 40)⁷. The adaptations of a novel like *Great Expectations* offer particularly significant examples of this, as Linda Hutcheon observes, since the vast majority of critics agree that none of its over one hundred adaptations has "ever managed to achieve the melding of the naturalistic and symbolic in the novel's verbal texture" (Hutcheon 70).

Given the complexity of the symbolic and metaphorical network that the novel creates through dialogues, characters' features, and the description of the settings, here I intend to focus on animal metaphors and similes in relation to the process of the dehumanisation of the main characters⁸. Recent studies have focused on the great attention that Dickens has always shown for the animal world not only in his daily life, but also and especially in his journalistic and later literary production⁹. *Great Expectations* is one of the works that best testify to this renewed attention, although animal metaphors mainly acquire a negative connotation and contribute almost exclusively to a dehumanised characterisation of the protagonists.

Starting from the premise that no transposition can reach absolute equivalence with the source text, and that every adaptation makes choices in terms of subtraction, addition, condensation, and expansion¹⁰, observing to what extent and in which ways the function of animal metaphors has been enhanced in transpositions also makes it possible to highlight on which thematic strands each

adaptation focuses and which of the main interpretative strands has been privileged by screenwriters and directors. Following McFarlane's premise that we have to "consider to what extent the film-maker has picked up visual suggestions from the novel in his representations of key verbal signs - and how the visual representation affects his 'reading' of the film text" (McFarlane 27), it is interesting to see how, even in a realistic texture, the films analysed gave a metaphorical or symbolic value to the animals staged.

The constant recurrence and the repetition of visual metaphors related to the animal world in the adaptations – even through reciprocal quotations between transpositions – is one of the aspects that have enriched and shed light on this reading perspective of the Dickensian text: these adaptations activate, as often happens, a two-way exchange that begins from the target text and illuminates the source text¹¹.

Once these semantic recurrences have been identified in the Dickensian text and in the adaptations, this study will illustrate not only how the film recreates these isotopies through its different languages, but also which functions they acquire and what kind of interpretations of the source text they suggest. Among the translation strategies adopted in the transpositions, particular attention will be given to the use of close-ups and subjective shots and in part to the use of sound in the creation of a soundscape that, together with the visual level, contributes to the symbolic network.

1. Animal metaphors and similes in Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*

Great Expectations tells the story of a disenchantment: it deals with the false social ascent of Pip, a young blacksmith's apprentice, who after encountering the rich Miss Havisham and her beautiful adopted daughter Estella, desires to escape the forge and the marshlands of his birth and become a gentleman. Upon inheriting a substantial fortune, Pip identifies Miss Havisham as his benefactor, convinced that he is destined to marry Estella. When he discovers that his true benefactor is really Magwitch – a lifer, a convict sentenced to deportation to life in New Wales, who for the sole purpose of meeting Pip again returns to Britain and loses all his possessions – Pip understands that he cannot return to his previous life at the forge and chooses exile in the colonies, working as a clerk for the insurance company that he had helped to found.

With the typical harshness that characterises his social criticism, Dickens illustrates the wide gaps between social classes, the degradation of the poorest members of society, the aloofness of the richest ones, the moral dignity of people at the margins of society. This is accomplished through an interesting play of symmetries. Joe Gargery – Pip's brother-in-law and blacksmith of the village – and Magwitch are the emblems of magnanimity which the main exponents of the highest echelons do not possess, since the "genteel" possess only a gentility of manners: this is particularly true of Miss Havisham and Bentley Drummle, a young scion met by Pip during his education as a gentleman in London and who finally becomes Estella's husband. Miss Havisham, specifically, suffering the humiliation of having been abandoned on her wedding day, has already decided to make Estella her instrument of revenge against men. To this end she

contributes to Pip's illusion of being chosen to marry Estella, only to crush his hopes. The play of symmetries and parallels between Pip and the putative father, between Estella and Miss Havisham, and between Miss Havisham and Bentley Drummle are corroborated, as we will observe, by the echoes generated by the various animal references, both in the novel and in the adaptations.

The process of dehumanisation in the novel therefore involves multiple characters and for different reasons. Firstly, outcasts of society like Magwitch and his *alter ego* – the other convict, Compeyson – along with Pip's violent foil, Orlick – who works with him at the forge – are likened to different animal species by their features and their actions; secondly, dehumanisation involves those who have lost contact with the sphere of emotions, such as Miss Havisham, who lives only to plan her revenge, and the lawyer Jaggers who acts as an intermediary between Magwitch, Miss Havisham and Pip, and with her contributes to the creation of the trap. In turn, the protagonist himself, a modern prodigal son, blinded by wealth and a dissolute life, proves ungrateful towards the people who raised him, acquiring the role of the anti-hero of the novel, compared to Joe, an emblem of humanity and magnanimity. The narrative scheme is based not by chance on the biblical parable of the prodigal son, enunciated in the fourth chapter in a moral lesson addressed to Pip during the Christmas lunch, in which the condition of the ungrateful boy is associated to that of the pigs, fellows of the prodigal in the moment of decline and loss of his fortune. The parable is therefore an anticipation of Pip's fate and it is significant that the pig appears in a metaphorical sense only in reference to Pip. After Chapter 4 there will be no other references to metaphorical pigs, and even the other pigs have the function of anticipating Pip's fate, since in all cases they are bound for slaughter.

To fully understand the value that animal metaphors have acquired in this process of dehumanisation of the characters and to examine the translation choices made by the transpositions, I have identified four categories based on the meaning and the function they assume in the novel.

1. Animals can create a reference to a subhuman condition due to their ferocity, uncontrolled blind force, cruelty, voracity, and their subordination to the pure instinct to satisfy basic needs¹². It is a trait firstly associated to Magwitch by Pip, for his voracity in eating during their encounter at the marshes (“I had often watched a dog of ours eating his food; and I now noticed a decided similarity between the dog's way of eating, and the man's. The man took strong sharp sudden bites, *just like a dog*”) (Dickens 21), mentioned also in the words with which Magwitch refers to himself when discussing the pursuit of Compeyson (“I'll put him down, like a bloodhound”) (Dickens 22). This equivalence between himself and other animals emerges in Magwitch's own words as well, when he describes his own lonely childhood and lack of a given name, the distinctive trait of human identity. He affirms: “I know'd my name to be Magwitch, chris'end Abel. How did I know it? Much as I know'd the birds's names in the hedges to be chaffinch, sparrer, thrush” (Dickens 259). Magwitch, indeed, has always belonged to the world of crime, dependent upon theft and all kinds of tricks to survive. The association between the outlaw world and the animal condition is reiterated by Pip in referring to the prison ship as “a wicked Noah's ark” (Dickens 36).

The parallels between Pip and his benefactor are also expressed through the bestiality that Pip attributes to himself because of the violence and ferocity with

which he beats Herbert in the garden of Satis House (“I regarded myself while dressing as a species of savage young wolf, or other wild beast”) (Dickens 75). It should be noted, in this regard, that the clash between Pip and Herbert immediately evokes the brawl that the reader witnessed in the first chapters between Magwitch and Compeyson in the mud, an element that further highlights Magwitch’s symmetry with Pip, since it recalls the typical habitat of pigs. A further hint at the animal nature Magwitch shares with Pip is also found when the convict refers to himself as “a wretched warmint, hunted as near death and dunghill as this poor wretched warmint is!” (Dickens 21). Moreover, the metaphor of the wolf used by Orlick with reference to Pip¹³ not only generates a link with the canine condition of Pip’s benefactor, as his ancestor, but also, as Kreilkamp notes¹⁴, with his status as an enemy of humanity. The image of Pip captured with a rope around his neck after being hunted like an animal sharpens the parallels with Magwitch and with his condemnation to the gallows, a link also pointed out by Orlick with the warning “Ware [...] the gallows” (Dickens 319). Pip himself says he feels like a trapped animal and Orlick threatens to kill him “like any other beast” (Dickens 317).

It is also possible to recognise symmetries between Pip and Orlick, a sort of *doppelgänger*, the double which allows the expression of Pip’s repressed side and of his guilt and shame. To Orlick is generally attributed animal ferocity. He is compared to a tiger during the attack on Pip, and, as a mirror-image of Pip, he is also drawn into the world of galleys as a Compeyson’s accomplice. A further reference to his animal condition is generated by the room reserved for him at Satis House, “the cage for a human dormouse” (Dickens 180), where the image of the cage creates a network of associations with the world of crime.

2. Animal metaphors and similes refer to the condition of subordination, repression and submission of the weakest members of society, who are controlled by those in a higher economic and social position. The metaphor of the dog, adopted twice before to identify Magwitch, is repeated at the moment of his return to London, in reference to his status as a kind of hunted animal at the time of his first meeting with Pip (“hunted dunghill dog wot [he] kept life in”) (Dickens 241). The condition of Magwitch and the convicts in general is also underlined with a further metaphor related to capture, that of the bird in cage (“There’s some of the birds flown from the cages”) (Dickens 95), which anticipates both the cage of the prison of Newgate in which he will spend the last days of his life, and the dock in which Magwitch is “penned” (Dickens 339) in the court at the moment of the death sentence. The metaphor of the trapped bird returns during one of the dialogues with Pip in London, in Magwitch’s words referring to his loss of freedom imposed by the English government (“I’m an old bird, as he dared all manner of traps since first he was fledged, and I’m not afeerd to perch upon a scarecrow”) (Dickens 250).

Moreover, during the same dialogues, when the gap between Magwitch and the gentleman he has created has widened, the name that he addresses to himself on two occasions, “warmint” (Dickens 240), testifies to a sharpened contempt for himself and underlines the need for his removal from the British homeland. His harmful nature is also emphasized by an additional comparison with a snake (“‘Look’ee here’ [...] I recoiled from his touch as if he had been a snake “a gold ‘un and beauty [...] a diamond, all set round with rubies”) (Dickens 241), which not

only carries biblical weight, but also reminds us of how the benefactor's fortune has induced Pip into the temptation of a dissolute life.

If the metaphor of the dog is that most commonly associated with Magwitch, it is interesting to observe once again the parallelism with Pip and with his condition of subordination during the episodes at Satis House: Pip is compared to a dog from the first day of his arrival at Miss Havisham's house (but he informs the readers that the episode is also repeated during the following encounters) when Estella is required to "let him roam" (Dickens 53) in the garden and "let him have something to eat" (Dickens 53) like he was "a dog in disgrace" (Dickens 53)¹⁵, an aspect that reinforces not only the symmetries with Magwitch, but also the role of animals in expressing the condition of degradation of the poorer social classes, along with the class difference between Pip and his guests. The same condition of subordination in Pip's domestic and family environment is underscored with an animal simile that amplifies the repressive role of the sister: "she pounced upon me, like an eagle on a lamb, [...] until I really was quite beside myself" (Dickens 45).

3. Animals can represent feelings, an inner state, or features of individual characters. Miss Havisham's condition, as the desire for revenge consumes both her and her rooms, is expressed by a simile when she compares the "teeth of mice" (Dickens 72) which have gnawed at her bridal cake to the "sharper teeth" (Dickens 72) of regret which have gnawed at her.

With regard to Joe, it is significant that the only animal similarity attributed to him points out his antithetical position with regards to Magwitch, a caged bird ("I could hardly have imagined dear old Joe looking so unlike himself or so like some extraordinary bird; standing [...] speechless, with his tuft of feathers ruffled, and his mouth open, as if he wanted a worm") (Dickens 80): as Funada observes in reference to the definitions of the Oxford English Dictionary and that of Goatly, the effect of this simile is in fact to highlight Joe's kindness, "since birds in his novels usually imply the 'timidity', 'amiability' or 'gentleness' of people" (Funada 14).

Estella's passivity and Drummle's and her suitors' attitude are figured by the well-known metaphor of the candlelight around which moths and other insects hover ("Moths, and all sorts of ugly creatures [...] hover about a lighted candle. Can the candle help it?", Dickens 234). If, on the one hand, this metaphor underlines that Estella is never compared to another living being, and that all of her metaphors and similes instead accentuate her absence of emotions and life – associating her with the world of the inhuman, of the inorganic – on the other hand, it highlights the magnetic force exerted by Estella's beauty on Pip and other admirers, transferring outside of the set of Satis House the motif of the entrapping spell: 'trap' is exactly the word adopted by Estella, who in this way creates a close connection between Pip's desire and the condition of subordination and with the cage¹⁶.

4. Animals characterising the environment or that appear on the scene as concrete entities have the effect of creating a network of references with the previously analysed metaphors and similes. Animals like cockroaches and spiders feast on Miss Havisham's table and weave their webs along the walls and on the furniture of the rooms: not only do they amplify the immobility of the life of those rooms, but, as a symbol of Miss Havisham herself, they also become "symbol of

the bad mother whose embrace inflicted injury and death” (Barzilai 272). As Barzilai points out, the clearest point of contact between Miss Havisham and the spider appears in the two scenes in which she appears to Pip hanging from the ceiling of the brewery¹⁷: she is the weaver of the web into which Pip is gradually lured¹⁸, as her words underline at the moment of Pip’s discovery of his true benefactor, trying to diminish her own culpability (“You made your own snares. I never made them”) (Dickens 269). Falling into her trap means, both for him and for Estella, being manipulated by her adoptive mother and ending up in the same fixity and absence of life as that which dominates Satis House. The symmetrical double of Miss Havisham, which contributes to the realisation of the trap for both Pip and Estella, is the other spider, Drummle¹⁹: “the Spider [...] was used to lying in wait, [...] had the patience of his tribe [...] doggedly watching Estella, outwatched many brighter insects, and would often uncoil himself and drop at the right nick of time” (Dickens 234).

Another significant example of animals on the scene which implicitly recalls other metaphors adopted by Dickens is present in the episode in which Wemmick refers to the pig raised at Walworth and asks Pip to roast the sausage produced by its meat: as McDonell observes, the choice of pronouns and the reference to Pip’s old acquaintance with the animal not only generates confusion between the hierarchical distinctions between man and animal, but also includes the pig in the category of domestic animals and weakens the boundary between public and private space, crucial in the representation of the character of Wemmick and in the Victorian age in general²⁰. This breakdown of the traditional hierarchy recalls Pip’s metaphorical close kinship with the first pig and fulfills the punishment of the pig anticipated in Pumblechook’s words about the prodigal son.

Two appearances of horses offer interesting insights into the features or condition of the characters involved in the episodes and their relationships with other characters: the image of Drummle’s death due to the rebellion of one of his horses, mentioned only in a brief summary by Pip in the last pages²¹, can be read as an apt punishment for his own violence and arrogance against those he had bullied, primarily Estella but also Pip himself: his destiny expresses the Dickensian deterministic logic of the *unicuique suum*. Even the image created by Magwitch in describing his experience in Australia, that of the colonists’ blood horses which “fling up the dust over [him]” (Dickens 242) – synecdoche of the settlers themselves – offers a clear hint at the reversal of the rules in the passage from Victorian England – where attention and sensitivity to animal and human welfare were increasing – to New Wales, where even a human being falls below the level of an animal if he has been deported.

It is known that many of the events of *Great Expectations* are anticipated by nightmares and visions that corroborate the tension and the expectation of Pip towards the discovery of the origin of his fortune. Thus, when Pip dreams of a coach led by pigs and dogs instead of horses the day before his departure from the village, it seems that this dream already anticipates that Pip’s great expectations will come to naught²²: this is the first clue to those dark expectations that hover around the fairy tale that Pip is apparently experiencing, since it recalls the famous transformation of Cinderella’s coach when the spell is over and everything returns as it was originally and is revealed for what it is²³.

A final observation, related to this point, concerns Pip's arrival in London: indirectly the presence of animals, this time slaughtered or ready for sale, is recalled by his description of Smithfield market. The transition from Jaggers' office – from which Pip chooses to exit because he can no longer bear the sight of the two casts on the wall depicting the two executed clients – to the streets of London, also creates in this case a dense network of references between the market with slaughtered animals – in particular pigs – and the Newgate prison that stands out in front of him, where Pip's experience in London will end.

2. Film and TV adaptations

As observed in this initial overview, animal metaphors bring to the fore some of the key themes and motifs of the Dickensian work: the guilt, the punishment, belonging to the world of crime, the false hopes and the trap, freedom understood as both self-determination and as a possibility of social mobility. Dogs, wolves, and pests in general are associated with the world of lawlessness, while birds are adopted either as an emblem *par excellence* of the animal in a cage; when seen in the metaphor of flight, as an emblem of freedom; or, in the case of Joe during his confrontation with Miss Havisham, as emblems of magnanimity. Ropes, loops, and cages create a network of references to capture, traps, and punishment, which from the animal world lead to that of jails and Newgate, but also to the condition of self-imprisonment of Miss Havisham and Estella. The fairy-tale vein of the story is alluded to in a parodic form in Pip's dream before he leaves for London, when the coach's horses are replaced by pigs, dogs and other animals, as an anticipation of the collapse of Pip's illusions.

As far as the narrative events selected by the adaptations are concerned, the first datum that emerges is that, for reasons of duration and development of the plot, the focus is on the main characters and on the story kernels²⁴: thus, most of the references and subplot related to Orlick and Compeyson – the two figures more neglected by the transpositions – are often missing, even if in the novel they have the function of creating symmetries among the main characters or of emphasizing the dark side of their personalities.

Moreover, in the process of modernisation of the Dickensian text, we will see how metaphors and similes present in the dialogues undergo a process of displacement or condensation, and are either transformed into visual metaphors or replaced by new, more effective metaphors in the target context, strengthening the adaptation's chosen interpretation of the text.

Although my intention is to limit the analysis of the adaptations to the more recent versions, produced between 1998 and 2012, it is not possible not to take into account a milestone for all subsequent adaptations such as David Lean's version of 1946. Despite the relative fidelity of Lean's transposition, in line with the post-World War II taste for literary cinema²⁵, it is known that the plot he favours is the sentimental one, focused on the figures of Miss Havisham and Estella as the true driving forces of the story, until the final happy ending. Although the choice of this happy ending can be interpreted from a cultural point of view, as a message of hope in the years of recovery after the second World War²⁶, it is important also because it places the primary emphasis on the

condition of Pip as a victim of the trap laid by Miss Havisham, and secondarily on that of the protagonist's moral punishment, as suggested by the ambiguous Dickensian ending. Despite its greater fidelity to the source text, this adaptation has made important choices, starting from the parts of the novel which have been discarded: Lean's selection on what to maintain, what to displace, to condense, or to eliminate expresses his reading of the Dickensian text.

The weight of the motifs of the guilt and the punishment in Lean's version is conveyed from the first scenes in which the protagonist is shown absconding from his house with the stolen goods destined for Magwitch. The rabbit hanging upside down in the foreground next to the pork pie that Pip is about to steal is later echoed by the image of the rope hanging from a pole, similar to a gallows, which overlooks Pip on the way back home: although Lean does not transpose the dream which torments Pip during the night, in which he is led directly to the gallows²⁷, the recurrence of these images that recall the hanging after the moment of the theft will become a *leitmotif* which anticipates Magwitch's sentencing and corroborates the guilt of Pip. In this sense, the display case in Jaggers' office containing the rope used at Newgate for hanging acquires a metonymic value, and Jarrod will also use this solution to give greater importance to the casts of the condemned and to emphasize their function of warning, since he shows Pip's face reflected in them several times.

In the first scenes of Lean's adaptation, the association between Pip and the convict to whom he is bringing the food is also reinforced by an addition: during the robbery, Lean not only uses the rabbit in the foreground, but also fills the soundscape of the frame with the reverberating line, "You're a thief, Pip", followed by other similar sentences against Pip attributed to the oxen encountered on the way to the cemetery. Pip's answer, justified by the lack of an alternative ("I couldn't help it, Sir") is another addition inserted by the adaptation which, besides suggesting a condition of equality between Pip and the animals, also demonstrates Lean's greater benevolence towards his young protagonist: Pip is in fact portrayed from the beginning as a victim and this is the reason why in the finale he will be worthy of the positive outcome of his story. Concerning Lean's regard for his adaptation's protagonist, it is significant that he removes all dialogues in which Pip is metaphorically related to animals, with the exception of the expression "little monkey" used by his sister, which in this case has the effect of sharpening the position of Pip as a victim even in the family environment²⁸.

These suppressions acquire even more value if compared to the choices related to Magwitch, the only character for whom Lean maintains the animal metaphors. Upon the convict's return to London, indeed, he refers to himself twice as a "warmint" and once as a "hunted dog". The erasure of Orlick implies that the role of Pip's foil is now attributed only to Magwitch, as shown in two significant scenes by the presence of the same visual animal metaphor: first, with the voracity of Magwitch while he is eating the pork pie in the cemetery and, subsequently, with Pip's own voracity during his first meeting with Herbert.

Further suggesting the symmetries between Pip and the benefactor, Lean realises another displacement: when portraying Pip's state of disorientation after Magwitch's death, he shows the protagonist almost being run over by a horse, thus recalling the image of the convict in the colonies when he had been forced to eat the dust of the settlers' horses. The effect of this choice in the transposition is

indeed to underline Pip's rejection by London society after he has lost every point of reference with the loss of his putative father, of Joe, and of the fortune that until then had given him an identity. The same scene also brings to the fore an intratextual allusion, since being trampled by a horse that pulls a coach leads us back to the scene on which Lean had lingered with a fade, the scene of the horses that led Pip to London the first time. The return of this image expresses Pip's disenchantment, the breaking of the fairy-tale plot recalled by the symbol of the horses and the coach.

With regard to the female plots, Lean's work stresses the network of references that is generated around the symbolism of the spider and the spiderwebs originating from Miss Havisham's room: the multiplicity of shots both in detail and in long shots in which the figure of the woman and the room are entirely wrapped in the cobwebs woven by spiders, conveys the idea of fixity, absence of life, suspension in a spell in which from that moment Pip will be trapped by making childhood experiences an obsession throughout his story. To corroborate the absence of time, but also Miss Havisham's patient work of weaving the trap while awaiting her revenge, is also the repetition conveyed by the dissolves during the scene in which Pip walks her wheelchair around and around the table. In this case, too, considering Lean's choices, it is crucial that the motif of the trap returns exclusively in Estella's words, and that among the integral quotations from the Dickensian text there remains the one in which she refers to the relationship with her suitors in terms of entrapment and deception.

A confirmation of Lean's attention to Dickensian metaphors and symbols referring to the two female figures is given by the other quote with which Miss Havisham extends the destiny of her wedding banquet – become food for mice – to herself “gnawed” by “sharper teeth than teeth of mice” (Dickens 72). Lean's conservation of these two moments emphasizes, in fact, “the dialectic of the web, the circular route of the victim” highlighted by Barzilai with reference to Miss Havisham (Barzilai 276), the “victimizer [...] who becomes the victim again” (Barzilai 276). These elements – the link between the spell, the deception that trapped Pip and the cobwebs – should also be kept in mind to understand the scene in which Pip tries to save Miss Havisham from the fire: the element used by Pip to extinguish the fire on her is the tablecloth on which mice and spiders have banqueted for years. The destruction of the immobility of that wedding feast, where the revenge of Miss Havisham began, represents the breaking of the spell that trapped Pip and anticipates his new awareness in the ending, his ability to finally take charge of his own destiny. The symmetry is emphasized by Lean through the choice to repeat the same gesture, when Pip tears away the curtains that prevent the light from entering. The last meeting with Estella at Satis House, indeed, evokes the possible narrative that Estella could begin to follow after being abandoned by Drummle, as also highlighted by the framing of the table that had belonged to Miss Havisham. An anticipation of the happy ending is offered by a comparison with the first scene in which Pip had entered that room: as on that occasion, also in the final scene the Bible had been framed in detail on the dressing table, but it lacks the cobweb and the fly trapped in it. Lean in fact chooses to realise that possible fairy-tale narrative at which Dickens had only hinted through Pip's thoughts in Chapter 29, the most explicit fairy-tale ending

that the author did not want to concede to his protagonist even after the interventions to modify it²⁹:

She had adopted Estella, she had as good as adopted me, and it could not fail to be her intention to bring us together. She reserved it for me to restore the desolate house, admit the sunshine into the dark rooms, set the clocks a going and the cold hearths a blazing, tear down the cobwebs, destroy the vermin – in short, do all the shining deeds of the young Knight of romance, and marry the Princess.
(Dickens 179)

Before concluding on this adaptation, it is worth noting the function assumed by the animals that in the Dickensian hypotext were a metaphor for freedom: birds in flight. It is interesting to observe that the soundscape of the only scenes in which Magwitch tastes his freedom while traveling on the Thames is characterised by the echoing cries of seagulls, the same soundscape with which Alfonso Cuarón (1998) chooses to open his version of *Great Expectations*, commonly considered postmodern³⁰ because of the richness of dialogic references to other texts, its metanarrative reflection, and its intertextual irony³¹. Cuarón, who states from the beginning through the protagonist's words that he wants to tell the story as he remembers it, immediately challenges the concepts of memory and source ("but what color it may be in memory depends on the day. I am going to tell the story the way it happened. I am going to tell it the way I remember it"). The flight of the seagulls surrounding the young Finn (Pip) and his boat on the gulf of Florida, the multiplicity of birds in the fishermen's village where he lives and on his house, inaugurate a soundscape and a *leitmotif* that will recur in the text to symbolize the freedom tasted during his childhood, but also his innocence before the discovery of the deleterious effect of money: unlike the familial repression to which Pip is subjected at his sister's home, Finn himself declares right from the start to enjoy "a certain amount of freedom from [his] sister Maggie". The centrality given to animals by the Mexican director – birds, fish, mice – also leads us to the focal point of his process of transposition: Finn's training path is no longer focused on the comparison between gentleness of soul or of manners. Cuarón's focus is on the motif of freedom, whether real or fictitious. The acquisition of wealth, as Finn affirms many times, is the key to access to a freedom that is reserved only to rich people ("all my longing which began that day to paint for the rich, to have their freedom, to love Estella, the things we cannot have"). In the new historical-cultural context – as Glavin observes (97) – the celebrity success that he can acquire with his paintings has in fact superseded the value of one's birth status that had been so important in the Victorian age. Moreover, the greater social mobility in the US of the nineties easily allows Cuarón's protagonist to access a new life and to be accepted in high society.

It is significant in this sense that the initial soundscape created by the birds acquires both shades of meaning that Dickens had already attributed to these animals: a cross-reference to freedom – and, consequently, to the conquest of Estella and of her status – and a cross-reference to the lack of freedom, to the control by other authorities of Finn's fate, namely the condemned Arthur Lustig (Magwitch) and Nora Dinsmoor (Miss Havisham). When the condemned man comes to Finn's Manhattan apartment and reveals himself as his benefactor, the architect of his success who had bought all of his paintings, the loss of the freedom

that Finn believed he had acquired by accessing the world of Estella is recalled not only by the return of the sound of the seagulls, but above all by the placement behind Finn of a wind chime made of numerous wooden birds, all painted in green³². An anticipation of his conquest of a false freedom had been found in another form of flight, an artificial one, which is the flight by plane: winking at Lean's transposition, Cuarón shows Finn's travel towards his (false) hopes in Manhattan with the plane in a fade-out that leads to the map of the New York subway in detail shot, Lean had done when he showed the coach's horses fading into the map of London. The motif of the artificial flight is extended in the image of Finn continuing to play with a plastic plane on the metro which brings him to his new accommodation. Corroborating the association between this form of flight and the idea of false freedom and false hopes is the scene in which Estella is shown from the airplane window as she leaves for her honeymoon with an unhappy expression: the plane window which frames her face, next to her husband Walter in the background, strengthens the sense of claustrophobia and constriction of that marriage compared to the possibility of being with Finn.

Among the birds that acquire a pivotal role in Cuarón's work, the most dense with references is the parrot placed in the centre of Nora Dinsmoor's room, focal not only in terms of the central position of the cage in the room and of its recurrence in the following frames, but also due to the metatextual significance of this postmodern revision of the Dickensian work, as it is commonly considered a symbol of mimicry. Like the settings and the clothes of the main characters throughout the entire transposition, the parrot is green³³: this gives a strong thematic significance to the bird's location within a large cage. For the setting of Satis House, Cuarón did not opt for spiders and cobwebs as Lean had done, but rather for bars and vines, an uncultivated vegetation which embraces and envelops the scenery of the villa, *Paradiso Perduto* (in Italian, "Paradise Lost")³⁴. Metonymically, the cage, the parrot and the colours of the main characters' clothes perform the same function as the cobwebs in Lean's version and remind us of "the circular route of the victim" (Barzilai 276), and a trap which, in the end, ensnares its own vengeful maker.

At the moment of Finn's initial access into Nora Dinsmoor's room, his first encounter is in fact with this caged parrot (fig. 1). The director lingers on this scene, but it will also return various times in the foreground through additional tracking shots that portray, seen from between the bars, both Finn alone (fig. 2) and Finn and Estella dancing.



Figure 1



Figure 2

The same motif of the cage returns in the first meeting between Finn and Estella in New York, where the architectural element that frames the drinking-fountain in front of which they kiss recalls the parrot's cage by its shape and structure, reminding the viewers of the spell under which Finn has fallen. The same architectural motif also refers to the metaphor of the golden cage in which Finn is being locked up and is also evoked by Estella's description of the room with the fountain in the villa of their childhood, where the ceiling was "gold leaf, real gold".

The caged bird is not the only animal to which Finn is compared: an even clearer association with the trap is given by the various juxtapositions of Finn and mice pronounced by Nora Dinsmoor and which create a further reference to his role of a guinea pig in the hands of the rich woman. From the beginning Finn is *observed* by the woman ("I remember watching you from that very window over there. A scared little mouse scurrying across my front garden. Now ... another door opens. What will our mouse do?"): in this metaphor the image of this gaze from above evokes a clear likeness between him and the guinea pig recalled by the choice of the different doors. The metaphor is repeated in the words on the postcard sent to him during his stay in Manhattan ("How's my little mouse doing?") that immediately implies that the woman has some project in store for him and wants to take him to Estella's level ("What were her plans for me?"). This parallelism is reinforced in the same scene by the camera's top-down view of the protagonist, while Finn watches the elevator cage descend towards him. Finally, the same motif returns when Nora Dinsmoor reveals the whole truth, telling him that Estella got married and that he had been needed only as a catalyst, as a tool in her hands, because Walter would never have decided to ask her hand in marriage if he had he not been jealous of Finn: "throw a mouse in with a snake, teach her to hunt and swallow food whole, you know?". This reading proposed by Cuarón is certainly one of the most interesting with reference to the relationship between *Great Expectations* and the animal world, as it reminds us of the role of Miss Havisham's rooms as a "laboratory [...], a place [...] of biological manipulation" in which "Pip (and before him Estella) becomes the object of an experiment; in the case of the boy the animal condition of the first chapters evolves into that of guinea pig" (Monti xxv-xxvi)³⁵. In this sense, the transposition process carried out by Cuarón is more complex compared to the previous metaphors already present in *Great Expectations* and which are amplified in this work of adaptation and modernization: what it does is to make explicit through dialogue and framing a metaphor that had been implicit in the Dickensian work

and to create a close link between this more sci-fi vision of the novel and the fairy-tale strand.

The following scenes, indeed, show Finn telling his lawyer (whose surname is “Ragno”, in Italian “Spider”) that everything makes him think of a fairy tale, in which a good fairy aims to transform the frog into a prince: the reference to the good fairy once again juxtaposes the Dickensian story to that of Cinderella and reminds the viewer that everything, at the end of the spell, can return to its initial condition.

In addition to mice and birds in cages, Finn is also compared to other animals: a last association links Finn’s image to the convict who escaped from jail right in the opening scene, when in browsing his sketchbook Finn focuses on the image of a fish pierced by a rose, an image that can be decoded in the light of two dialogues. The first is that with the convict who threatens to gut him like a fish and make him swallow his guts, and the second one is the dialogue with Nora Dinsmoor, who predicts to Finn that Estella’s duty is to pierce men to avenge her adoptive mother’s humiliation. On the visual level, the first appearance of the convict has the effect of immediately suggesting the link between him and Finn, since it is the first adaptation that shows us the figure of the convict emerging from under the water, where he dives again immediately after the dialogue with Finn.

The threat of making Finn eat his own guts also has the effect of evoking the same cannibalism that occurs in the Dickensian text, and that echoes in one of the first lines pronounced by Finn and Dinsmoor (“That’s the biggest cat I’ve ever seen. What do you feed it?” “Other cats”, answers Nora Dinsmoor). Although in the general ironic lowering adopted by Cuarón with respect to the Dickensian text, this set of references between dialogues has the effect of establishing the well-known parallelism between the convict and the eccentric woman in relation to the motif of cannibalism, since their role will be revealed to be that of cannibals of the two young victims whose lives they absorb for their own personal revenge³⁶.

Another important fact is that the Dickensian image of Magwitch as a bird in a cage or a hunted dog is here replaced by that of a marine animal seeking refuge in a fishing village: in the first lines pronounced by Finn’s uncle Joe, it is still a cage, a fish trap that anticipates the capture of the fugitive a few scenes later, which will echo in the images of the cage in which his putative son will be trapped.

An essential moment in this itinerary is the two-part film directed by Julian Jarrold in 1999, produced by the BBC and destined for American TV. With respect to the adaptations examined so far, he is the first to give new attention to the Parable of the Prodigal Son, to the motif of Pip’s guilt, and to the animal metaphors related to it.

It is in fact the first transposition that, after having used the quotation from the source text during the Christmas lunch, will make the pig the most recurrent element within the whole film (“If you want a subject, look at pork [...] Many a moral for the young might be deduced from that text [...] Swine were the companions of the prodigal. The gluttony of swine is put before us as an example to the young. Think what you ought to be grateful for, if you’d been born a Squeaker, what would your destination be? You’d have been disposed of for a few shillings. [...] Disposed and then Dunstable the butcher would have come up to you, as you lay in your straw, and he would have whipped you under his left arm, and shed your blood with a penknife with his right”). At Pip’s arrival in London,

in a displacement with respect to the Dickensian text, the adaptation collocates the coach's last stop at the Smithfield market: the first shot is on the ground, on the blood from the meat, and the following frames emphasize the gutted pigs and their hanging heads. It is an image whose meaning is reaffirmed by the subjective shot that immediately follows, showing the condemned at the gallows.

This closeness to the world of pigs had already been implicitly inaugurated in showing Pip running through the mud in the marshes as he goes to meet Magwitch³⁷. Jarrold's choice to weave this set of cross-references between the Parable of the Prodigal Son and the motifs of Pip's guilt and punishment is particularly worthy of consideration because it is also readable in terms of anticipation of the Dickensian possible narrative that Jarrold chooses to realise in the third part of the work: having lost his entire fortune, Pip is arrested for his debts and spends his days in prison until Joe pays off his creditors. With this option, the transposition amplifies the weight of the initial parable, pointing out the role of the father who welcomed his son back despite his ingratitude.

Equally significant in relation to the same metaphor is another addition by Jarrold in a scene excluded by previous adaptations, but which again suggests Pip's closeness to the world of those animals: during Pip's first entry into the lawyer's home in Walworth, when he meets Wemmick's pig coming out of the door meant for pets, Pip holds him in his arms during the entire dialogue and keeps it like a dog or a cat until inside the house, while the first observation of the lawyer – that he needs to grow salad in order to eventually prepare a proper side dish – anticipates the fate of the animal.

The interior and exterior settings of Wemmick's house are also worthy of attention, since they are populated by stuffed animals that establish a common thread with at least two other settings: Mr. Jaggers's office, with the faces of his condemned clients fixed in the display cases (in which Pip's reflected face figures several times), and Miss Havisham's room, strewn with mannequins with which, in one of the first interior shots of the house, Pip is surrounded.

Pip's dehumanisation also continues in other forms: in the treatment received from his sister during the bath that precedes the departure; at his arrival at Miss Havisham's, when Jarrold adds a scene in which Pip is made to run and neigh like a horse at the old lady's request; when Estella leaves a tray of food on the ground along with a bone, as if it were meant for a dog – an image that echoes in the bone that Magwitch gnaws at the time of his arrival in London; and in the words that Orlick addresses to Pip: in an addition that once again highlights Pip's bestiality and isolation, Orlick in Jarrold's version pities him as “a poor beast”, remarking on his own superiority.

A further aspect of the 1999 version's innovation compared to previous transpositions is found in the emphasis on the parallels between Pip and Estella: the girl is portrayed kneeling at the feet of Miss Havisham and caressing her head during the meeting between Miss Havisham and Joe Gargery, highlighting Estella's domestication, and she is also shown behind various kinds of bars due to the placement of the camera, returning to the motif of the cage. She is first seen behind the railings of the gate and the windows of Satis House (already a recurring element in Lean's work); later in the addition of Pip's visit to Drummle's home after the wedding, when she is forced to turn Pip away, and she is framed with a bruised cheek behind the windows; finally, with the addition of a dialogue

at Miss Havisham's funeral, when Estella points out that Drummle spares her because he vents his violence by whipping his horse; this moment also defines her distance from warm-blooded creatures because of her incapacity to feel pain. Jarrold's greater attention to Estella's dehumanisation and inanimate condition is seen through a juxtaposition of shots that creates a clear semantic association: the frame immediately following the vision of her bruised face due to Drummle's violence is a detail shot of a dead bird devoured by larvae, followed by a fly trapped inside a spider's web, and a spider that walks around the little bird. The viewer understands that the scene has therefore shifted from Drummle's house to Satis House when Pip enters Miss Havisham's room to tell her that Estella has been the main victim of her revenge: the concentration in the same scene of all the animals characterising Miss Havisham's room also in this case reinforces the sense of "self-entrapment" typical of the "dialectic of the web" (Barzilai 276) triggered by Miss Havisham who sees the consequences of her revenge falling on her daughter and on herself.

Moving on to the 2011 BBC series directed by Brian Kirk, it should be pointed out that this is the only transposition that gives centrality to an animal metaphor starting from the "paratext" (Genette): the chrysalis that gradually turns into a black butterfly, accompanying the opening credits, acquires meaning and echoes through dialogues and visual metaphors throughout the entire film. All three episodes are in fact introduced by a dark red chrysalis with shades of black, which seems to palpitate like a heart until it breaks open and frees the butterfly that gradually, beating its wings, turns black. Since the first meeting between Pip and Miss Havisham, spectators learn that the image of the butterfly is once again linked to the motif of the trap: the cobwebs and darkness that used to characterise Miss Havisham's room have been replaced by a multiplicity of display cases and bell jars enclosing stuffed birds and a collection of butterflies that Miss Havisham inherited from her brother. The condition of the butterflies, captured at the height of their beauty by impalement with a deadly pin, is a clear reference to Miss Havisham's wedding day and to the revenge she is planning at Pip's expense: she, too, was pierced in the moment commonly considered to be the peak of happiness and beauty for a woman and, moreover, with the complicity of her own brother in the Dickensian text. The connection between the chrysalis and the heart, a heart that seems to break, is confirmed by Magwitch's words: when referring to Compeyson he mentions the black heart that he wanted to tear from him to seek revenge ("I go after him to rip his black heart out through his lying mouth").

It is significant, therefore, that Kirk's innovations – both in terms of dialogues and setting – confirm the strength of both visual and verbal metaphors that are now fixed in the collective imagination and that the model viewer of *Great Expectations* can easily recognise in these allusions, although they are never explicitly cited in the dialogues, like that of the broken heart.

The stuffed animals and the display cases in which the casts of the condemned were fixed as a form of warning, a *memento mori*, are clearly referring to the previous adaptations, but the novelty is that for the first time they also become part of Pip's furnishings in his new home in London. Kirk chooses to linger on the arrival of the cases at the apartment long with the other furniture: the effect is to remind us of the imitative process of Pip, so emphasized in this adaptation that repeatedly insists on his true identity³⁸. Another possible meaning attributable to

the cases, especially when considered alongside Miss Havisham's bell jars, is also to remind us of the bell jar under which Pip is developing, unaware of his status of a guinea pig in Miss Havisham's hands. In trying to convince him of having a destiny to parallel to that of Estella – an aspect amplified with respect to the Dickensian text also to emphasize Pip's vanity – Miss Havisham pronounces a metaphor in which she reduces the two youths to objects (“not quite finished articles but [they] will be soon”).

In the BBC series' expanded network of allusions, referring to both the source text and to previous adaptations, it is significant that in one of the first scenes Orlick (who in the end becomes Pip's hound and spy, being allied to Compeyson) compares Pip's condition to that of the recently-escaped convicts with a very suggestive image and simile: he holds an arm around his neck, like a rope, while he utters the words “Should hang them all, hang them all like rabbits. Their legs kicking”, while the frame drops to Pip's feet coming off the ground as he is lifted by Orlick. The same motif – which returns shortly after in the scene of Magwitch's arrest, when Mrs Gargery significantly yells, “Animal. You should hang!” – evokes the Magwitch's sentence to hang, also alluded to by the multiplicity of ropes and chains hanging from the ceiling and the walls of the convict's hiding place in London.

When we finally consider the most recent cinematographic transposition, that directed by Mike Newell (2012), it can be said that the referential play with the Dickensian text and the previous transpositions reaches its highest expression. This new version begins with the motif of cannibalism, emphasizing Pip's position as victim of the whole system of characters surrounding him, from the encounter with the convict at the marshes (“what fat cheeks you got. Damn me, if I couldn't eat them. [...] There's a young man hid with me [...] ha has a secret way of getting at a boy, and at his heart, and at his liver so they may be roasted and ate”) to the familial context. Although the quotation from the Parable of the Prodigal Son is not repeated at the Christmas lunch, Newell chooses to implicitly recall the episode by framing a pork leg brought to the table, while the main character is referred to as a “wicious little ferret”, dragging out the detail shot of the diners' mouths as they feed on his meat, with the comment “that meat'll fall off the bone”.

The motif returns through a citation of Jarrold's work at the time of Pip's arrival in London: once again he is left by the coach at the Smithfield market, and also this time the first shot lingers on the butchered meat, on the heart of the pigs lying in a pan, on their innards; the camera's perspective as it looks from one of the balconies towards the square shows the heads of the hanging pigs in the foreground. The parallelism, already adopted by Jarrold, between these heads and those who are sentenced to the gallows is also immediate, and it is also realised when Pip enters Jaggers' office while Wemmick arranges the casts newly made at the scaffold.

The motif of cannibalism also returns in other forms and is expressed through visual metaphors that create a close connection with the dialogues: at the beginning of the first dinner at the Finches of the Grove, Newell adds the reading of a list of names of all the species of birds that belong to the club, and shows the members serving roasted poultry meats as well as entertaining themselves by throwing each other the food. In the false flight of these dead animals echoes not only the function performed by birds in the Dickensian work, as an emblem of

kindness and shyness, but also their value assumed up to that moment in previous adaptations as a symbol of freedom. Already in the scenes which depicted Pip at Joe's side while composing his first texts, the sound of seagulls echoes in the air to remind us of the freedom of those days and to emphasize the role of writing and knowledge in the Dickensian story as a key means of emancipation from social limitations. What underlines its meaning of freedom is the second moment in which the flight of a flock is framed precisely during the departure for London, an image that is repeated when Pip and Estella make the same journey together for her transfer to Richmond: the sense of freedom expressed by the flock of seagulls in flight is marked by Estella's gesture to stick her head out of the coach to watch them cross the sky and let the wind caress her face.

In relation to the motif of the birds' flight, it is possible to find another set of intertextual allusions with which Newell takes advantage of Lean's (fig. 1) and Cuarón's models in order to anticipate the dark fate awaiting Pip: one of the first shots that show him returning home after the encounter with Magwitch is a subjective shot of a cage hanging near the forge, exactly where Lean had positioned the pole with a hanging rope (fig. 2-3).



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

Newell chooses to add the cage, which recalls that placed by Cuarón in the centre of Miss Havisham's room and as well as evoking the cages used in the medieval period as instruments of death sentences. The subjective shot on the cage that swings and creaks in the wind is repeated twice more after the encounter with Magwitch, a choice which clarifies the double metaphorical function of the cages of which Pip is a victim, trapped by the machinations of Miss Havisham and Magwitch as well as subjected to a kind of social cage which limits his powers of self-determination and social mobility. The second time the cage appears is after

Pip leaves Satis House to start his apprenticeship, when, with an addition to the Dickensian dialogue, Estella points out the unlikeliness of their paths crossing again. After this dialogue a subjective shot focuses on the cage, then pans to show Pip older and working at the forge, bringing attention to the social cage to which is subjected and suggesting that the passage of time has nonetheless left intact the effects of the spell of Satis House. The third and last time in which the same shot on the cage is repeated, Pip looks at it smiling, after Magwitch's death, clearly thinking about his liberation from that bond which had, from the first frame, drawn him into the criminal underworld.

In the attention to the parallels between Pip and Estella, the quotations from the previous directors acquire particular relevance: Newell emphasizes to the extreme the bond that ties Estella to Miss Havisham, underlining her complete dependence on her adoptive mother. Here the presence of Lean's model is clear, as Lean had already shown Miss Havisham placing a jewel on the neck of her adopted daughter, with the promise that it would become hers. Newell not only chooses to show Estella, since her first appearance, already wearing that same jewel, but also accentuates the value of a bond that, with a reference to Jarrold, is represented in terms of dehumanisation, showing Estella kneeling at Miss Havisham's feet to place her head on her legs. In Newell's scene, Miss Havisham swings the necklace in front of her daughter's eyes, convincing her to play with Pip as though she were a pet subject to her mistress's whims.

The likening of Estella to a domestic animal establishes a connection among Estella, Pip, and finally even Magwitch through the motif of food: like Jarrold, Newell chooses to place the tray of food brought by Estella to Pip on the ground, alluding to one of the first scenes in which Magwitch had been portrayed eating. Unlike in the other transpositions, however, Magwitch eats lying on the ground and exactly reprises the Dickensian words ("hunt him down like a dog") in reference to Compeyson's pursuit.

The parallels among the convict, Pip, and Estella ends in the scene in which Estella, unhappy at the idea of having to part from Pip to marry Drummle, has a moment of hesitation before Pip's request to leave with him. The choice, however, to go back and kneel at Miss Havisham's feet with her head on her legs, as in the first scene, indicates the strength of the process of dehumanisation carried out on Estella by the woman, who "stole her heart away" – another key parallel with Magwitch and Pip, since their relationship is also a cannibalistic one.

Throughout the creation of these increasingly referential adaptations, the original Dickensian metaphors and similes have been enhanced through processes of displacement, condensation, and substitution. The overall effect has been one of modernisation of the source text by creating metaphors of greatest impact in the target context. The metaphors of the guinea pig or of the collection of butterflies captured in the moment of their greatest beauty are also effective because they are linked to current cultural references, whether scientific ones or the modern fear of a rapidly-changing world that renders individuals powerless³⁹.

In particular, new visual metaphors emphasize the Dickensian motif of control by an external authority. They are extremely powerful in representing the dehumanisation of characters in relation to the two themes of freedom and guilt: in the adaptations the comparison to the animal world mainly reinforces the motif of the trap, of the closeness to the world of crime and the consequent punishment.

Conclusion

Through the observation of the choices made in the use of animal metaphors it is therefore possible to deduce which theme was privileged by each adaptation. In Lean's transposition, as illustrated, the animal metaphors function to illuminate the central strand of the fairy and the spell in which first Pip and then Estella are trapped. After Pip's penance, – who after his initial sin and his distancing himself from the values of his origins rediscovers a purity of soul through Magwitch and Joe – the liberation from the most recurrent visual metaphor of the cobwebs, in the end, allows him to break the spell of Miss Havisham's rooms.

Cuarón focuses instead on the motif of freedom, meant as social mobility, acquisition of a new status, and liberation from his original condition, but also as freedom of expression through art: the centrality of the parrot in a cage, combined with other metaphors related to the flight, warns the viewer about the falsity of the path of ascent and liberation that the protagonist is undertaking, of pure imitation of a world to which he does not belong.

In the case of Jarrold's adaptation, the focus is instead on Pip's guilt, on his assimilation to the world of crime and, above all, on his inability to acquire economic and social independence. The metaphor that generates greater resonance, starting from Pumblechook's words at the beginning, is that of the pig, companion of the prodigal son, the signs of which ripple across the entire transposition.

Finally, in Newell's adaptation, the most recurrent and effective metaphors are those related to the parallels that bind Miss Havisham and Magwitch in their respective relationships with Estella and Pip: from the metaphor of cannibalism to that of domestication of their creatures through material goods like jewels and money, the most recent transposition emphasizes the dehumanisation of the two young protagonists and their dependence on their creators.

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Notes

- [1] See Jenkins 2006, in particular Chapter 3.
- [2] See Bolton 1987; Cao 2015, pp. 109-128; Cao 2016, pp. 45-90; Glavin J. 2003; Glavin 2012; Hammond 2015; McFarlane 2008.
- [3] The expression is a calque from "the model reader" (see Eco 1979, in particular pp. 7-9).
- [4] See Eisenstein 1957, pp. 195-255.
- [5] See McFarlane 2008, p. 32. On this aspect see also Leitch, pp. 156-157.
- [6] See Hutcheon 2006, p. 23.
- [7] This is one of the crucial points relating to the transition from telling to showing on which the major adaptation theorists have focused. Among the others, see Eco 2000; Gaudreault 2009.
- [8] See Tomita 2009, pp. 25-41.
- [9] See Morrison 2017, pp. 41-64. In general, the Victorian era offers an example of the renewed attention to the animal kingdom. In particular, after Darwin's essay on the origin of species, many more studies focus on to the belonging of man to the animal genus, with a consequent weakening of the borders that previously marked the difference between men and animals.
- [10] See Cortellazzo, Tomasi 1998, pp. 21-24.
- [11] See Hutcheon 2006, p. 40: "In the process of dramatization there is inevitably a certain amount of re-accentuation and refocusing of themes, characters, and plot".
- [12] See McDonell, p. 559: "To be subjected to hunger, thirst, and destitution, to be dependent on a more powerful person for food, to be devoid of 'civilized' etiquette associated with eating, is to be reduced to a state that Giorgio Agamben has called 'bare life' – that is to say, life that is wounded, expendable, and endangered".

[13] See Dickens, p. 317.

[14] See Kreilkamp 2007, p. 91.

[15] It is repeated at page 73: “I was taken down into the yard to be fed in the former dog-like manner”.

[16] See Dickens p. 235: “Do you want me then [...] to deceive and entrap you?”.

[17] See Barzilai 1987, p. 277.

[18] The motifs of the trap and the spell are generally recurrent during the scenes set at Satis House, where the references to a haunted place return repeatedly.

[19] See Dickens, p. 164.

[20] See McDonnell 2018, p. 6: “It is as if an aspect of Smithfield livestock market in the centre of London, which Pip encounters on his arrival in the city, has penetrated the domestic idyll of the ‘castle’”.

[21] See Dickens, p. 356.

[22] See Dickens, p. 124.

[23] On the fairy-tale strand in *Great Expectations* see Stone 1980, and Meckier 2002.

[24] See Chatman 1978, pp. 53-56.

[25] See McFarlane 2008, p. 130.

[26] The choice to substitute the conventional “The End” with “Great Expectations” is significant, as this suggests an open and hopeful ending that points towards the future rather than to the completed facts of the narrative.

[27] See Dickens, p. 18: “If I slept at all that night, it was only to imagine myself drifting down the river on a strong spring tide, to the Hulks; a ghostly pirate calling out to me through a speaking-trumpet, as I passed the gibbet-station, that I had better come ashore and be hanged there at once, and not put it off”.

[28] See Soccio 2006, pp. 113-124.

[29] See Dickens 359.

[30] See Antinucci 2006, pp. 293-317.

[31] The expression “intertextual irony” is used by Eco 2005; on the aspects of postmodernism listed, among the others, see Hutcheon 1988; McHale 1987.

[32] See Antinucci 2006, p. 299.

[33] See Simeone 2012, p. 6.

[34] The new name chosen by Cuarón for Satis House refers to the interpretation of the ending of *Great Expectations*’ ending as a reference to *Paradise Lost*.

[35] My translation.

[36] The spectator has proof of the same lowering even when Finn cites the well-known dialogue on moths: winking at the Dickensian reader, he cancels the effect of the metaphor and refers to the moths around the light bulb at the entrance of his house, but at the same time ironically hints at the first guided tour with which Estella had illustrated the architectural features of their villa *Paradiso Perduto*, to accentuate the economic and social disparity between them.

[37] Jarrold shows the same familiarity with animals in the case of the convict, as well, when he portrays him during the meal at the gravestones grunting and producing animal sounds, and he corroborates his proximity with Compeyson during the well-known mud fight on which Lean had already lingered.

[38] “I don’t know who you are” Wemmick tells him; and Miss Havisham, too, after the discovery of the origin of his fortune, says, “You are not a gentleman. You are not even a blacksmith, you did not finish your apprenticeship. You are merely from the forge”; above all it is Drummle who insists most on the fact that Pip does nothing but copy him. “Just copy me, Pip. Isn’t that how you get by? Isn’t that what you pass? [...] I know exactly what you are. You’re not one of us. And you know I know, don’t you, Pip?”.

[39] In the same DVD cover and poster, this reading of the text is emphasized by the tagline “Everything can change in a heartbeat”.

Media Franchises, Brand Identity and Fidelity

Reconsidering the book-to-film debate in the Brand Context

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Abstract. Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan have noted that fidelity may now reside in the fringes of Adaptation Studies, “but it dominates popular reviews and fan sites alike” (qtd. in Brooker 45). I believe that this is true to a certain extent; Adaptation Studies may realize the fallacy of fidelity – that it does not pose as the end in itself anymore – but it continues to appear in academic publications all the same. What is more, medium-specificity discourses fall back on fidelity as well. Robert Stam emphasizes that the notion of fidelity “gains its persuasive power from our sense that (a) some adaptations are indeed better than others, and (b) some adaptations fail to ‘realize’ or substantiate what we most appreciated in the source novels” (14). It appears that if fidelity is still an issue it is due to this notion of persuasive power whereby value is attached to a particular meaning, or range of meanings, which if accepted by the audience awards both creator and product with value. Unlike cultural studies which, according to Stam, are “less interested in establishing vertical hierarchies of value than in exploring ‘horizontal’ relations between neighboring media,” thus rendering adaptation forms as part of a flattened out and newly egalitarian spectrum of cultural productions” in essence deeming them just another text, the very treatment of an intellectual property as a brand or franchise entails the notion of value and vertical hierarchies. Hence, this paper adopts a cultural perspective when examining Adaptation and more specifically the book-to-film debate by considering the context of production and more so the trend of branding intellectual properties. It argues that mainstream media franchise culture seeks the branded treatment at both the horizontal and vertical level of its intellectual properties including adaptations. Therefore, the branding of entertainment appears to take precedence over the notion of fidelity where the idea of faithfulness and loyalty is established between concrete extended and abstract core identity and fidelity prompts a dialogue of meaning-making and power play.

Keywords. adaptation, transmedia, brand identity, fidelity, value, power play

Fidelity – whether an adaptation is faithful or unfaithful to its original source – continues to pose as an issue, due to the notion of persuasive power where, as Robert Stam argues in his “Introduction: The Theory and Practice of Adaptation”, value is attached to a particular meaning or range of meanings (15). If these meanings are accepted by the audience, this then awards both creator and product with value. Thomas Leitch in his “Twelve Fallacies in Contemporary Adaptation Theory” has deemed the notion of fidelity, among numerous other notions, a fallacy. More specifically, he sees fidelity as “a hopelessly fallacious measure of a given adaptation’s value, because it is unattainable, undesirable, and theoretically possible only in a trivial sense” (161). Part of this argument is that the degree of fidelity resides in the successful transference of an agreed-upon meaning of the text. However, to what an adaptation ought to display fidelity on a practical level in order to achieve this still remains debatable and has not been answered definitively. In fact, it appears somewhat naïve to assume that an adaptation will

manage to capture the one meaning that audiences will unanimously agree upon, even in the hypothetical case that heterogeneous audiences are in a position to actually agree on a unanimous definitive meaning. According to Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan, fidelity may now reside in the fringes of Adaptation Studies, “but it dominates popular reviews and fan sites alike” (qtd. in Brooker 45). I believe that this is true to a certain extent. Adaptation Studies may realize the fallacy of fidelity – that it does not pose as the end in itself anymore – but it continues to appear in academic publications all the same. What is more, medium-specificity discourses fall back on fidelity as well. Stam emphasizes that the notion of fidelity “gains its persuasive power from our sense that (a) some adaptations are indeed better than others, and (b) some adaptations fail to ‘realize’ or substantiate what we most appreciated in the source novels” (14). It appears that if fidelity is still an issue it is due to this notion of persuasive power whereby value is attached to a particular meaning, or range of meanings, which, if accepted by the audience, awards both creator and product with value.

In the case of literary adaptations, a field dominated by literary scholars, fidelity discourse appears to be a tactic, due to its persuasive power, that is employed so as to contemplate the value of original and adaptation regarding similarities and differences, as well as their meaning and value when it comes to the medium. This is not to say that this mentality has not extended into the area of Popular Culture as an example further down will demonstrate. The two reasons Stam provides confirm that fidelity exhibits power as well as preference. In both an academic environment as well as in pop culture, fidelity, in my view, acts more as the means or tool to argue and establish those features. As a result, I do not view the fidelity debate even in Adaptation Studies as fully resolved. This is the main reason why this paper suggests viewing it in light of the notion of value. To consider the notion of value this article draws upon the concept of brand identity theory. Legal issues inevitably prompt the industry to state that an intellectual property is based on, or influenced by, another intellectual property, thus alluding to fidelity discourses and even signaling a degree of fidelity between adaptation and source material, or at the very least explicitly indicating the tight intertextual connection. Nevertheless, from a brand management and marketing perspective, the signaling of an intellectual property as an adaptation immediately positions the product in the mind of the audience consumer, hence playing on functional, emotional or self-expressive benefits of the consumer. Fidelity is a prominent notion within the sphere of Popular Culture and Media Franchise Culture because it provides a context, or ambience, of value to a branded intellectual property. By implementing the concept of brand equity value and considering fidelity as a possible asset/liability characteristic that can grant value to an intellectual property, this paper demonstrates that fidelity persists in the area of Popular Cultural because it poses as the element that dictates value but does not essentially determine it.

Considering the Issue of Fidelity

Cultural Studies are, according to Stam, “less interested in establishing vertical hierarchies of value than in exploring ‘horizontal’ relations between neighboring

media” (9). In fact, from a Cultural Studies standpoint, “adaptation forms as part of a flattened out and newly egalitarian spectrum of cultural productions” (Stam 10) in essence deeming them just another text. However, in my opinion, the very treatment of an intellectual property as a brand or franchise entails the notion of value and vertical hierarchies. Media franchise culture seeks the branded treatment at both the horizontal and vertical level of all its intellectual properties including adaptations. Therefore, the branding of entertainment appears to take precedence over the notion of fidelity where the idea of faithfulness and loyalty is established between concrete extended and abstract core identity. The cultural value of an adaptation, as seen via brand identity, lies in being hyperconscious of the relationship between the abstract core and concrete extended identities, in other words, the relational and relative relationship of extended identities towards the core, as well as the context of production and consumption. In other words, value is not found in content, form or context alone, but in the interrelationship of all three. The persuasive power of fidelity triggers the debate of value surrounding an adaptation. There is a misconception that adaptations allegedly gain value by displaying a high degree of fidelity towards their source text where fidelity and value focus on either content or form. However, no common ground has been reached on what exactly an adaptation ought to be faithful to regarding its source material. Fidelity is relative and dependent on point of view. As a result, the degree of fidelity is a subjective and relative factor that can be viewed from either the perspective of the industry or the audience. On the basis of the point of view and what each side is basing the degree of faithfulness on, both sides may concur on the degree of fidelity or disagree on its successful manifestation. There is even the possibility of the degree and notion of fidelity to be imposed on the minds of consumer audiences, or it may be a direct result of their fan loyalty towards a franchise or intellectual property.

Media franchises display storylines that are adapted to semiotically different, albeit converging, narrative systems, exhibiting different aesthetics that are dictated by technological advances, media convergence, director styles and production studio choices. The identities of a text are governed by numerous factors dictated by various cultural production practices described in Henry Jenkins’ *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (2006) as follows:

By convergence, I mean the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want. In the world of media convergence, every important story gets told, every brand gets sold, and every consumer gets courted across multiple media platforms. Convergence represents a cultural shift as consumers are encouraged to seek out new information and make connections among dispersed media content. (2-3)

The practices of transmedia storytelling offer additional concrete instances of how media interact together, so as to develop a story across different formats and platforms that are not considered by some adaptation per se. In light of brand identity, this demonstrates that a story can travel across media because its content and form are malleable elements of an extended identity. What is more, fidelity

does not appear to be the dominant issue for transmedia stories, because their ultimate goal is to engage audience members with aspects, elements or versions of the story through as many outlets as possible. In addition, heterogeneous consumer audiences display a variety of expectations and demands towards media franchises, intellectual properties and the actual industry. Within the sphere of media franchise culture, both industry and consumer audiences seek to attribute meaning and value to intellectual properties, franchises, brands and adaptations. Stuart Elliot's premise that "the marketing of an entertainment property is becoming the story instead of the property itself" (qtd. in Maxwell 157) may be viewed as a harbinger of meaningless, commercialized, and profitable Hollywood practices that, nevertheless, contains a grain of truth. The fusion of marketing and storytelling, as well as the hyperawareness towards marketing, raises the value of not only the work in question but also the context within which it is produced and consumed. The important elements to consider here that can shed light on the cultural value of adaptations is the idea of a culturally branded community in connection with the practices of contemporary entertainment that result in open-ended structures and transmedia storytelling. Due to the convergence culture practices and transmedia storytelling, contemporary entertainment exhibits tendencies that result in open-ended and intertextual structures, with the latter posing as an integral feature in the production of adaptations. Overall, strict textual-comparisons, such as book and film, or book and TV series, will no longer suffice.

Unlike previous scholars who provide a comparative textual reading of adaptations, Hutcheon calls attention to how adaptation can be viewed as both a product and a process. She suggests the need for a theoretical perspective that is formal and experiential. Hutcheon's method "has been to identify a text-based issue that extends across a variety of media, find ways to study it comparatively, and then tease out the theoretical implications from multiple textual examples" (xii). Believing that common denominators across genres and media can be as telling as the differences, Hutcheon shifts focus from individual media – thus avoiding the medium-specificity pitfalls – to a broader context of how we engage with stories, namely telling, showing and interacting (xiv). By posing questions such as: what? who? why? how? where? when? something is adapted, Hutcheon raises awareness towards the fact that Adaptation Studies needs to examine areas of production and reception even more. The focus should not solely be that of textual comparisons. One alternate approach is the concept of fluid text while another is to consider the vertical hierarchies of production and reception.

John Bryant adopts the fluid-text approach arguing that a "*work* is the sum of its versions; *creativity* extends beyond the solitary writer, and *writing* is a cultural event transcending media (47, original emphasis). Bryant points out that "if adaptation is to achieve its proper textual legitimacy, we need a broader conception of geneticism in which the notion of *work* embraces all versions of a text, including sources and adaptations, and the *creative process* is extended to include all forms of revision, both authorial and cultural" (47, original emphasis). He clarifies that the fluid text "is any work that exists in multiple versions in which the primary cause of those versions is some form of revision. Revisions may be performed by originating writers, by their editors and publishers, or by readers and audiences, who reshape the originating work to reflect their own desires for

the text, themselves, their culture. This third category, which he has elsewhere been called ‘cultural revision,’ is the proper arena of *adaptation*. Bryant explains and clarifies the ideas and terms he implements: “[a]daptation is an *announced retelling* of an originating text;” “[a]nnounced adaptations are distinct from but related to *adapted revision*, in which an originating writer or adaptor appropriates a borrowed text and, by ‘quoting’ it, essentially revises it and therefore adapts it, though in an intertextual and necessarily partial rather than comprehensive way;” “[b]oth announced adaptation and adaptive revision are *versions* of the originating or borrowed text;” “[t]he meaning of any adaptation is essentially a measuring of the *critical distances between and among adaptive versions*;” “[i]nterpretation is the analysis of the *strategies of revision* perceived in the making of these textual distances;” “[w]hile versions are necessarily interconnected, they possess distinct *textual identities*. The *ethics* of adaptation is knowing and acknowledging *the boundaries of textual identity*;” “[e]diting adaptation and adaptive revision is best achieved through *digital* and *fluid text* approaches” (48-49, emphasis in original).

In order to explore the vertical hierarchies of adaptation as process, I believe more than a textual approach is required. A contextual approach, drawing on Hutcheon, Bryant, Kamilla Elliott and scholars focusing on transmedia storytelling, appears to be more constructive. This is where the notion of the fluid text is useful because it draws attention to aspects that constitute the identity of a text. Hutcheon also refers to the matter of intentionality by drawing on John Bryant’s *The fluid text: A theory of revision and editing for the book and screen* (2002), where fluid texts pose as the “material evidence of *shifting* intentions” (9, emphasis in original). The theory of adaptation appearing one step behind that of adaptation practice needs to broaden its scope and begin considering the context of adapted works. Kamilla Elliott argues in her critical essay “Theorizing Adaptations/Adapting Theories” that “adaptations require theories to adapt to *them*” (20-21, emphasis in original) a valid argument considering that adaptation practice precedes that of theory. Depending on how adaptation practices change and evolve, so too the theories and approaches employed to examine them must develop. For example, many have accused adaptations of exhibiting an alleged “profanity” of bastardization, essentially violating or desecrating an “original” text. Bryant provides a unique take on this by drawing on the ethics of adaptation. These accusations, however, are directed towards the text due to the textual focus certain disciplines have adopted for the examination of adaptations. The choices, purposes and intent that lead to the end-text, however, are made by a production team under certain circumstances and influenced by various industry policies, legal matters and contextual parameters. Consequently, both a contextual reading of and context-representative tool that considers the aims and scope of the context and the dialogue within that context is necessary. After all, there is more than one way to adapt a text and there is more than one reason for doing so.

Adaptation through the lens of Brand Identity

While Bryant argues for a fluid text, I would take this a step further and argue for fluid identities, when it comes to adaptations specifically. If adaptations are to be

viewed as identities, then matters of narrative and media simply become aspects, features or textures of that identity. They do not dictate the identity. I would, nonetheless, agree with Bryant that texts set the boundaries of their distinct identities, identities that manifest in the end-text due to the purposes and intentions of their context. Given the range of both literary and non-literary products that can be produced and adapted, “fluid text” is not broadly applicable. The fluidity of a text’s identity can be vague and ambiguous when examined from various disciplines unless one takes the intentions of the context into consideration. The intentions of the context this article is examining are governed by branding which is why the tool and theory employed is brand identity. The word “brand” is defined as “marking with a branding iron,” for instance when burning the skin of animals, especially cattle, so as to indicate ownership or property. Matthew Healey in his *What is Branding?* (2008), informs that brands are understood as “a promise of satisfaction,” where the process of branding is the “continuous struggle between producers and customers to define that promise and meaning” (6). In her article, “What is Branding and the Brand?” (2015), Dimitra Zervaki notes that branding refers to the strategy a company adopts, while marketing refers to the actual tactics the company will follow so as to realize the adopted strategy. Hence, branding is not to be confused with marketing. Branding precedes marketing as a dynamic non-linear process. Branding can be understood as the umbrella term that encompasses marketing, design and trademarks. Zervaki further stresses that branding is something that triggers a feeling in the minds of consumers, sets consumer expectations and it is the impression people have about a company, its services and its products. It enables consumers to distinguish between companies, products and services. Most importantly, it is predominantly connected with the creation and negotiation of identity in the sense of who we are, who we want to be and how we want consumers to perceive us (trans. by Zervaki, no pag.) [1]. David Aaker in his *Building Strong Brands* (1996) clearly indicates how a brand is more than a simple product, extending the identity to the organization but also factoring in the cultural context and even consumers. Finally, the American Marketing Association defines the word brand as “a name, a term, a strategy, a symbol or any other characteristic that creates associations with the product, the service or the company and distinguishes it from others (trans. by Dimitra Zervaki). Following this logic, the identity that is negotiated in the process of adaptation within the context of franchise culture is that of the respective genre and the respective production team.

The decision to implement brand identity theory is based on the matter of context. The majority of adaptations in American popular culture are produced within the context of conglomerate Hollywood. Hollywood deals in intellectual property content and treats intellectual properties as brands. According to Aaker, brand identity is:

A unique set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain. These associations represent what the brand stands for and imply a promise to customer from the organization members. Brand identity should help establish a relationship between the brand and the customer by generating a value proposition involving functional, emotional or self-expressive benefits. (68)

Hollywood adapts texts to its own context and for its own purposes. André Bazin emphasizes an important cultural aspect of adaptations: “One must first know to what end the adaptation is designed: for the cinema or for its audience? One must also realize that most adapters care far more about the latter than about the former” (21). This highlights the need to explore the field of Reception Studies in connection with the field of Adaptation Studies even more. It also elevates the importance of context of the adapted work and the issue of intentionality. Hutcheon further confirms that “there are manifestly many different possible intentions behind the act of adaptation” (7). Storytelling is only one of them. Robert B. Ray has pointed out that Literary and even Film Studies have failed to notice and ask two specific questions: “do popular narratives differ in some fundamental way from ‘artistic,’ ‘high art’ ones; and second, why had the cinema committed itself almost exclusively to storytelling?” (39). The answer I provide is that within the Hollywood context today narratives and storytelling are different due to announced and pronounced brand treatment that governs the current practices and interrelationships in that context. The process of branding implies a promise between producers/consumers via the content/form of commodities, in these case adaptations, and, by extension storytelling, in the context of brand franchise culture. Storytelling and adaptation are not the ends but the means to an end thus pointing towards other intentions. These intentions and practices are mainly located in the context of conglomerate Hollywood, and more specifically in franchise culture. What is observed in this context is that conglomerate Hollywood develops franchises where intellectual properties are treated as brands. As a result, this paper argues in favor of substituting terms such as that of ‘text’ with ‘identity’. Brand identity will assist in delineating the notion of identity through its structure and it will demonstrate the cultural aspect of communicating a promise and meaning through an identity.

The interesting point in the perpetual book-to-film debate is how or why fidelity still represents an issue, in spite of practices that indicate that fidelity is indeed a fallacy. Angela Ndalians in her *Neo-Baroque Aesthetics and Contemporary Entertainment* (2004) argues in favor of mainstream cinema and other entertainment media as being imbued with a neo-baroque poetics (5). In this book Ndalians is concerned with the emergence of a new order in the entertainment industry, one where the classical still persists, but with a new twist by using the term of neo-baroque. More specifically, Ndalians argues that

“contemporary entertainment media reflect a dominant neo-baroque logic. The neo-baroque shares a baroque delight in spectacle and sensory experiences. Neo-baroque entertainments, however – which are the product of conglomerate entertainment industries, multimedia interests, and spectacle that is often reliant upon computer technology – present contemporary audiences with new baroque forms of expression that are aligned with late-twentieth and early twenty-first century concerns” (5).

Ndalians’ argumentation attempts to compare and examine the entertainment industry by viewing the classical practices of production against those used nowadays by contemporary entertainment, which she terms as neo-baroque traits. This paper does not adopt the notion of the neo-baroque, but instead it draws on Ndalians’ observations and insights with regard to the role

contemporary industry plays so as to shed light on the practices that are currently used in contemporary entertainment in an effort to expand its polycentrism and intertextual character.

In particular, Ndalianis notes:

Closed forms are replaced by open structures that favor a dynamic and expanding polycentrism. Stories refuse to be contained within a single structure, expanding their narrative universes into further sequels and serials. Distinct media cross over into other media, merging with, influencing, or being influenced by other media forms. Film companies seek to expand their markets by collapsing the traditional boundaries and engaging in multimedia conglomerate operations. [...] Horizontal integration increasingly became one of the successful strategies of the revitalized film industry, and formal polycentrism was supported by a conglomerate structure that functioned according to similar polycentric logic: Investments were dispersed across multiple industry interests that also intersected where financially appropriate. (25-26)

The notion of open structures and expanding narrative universes mentioned above is highly evident in the case of superhero narratives. The stories of individual superheroes refuse to be contained in a single structure but travel across media, which often results in film and television series cross-overs. The polycentric logic of Marvel Studios and Disney becomes evident in their effort to expand their superhero productions, either through the collaboration with Sony and Fox, or through the production of television series on ABC and Netflix, or even with the production of video games with partners such as Square Enix (Todd Spangler n.pag.). What I would like to focus on is the intertextual logic that emerges from the aforesaid actions and allows audiences as Ndalianis states “to make order out of chaos” (27). Ndalianis observes that this kind of polycentric logic facilitates the dialogue between economics and production, eventually leading to a transformation in audience reception, where “a rampant media literacy result[s] in the production of works that rel[y] heavily on an intertextual logic. [...] ‘[M]eaning’ becom[es] reliant upon an audience that [is] capable of traversing multiple ‘texts’ to give coherence to a specific work riddled with intertextual references and allusions” (26). Audiences can certainly make their own intertextual associations. However, the practice of the intentional implementation of intertextual markers that audiences are expected to identify with currently represents a fruitful area of research that requires further investigation.

Similarly to Ndalianis, scholars such as Omar Calabrese, Gilles Deleuze, Umberto Eco and Penelope Doob have employed the model of the labyrinth as a formal tool of analysis [2]. More specifically, Doob sees two possible labyrinth types: the unicursal and the multicursal, both designs of planned chaos but with a different structural logic. “The unicursal (or one-directional),” Doob suggests, “follows a series of intricate linear paths that remain singular in structure, and ‘confusion results from inherent disorientation rather than repeated need for choice’” (qtd. in Ndalianis 82). Any novel, film, television series, comic book, theatrical play, even video game that has not been adapted or expanded trans-medially into a different medium could be considered unicursal or one-directional. The planned chaos in this case relates to the unlimited intertextual associations any one consumer can make, both within a single medium, as well as

across media. Nevertheless, the idea of even planned chaos in this case highlights how difficult it would be for producers to even claim that a work exhibits fidelity with its source material. “Alternatively, the multicursal (or multidirectional) model ‘suggests a series of choices between paths.’ Adaptations and trans-media stories are products that initiate a multicursal, or multidirectional series. Unlike the unicursal model, the multicursal model does not consist of a single prolonged path. Instead, mimicking the compossible and impossible paths, it ‘incorporates an extended series of bivia, an array of choices’” (Ndalianis 82). As a result, the choices are actually provided to audiences in addition to any references and associations they are capable of making on their own.

Instead of adopting the neo-baroque or the labyrinth model, I view brand identity as capable of providing consistency to its array of product lines and providing a basis that explains why fidelity discourses around adaptations remain prominent. Intellectual properties such as superhero narratives can resemble a chaotic labyrinth of texts, intertexts and choices for audience engagement. The core of the brand, however, poses as the center from which a multitude of product lines can emerge, thus acting as an overarching point of reference. More importantly, brand identity entails the notion of brand management and by extension the intentions of the production team, more specifically, their desire to achieve brand equity. Brand equity as a concept used to decipher and determine the value of a brand, its products and/or services is highly conducive to re-evaluating the matter of fidelity and determining the cultural value of adaptation. It is mainly employed within the field of brand management, brand identity, marketing and economics. More specifically, brand equity is “a set of assets (and liabilities) linked to a brand’s name and symbol that adds to (or subtracts from) the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or that firm’s customers” (Aaker 7-8). For literary adaptations, value is essentially believed to be determined by the degree of fidelity between an adaptation and the original. While the notions of faithfulness and loyalty are both evident and accompany value in the case of brands and adaptations alike, they are understood differently, mainly because brand management is more aware of heterogeneous audiences. Fidelity cannot definitively appoint the aspect(s) an adaptation needs, so as to be loyal in order to ensure faithfulness, unlike brands that have a distinct core brand identity to which their extended identities display a degree of faithfulness. What is more, brand identity appears more practical in its assessment of acquiring and maintaining brand value. Literary adaptations do not appear to take various cultural factors into account when employing the element of fidelity in order to assess an adaptation’s value. The examination of the significance of value in the context of brands can shed light on just how complex and convoluted the idea of value and by extension fidelity as value can be. The major asset categories that determine the degree of value include: (1) brand name awareness, (2) brand loyalty, (3) perceived quality, (4) brand associations (Aaker 8). These categories should be seen in comparison with the features of fidelity and adaptation in an attempt to heighten the fact that value for adaptation is primarily cultural.

What distinguishes adaptations from other works is their announced stature as an adaptation. In other words, adaptations raise awareness to the fact that they are adaptations. This notion of awareness from a brand identity perspective grants strength and value to a brand. Awareness for brands “refers to the strength

of a brand's presence in the consumer's mind" and is dependent on recognition, in other words, the "familiarity gained from past exposure" (Aaker 10-11). While awareness is a feature that can be found in all texts via intertextuality, for adaptations it poses as a more prominent feature. For instance, in order to ensure or heighten audience awareness towards the Avengers brand, it was necessary for each individual superhero film to refer to it, connect with it and, more importantly, set a contextual dialogue for it. This has also contributed to tightening the brand associations the audience makes between the films comprising Marvel Cinematic Universe, even though there is no restriction to the associations audience members can make. In fact, adaptation theory from the aspect of fidelity fails to account for the associations that consumers make, when viewing an adaptation which may, or may not, strictly be with the source material.

The notion of intertextuality has opened up this field of associations, thus not restricting the comparison of an adaptation to its original. By mentioning the superhero genre or product class, consumers immediately bring to mind some superhero, depending on preference and past exposure. What is more, because the superhero genre resides within the sphere of Popular Culture, the chances of being exposed at some point to particular brand characters are higher. Both aspects are considered to be assets, as they are believed to grant positive feelings in consumers towards the brand and the company in the case of awareness and recognition (Aaker 10-11). In fact, all adaptations raise awareness to the fact that they are adaptations, whether audience members choose to experience the source work and all adaptation versions or not. Perceived quality is a characteristic that is employed on the part of the industry regarding its brands in order to accumulate profits, market share values and investors (Aaker 17). Nevertheless, it does point to a significant factor that needs to be taken into consideration, namely, the conditions and possible restrictions the production undergoes when developing a brand adaptation. At this point, I would like to emphasize that perceived quality appears to be what some critics and academics claim, when they base their critique and evaluation of adaptations on their perspective which can be of a specific discipline such as Semiotics, Literary or Films Studies, or in the case of critics, if they are more keen on blockbuster or independent productions. These perspectives, however, cannot provide a fully definitive account of either the adaptations' quality, degree of fidelity or more importantly how others come to perceive it, thus demonstrating how value is negotiable, malleable and relative.

Brand loyalty is a characteristic that pertains to the consumer audience where discourses of fidelity may be employed, so as to ensure audience loyalty. Accumulating or maintaining value through brand loyalty entails segmenting consumer audiences into the following groups: "noncustomers (those who buy competitor brands or are not product class users), price switchers (those who are price-sensitive), the passively loyal (those who buy out of habit rather than reason), fence sitters (those who are indifferent between two or more brands), and the committed" or, in other words, the fans (Aaker 22). This categorization of consumers is useful and mostly applicable to brands that offer tangible products and services. When it comes to branded content, such as intellectual property, a differentiation may be necessary in order to comprehend the respective segmentation within consumer audiences. The range of consumer audiences displays the heterogeneity of the audience, the variety of expectations and the

difficulty in satisfying any subjective notions of fidelity consumers may have in mind. Hence, it is necessary for brand management to have a clear brand treatment in mind, so as to ensure brand loyalty and possibly attract new consumers. In the case of superheroes, non-customers would include those audience consumers who do not engage at all with superhero brands. The dominating presence of superheroes in pop culture today may pose as an incentive for these audience segments to ultimately engage with respective intellectual properties. Price switchers would include audience consumers who engage with superhero brands and products depending on their financial state and the cost of engagement or purchase of narrative media and ancillary market products. Audience consumers who are passively loyal would generally display a positive feeling towards the brand and its meanings in spite of any liabilities, malfunctions, poor quality, and extremely high prices. The choices of the passively loyal basically lack in reason because they simply wish to identify with and be identified through the brand and what it stands for. Fence sitters, on the other hand, appear to be more active and dynamic among the audience consumers. They exhibit brand preferences from numerous aspects that may range from superhero, to production studios, directors and cast, type of film or narrative/interactive medium. Their choices may be dependent on age, gender, financial, social, educational and even ethnic standing. Finally, the committed obviously point towards consumer audience fans who are the most dynamic and active but simultaneously the most demanding in preferences and expectations, as well as most vocal in their critiques [3].

Fans are by far the most exposed to branded entertainment in all its manifestations ranging from comic books, to films and video games, to animation, collectibles and attendance at Comic-Con events. The passively loyal may also be engaged with said branded entertainment to the same extent but via a different logic. This, however, does not prohibit either from exacting demands or critique, although fans may display more knowledge and logical reasoning in preferences, demands and criticism of a brand product and its treatment. The fence-sitters and price switchers representing those audience segments that for varying reasons have not been exposed to the full gestalt of total branded entertainment experiences of a particular brand and are thought of as maybe lacking somewhat in knowledge when compared to the fan segment. In order to cater to such a vast and heterogeneous audience, the industry resorts to brand associations and marketing to develop brand value. Value as a cultural concept is malleable, ambiguous and subject to reassessment, in spite of categorization of consumers and strategic tactics employed to maintain or raise equity value. Fidelity, nevertheless, continues to resonate in the broader sphere of Popular Culture discussions mainly because the industry employs it, either by means of paratextual features or intertextual references, so as to engage the audience in a discussion of similarities and differences. The main goal is value ensured by the production's confirmation that their version is faithful to what the audience expects.

Industry and Consumers: The Power Dynamics

The industry cannot accommodate all consumers, but it can make allowances for heterogeneous audiences and the vast variety of preferences and taste by offering subbrands, range brands, brand extensions and ancillary market products. However, the audience finds itself in a conflicting position due to how the notion of faithfulness is used by the industry. This could account for cases where audience members are influenced into directly deeming the book better than the film. When it comes to the branded environment, audiences are somewhat guided in how they view, perceive and possibly discuss the brand. Nowadays, the industry cannot definitively dictate the ways goods are used or how consumers should think of and behave towards a brand. The plethora of information available on the internet, as well as in fan communities, enables consumers to be more aware of and vocal about various matters. Instead, brands are offered as tools, so that consumers can create their own meanings and by extension functional and emotional values but they simultaneously represent the means for communicating specific promises set by the producers, as well as set the context of interrelationship between producers/consumers. The industry is not always behind and in connection with consumers about the nature, stature or treatment of a branded intellectual property. Adam Arvidsson insightfully explains that an important task for brand management is to “ensure the ongoing production of a common social world on the part of consumers [and] proceeds in ways that reproduce a distinctive *brand image*, that strengthens the *brand equity* – the productive potential that the brand has in the minds of consumers – which is understood as the most important factor behind brand value” (74, emphasis in original). Thus, in order to achieve this, brand management employs what Mich el Foucault has referred to as government, and what this entails is that brand management “is achieved through the provision of particular ambiances that frame and partially anticipate the agency of consumers” (qtd. in Arvidsson 74).

The context of brands is initially set and governed by the company or industry inviting consumers and audiences to engage with, purchase and experience the brands. Celia Lury highlights that in this producer/consumer relationship the brand becomes a

“platform for action” that is inserted into the social and works to “program” the freedom of consumers to evolve in particular directions. It is not impossible for consumers to break with the expectations inscribed in these ambiances. However, the task of brand management is to create a number of resistances that make it difficult, or unlikely, for consumers to experience their freedom, or indeed their goals, in ways different from those prescribed by the particular ambience. (qtd. in Arvidsson 74)

This control or manipulation of the audience may still be an aim of the producers as Nolan’s first two Batman films demonstrate; with the internet, the plethora of information and the expansive fan communities that exist, consumers are not as easy to control. Brand systems and brand identity can be employed so as to negotiate the value of an adaptation via discourses of fidelity. Evidently, there are four clear differences beginning with the reversal of cultural hierarchies. Traditional Adaptation Studies would view any medium in relation to literature as being subordinate. Luca Somigli counterargues that “when the source is a work

of ‘popular culture,’ the integrity of the original is not an issue” (qtd. in Brooker 48). What is more, even though it is possible for any for example Batman film to adapt a single specific text, “none of the ten Batman movies released in theatres since 1943 have done so” (Brooker 49). This is the case for most superhero productions given the plethora of comic book issues the adaptations in question pose. Evidently, *Batman Begins* (2005) is not a “rearticulation of any single comic [...] Rather, it recycles from a wealth of existing material [and] invents new scenes and characters of its own” (Brooker 50). As a result, the notion of fidelity continues to be an issue residing in paratextual discourses, because the industry contributes to the creation of this particular ambience. The industry kindles the dialogue that focuses on similarities and differences that grant value to the relative branded intellectual property and its treatment by the industry. In addition, Brooker confirms that the process of adapting from medium to medium presents its own set of difficulties, due to the visual ontologies present in spite of media convergence (52). Until it was used for textual readings, intertextuality was not a paratextual praxis dominant in media franchise culture.

The dynamic relation between old and new, similar and different, brings to mind the words of Alan Moore when praising Frank Miller’s *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*: “Everything is exactly the same, except for the fact that it’s all totally different” (qtd. in Brooker 66). Brooker’s conclusion which can also be applied to the various superhero adaptations currently dominating media franchise culture states:

[E]very new Batman story is always already an adaptation of existing elements and earlier stories, combined in a new order with a twist and a handful of innovations. Authorial expression, and the pleasure of these texts for the reader, lies neither in the reassuring repetition of entirely familiar patterns and motifs or in the surprise of entirely new inventions, but in the dynamic between the two. (66)

This dynamic relation guides the components of brand systems in their attempt to achieve, maintain or strengthen their equity value. Brand systems cater to a holistic strategy via which to guarantee equity value, as Brooker’s case study highlights, which constitutes a resourceful way of viewing and re-evaluating the notion of fidelity. Fidelity cannot be accounted for based on single or isolated components of aesthetics, semiotics, or narratology. Similarly, it cannot ignore aspects such as paratexts and the marketability appointed to intellectual properties by the industry or even consumer audience preferences, expectations and reception. If replaced by the notion of value, then it can account for more than a single text. The notion of value entails examining assets and liabilities of the single in relation to the whole. For example, the value of the Iron Man, Batman, Spider-Man or Superman is not solely determined by one text, even in the event that a film may prove to be a failure at the box office. Instead, it poses as an example that demonstrates liabilities the production team needs to rectify and avoid in the future. As a result, the examination is relative rather than absolute, malleable and dynamic rather than static and restricting. Another means by which to view this premise which further evidences that the industry in its own way cultivates the ambience of fidelity is through the notion of marketing.

Richard Maxwell advocates in *Global Hollywood* (2001) that marketing does not aim at protecting consumers but instead focuses on the issues of positioning and playability. Positioning is about “what marketers want to ‘do to the mind of the prospect,’ how they segment the audience” and “how they manipulate what’s already up there in the [consumer’s] mind, [so as] to retie the connections that already exist” with new and different ones (152-53). When it comes to adaptations, this approach ensures consumer awareness towards the product and creates ties with the source material. “Whereas positioning is about finding the right place to put a film in an audience’s collective mind, playability is about predicting how satisfied that audience will be with said positioning (Maxwell 154). A distinction, however, needs to be made between playability and marketability, where the latter focuses on the film’s commercial potential, thus taking into account “all the elements of the film that can be used in promotion and advertising” through various media outlets (Maxwell 155). Unlike positioning and playability, marketability is a process that ensues at the pre-production, final and future stature of the film with an eye on tie-ins, cross promotions and ancillary markets (155). Evidently, branded intertextual commodities display high marketability, as audience awareness is relatively high. When it comes to branded entertainment the marketers’ job of ensuring the trinity of marketability, playability and positioning is fairly easy due to audience awareness, especially for fans who display high brand associations and recognition. This appears in Christopher Nolan’s first two Batman films. Specifically, upon the success of *Batman Begins* (2005), Nolan’s brand also “rose to prominence” as viewed in the second installment, *The Dark Knight* (2008) (Brooker 25). Meanwhile, what was at stake for *Batman Begins* (2005) was distinguishing it from previous Batman films and particularly differentiating it from the Joel Schumacher versions. This was achieved, according to Brooker, by the studio’s adherence to particular comic books that display the “true” and “original” Batman as being dark, masculine, noir-esque, violent, rational, and authentic and not as campy, homoerotic and silly (119). These comics include O’Neil’s “Daughter of the Demon” (1971) and “The Man who Falls” (1989), Frank Miller’s *Dark Knight Returns* (1986), Miller and Mazzucchelli’s *Year One* (1987), Loeb and Sale’s *The Long Halloween* (1996) (Brooker 110-11). Nolan’s production has sought to position this version of Batman as the correct one in the consumer’s mind by establishing a contextual dialogue centering on the films’ fidelity to specific texts that reflect the truthful and original Batman version (Brooker 108-10). Similarly, the Marvel Cinematic Universe is a tactic that differentiates purely Marvel film productions from that of other studios who continue to hold the film rights to certain Marvel characters. In the case of Nolan’s Batman films, this was further achieved and enhanced by implementing realistic aesthetics that offer further associations and points of comparison with Tim Burton’s films, thus providing even more distinctions (103). Consequently, if the issue of fidelity appears as significant and prominent with regard to Nolan’s Batman films, it has initially become so from the point of the industry and continues to be so due to audience engagement.

Audience segments are prompted to delve into discussions regarding the brand due to the fact that they testify their knowledge and awareness of the source texts. The marketing tactics of the industry as regards Nolan’s Batman films are crucial because they cater to those segments of the audience that are aware of the

source material and can view the films as a type of adaptation. At the same time, through fidelity, the industry has sought to elevate marketability of specific source material and distinguish it from earlier versions, albeit characterizing it in a relatively negative way but advertising it nonetheless, thus expanding audience awareness and associations. While this particular case demonstrates that the films display some fidelity towards source texts, audiences can be distinguished into segments who are or are not aware of this fact. This point ties up with Hutcheon's view, where she explains that the knowing audience is the one who experiences the work as an adaptation and is aware of its stature, while the non-knowing one experiences it as any other work/text, because they do not know whether it is an adaptation or not, since they are not familiar with the source material (120). For segments of the audience to experience Nolan's films, or any Batman film for that matter, as an adaptation they need to recognize it as such. This creates ties in their minds with memories of other Batman texts in juxtaposition with the current product under experience, where any gaps pertaining to changes, updates, similarities and differences become the focal point of discussion in connection with audience expectations (Hutcheon 121). If, however, certain audience segments are not familiar with the source material but display some general awareness of the character due to its pop culture exposition, then the product must conform to other types of expectations. These could include expectations regarding genre, film medium, blockbuster format, casting, special effects and ancillary market products. The satisfaction of such expectations would leave audience segments with more knowledge and possibly prompt them to seek out the source material, so as to broaden their experience. Knowing audiences or fans appear to be the consumers with the highest expectations and demands. Evidently, fidelity becomes an issue only if one is aware of the status of a product as an adaptation, otherwise the discussion essentially revolves around the quality value of the film per se.

Hutcheon makes it clear that the reason why the industry adapts texts and may seek to turn them into branded franchises is because "[t]he goal is to have the child watching a Batman video while wearing a Batman cape, eating a fast-food meal with a Batman promotional wrapper, and playing with a Batman toy. The goal is literally to engage all the child's senses" (88). These tactics may not always work the way the industry intends. For instance, fans may not necessarily be fans of the actual brand, but knowledgeable of other components pertaining to the brand. They could be fans of a director or actor/actress, of the genre or blockbusters in general. Consequently, "[d]ifferent knowing audiences bring different information to their interpretations of adaptations", while at the same time they also form expectations and demands based on the aforementioned factors to differing degrees (Hutcheon 125). Brands and adaptations cannot absolutely cater to every type of preference, demand, expectation or audience member. Hence, the very aspect of fidelity becomes subjective, when considered from the consumer audience point of view. At this point, I turn my attention to fans and the type of relation they have with branded franchises, so as to consider how the issue of fidelity can be viewed as setting an ambience for a productive dialogue that ultimately grants value to both brands and their products.

The notion of fandom is more than a group of active individuals who achieve various functional and emotional benefits from their engagement with products,

services or brands. Instead, their committed stance displays an engagement and interaction in a form of social community which is governed by various power plays. Henry Jenkins in his *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture* (2006) writes about the social dimensions of fan communities: that “[f]andom is one of those spaces where people are learning how to live and collaborate within a knowledge community” (134). What connects fans and brands in this sense of community is the “knowledge space” or “cosmopedia” that resonates back to the loyal and committed consumers due to the knowledge they possess in relation to a brand. The notion of cosmopedia is of course enhanced by the new media environment, online communities and the internet in general. Jenkins advocates that “online fan communities might well be some of the most fully realized versions of Pierre Lévy’s cosmopedia, expansive self-organizing groups focused around the collective production, debate and circulation of meanings and interpretations, and fantasies in response to various artifacts of contemporary popular culture” (137). The factor of power play is still evident. Interactive audiences, “still operate [...] alongside powerful media industries,” hence their social relationships are governed by a brand identity logic that seeks to pose boundaries to the actions of said consumers and maintain control over said commodities (Jenkins 135). Given the matter of ownership with regard to these commodities as intellectual properties, it is logical that the production team seeks to control their use and meaning. While this is still a fact, the tension between producers and consumers in light of online culture today is far more intense and results in power play shifts.

Brand consumers are given more freedom when it comes to how they engage with brand commodities, as well as the functional and emotional benefits they extract from them. Lévy’s distinction between the “collective intelligence” and the “hive mind, where individual voices are suppressed” (qtd. in Jenkins 140), mirrors this transition from the complete control of the production to the power and freedom of the consumers. Fans actively contribute to the circulation, advertisement and negotiation of both value and meaning of a brand commodity. They also serve as a knowledgeable community, now more than ever, capable of exerting its own influences and control over various aspects of the production of brand commodities. This is evident in fan art, fan fiction, as well as polls, gallops and various means of exhibiting preference or disapproval, such as for example in casting choices, future projects and film trailers. Engagement with a brand grants access to a social community where interaction, communication, shared knowledge and opportunities become part of the production of a brand. Current advertising and brand management have altered the power relations between production and consumption, where production effectively sets a context of choices for audience consumers, while consumers display their power by engaging or abstaining from these choices. These audiences exert their means of power by choosing or not to follow and engage with said commodities. The industry’s power is re-enforced when they successfully manage to attract audiences to experience all extended identities. Control over territory, from the industry’s perspective, has been minimized due to the internet. The internet grants consumers a wider base of outlets and tools via which to gain knowledge, communicate and even produce their own brand-related fan products. This leads to the aspect of ownership that is undisputable in relation to the industry via

copyright, trademark and patent laws. However, the internet and illegal practices of pirating, viral campaigning, adbusters and culture jammers [4] displays an opposition towards the use of commodities and, more importantly, the control over ownership. The industry has inside knowledge over the creation and production process. Fans, however, appear more emotionally invested in the final product and can strongly influence and affect the value of a brand commodity depending on their satisfaction or dissatisfaction of it. As a result, these knowledge cultures will never fully escape the influence and control of commodity culture.

Commodity culture can never function outside the constraints of territoriality. In other words, copyright will always designate the owner and producer of a commodity or intellectual property. More importantly, the owner and producer of an intellectual property are responsible for managing the brand system and context consumers choose to experience. How commodities are used, however, and, more importantly, the meaning they have for consumers, goes beyond copyright and legal matters. Fandom will, as Lévy predicts, alter the ways that commodity culture operates, because “[t]he distinctions between authors and readers, producers and spectators, creators and interpretations will blend to form a reading-writing continuum, which will extend from the machine and network designers to the ultimate recipient, each helping to sustain the activities of the others” (qtd. in Jenkins 144). As a result, while some media producers may view fandom as representing a “potential loss of control over their intellectual property” (Jenkins 146), current brand management practices demonstrate a different potential for brands, as well as for the relationship between producers and consumers. The matter of fandom and commodity culture invites a reiteration of certain cardinal premises such as the importance of context and reception in adaptation studies, the hierarchical values of adaptation as a process, and the dialogue taking place between producers and their intentions and audiences, and their expectations in media franchise culture. Brand systems offer a context of action and communication that grants consumers a means towards self-expression, identification and, more importantly, a shared community. By extension, this is what caters to brand equity, in other words, the source of a brand’s value, which is highly dependent on the interrelationship between producers/consumers and may or may not relate strictly to fidelity issues. The following final example aims to demonstrate how the practices in the media franchise industry can stray from the field of adaptation into the neighbouring but yet to be explicitly defined arena of transmedia storytelling. Transmedia storytelling practices take debates such as the book-to-film even further and warrant further future research.

Concluding remarks: transmedia storytelling and how it contributes to the debate

Since 2011, the television series *Game of Thrones* has proved to be an incredibly popular and widely, even religiously, followed series by *GoT* fans around the world. Based on the epic fantasy novels of the series *A Song of Fire and Ice* written by George R. R. Martin, the television series went through its most controversial

phase in seasons six and seven from the standpoint of adaptation. The unique and unprecedented issue currently characteristic of the television series is that it has reached the point where the “original” novel upon which producers are to continue adapting the show is not available. Martin, who has been in close talks and cooperation with creators David Benioff and D. B. Weiss, has even taken part in the adaptation of his own work by contributing screen scripts of some of the episodes, thus guaranteeing a higher status and value to the television series. In spite of being fortunate to have direct access to Martin, creators Benioff and Weiss reached a point where they are not adapting per se but more so entering what is considered trans-media storytelling, where the *Game of Thrones* overarching plot and subplots will be told initially via the medium of television while also continuing to tell the story established in the television medium. Martin’s final novel of the series was not available before the commencement of season six, which begs a series of questions. Is this still a clear case of adaptation or of trans-media storytelling? Without the basis of the relative source material are Benioff and Weiss essentially and solely remaining loyal to the *GoT* intellectual property brand in contrast to prior seasons which also displayed a degree of “fidelity” to the novel series? If there is no adaptation process in the strict traditional sense per se, then what type of adaptation/response is the sixth season? Various choices which have been made have contributed to the deviation of season five from the novel series; more specifically, the lack of information regarding the fate of certain characters as well as the choice to not include certain minor characters and subplots throughout the series has led the TV creators to begin applying the plot sequences of certain minor characters from the books to major characters in the television series. What is more, the series has resorted to the use of flashback sequences, which Benioff and Weiss had initially stated would not be employed in the series. Lack of new material ultimately prompted production to reconsider and begin including analogous material from prior novels so as to fill out the episodes of season five. In addition to the aforementioned dilemmas facing the production, the heterogeneous audience does not simplify matters.

Nationality, gender and age aside, the *Game of Thrones* audience can be divided into three groups: those who have read the books prior to watching the show, those who only watch the show, and those who read the novels parallel to viewing the series. Indications such as the IMDB ranking of 9.5 in addition to the number of viewers for each episode, season, as well as reports of the number of downloads, including illegal downloading, posit the series as popular and widely accepted among consumers and fans. While the current state of the series upon the departure from the books in connection to dilemmas facing production did not directly affect audience members who solely view the series, in contrast to how the eighth and final season was received, it will certainly affect audience members who are both readers and viewers. As *GoT* officially completed its run in 2019, avid readers who were also watching the series will read Martin’s final novel in a post-series fashion. In the *IndieWire* article “George R. R. Martin says ‘Game of Thrones’ Fan Outrage Will Not Change His Book Ending” (2019), Zack Sharf notes that Martin has confirmed that the direction taken by the production studio will not affect what he has in mind for the final volume. Hypothetically speaking, if no more novels were to follow, then it would constitute a clear case of trans-media storytelling resulting in all consumers becoming viewers from season

six onwards. Being both a reader and a viewer, however, places a higher stake in the matter as consumers are provided with two story types, two different media, two different renderings and accounts, which prompts comparisons.

From the standpoint of a narratological adaptation and a semiotic adaptation this could indeed prove problematic, possibly resulting in the long-held debates regarding adaptation thus far. From a cultural adaptation and brand identity standpoint, however, the matter takes on different meaning and significance. Adaptations can be viewed as responses initially to the source material, and both ultimately to the respective genre(s) in the case of storytelling brands. Considering that trans-media storytelling does not adapt in the traditional sense but continues and extends a story via a different medium, if Martin had not planned to publish a new novel installment, then *GoT* season six would be a continuation of both television series and novel series, acting not as a traditional adaptation in the sense of duplicate, or copy but acting as an account-response that offers something new, different and maintains continuity of the story. Solely readers or viewers of each respective series can also be considered as engaging with account-responses, while consumers who are both engaged with account and interpretive-responses. Thus, in the case of trans-media storytelling, fidelity does not appear to be an issue of significance because continuity is ensured through the new and the different, in other words, an account-response. On the contrary, traditional cases of adaptation are problematic when it comes to fidelity because they are rendered interpretation-responses to an “original” where continuity is *allegedly* ensured through equivalency, narratological, semiotic and aesthetic, in effect a high degree of similarity. In other words, the interpretation of the adaptation/response needs to be “faithful” to the “original.” Hence, reader/viewer audience members are in a pivotal state as they are caught between *The Song of Fire and Ice* series, on the one hand, and the *Game of Thrones* series on the other. If, however, one were to view the aforementioned as brand series then the matter of response becomes one of relativity and relationality.

Drawing again on Lury’s comment regarding brands, we can say that the brand is “both a means of establishing relativity or the abstract equivalence of products in space and time and it is a medium of relationality able to support differentiation of both objects and subjects, products and consumers” (8). The interrelationship between the abstract core of a brand and the concrete extended identity ensures relativity while the nature of each extended identity displays the relationality between both intertexts and adaptations. As a result, a brand identity is interchangeably both an interpretative and account response. Both *A Song of Fire and Ice* and *Game of Thrones* display relativity with the abstract core of epic, fantasy, adventure genre(s), thus rendering them account-responses of these genres. Relationality is evident in the relationship they have with each other as extended identity samples, thus rendering them interpretative-responses of each other as intertexts and the television series to a higher extent as an adaptation. A similar example would be Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s short stories of Sherlock Holmes and the BBC television production *Sherlock*. Both act as account-responses to the detective genre, thus displaying relativity, and both can be viewed as interpretative-responses catering to both similarities and differences at the extended identity level where the television series doubly interprets both its counterpart as intertext while also being an adaptation of it. In both cases, the

television adaptations raised sales of the respective novels and short stories as well as contributing to the output of relevant merchandise. Culturally speaking, the meaning and value of adaptations cannot be restricted to the relativity and relationality between two texts, but it ought to be viewed more holistically. Hence, if intertexts and adaptations are viewed as interpretive/account-responses to both an abstract core identity and to concrete extended identities, then the notion of fidelity and relative discourses pose as the trigger that initiates the power play intent on persuading of the high degree of faithfulness and loyalty. Fidelity is the fallacious “marketing” tool that is institutionally charged, thus displaying a power play, intent on setting the borders of possible meanings, or context, for a branded intellectual property in the attempt to dictate and ensure value.

Of course, the determining factor is not the notion of fidelity, or even the degree of fidelity per se; rather the value and meaning lies in the power play between producers and consumers with the brand context acting as the playing field. With the ever-more emerging field of transmedia storytelling and its relation to adaptation, scholars such as Henry Jenkins (2003), Geoffrey Long (2007) and Aaron Smith (2009), Elizabeth Evans (2001), Carlos Alberto Scolari (2009), Melanie Bourdaa (2013), Tom Dowd (2013), Colin B. Harvey (2014), Tyler Weaver (2013) and Christy Dena (2009 and 2019) are still debating the definition of transmedia storytelling and, more importantly, its relation to adaptation. As I argue in another article [5] where I also examine the relation between transmedia and adaptation, drawing on Dena’s essay “Transmedia Adaptation: Revisiting the No-Adaptation Rule” (2019), it is becoming more a matter of numerous extended identities and how they complement, contradict or offer alternative perspectives to how we initially perceive a source work than whether or not they have remained faithful to the source work in question. As a result, current and future debates will most likely focus – and should focus – on the position of adaptation in comparison to that of trans-media storytelling and, in my opinion, greatly consider the matter of power play amongst producers and consumers in both contexts, as the cultural value of an adaptation or transmedia product appears to be a matter of identity allocation and power play.

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Notes

[1] According to Zervaki brand and branding are: a promise; the way products distinguish from other similar products; what consumers believe about a company; the feeling created via the interaction with a product, service or company; the tangible representation of a company's values; a set of expectations that have been met and satisfied; the trust between a company and consumers; the intangible value of a company; a set of unique benefits; the reasons for purchasing something; the story of the brand; the symbol of the brand; how messages and their meanings are communicated with or without words; a consumer's experience; and the impression left to consumers after their latest interaction with the brand (n.pag.).

[2] Calabrese touches upon the neo-baroque in his *Neo-Baroque: A Sign of the Times* (1992); Deleuze incorporates the notion of the neo-baroque fold in his *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (1993); Umberto Eco in his *The Open Work* (1989) examines how serial thought is intent on producing new signs and highlights that what is important is the aesthetic equivalent, in other words, its "poetic meaning" (59); finally, Doob in her *The Idea of the Labyrinth from Classical Antiquity through the Middle Ages* (1990) presents the two possible forms of the labyrinth.

[3] Henry Jenkins, in *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture* (2006) argues that Robert Kuzinets has "pioneered an entire field of marketing research focused on the cultures of committed consumers, whether understood as brand cultures or fan cultures" (3).

[4] Henry Jenkins in his *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture* (2006) touches on the matter of culture jamming. He draws on Mark Dery's 1993 essay

“Culture Jamming: Hacking, Slashing and Sniping in the Empire of Signs” to explain the term. Culture jamming, according to both, entails introducing noise or jamming a signal of communication or dominant message as it passes from transmitter to receiver. The strategy in question is usually taken up by cultural activists. Christine Harold also discusses this in her article “Pranking rhetoric: ‘Culture jamming’ as media activism” (2004).

[5] The article in question, titled, “*Buffy the Vampire Slayer* Reboot: A Cultural Practice of Branding and Extended Identities” is in the final stages of consideration for publication.

“They Just Don’t Get It”

An Overview of *Brokeback Mountain*’s Reception and Impact

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Abstract. After the large-scale success of the movie *Brokeback Mountain*, Annie Proulx expressed repeatedly that she is not happy with the way her story was treated by the public. Her dismay stems from people’s ignorance of the core theme she explored in both film and short story: the rampant homophobia present in the American West. The aim of this paper is to examine and contextualize the discussion which followed the movie’s success and analyze the way the movie was marketed and then reviewed to reinforce homophobic stereotypes.

Keywords. Annie Proulx, *Brokeback Mountain*, homophobia, LGBTQ representation, movie adaptation

The short story *Brokeback Mountain* by Annie Proulx appeared in *The New Yorker* in 1997. The story depicting the struggles of two gay men who fall in love in rural Wyoming was received well by critics and readers alike, but it gained mainstream recognition in 2005 when it was adapted into a movie by the same title. The film *Brokeback Mountain* features two established Hollywood stars, the late Heath Ledger as Ennis del Mar and Jake Gyllenhaal as Jack Twist, and it managed to rake in 3 Academy Awards. Even so, writer Annie Proulx told *The Paris Review* that she wishes she had never written the story (Cox). The release and reach to a much larger audience could be regarded positively, but Proulx reports that the adaptation’s popularity only brought “hassle and problems and irritation” (Cox) because many people misunderstood her intentions and her message. Moreover, many of the newfound fans of the story took it upon themselves to rewrite or continue Jack and Ennis’s story, which further distorts Proulx’s views: “[i]t’s about homophobia; it’s about a social situation; it’s about a place and a particular mindset and morality. They just don’t get it” (Cox), claims the author who also adds that these characters belong to her by law [1] and writing their story the way she did was a conscious effort to discuss the rampant homophobia of the poverty-ridden, rural American West, and not to write a love story with a happy ending. The aim of this paper is to examine the way Annie Proulx’s *Brokeback Mountain* was adapted into a movie and then received by the general public. Given that the author praises the movie but expresses dissatisfaction with the apparent misunderstanding of her message, it is important to take a look at the movie reviews as well as the two artistic endeavors.

“It’s about Homophobia”

The movie, directed by Ang Lee and produced by Diana Ossana and James Schamus, follows the original text closely: in many scenes, the dialogue between

Jack Twist and Ennis del Mar is implemented in the film word for word, although there are some changes applied as well, as it is expected. Both movie and short story emphasize that the two men are stereotypically manly, two regular cowboys whose appearance and behavior does not differ from anyone else in Wyoming. The young men are portrayed as equals, even as doubles:

[...] they were raised on small, poor ranches in opposite corners of the state, Jack Twist in Lightning Flat, up on the Montana border, Ennis del Mar from around Sage, near the Utah line, both high-school drop-out country boys with no prospects, brought up to hard work and privation, both rough-mannered, rough-spoken, inured to the stoic life (Proulx 256).

Clifton Snider observes that many Jungian terms apply to the two characters whose story the readers watch unfold; he observes that if their struggles and emotions are universal, then they can be perceived as archetypes themselves (55). Where does this idea of universality come from?

Annie Proulx sets up her characters as everymen in rural Wyoming in 1963, two young men at the very beginning of their adulthood, coming from poverty and a negative familial background. They do not stand out, neither of them is particularly attractive, they wear clothes anyone of their social standing would. The only difference there is between them and everyone else is that they are homosexual men who hide their sexual preferences from a world which would cast them out if they came out of the closet. Their feelings for one another, however, are universal: longing, love, sexual attraction and unrequited love are present in heterosexual relationships as well. As such, using Jung's theory of self, one could argue that Jack and Ennis fit queer archetypal personas (Snider 57). Jung defines archetypes as "the introspectively recognizable form of a priori psychic orderedness" (140). Jack and Ennis's outward personalities are masculine, rough-edged – regular for cowboys. However, their gay personas [2] are hidden away, never explored in Ennis's case. Proulx examines the closeted gay men's experience over the span of twenty years through language – or the lack of it –, and the stunted actions of the lovers whose lives remained unfulfilled.

The movie depicts Ennis del Mar as a man of very few words, much fewer than in the short story. He barely speaks which is not only another characteristic of his macho, masculine persona, but part of what Sedgwick (3) calls the "performance" of closetedness. She argues that speech is very specific once someone comes out, while silence is not particular but "it acquires particularity by fits and starts, in relation to the discourse that surrounds and differentially constitutes it" (3). Ennis and Jack never refer to themselves as *gay men* in either version of *Brokeback Mountain*, the first time they are intimate, no words are spoken, and later, as their relationship progresses, they further deny their sexual orientations:

They never talked about the sex, let it happen, at first only in the tent at night, then in the full daylight with the hot sun striking down, and at evening in the fire glow, quick, rough, laughing and snorting, no lack of noises, but saying not a goddam word except once Ennis said, "I'm not no queer," and Jack jumped in with "Me neither. A one-shot thing. Nobody's business but ours (Proulx 262).

The film also includes this verbal denial, and no other discussion between the two men about their sexuality or relationship until later. This utterance represents the internalized homophobia Jack and especially Ennis feels, growing up in a

prejudiced time and space. The ideal male image in 1960s Wyoming does not include the possibility of homosexuality. It is important to mention that although the short story begins in the '60s, homophobia has not disappeared from our society today either. I will further elaborate on the time and setting, and its importance in this paper.

Ennis is brought up by a deeply homophobic father who goes as far as to show his young son the body of a badly beaten and castrated rancher who was murdered because it was assumed that he was gay. Snider (59) claims that this stunts Ennis's queer imagination, which leads him to be unable to explore his homosexuality. He quotes Patricia Juliana Smith (xiii) who explains that even today, but especially in the '60s, queerness was viewed through a heterocentric lens, which painted the LGBTQ experience as imaginary, unrealistic or easily dismissed. Although today queer representation is much more prominent [3], before there were no gay heroes to look up to. And, in Ennis and Jack's case, the idea of a normal life between two gay men was unimaginable and life threatening. Due to the lack of representation and the clear, brutal treatment of gay men by the main characters' environment, they internalize the homophobia and view themselves as lacking, shameful or wrong in some capacity. The movie tackles Ennis's shame directly as he earnestly asks Jack: "when you're in town, and someone looks at you, suspicious... like he knows. And then you get out on the pavement, and everyone's lookin' at you, and maybe they all know too?" (Lee). As mentioned above, Proulx argues that her story is meant to showcase this state of paranoia and rampant homophobia, that is why she struggled with the film's immense success and its subsequent treatment by fans. She further clarified in *Brokeback Mountain: Story to Screenplay* that she reworked the short story over sixty times before it was finalized (Proulx, McMurtry and Ossana 131). So, it is not surprising that both characters are developed with incredible attention to detail to showcase the reality Proulx observed in rural Wyoming. It is also understandable that the writer is upset by the countless letters and rewritten stories she receives from fans who are dissatisfied with the story (Cox). The tactics used by reviewers and rewriters of *Brokeback Mountain* reinforce the homophobia Annie Proulx wanted to shed light on. Even though the screenplay and movie follow her vision closely, responses and analysis of it overlook the core problem or change the film's initial message to a different one, which is more suited for a heterosexual audience.

Gay Cowboys and the American Love Story

Annie Proulx's frustration with *Brokeback Mountain's* perception is fueled by what the general public had to say in letters, online fanfiction and, as she mentioned in a *Wall Street Journal* interview, "there are countless people out there who think the story is open range to explore their fantasies and to correct what they see as an unbearably disappointing story" (Hughes). She argues that this method of reshaping the original story to fit the readers' fantasies ultimately takes away from what she actually meant to communicate.

Proulx's fears of her message being squandered are materialized in the countless reviews the movie received. Although most critics saw the movie is a

positive, the above-mentioned “universality” of Jack and Ennis’s story works as a tool to keep them in the closet instead of bringing them out of it.

Movie reviews are an important tool of canonization and thought forming: Alice Hall explains that the movie critic is usually considered to be an intellectual, a person to look up to, and as such, they “contribute to audiences’ managing of the varied perspectives implied by the images and information embodied in film, they have the potential to contribute to the media’s role in maintaining existing belief systems or encouraging social change” (402). Reviews are important tools to place films in specific trends, to establish genre and stylistic similarities with other movies. A study conducted by Brenda Cooper and Edward C. Pease analyzes 113 reviews by publications all across the United States to see what biases and “framing strategies” (253) were used to discuss the movie. They explain that such strategies are applied by critics almost naturally in order to clarify and further explain social issues (253), and to create parallels between the reviewed movie and other forms of media, thus exemplifying to the general public what might be a topic they are not comfortable discussing.

In the case of *Brokeback Mountain*, the general public is the heterosexual audience whose knowledge of the issues gay men face is limited and who presumably could have trouble relating to the story of Jack and Ennis without contextualization by the reviewer. For this reason, many critics searched for heterosexual counterparts to the love story. However, Cooper and Pease argue that

[...] by comparing the film’s protagonists to culturally familiar heterosexual symbols such as doomed lovers Romeo and Juliet, or cowboy icons John Wayne and Clint Eastwood, while simultaneously framing homophobia primarily as a relic of the past, the discourse of the reviews relegated queers and queer experiences to the margins (Cooper and Pease 254).

One of the most popular strategies to contextualize *Brokeback Mountain* was to fit it into the mold of a genre: many critics called it a “gay western” or a “gay romance.” Some of these comparisons seem self-evident on the surface. It is easy to make a connection between cowboys and the western genre. The backdrop, the location, the costumes and the general grittiness of the movie are characteristic of westerns, but the story itself is not. Westerns are generally considered to be adventure movies or novels set in the Wild West, where there is conflict between cowboys, lone rangers and lawmen, there are gunslingers, gun duels, the adventures reach epic proportions (*Encyclopedia Britannica*). Compared to this, *Brokeback Mountain* is a slow-paced movie, characterized by very few action scenes, many panning shots of the setting, wide shots of the characters doing mundane things such as herding sheep, opening cans of food, riding horses, etc. The more action-packed scenes are not part of some adventure, they focus mainly on Jack and Ennis’s social and personal development (e.g. Jack stands up for himself against his father-in-law, Ennis’s horse is spooked by a bear, etc.), so the western label is slapped on the film because it features two cowboys. However, the “gay cowboy movie” seemed to have a big impression on the public and the reviewers. The movie was framed as being the first movie which shows the cowboy, the “epitome of American heterosexual masculinity” (Piontek 123) to be gay, thus challenging the possibly most American straight male image. This is also

untrue. *Brokeback Mountain* was not the first movie to use the gay cowboy as a trope. In *The Celluloid Closet*, one of the most cohesive books on homosexual representation in cinema, Vito Russo points to many movies before the release of *Brokeback Mountain* which showcase gay cowboys: he explains that regulations about indecent behavior and the introduction of the age rating system stunted the usage of gay characters in Hollywood (24), because homosexual behavior was considered to be sexual perversion. So, in many cases, when a gay cowboy appeared, his framing was that his behavior was wrong. Russo mentions stereotypes such as the "harmless sissy" (25) who is a source of humor. Piontek (124) underlines the harmful nature of these stereotypes: they are aimed to frame the gay man as ridiculous do to his attraction to men. He becomes effeminate, acts exaggeratedly like a feminine stereotype, which appears to be the punchline of the "joke."

Although many of the earliest representations of gay men are homophobic and sexist in nature, there are movies which managed to trick the rating system and slip under the radar of the Hollywood Production Code. Piontek (124) mentions a scene in the iconic *Red River* (1948) where two cowboys played by Montgomery Clift and John Ireland share a homoerotic moment praising each other's guns. The two men stand close to one another and lovingly examine and stroke each other's weapons as Ireland comments: "Nice. Awful nice. You know there are only two things more beautiful than a good gun: a Swiss watch and a woman from anywhere. Have you ever had a good Swiss watch?" (Hawkes). They proceed to shoot each other's guns at a can and further praise their abilities.

The Production Code was finally abandoned in 1968 (Piontek 125) and since then the figure of the gay cowboy was used in more movies, such as *Midnight Cowboy* (1969) where a young Texan cowboy moves to New York City and ends up becoming a hustler servicing men instead of women. Piontek (128) also mentions the Village People who used traditionally masculine, macho male roles as gay stereotypes, further establishing the idea of the cowboy being not just a heterosexual man. He criticizes the fact that critics were quick to celebrate *Brokeback Mountain* as a groundbreaking movie in terms of queer representation, claiming that "this kind of historical amnesia is due to Hollywood's tendency to pat itself on the back for breaking new ground when it comes to social issues" (126), while in reality they do not.

Critics were quick to point out that the movie is not just a western, but also a love story between two men who are gay, but not stereotypically, and whose love story is just like any other. Snider (55-56) notes that this universality of Jack and Ennis's love story is a double-edged sword, because it can be seen as a positive for members of the LGBTQ community to see the romance and the struggles of a gay couple played by conventionally attractive and established actors such as Jake Gyllenhaal and Heath Ledger, but he finds it important to note that this universal appeal is also a strong marketing ploy: the movie was marketed towards heterosexual women as much as it was aimed at gay men.

Director Ang Lee told the *New York Times* that to him *Brokeback Mountain* is "a great American love story, told in a way that felt as if it had never been done before" (Durbin). He adds that he had tears in his eyes as he read the ending scene where Jack and Ennis's shirts are put back in the closet, and Annie Proulx noted in an interview with the *Salt Lake Tribune* that her story was "not mangled but

enlarged into huge and gripping imagery that rattled minds and squeezed hearts” (Cohen D5). She stated many times that the way Lee handled her story was satisfactory, but she voiced concerns early on that the general public was not ready to listen to what message she was trying to convey. In *Brokeback Mountain: Story to Screenplay*, she expressed that critics from urban areas who do not see day-to-day homophobia “dubbed it a tale of two gay cowboys” (130). She continues to stress “[n]o. It is the story of destructive rural homophobia” (130).

Even though the author herself believes that the movie version of *Brokeback Mountain* captured what she wanted to shed light on, the critics and fans, and in my opinion, the marketing strategies behind the movie, ended up dumbing down the severe social issues. Calling the movie a love story like any other or the story of unrequited love, which is a universally understood concept, takes away from the fact that living as a queer person in a heteronormative world is not universally understood, or accepted.

Focus Features deliberately marketed *Brokeback Mountain* as a romance and angled it towards heterosexual women who are most likely to watch a romantic drama (Piontek 126). Immediately, critics were quick to say that this first mainstream gay love story is able to change the minds of people about homosexual men, however, Piontek (127) points out that the idea that homophobic people from red states would not buy tickets to see a movie which clearly goes against their beliefs, so, the reach and the mind-changing ability of the movie should be subjected to more scrutiny.

Reviewers of *Brokeback Mountain* used the perceived universality of Jack and Ennis’s experience to “humanize” [4] the gay men, although Cooper and Pease point out that “the universal framing strategies work to ‘un-queer’ Ennis and Jack, in effect positioning them within the safe boundaries of familiar heterosexual cinema” (258). As Annie Proulx stated and stressed in many interviews, the story is meant to shed light on the rampant and brutal homophobia of the rural America. Heterosexual couples do not face homophobia, thus, clearly, their experience is not the same as Jack and Ennis’s would be. Furthermore, although Snider mentions universality, he explains, in Jungian terms, that the main characters’ (at least) two personas include a queer one, which is hidden, and a conventional, macho persona, which is expected and shown outward (62-64).

Ennis del Mar’s queer persona is hidden away from everyone due to his fear of repercussion: both the movie and the short story emphasize that he has seen a victim of an anti-gay hate crime, which leads him to never have the courage to even consider settling down with Jack. His only male sexual partner is Jack as well, while Jack’s queer persona is less hidden. The novella’s narrator implies that he “had been riding more than just bulls” (Proulx 268), while the movie shows him crossing the border to Mexico to seek out male sex workers and even attempting to have a romantic relationship with another man, once he realizes that Ennis would never commit to him.

Both the film and the movie show that the only place where Ennis and Jack can express their fondness and homosexual love for one another is on *Brokeback Mountain*, where they are alone in the world and no judgmental eyes are watching them. The short story emphasizes that after a while the two young men show affection to one another outside of the confines of the tent, while the movie showcases them going outside of the tent, the shots become brighter, with

daylight illuminating their bodies, and their acts such as kissing in the open, etc. This is the only time the movie shows Ennis in the light, expressing his queer persona, after that the viewer only sees him in seedy motel rooms with Jack or embracing and kissing in the shadow near his home when Jack visits him after four years of absence.

By erasing and normalizing these struggles specific to the gay man, the experience of LGBTQ people is not represented, instead, they are kept in a state of visible invisibility. Barnhurst (11) explains that this "visible-invisible state" is quite common when a marginalized group enters the mainstream. Furthermore, Sedgwick (88) points out that the universalization of the gay experience falls in line with the belief that sexual orientation is a social construct, meaning that there is "bisexual potential", and thus implying that the gay man can just quit being gay and turn straight. The problem with this universalizing approach is that it does not help the straight audiences become more aware of the gay experience, instead the narrative becomes "heterosexed" (Erhart 171) – bending the heteronormative expectations.

In the case of Jack and Ennis, they both get married and live an outwardly heterosexual, common life. They have children, Ennis gets divorced and tries to find himself another girlfriend, so, for everyone around him, he seems to be just like everyone else. The only time he is outed in the short story is when his wife, Alma sees him and Jack embrace and kiss, while Jack knows that Joe Aguirre, their employer saw them on Brokeback Mountain as well. In the movie, Jack tells him that Aguirre most likely had seen them, which scares Ennis. He is outed by his ex-wife in the movie as well, which results in a rather violent confrontation between the two.

Although both men lead a heterosexual public life, or as Snider suggests (56), their heterosexual personas fit the norm, they express in some capacity that they are not happy with what they have. Jack puts it into words in both movie and short story, expressing his frustration that after twenty years of rare meetings, Ennis still wouldn't commit to a life together. "Tell you what, we could've had a good life together, a fucking real food life. You wouldn't do it, Ennis, so what we got now is Brokeback Mountain. Everything built on that" (Proulx 277).

Although the marketing strategy applied by Focus Features was very successful in spreading the movie towards audiences which would otherwise not watch it, the framing of it as a romance also took away from its message. As Leung (32) observes, the connection is easily made between Elizabethan and Greek tragedies and *Brokeback Mountain's* frame. Two star-crossed lovers who are unable to be together due to circumstances they have no control over, are finally separated forever by death. Ennis del Mar's tragedy can thus fall in line with the tragedies of Othello, Hamlet, Oedipus Rex, etc. (Piontek 129). However, Piontek argues that such readings of *Brokeback Mountain* also frame Ennis's sexual orientation as a problem: "a gay man can lose his mark of difference and become an ordinary person who is typical of all human beings only on the condition that his downfall and extreme sorrow are a forgone conclusion" (129). This reading implies that Ennis and Jack's sexuality is a flaw which they have to pay for. He heavily criticizes Leung's apparent ignorance of the issue of homophobia, whilst blaming Ennis del Mar for not committing to Jack.

It is clear that by trying to universalize *Brokeback Mountain*, critics and fans alike focus more on the tragic love story and forget about the underlying issue which makes Jack and Ennis's lives tragic. The story of these two cowboys does not follow the "bury your gays" trope (Bridges 122) [5]: Jack is not killed off to respect censorship practices and to keep a movie family friendly. His death is left ambiguous in the short story, it is unclear whether it was an accident, a suicide or a hate crime. In the movie, however, when Ennis finds out from Jack's wife that he died as a result of an accident, the scene overlays the image of a man being beaten by others as Ennis listens to the wife's voice over the phone. It is not clear whether the death was an accident or the result of a hate crime, but Ennis certainly believes the latter. Jack Twist's death, and Ennis's loss is a clear consequence of homophobia. The tragedy of their relationship – or the lack thereof, is that they are kept apart due to homophobia, not that they are simply kept apart. Piontek (131) also points out that today movies about star-crossed lovers are no longer popular because they are considered to be improbable. These stories usually feature heterosexual lovers who are kept apart by differences such as nationality, religion, class or race, and they are usually set in a time period in the distant past. If we are looking at a heterosexual couple, such stories about them set current times seems ridiculous.

Annie Proulx picked 1963 as a starting point to *Brokeback Mountain*, which was also kept in the movie. The story follows the two men over the course of twenty years, concluding in 1983 when Jack dies. The movie does not show much of the time changing around the two cowboys. Only the pickup trucks, Jack's wife's hairstyle and some tiny details change around Ennis and Jack. Manalansan (99) calls this both "historical time and romantic time", because the two men are set in a distant time period which is not the present, where suffering and discrimination against gay men is possible. This distance between the audience's present and the period in which Jack and Ennis live allows for viewers to shrug off homophobia as yesterday's problem.

Conclusion

Although Annie Proulx had a very clear vision of what she meant to write about, and a reason for which she chose the time period between 1963 and 1983, the message of the short story, and the movie was lost in reviews and fan interaction. Proulx explains that

The early sixties seemed the right time period. The two characters had to have grown up on isolated hardscrabble ranches and were clearly homophobic themselves, especially the Ennis character. Both wanted to be cowboys, be part of the Great Western Myth, but it didn't work out that way... Neither of them was ever a top hand, and they met herding sheep, animals most real cowpokes despise (Proulx, McMurtry and Ossana 130).

At the story's core there is the issue that Proulx stressed many times: rampant homophobia in rural America, which is still a problem today. The framing strategies and the heterosexual audience's tries to relate the topic to themselves diminishes the experience of the two gay men who are struggling with the very real consequences of being gay in the wrong place, at the wrong time. In spite the

fact that in many cases, viewers and reviewers alike try to create parallels between the homosexual and the heterosexual experience in order to relate to the characters, Proulx's complaint of "they just don't get it" is proven to some extent. The movie's marketing as an American romance between two cowboys or as a gay western demonstrates the fact that Hollywood is not ready to tackle controversial social issues. A Piontek (132) explains:

To be sure, *Brokeback Mountain* provides the audience with the opportunity for a good cry at a tragic gay love story and—depending on one's point of view—the reminder or the reassurance that loving someone of one's own gender can still be a deadly proposition. However, its consistently timid approach to dealing with controversial social issues has rendered Hollywood increasingly insignificant to the process of shaping public opinion in the U.S.

The movie *Brokeback Mountain* follows Proulx's vision closely, as the writer herself has expressed many times. Still, its reception and the discourse led by critics underlines the fact that the language people use to frame the movie as both groundbreaking in showcasing a romance between two men, in a non-stereotypical way, and universal, due to its mass appeal to feelings of yearning, love, lust, and grief, is unable to differentiate between the quintessentially gay experience of homophobia. Many viewers and critics had trouble pinpointing the serious problem of homophobia, placing it in the past as though it is not an issue representative of today too.

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Notes

[1] The author undoubtedly takes a strong stance against the fans' retelling and rewriting of *Brokeback Mountain* because she believes that it is proof that the fanfiction writers misunderstood her message. The culture of fandoms and fanfiction has become a pillar of many online communities which form around popular films and books, but there is no conclusive proof that the people who want to see Jack and Ennis's alternate, happy story, did not understand the author's original intentions.

[2] Snider (60) explains that Jack and Ennis's public personas such as sheep herders, salesmen, macho men, fathers and husbands all work to reinforce their perceived heterosexuality, while their homosexuality remains hidden.

[3] Even though members of the LGBTQ community are more heavily featured in popular media than ever, not all representation is good representation. Many queer characters today fall into stereotypes or are used to tick boxes of social awareness. Phrases such as "queerbaiting" and "bury your gays" have become popular in the 2010s as a response to repetitive unfulfilled stories queer characters receive in TV and movies. Elizabeth Bridges explains that although many characters are initially set up as members of the LGBTQ community, fans are left disappointed "when a series ends or a character is eliminated with no 'endgame' romantic or other satisfactory resolution, or else an apparently queer-coded character is relegated to a heterosexual pairing" (121). One of the most famous queerbaiting incidents was J. K. Rowling's outing of Hogwarts headmaster Albus Dumbledore and discussing his sexuality on social media, but not addressing it in her books or films. For further information on Dumbledore's outing, see Kidd (2008).

[4] Many critics and reviewers were quick to point out that *Brokeback Mountain* showcased gay men as real people, human beings just like straight people, who go through the same struggles as anyone else. Although these comments are made in good faith, they point to the underlying homophobia that some critics tried to dance around. Such comments imply that only through the suffering and pain of gay men is the audience able to identify with them.

[5] "Bury your gays" or BYG is a TV trope applied by showrunners in order to respect the censorship practices of certain TV networks. It attracts LGBTQ viewers to the show and later lets them down by killing off the gay character without giving them a chance to have a completed story arc.

Lost in Adaptation

The Case for The 'Great' *The Great Gatsby*

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Abstract. Since its publication, F. Scott Fitzgerald's famous novel *The Great Gatsby* has been adapted several times, each one offering a distinct representation. The adaptations renew public fascination with Fitzgerald, his fiction, Jazz age fashion and music but also encourage viewers to reconsider their own conceptions of enigmatic Gatsby. But is the popularity of the novel and even its high reputation among literary academics a measure of its greatness? Despite the popularity of 1926, 1949, 1974 and 2013 films, critics maintain that the nuances of the novel are lost in the process of adaptation and even question whether the novel should be represented in another medium paving the way to put an effort of answering why the 'great' *Gatsby* never makes a great movie.

Keywords. Gatsby, adaptation, Fitzgerald, great, film

Cinema and literature are two forms of art that mostly go hand in hand. While the film counts on images and a direct impact on audience with its mix of both detail and broad focus, literature is print-based and allows the readers for a wide imagination experience. In cinema, visual and gestural representations are rich in complex associations; music offers aural "equivalents" for characters emotions and in turn, provokes affective responses in the audience; sound, in general, can enhance, reinforce, or even contradict the visual and verbal aspects (Hutcheon 23). In other words, the performance mode teaches us that language is not the only way to express meaning or to relate stories. On the other hand, however, there is always a risk that a shown dramatization may not be enough to approximate the complicated verbal play of told poetry or the interlinking of description, narration and explanation that is so easy for prose narrative to accomplish. When it comes to being captured on big screen, some great novels have their own impossibilities. The account for the greatness of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* in cinema has been a question mark that has concerned the scholars and critics for a long time. Although the outcome is generally considered as a failure, it seems fitting to have an effort of answering that question in terms of cinematic merits.

One cannot help questioning the difficulties of converting a novel into film and in what way the adaptation should appeal to the viewers' tastes and concerns. For the theory of adaptation, Linda Hutcheon comments that "whatever the movie, from the adapter's perspective, adaptation is an act of appropriating or salvaging and this is always a double process of interpreting and then creating something new" (20). For that reason, rather than copying, adaptation is a process of making the adapted material one's own which entails a creative mind. According to Hutcheon, re-interpretation of the source text is essential for a successful adaptation. She also says that "adaptation is a kind of extended palimpsest and, at the same time, often a transcoding into a different set of

conventions” (8). By creating film adaptations of the novel, the text is revived which consequently introduces new forms of reception theory.

According to Dennis Cutchins, it is possible to learn “what is distinctly literary about a written text and at the same time, what is distinctly cinematic about a film” (295). He believes that films are invaluable sources of interpreting or reading literary work. In translating literature into film, directors, writers are forced to change, adapt the text and often these changes expose limitations or boundaries of both medium (295). In his pioneering work *Novels into Film*, George Bluestone remarks the inevitability of these changes in conveying a linguistic form to the visual medium. He states that “the film becomes a different thing in the same sense that a historical painting becomes a different thing from the historical event which it illustrates” (5). Bluestone even interprets novel and film as “overtly compatible, secretly hostile” (2). That hostility could refer to the adaptations which are “deemed to betray the original in some way, although a more interesting manifestation of hostility might be apparent in many adaptations’ resistance to the idea of them as inferior or shadowy copies of the original” (Whelehan 7). Yet seeing moving images on screen cause a sensation and according to Erwin Panofsky, such implication suggests that “primordial basis of the enjoyment of moving pictures was not an object interest in a specific subject matter, but the sheer delight in the fact that things move” (121). Therefore, it would be pointless to say that one form is better than the other one. The difference between the two forms should not mean advocating one from over another as pursuing a process of mutual flow feeding both sides’ aesthetic genera is of primary importance.

The question of fidelity to the source has dominated the debates on cinematic adaptations of literary works and there is a general tendency to prioritize the literary originals over their film versions. When a well-known work of great literature is transferred into film, fidelity is put to the fore as there is an unconscious prioritization of the fictional origin. But Whelehan aims an extension of such debates in her work “Adaptations: The Contemporary Dilemmas”. Studying both fictional and filmic sources can be fraught with problems—particularly in making decisions about giving the ‘appropriate’ amount of attention to each medium, and fostering the skills specific to each form; but perhaps the chief problem lies in teasing out our own and others’ conscious and unconscious prejudices about this kind of ‘hybrid’ study (Whelehan 3). For that reason, she moves from consideration of literary adaptations (where the text is well known that a potential cinema audience would have an idea of the authentic version regardless of whether they’d ever actually read it) to focus on adaptations more broadly (3-4). When a classic, in particular, is being adapted for the popular cinema audience, the act of judging authenticity or textual fidelity become an inexact science dogged by value judgements about relative artistic worth of literature and film. As a matter of fact, in Brian McFarlane’s notes, the necessity of making a critical distinction between the narrative features that can be transferred or cannot be transferred could be taken into account. McFarlane sees two worthwhile lines of investigation in the transposition process focusing on what is possible to transfer or adapt from novel to film; and what key factors other than the source novel have exercised an influence on the film version of the novel (22).

Adaptations could also act as a way of bringing the great works of literature to the masses, some filmmakers were of the view that a dependency on literature or “great art” would also elevate the status of the film. In her essay, “100+ Years of Adaptations, or Adaptation as the Art Form of Democracy,” Deborah Cartmell posits adaptation as a popularization of ideas, albeit one that is often “damned with praise in its ‘democratizing’ effect: it brings literature to the masses but it also brings the masses to literature, diluting, simplifying, and therefore appealing to the many rather than the few” (3). Cartmell turns to Virginia Woolf’s essay “Cinema” and her concerns and comments that films might be a disservice to literature. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, it is clear that literature adapts film techniques and cinematic genres creating new types of fiction but, for some, the influence of film has a damaging effect on the quality of the novel and it has been lamented that some novels are written not *just* as novels, but as future film in which the experience of reading the book is akin to watching a film (Cartmell 5). New tendencies posit the two art forms becoming more and more interdependent and some novels actually develop cinematic tendencies. Some see the advantage of film in its more enhanced representation of reality, some focus on the impacts of cinema and how it has driven some writers to experiment with cinematic techniques in prose fiction.

The Great Gatsby is a cornerstone in American literature and although it triggers a renewal of public fascination with the author and the Jazz Age, directors who want to adapt this book face a set of challenges. Typically speaking, the comparisons between the book and the adaptations focus on fidelity as a barometer for success. However equally significant is independent artistic endeavors and how much imaginary standard is imposed. The novel is F. Scott Fitzgerald’s most widely read book and has been adapted into several artistic interpretations over the years including theatre, opera, ballet and most importantly films. Chronologically the films came out in 1926, 1949, 1974 and most recently in 2013. Fitzgerald’s novel seems to contain many elements appropriate to an excellent film; e.g., a fresh and revealing exposure of the decadence of wealthy society and an unusual love relationship which leads inexorably to a tragic denouement (Glasser 6). However, of the four major adaptations so far, none has managed to satisfy the critics and the audience adequately. At first glance, the book might be about a man outside the law, a big-scale bootlegger, a social climber, a perennial adolescent who uses his ill-gotten gains in an effort to bring back his sole love, Daisy. But Fitzgerald also displays universal themes like wealth, hope and ultimate fail. He raises questions about the authenticity and attainability of that ‘American Dream’ and its historical relevance to contemporary issues of society.

When it comes to the ‘greatness’ of *Gatsby*, Charles Thomas Samuels enlists how “humanly the novel reflects the disillusionment and the failure of youthful dreams which is so marked a feature of man’s lot, culturally it dramatizes the cause and cost of America’s identification with eternal beginnings and cosmically it suggests the apocalyptic vision with which we have become familiar in literature” (793). Actually, the novel’s great achievement is painting this bleak picture with the brightest of colors. *Gatsby* has “the precision and splendor of a lyric poem” (784). The novel’s stylistic beauty and cultural importance are

indisputable and moreover “with so much of the novel’s plot achieved through motif and symbol, with so much of its atmospheric intensity concentrated in the central images of the waste land, the grail quest, and the tragic odyssey, the fiction that Fitzgerald conceived of as a “rough” novel eventually seems to have been written as though it were a long poem” (Barbarese cxxi).

Yet the celebration of literary art is inseparable from the management of the point of view in the novel in that Nick is “more than just a clever manipulation of point of view” (794). What Nick endows the narrativity with is more than objectivity, he describes more than the experience which he witnesses, he transplants the act and the consequences of telling it. Therefore, one of the difficulties in filming *The Great Gatsby* is capturing Nick’s inner monologue as the book is narrated by his perspective. For Nick Carraway, Bloom elaborates that “his perspective of the novel’s events is colored by his feelings of difference and absence in comparison to that of the rich characters as well as by the spectacle of Gatsby’s tragic quest for Daisy” (18). As Daisy’s cousin and Gatsby’s admirer, the narrator is not exactly neutral even though his account is that of an observer. Fitzgerald thus employs Nick as a narrative device- “the device of having events observed by a ‘central consciousness,’... a character who stands somewhat apart from the action and whose vision frames it for the reader” (Bloom 98). Therefore, it is more important what the narrator is not seeing, what is happening off the page.

Fitzgerald dramatizes the betrayal of ‘American Dream’ in a corrupt society. The events of the novel are actually simple as the power of Gatsby does not come from the plot, the beauty lies in how the prose is processed which is often said to be highly visual. Presumably these pictorial qualities would lend themselves to cinematic adaptation. But Fitzgerald’s novel is an art of concealment rather than explicit revelation, of poetic fragments, shimmering half glimpses, and suggestive allusions (Giannetti 14). The novel mostly consists of long-ago expositions and offstage scenes which might make it difficult to find the cinematic equivalents. *The Great Gatsby* depicts things being made from nothing, and objects becoming enchanted objects. Both these operations depend, quite simply, on belief. Nothing in the novel is more endowed with this magic power than Daisy’s voice (Weinstein 26) which is “full of money” (126). Ironically, this makes Gatsby’s dream more quintessentially American than it might seem at first: in the end, it does come down to material wealth. The core of what Fitzgerald wanted his readers to see is that Gatsby’s demand on Daisy is the demand of the American imagination upon America (Perosa 225). *The Great Gatsby* was published during the ‘Roaring Twenties’ and it is no coincidence that the book was popularized during the early years of Great Depression when most Americans were chasing the dream. Fitzgerald’s classic novel engages in explorations of problematic paradoxes inherent in cultural context both portraying and critiquing them. He is fascinated by the way social and economic conditions affect his characters’ lives and presents a study of the ascendancy of American commodity culture and its cultural, social, and personal ramifications.

In his book *The Cultural History of The Great American Novel*, Bob Batchelor comments that “Gatsby is a novel of ideas, rather than a novel of action. This distinction makes Fitzgerald’s masterpiece elusive and difficult to film. For some readers, too, this dichotomy either results in one loving or hating the book” (15).

Likewise, *The Great Gatsby* was not an overnight sensation. When discussing the novel in terms of its reception in the early 1920s, one can assert that the novel was not received well by the general public and specialized critics of its time. Due to the novel's ambiguity and complex characters and the idea of the American Dream which in the historical sense, during the time of the novel was still being defined, and as such not yet fully understood led Fitzgerald's credibility being placed under the spotlight. Batchelor elaborates further on that ambiguity saying that *The Great Gatsby* mattered more in time as it enables readers to use the novel as a barometer for measuring their own lives and the culture they inhabit. He states that:

...the central themes and ideas emerging from the book, ranging from the fulfillment of the American Dream to the role of wealth in society, resonate with contemporary readers who struggle with similar uncertainties today. As a matter of fact, the ambiguity at the heart of *Gatsby* is its lifeblood and embraced by audiences, particularly American readers hope and anticipate that its contents will help them comprehend their lives and the larger world a little better. (3)

It is remarkable to note that the reason behind the mixed reviews of the book could also be the irony that a tale of rich people mostly in depression period might constitute a counter reaction from the people. One could argue that the dissemination of the publication in the late 1920s and beyond was impacted by the depression of 1929. Robert Beuka remarks that:

As has often been pointed out, Fitzgerald's personal and artistic fortunes seemed to parallel the trajectory of the nation itself over the two decades of the twenties and thirties. The boom-bust cycle of the postwar insouciance of the twenties (the decade Fitzgerald himself dubbed "the greatest, gaudiest spree in history") followed by the despair and desperation of the Great Depression in the thirties... (24)

Artistically, Fitzgerald's work, redolent with images of rich boys and rich girls negotiating high society life, fell out of favor with critics of the 1930s who were concerned with the plight of the suffering masses, as well as the ascent of a more proletarian strain in the national literature" (Beuka 24). Thus, the hard realities of the time could have diminished the interest in the first two films making Fitzgerald irrelevant to the social and literary scene. His perception of the rich has generally been considered a rather snobbish peculiarity.

The Great Gatsby was first published in 1925. Owen Davis wrote the stage version of the novel which opened at New York's Ambassador Theatre in 1926 and had a successful run. Upon its success, a silent film from Paramount was released. However, the film is now lost and all that survives is a one-minute long trailer. Reviews of the first *Gatsby* film suggest that, like so many other silent films of the era, accentuated the spectacle and sex of the novel (Leff 52). On the other hand, Dixon says that in view of the assessments of the film's general qualities as a cinematic work, it was an authentic adaptation yet devoid of imaginative direction (289).

The 1949 adaptation, directed by Elliot Nugent, tried to stay closer to the novel in that it used flashbacks to tell *Gatsby*'s backstory. But Nugent had to face serious pressures during the time of production which was the limitations of the Hays Code that meant a drawback in his interpretation of the novel. The Hays Code,

initiated by the activist lawyer Will H. Hays was a set of guidelines detailing what is morally acceptable on screen imposing Christian morality into popular American culture. According to Candace Ursula Grissom's observation, Nugent's film condemns sins of greed and adultery which is inconsistent with Fitzgerald who "sought to present the actions of the characters living in materialistic and promiscuous modern times without passing judgement upon them" (18). In order to comply with sensibilities of the era and avoid censorship, Nugent created a villain whose teachings were behind Gatsby's immoral and sinful life. The film also departs from Fitzgerald's novel in that Gatsby, portrayed by Alan Ladd is like a gangster. At the time the emergence of gangsters as an object of fear and fascination meant an attempt to restore the loose morality of the society. Although this was in compliance with the Hays Code and led Nugent to stage his adaptation as a film noir, it strayed from Fitzgerald's original text.

The new marketing techniques and equipment to endow Fitzgerald's imagery with cinematic quality paved the way for visual medium of the third film more than ever. 1974 version which was made by Jack Clayton put already famous actors, Robert Redford and Mia Farrow in leading roles. But more importantly, the film was scripted by an even more famous figure, Francis Ford Coppola. Coppola was confronted with a number of problems, especially in converting Fitzgerald's delicate impressionistic prose into concrete detailed scenes which inevitably threatened to destroy the poetic resonance of the novel. As agreed by many, Clayton's 144-minute Gatsby "depended solely on the visuals to carry the impact of the story" (Dixon 292). An important criticism brought by Louis Giannetti is Clayton's misinterpretation of Fitzgerald's famous party scenes. Fitzgerald's partygoers are a *mélange* of Broadway bootleggers, hangers on, the newly rich and a few society types and the keynote to these parties is the wasteful extravagance. Yet in Clayton's elegantly directed party scenes, the performers all seem carefree and gay (20). The director created a visual experience where the audience felt that they were literally given an opportunity to view the past through the lens of the camera. However, by paying close attention to all of the visual details represented in the novel, the plot was too slow and uncaptivating to its audience.

The new millennium has brought in a series of Gatsby adaptations, an opera, a ballet, and Robert Markowitz' TV movie (2000). The most recent film version of *The Great Gatsby* was made in 2013 by Australian Baz Luhrmann whose artistry is generally based on constant movements, lots of music and radiant costumes. Leonardo DiCaprio plays Gatsby who is an insecure loner, and his veritable belief in his impossible dreams makes the character particularly sympathetic for viewers. The film does not introduce the viewer to Gatsby who is more of a presence in the shadows for more than half an hour and according to Kenneth Eble, Fitzgerald also withholds information about Gatsby making a deliberately shadowy figure the central character of the novel. How well he succeeded can be argued from the fact that Gatsby is one of those few characters in American fiction, like Huck Finn and Hester Prynne, whose name immediately brings forth a type representative of a vital aspect of the American character and experience. It was obviously Fitzgerald's intent to make Gatsby both shadowy and clear, to emphasize the myth of Gatsby at the risk of slighting his reality (Eble 40). The main departure from the book is the invention of a framing device, which

finds narrator Nick Carraway, a patient in a sanatorium writing out his memories of Gatsby. Another liberty Luhrmann takes is Gatsby's famously ambiguous background and how he ended up as a self-made millionaire. Luhrmann adds a scene in which Gatsby confesses his past to Nick on the night after the accident killing Myrtle.

The biggest criticism about the film was the choice of music. Luhrmann uses contemporary artists like Jay Z, musical styles and updates melodies of 1920s to the hip hop of 2010s as soundtrack to the film. Luhrmann argues:

Fitzgerald was a pioneer, famed and controversial for using the then new and explosive sound called jazz in his novels and short stories – not just as decoration, but to actively tell a story using the immediacy of pop culture. He coined the phrase "the jazz age". So the question for me in approaching Gatsby was how to elicit from our audience the same level of excitement and pop-cultural immediacy toward the world that Fitzgerald did for his audience. And in our age, the energy of jazz is caught in the energy of hip-hop. (Renshaw)

Joe Morgenstern claims that the film's only governing principle is maximalism- everything has been made as big as possible. With an extravagant and flashy use of 3D technology, Gatsby's parties are turned into "a writhing mass of flesh, feathers, swinging pearls, flying tuxedos, fireworks, and breaking glass". As David Denby states in his review "All That Jazz", Gatsby's excess- his house, his clothes, his celebratory guests- is designed to win over his beloved Daisy. Luhrmann's vulgarity is designed to win over the young audience. A. O. Scott directs his criticism to the fact that in spite of sticking close to the details of the story and lifting dialogue and description directly from the novel's page, the result is a less conventional movie adaptation than a splashy, trashy opera, a wayward, lavishly theatrical celebration of the emotional and extravagance that Fitzgerald surveyed with fascinated ambivalence. Rather than keeping the novel's spirit alive, Luhrmann tries to appeal to young viewers' taste and hopes. As Philip French states, what sinks Luhrmann's picture is overstatement and noise, both visually and aurally.

It is hard to have a clear idea on what should be retained for a successful adaptation and approaches to adaptation also demonstrate versatility. Furthermore, things look different in the case of adaptations that are based on the books people love and have interiorized so intimately that they have become an integral part of their imagination like Gatsby. On the other hand, what should not go unmentioned is the strong wish to revisit the beloved world of the book through film which produces a feeling of hopeful expectation mixed with anxiety because the film is going to interfere with a world that is treasured and cherished. The motivation for adaptation is therefore rooted in the desire to witness the rebirth of a text. The Gatsby films meet at a common point of renewing the public interest in the novel so that those who see the film may take up the book, read or re-read it and find new images and echoes within its pages. Although each adaptation manifests an understanding of its own that the audience can relate to, they all seem to be confined to social, artistic and historical norms of the given time of production. Gatsby adaptations contribute to the book's popularity inducing a burst of critical and cultural fascination with Fitzgerald but a focus on the specifics and ignoring the larger context of Fitzgerald's main ideas and themes

or finding the right cinematic equivalents to the qualities of the book might be the reason for those getting lost in their adaptations. While 1926 silent movie is lost, 1949 version portrays Gatsby heavily involved in underworld in compliance with the sensitivities of the era, loose morality and the Hays Codes. 1974 version puts famous stars in charge but heavy engagement with visual details, and the length of the movie cause a setback from the essence of the book. Finally, 2013 adaptation introduces interesting choices of music and excessive use of technology in every aspect which is much to a critical reception. Adaptations can at times deviate from its purpose either in an excess of distance or closeness to the source text but following the major nuances of the book's complexity, coming to terms with what is considered as the spirit of the book, an adaptation as interpretation with its own internal logic could turn into a coherent and convincing work of art.

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Reviews

Chambers, Eddie. *Things Done Change. The Cultural Politics of Recent Black Artists in Britain*. Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2012.
299 pp. ISBN: 978-90-420-3443-3.

Chambers, Eddie. *Black Artists in British Art. A History Since the 1950s*. London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014.
ISBN: (HB) 978-1-78076-271-5, (PB): 978-1-78076-272-2.

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This review requires a definition first: what exactly is meant by “Black Artists” in the titles of both books? “Black” does not denote race or skin colour, but means a historically, culturally and politically constructed position in the context of black and Asian British citizens’ political struggle for recognition and equality. Chambers, who helped developing the concept of “Black” (or “black”) art in the UK, uses the word as an umbrella term, denoting people of African, Caribbean or Asian origin, although from the 1990s on it has become more common to differentiate between the various cultures.

While the history of literature created by black and Asian British writers in post-war Britain, has become a real success story, with a number of works now celebrated as milestones in the British literary canon, black visual art has not fared so well. It is true that since the 1990s a few artists like Anish Kapoor, Chris Ofili, Yinka Shonibare, Isaac Julien or Steve McQueen have won national and international fame, enjoying big exhibitions, winning prestigious prizes like the Turner and representing British art abroad, but only slightly older artists - who worked with a more pointed political agenda from the 1970s on - have had great difficulty in bringing their work to public knowledge. Their struggle for exhibition space is mirrored in the scarcity of academic research on their work. While exhibition reviews and some critical articles in newspapers and art magazines exist, there are few longer studies attempting an overview of the field. An interesting exception is Gen Doy’s book *Black Visual Culture. Modernity and Postmodernity* (2000), a theoretical analysis of black art’s position at the juncture of modernity and postmodernity, including detailed interpretations of artworks. Richard Hylton’s book *The Nature of the Beast Cultural Diversity and the Arts Sector* (2007) investigates the policies behind exhibition decisions and practices, while *Different*, edited by Stuart Hall and Mark Sealy in 2001, demonstrates the development of black photography from its beginning to the present, accompanied by an illuminating essay by Hall. Hall also convincingly wrote on the generational differences in the work of black artists working in Britain since World War II, the most important text being “Black Diaspora Artists in Britain: Three ‘Moments’ in Post-War History” (2006). Eddie Chambers’s two

books come as a very welcome expansion of research on the field, especially as they are the first produced by an artist himself with first-hand experience of the art scene.

Chambers, born in Wolverhampton in 1960, studied Fine Art at Sunderland Polytechnic and later obtained a PH D in Art History from Goldsmith College, London. He began his career as legendary BLK art group, four very young conceptual artists from the Midlands, determined to promote art with a distinct political trajectory. Later Chambers concentrated on curating only, staging over 40 shows, group and solo exhibitions of black artist in various British towns. His interest in art history eventually led to an academic career, pursued in universities in the Caribbean, Atlanta and finally Austin/Texas, where he now teaches as a professor for Diaspora Art History.

Chambers' two books are the natural climax of a long practice of writing for catalogues, newspapers, academic journals and art magazines. His varied activities and experiences within the art scene explain two characteristic features of both books. First, they offer enlightening insights into a rich wealth of sources, now hard to come by, out of Chambers' private archive, from which he generously quotes. Secondly, the books differ in their approach from the usually assumed objective stance of an academic analysis. Chambers rarely refers to theoretical categories and hardly ever uses academic jargon, but writes an easy, almost colloquial style, accessible also to readers with little knowledge of the field. Furthermore, the books do not aim at a full and/or balanced account of black art in the UK, but are political texts, and passionately so. As a combatant for political art, the author selects and judges his material according to personal preferences, highlighting the work of artists with a critical message and giving special attention to neglected or forgotten ones, while being short on – and sometimes dismissive of – some celebrities. The overall aim of his books is to explore the cultural politics behind the development of black art in Britain by analysing the supportive as well as the restricting forces (above all the art institutions' habitual Euro-centered perceptions) (Chambers 2012 xxxix).

The first study *Things Done Change* focuses on a conjuncture in recent times, the change from straightforwardly political art practised in the 1980s to a more indirect, ironic approach in the 1990s, which Chambers ascribes partly to the influences of the political climate under New Labour and the increasing globalisation of the art scene. That Chambers sees the development negatively is obvious from the headline of the last chapter: "Everything Crash". His narrative sets in in the 1980s, which has appeared to many as the high-tide of black British art. Chambers partly agrees: "Thus far, no moment in recent history has come close to replicating anything like the broad range of exhibition activity involving Black artists in the 1980s" (219). Yet he also warns of overestimating the progress as compared to the work produced before (2). After a long introduction, the book is divided into five chapters. The first tells the story of important exhibitions of black art through the 1980s, leading up to the highlights in two mainstream galleries, *From Two Worlds* in the Whitechapel Gallery 1986 and *The Other Story* in the Hayward Gallery 1989 which brought public recognition to a large number of practitioners for the first time, with due praise given to the activists and curators making them possible. The second chapter turns to the 1990s, focusing on Labour's policy of embracing – and de-politicising – black artists with the help

of the Honours System and honorary doctorates. Chapter 3, bitterly titled “Chris, Steve and Yinka: We Run Tings”, focuses on three artists, who – to Chambers’ dismay – by distancing themselves from “political correctness”, have reached “stratospheric success” (121) in the 1990s, ignoring both their forerunners and sidelined colleagues: painter Chris Ofili, painter and installation artist Yinka Shonibare and video artist Steve McQueen. This chapter ought to be read with caution, as Chambers’ partiality is over-obvious. While Shonibare is at least praised for his early “irreverent, brassy” (117) painterly work, and McQueen for his “seriousness”, Ofili fares worst. “Technical mastery” is granted to him (147), yet he is blamed for superficiality (*ibid.*), for only playing with the black image. The negative judgements are based on the analysis of only very few works, in Ofili’s case on the painting *No Woman No Cry*, which won him the Turner Prize in 1998. (For a positive judgement of Ofili’s art see e.g. Fusco 1999, for another critical view see Stallabrass 2006.) Chapter 4 traces the changing attitudes of public institutions to black art. The Tate Gallery as well as the British Art Show are shown to have long ignored black artists, but from the late 1980s on to have corrected their course. Chambers deplores, however, that some excellent artists were only posthumously honoured with retrospective shows, e.g. the Caribbean modernists Aubrey Williams and Ronald Moody as well as Donald Rodney, an especially talented member of the BLK group, who died prematurely. The last chapter sums up the course of exhibition possibilities from the 1960s to the present, when the prospects for black artists – with the exception of the happy few – have darkened for various reasons: exclusion from mixed shows, competition through increasing internationalism and the closing of a number of exhibition spaces, which once promoted black art.

Chambers’ second book, shorter and less polemical in tone than the first, aims at a historical overview of black British art since the 1950s. In his introduction the author dampens high expectations: his intention is not to offer a full account, but “to point to a number of significant personalities, exhibitions, and other initiatives that have benchmarked the postwar history of Black artists in Britain” (9). The selection, again determined by his personal preferences, follows chronology. Some chapters focus on important exhibitions: two shows attempting to compile a history of black British art, *The Other Story* in London 1989 and *Transforming the Crown* in New York 1997 (introduction), exhibitions of African art in Britain (Chapter 4) and the work of the Black Art Gallery, an influential private enterprise operating in the early 1990s (Chapter 8). Yet the larger part of the text deals with various generational and ethnic groups of artists, referring to the respective political situations in the countries of origin and the UK and, as a rule, analysing in detail one or two characteristic works of individuals. Separate chapters deal with the work and fate of artists who moved to the UK from various corners of the Commonwealth: modernist painters and sculptors from the Caribbean in the 1940s and 1950s, four lesser known Asians from India and Sri Lanka in the 1950s and 1960s, East African Indians, who fled after black independence in the 1970s. In Chapter 3 the 1970s are characterised as a critical period of change: increasing marginalisation as “ethnic artists” led to group-building and self-curating and the use of “Black” as an umbrella term. In the following part Chambers highlights the work of lesser known artists, who seem to him unfairly neglected, e.g. six “Earliest Black British Practitioners”, who

were not born but studied in the UK, among them Tam Joseph and Denzil Forrester whom Chambers particularly praises. While homosexual artists, including internationally successful Isaac Julien, are given only half a page (138), full three chapters are dedicated to the work of women, who have had to fight for recognition even harder than their male colleagues. Chambers points out that many of them have not only produced highly original work, but have also engaged in important curating activities, above all Sonia Boyce and Lubaina Himid. Surprisingly, the famous 1980s generation is treated very briefly (105-113): Chambers' own artistic, political and curatorial involvement is modestly not mentioned and instead the work of Keith Piper and Donald Rodney foregrounded. Among the artists appearing on the scene in the 1990s, again some lesser known ones like the painters Barbara Walker, Timothy Donkor and Godfried Donkor (no relation) are lovingly characterised, while the importance of "The Triumphant Triumvirate" is again played down and treated on mere 10 pages in a similar vein as in the first book, though less sharply. In the final chapter the author throws a glance at a new, upcoming generation, among whom painter Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, focusing on enigmatic fantasy portraits of dark-skinned characters, is probably the most promising talent. She was shortlisted for the Turner in 2013 and some of her work presented in the Haus der Kunst in Munich in 2016.

On the whole, Eddie Chambers' two books make an inspiring and very informative read, which offers discoveries of many lesser known, though highly gifted and original artists. Yet to get a more rounded picture of the work of the more prominent black British artists it seems advisable to turn to some additional sources.

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Keatinge, Benjamin and Marie Pierse, eds. *France and Ireland in the Public Imagination*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2014.
269 pp., ISBN 978-3-0343-1747-4.

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This volume is number 55 in the 'Reimagining Ireland' series and builds on Franco-Irish studies exploring "us and them" as nations and identities sharing similar values and tastes. Shaped by a common Catholic heritage, both countries opposed their English neighbour, and the editors Benjamin Keatinge and Marie Pierse explore major representatives from the history, literature or arts of both. The book is divided in four parts, one examining the perceptions of the two countries, the next observing cases of constructions and images based on literary examples, the third one noting various manifestations in the public realm, while the fourth dips into cuisine and high society entertainment.

In the first chapter Pierre Joannon explores historical affinities bringing Ireland closer to France, a result of numerous economic contacts and religious intersections, such as Lady Morgan, George Moore, Oscar Wilde or William Butler Yeats. The second, entitled "Seeing France: Varying Irish Perceptions at the Fin du Siècle", looks at the "multiplicity, complexity and fluidity of viewpoints" between the two states, examining examples taken from nineteenth-century periodicals, in a mixed display of "[p]rejudice and partisanship and propaganda" (44) in what covers Catholic issues, literary and artistic influences. In the last part of this section Anne Goarzin analyses exhibitions and artists that were popular at the time, featuring Brittany as a perfect case "to crystallize the Victorians thirst for travel and their fascination with Otherness" (61) through the works of Camille Corot, Eugène Boudin, Paul Gauguin and Roderic O'Connor. Artists not only engaged in bolder experimentation with colour, shapes and setting, but were also in search of a deeper understanding of their own identity, exploring productive contacts through "exchange with other European and American artists" (75).

The second part of the book covers examples of translations from French poetry into English, the post-war poetic representations from John Montague's works, and an examination of Michel Houellebecq's prose. In Part III, the analysis covers the historical context of the era of the Celtic Tiger, followed by insights into the poetry of Brendan Kennelly, the links between popularity and a poet's persona, and returning to the connections between poetry and painting emerging from Paul Durcan's works and those from Chagall, Balthus and Picaso.

Part IV closes the volume and includes three sections dedicated to cuisine and wine consumption, including cookery from the fifteen and sixteen centuries up to modern tastes and authors, such as Bishop Stock's narrative of the French invasion of Mayo in 1798 or hospitality and society as seen by Hannah Glasse, Maia Edgeworth, Mrs Baker or Dorothea Herbert. This continues with two chapters about wine consumption, including data about wine exports from Bordeaux and imports into Ireland, cases of hospitality and more recent trends transforming wine consumption.

The volume includes valuable cases related to writing, arts, history or public taste. We learn mainly about writers, travellers, and high society members. There are no mentions about other performing arts, except painting, to complement the overall picture. Despite this, the chapters fluidly cover figures from literature and history, showing the sympathies and common ground in terms of tradition between Ireland and France.

Delville, Michel. *Crossroads Poetics: Text Image Music Film and Beyond*. Prague: Litteraria Pragensia, 2013.
258 pp., ISBN 978-80-7308-452-3.

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Michel Delville's *Crossroads Poetics* is a sophisticated volume, encompassing a wide range of contemporary poetics. From silent film to video art, poetry, music and architecture, the intellectual objects of research are numerous and studied with a comparatist and applied approach. It openly fights "over-specialization in humanities" (7), to grasp a "selective picture of twentieth-century art" (7), more particularly what he refers to as "popular avant-garde" (7). Even though Delville resorts to such physical analogies as crossroads, extremities and bodies, he makes it clear that his approach is not to be understood as a pseudo Renaissance-style humanist one.

Within that intellectual frame, the book is a complex opus, relying, as stated in the table of matters, on connections, contexts and "(dis)continuities" (91) and one may regret, therefore, the absence of an index and a bibliography, which could have made it easier for the reader to find their way into the author's very rich reflection and multiple references, for the book is very well documented. In the end, it reads more like a collection of essays – a label Delville himself uses to introduce some of them (185) – than a structured book bridging gaps between its ten chapters. It is indeed advertised in the introduction as "including new essays alongside revised and expanded versions of articles which appeared (...) over the last fifteen years" (8), which explains why it could be regarded as lacking the coherence one may expect from the title on such a challenging topic.

Delville's main merits, then, are in allowing his audience to discover the power of discontinuities among the contemporary artists in the many fields he has dealt with, most of those artists coming from the English-speaking area, actors of his own very dense peopled pantheon, as could already be noticed in the author's previous abundant works.

The book begins with "Poetry and Silent Film", which proves one of the most accessible chapters within the volume, in part because of references to the famous artists that are Chaplin and Gertrude Stein; it is followed by "To Be Sung", a study on Melody considered as "the parent pauvre of modern musicology" (30). The following chapter, "Against Extremities" consists mainly in a commentary of several of Charles Tomlinson's poems, and postulates poetry as a refusal to yield

to “phenomenological dichotomies” (48); it is thus an interesting example of applied poetics by Delville.

The next chapter, dedicated to “The Prose Poem”, adds up to 63 pages divided into three parts and is also the longest. It includes both a close examination of former critical studies of the American and British prose poem format considering “Issues” and “Figures, Contexts, (Dis-)continuities”, and a presentation of eight contemporary American poets and their works, drawing parallels with European writers such as Kafka or Beckett. The belief that this “form [...] exists by virtue of other genres it tends to appropriate” (138) certainly explains the interest of Delville in that “crossover” format, evocative of the “crossroads” he advertises in his book’s title.

The next chapter aims at “Rethinking the Detail” in language and visibility: the process is understood as distinguishing “what is seen from what is not seen” (142) in what the author refers to as “concrete poetry” (148) and will be of particular interest to readers concerned with Reception theories.

This is also the case for “Revisiting Joseph Cornell”, which takes a look at the collagist artist’s work from Victorian fairy tales, analyzed as a result of “collection, selection and contrast” (162), processes that also shed a different light on the previous chapter about detail.

“More Thoughts on Popular Avant-Garde” is dedicated to one of Delville’s favorites, musician Frank Zappa, the subject of several former studies of his, whose eclecticism is particularly stressed here, both as “a composer and a political agitator” (200). It illustrates the originality of Delville’s approach, considering the arts outside of the usual frontiers delineating them: the example of rock lyrics, understood here both as a performative gesture and conceptual composition (185) pays tribute to this conception.

Chapter 8, on the “Architectural Body”, resorts more to semiotics and “the irreversibility of our perception of space-time” (218), with numerous quotes from Baudrillard and Kristeva, and advocates the virtue of poetry as a way to “defamiliarize our surroundings and make us see the world at a slight angle from everyday reality” (219), which could also apply to Delville’s work as a whole. It is no wonder then that Chapter 9 is concerned with “The Ghost of Repetition in Video Art”, especially the figure of the loop as a revisiting and rereading process. It considers video as an art implying both audio and video, the visual fully benefiting from former sound experimentations, such as splitting, mixing and so on.

The last essay, “On Disgust”, works, and is introduced, as an epilogue. It offers a reflection on “the levelling power of hunger, digestion, decay, filth and human defilement” (248). One may wonder why this should be the final chapter of Delville’s book, a question which is certainly answered by the end of the above quote: “to challenge authority and oppression”. It is a goal that the whole book may achieve in a sense: defying the authority of the traditional fields of research, crossing the many borders between scholarly disciplines, it reads both as provocative and disturbing the arrangement of the academic order. But isn’t that at the very core of dialectics?

This makes it a complex and intriguing work, which might prove difficult to grasp for the naïve reader: Delville’s reliance on analogies such as loop and repetition may be an indication of the way one should apprehend his well-

informed volume. It calls for many visits, separated by times of reflection in between, food for thought in earnest.

Baisnée, Valérie. *Through the Long Corridor of Distance: Space and Self in Contemporary New Zealand Women's Autobiographies*. Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2014.

156 pp., ISBN 978-9042038684.

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In *Through the long corridor of distance*, author Valérie Baisnée compares several autobiographies from New Zealand female writers and their relationship to space, place and its bearing on textual identity. She notes the considerable surge of New Zealand autobiographies since the 1970s and likens it to a reflective phase in New Zealand culture, especially for Pākehā women, the racial group she chose to study. According to Baisnée, the study of Geography is particularly relevant in the field of postcolonial autobiographies as it creates in writers a sense of belonging (introduction) and national identity. She highlights the political aspect of female autobiographical writing, which she deems ambiguous as it enables women to speak for themselves but still in a dominated position. (xix). Another political aspect of the Pākehā biographies is that some biographies trying to legitimize “white native culture” and sees it as a way to reassert and reinvent the Pākehā identity especially in the wake of the Maori Renaissance.

In the first chapter, the author shows how these women’s writing can be seen as a threshold, a physical entry of the space of autobiography “the thresholds of autobiography logically lead to the entrance to a home, the space within which women do not fit as neatly as they are supposed to” (23). To further this discussion, the second chapter explores all the meanings of “home” and its many functions. Western women are traditionally enclosed in the domestic home where they were seen to belong. The author explains how, through their writings, women redefine the concept of home and meanwhile of their own place in the New Zealand literary field. She demonstrates that through autobiographies “homes” can be seen as a “lost time-space”, a trap where women are caged within a representation of themselves, but also sometimes utopian dwellings when the authors remember their childhood.

Chapter three *Displaced bodies, Disembodied Texts* explores the rites of passage such as periods, loss of virginity and childbirth in a woman’s life through three narrators - Frame, Edmond and Kidman - keeping in mind the constraint of autobiographical discourse. Baisnée points out that the authors whose narrative is set in the 1950s bear the trace of post colonial conformism in contrast to the youngest writer, though she also is reluctant to discuss bodily experiences. She then transitions to Chapter 4 dealing with landscapes highlighting the fact that it is a topic more openly broached in literature “if body and autobiographical self still entertain an uneasy relationship, the bond between self and landscape is

often acknowledged and celebrated” (75) and that both women and landscapes are traditionally an “object of a gaze” (79). She also mentions the near obligation for New Zealand writers to write about landscapes pointing out that while Maori writers have no issue with having a strong sense of belonging to the land, the Pākehā seem to have trouble adopting a stance other than that of an observer of the land. Pākehā writers criticize the harm done to the ecosystem by corporations and the Government without condemning Colonization, with the exception of Kidman who is fully conscious that the landscape’s remodeling by the Pākehā is a clear mark of gendered and racial domination.

The last chapter concentrates on the literary itinerary of the writers studied, and the many obstacles they faced having to do more with the New Zealand literary scene (or absence thereof) than gender. She lists expatriation, consignment to psychiatric hospitals, suicide, poverty and lack of opportunity “the realization that New Zealand is invisible in the world of English literature participates to the perception of their identity as writers” (107). She mentions several writers who initially did not identify as writers since they perceived there were no writers in New Zealand. She concludes that hardly any of them as had a linear career in literature but rather had to work and have several lives before existing as writers.

As the book reaches its final chapter its objectives are summed up: to examine spatial concepts and how it might be useful in the study of women’s autobiographies and the question of self. Anchored in feminism, the author insists on the need not to view the self solely as a performance but as a “linguistic and cultural space marked by several thresholds in the form of the various paratexts surrounding the text proper” (129) and highlights the “elusiveness of boundaries”.

I found this book a valuable scholarly work about a too little-studied field of literature. The themes are clearly delineated in each chapter making it a useful tool for researchers in Commonwealth Literature. The book is not written in an overly academic style, making it a good read for someone wanting to broaden their literary horizons.

Gallagher, Donat and Carlos Villar Flor. *In the Picture. The Facts behind the Fiction in Evelyn Waugh’s “Sword of Honour”*. Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2014.

ISBN: 978-90-420-3900-1.

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Evelyn Waugh’s war novels *Men at Arms* (1952), *Officers and Gentlemen* (1955) and *Unconditional Surrender* (1961), from the trilogy *Sword of Honour* (1961), were studied and reviewed by critics like Joseph Frank (1952) who considers that in *Men at Arms*, Waugh had fallen in love with his subject (19). More recent works, as for instance, *Evelyn Waugh, Fictions, Faith and Family* by Michael G. Brennan (2013) concentrate on the religious reconstruction of the main character,

Guy Crouchback. Considering that this character was inspired by Waugh's experiences during the Second World War, scholars showed little interest in analysing the historical context which stands behind the fiction. Nonetheless, Donat Gallagher and Carlos Villar Flor, as experts in Waugh's work, examine the historical and biographical events behind the trilogy in the volume *The Facts behind the Fiction in Evelyn Waugh's Sword of Honour* (2014). Divided into two major sections, the authors first analyse the insights of the historical facts behind the fiction, such as Waugh's training in the British Marines, the Dakar expedition and the Battle of Crete. Secondly, the volume focuses on Waugh's military reputation and refutes the criticism brought by Waugh's biographers and critics like Christopher Sykes (1975) and Martin Stannard (1992) regarding his actions as captain, his War Diary written in Crete or his work as a member of the No. 37 Military Mission in Croatia. Thus, this book is directed to those readers interested in a better understanding of the trilogy, the novelist's military career and the complicated nature of the Second World War, which Gallagher and Villar Flor examine through the eyes of Waugh, a first-hand witness of the conflict.

The first part of the volume entitled "A Place in that Battle" written by Villar Flor, presents the historical events that influenced the actions of Guy Crouchback. In *Men at Arms*, Guy was living in a small Italian Village, when he learned about the Spanish Civil War initiated in 1936, the failure of the agreement signed in Munich by Germany, United Kingdom, France and Italy in 1938 regarding the annexation of the Sudetenland, and the Non-aggression Pact between Russia and Germany of 1939 (Gallagher & Villar Flor, p. 18-19). This uncertain atmosphere convinced Guy that a war was imminent and decided to return to England and join the army. After a long search for a job, he was accepted by Major Tickeridge in the Halberdiers regiment. There is an autobiographical detail in Guy's search for employment in the military, since Waugh as well as Guy, had his application constantly rejected (21). He was finally admitted in the Royal Marines on October 1939, and on December he was called up to the Marine Division at Chatham for a training course. Waugh ended the training at Bisley, Surrey, and in May 1940 he was appointed a captain.

Villar Flor reconstructs the events of the main operations of Waugh, like the failed expedition of Dakar in 1940 and the Battle of Crete of 1941. The Dakar expedition also known as "Operation Menace" was initiated by the Allies in order to overthrow the pro-German Vichy administration and substitute it with the Free French of Charles De Gaulle in French West Africa (p. 44). The operation began on 31 August, when a convoy of 8,000 troops sailed from Scapa Flow reaching Freetown on 14 September. Once they reached Dakar, the action developed during three days being cancelled on the afternoon of 25 September (46-48). The outcome of the Dakar expedition was interpreted by Waugh as dishonourable since he considered that "bloodshed has been avoided at the cost of honour" (Amory, 1980, 141). Disappointed by the Royal Marines, Waugh joined the Commandos and went to the Battle of Crete as Intelligence Officer under the command of Robert Laycock in Layforces' battalions. Laycock and his men were destined to Suda Bay port, which they reached on 26 May in order to ensure the rearguard for the allied troops in their withdrawal to Sphakia (p. 64-65). Waugh and Laycock reported to the general C. A. Weston who soon ordered capitulation on account of "the circumstances of demoralization, food and ammunition

shortages” (69). Thus, Waugh, Laycock and Brigade Major Freddie Graham managed to embark in the last ship on 31 May reaching Alexandria in the afternoon of 1 June. The Battle of Crete was clearly recreated in the novel *Officers and Gentlemen*, and Villar Flor identifies some characters with the real participants at the battle, such as Laycock being performed by “Tommy Blackhouse” or Major Graham by “Fido Hound” (72).

In the second part of the volume entitled “Four Myths Explored”, Gallagher attempts to contest the criticism brought to Waugh’s military career. A relevant aspect of this second part of the monograph is Gallagher’s consciousness regarding the “fog of misinformation” around Waugh’s military experience, which could cause controversy (135). Thus, Cristopher Sykes, Waugh’s biographer, stated that Waugh was disliked by his men and it was impossible to fit him in “the humblest military organization” (159, 165). Gallagher clarifies that such statements come from second-hand sources like Major Brian Franks, and the accounts Sykes employs to support his claims are inaccurate (165). Waugh’s criticism goes further, as Jacob Astor, a friend of Sykes, accused Waugh of being utterly unfitted to be an officer because he took advantage of his high education in order to bully his soldiers “in a way they were unused to. He bewildered them, purposely” (as quoted in Sykes, 1975, 228). Gallagher notes that Waugh, to some extent, despised and bullied his men, as he was twice removed from command of Royal Marine companies for “his uneasy relationships with troops” (164). However, Gallagher states that if Waugh behaved in a bullying way as Astor affirmed, then Private Austen of Brigade Signals would not have “favoured Waugh over the other officers in Headquarters” (164). Probably Waugh’s uncomfortable relations with the troops might have been stimulated by his “regrettable class-based snobbery”, as he preferred to relate to lower-middle class officers rather than working-class soldiers (170).

Waugh’s expedition to Crete was also censured by his critics. The author was accused of fleeing Crete, breaking orders and taking the place of others (Gallagher & Villar Flor, 77). Stannard (1992) seems to be the most biased in his statements, as he mentioned that “Waugh’s hypocrisy rocketed” and “*sauve qui peut* was a game at which Waugh was particularly adept” (38). Stannard alleges that Waugh displaced others in order to get himself an illegal position in the evacuation (38). In Waugh’s defence, Gallagher (2014) presents military sources like the Admiralty report, which stated that at midnight on 31 May/1 June, “the embarkation proceeded so quickly that for a time the beach was empty of troops” (78). If the report was right, then Waugh could not open himself a path through the multitudes as Stannard assumed. In addition, Antony Beevor, a military historian affirmed that Waugh falsified the War Diary in order to cover Laycock’s misconduct and exposed his guilt in *Officers and Gentlemen*. Gallagher mentions that such charges are based on incomplete information and “incorrect guesses” (175-76).

Nevertheless, there is a representative episode in Waugh’s military life, which Gallagher and Villar Flor present in this volume, and which in my opinion redeems Waugh as a respectable officer: his actions in Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia in 1944, where he denounced Marshal Tito’s persecution of the Catholic Church. In 1944, Waugh joined No. 37 Military Mission in Dubrovnik alongside Rudolph Churchill as a superior officer. He issued a report entitled “Church and State in

Liberated Croatia” focusing on the National Liberation Front and Army of National Liberation (the Partisans) and their Communist doctrine. The main standpoint of the report was to determine the number of Roman Catholic clerics involved in Ustase crimes as well as the number of Catholic priests executed by the partisans in Dubrovnik (276). Waugh’s claim was that Britain helped Tito to establish a Marxist regime in an area of 5,000,000 Catholics and by its nature, this regime threatened to eliminate Catholicism in that zone. Waugh hoped that Britain could induce Tito to modify his policy and allow the Catholic Church to survive. Waugh did his best to denounce Tito’s crimes, nonetheless the answer from the War Office to the report was that Waugh provided a fair picture of “the treatment of the Catholic Church in Croatia, but the Foreign Office firmly rejects any argument that Her Majesty’s Government must be held to be in part responsible” (as cited in Gallagher & Villar Flor, 277).

In conclusion, this volume could be interpreted as a historical study based on Waugh’s trilogy *Sword of Honour*, which allows the authors to clarify many of the circumstances of the Second World War and put some light on Waugh’s military service. Gallagher and Villar Flor employ the novelist’s war experiences to reconstruct the scenes of the Dakar Operation, the Battle of Crete and the chaotic atmosphere of Tito’s Yugoslavia. The authors also provide a complete study of Waugh’s military career since the moment he joined the Royal Marines in 1939 until 1945 when he retired after his last mission in Dubrovnik. Supporting their arguments on documentary material provided by institutions such as NZ National Archives, the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives or the Imperial War Museum in London, Gallagher and Villar Flor examine and elucidate the charges that biographers and scholars made about Waugh’s activities during wartime. Thus, this insightful research is a revealing and valuable contribution to Waugh studies, which intertwines the historical and biographical events with the fictional components of the trilogy.

Nixon, Mark. *Samuel Beckett’s German Diaries 1936-1937*. London & New York: Continuum, 2011.
272 pp., ISBN 978-1441152589.

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Found in a trunk by Edward Beckett following the death of his renowned uncle, the Diaries were first mined by Beckett’s official biographer James Knowlson in his 1996 biography *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett*. The picture of Beckett dragging himself round Nazi Germany, plagued by illness and fatigue, while heroically maintaining (most of) his arduous art-historian’s itinerary, emerges from Knowlson’s account as does the then under-appreciated connoisseurship Beckett attained in the visual arts. Knowlson’s always sympathetic account nonetheless recounts a Beckett rather ‘at the end of his tether’ and, as we know, the frustrations of a completed, but unpublished

Murphy, and a lack of a creative direction were perhaps factors which drove Beckett to his German journey and which preoccupied him on the road.

And so, we read in Beckett's *Letters* (volume 1) the following diatribe to Mary Manning Howe written from Berlin in December 1936:

"The trip is being a failure. Germany is horrible. Money is scarce. I am tired all the time. I keep a pillar to post account [the Diaries], but have written nothing connected since I left home, nor disconnected. And not the faint of a book beginning." This revealing letter sets the tone for much of Beckett's self-evaluations in the Diaries themselves. Without self-pity, Beckett recounts his various woes – mental, physical, financial, creative – after the fashion of his own post-war creations. Nixon's study, just as Knowlson before him, shows an ever-inquisitive Beckett immersing himself in German art, literature, philosophy and music all of which will resurface in his subsequent writings and creative statements. The Diaries themselves are a goldmine of aperçus and biographical data and Nixon is an expert guide and mediator of this material. But there remains the important sense that Beckett was 'in a rut', unable to write his way out of a creative dead-end and the Diaries serve as a substitute for the writing which Beckett was *not* doing, just as note-taking would serve to fill a creative vacuum both before and after Beckett's German trip. Nixon's overall conclusion is that the Diaries articulate an artistic struggle within Beckett's psyche to rid himself of the inessential and to write 'from the depths', as it were, as he does in the post-1945 writing. We can agree with the documentary value of the Diaries while also acknowledging the essential aimlessness of Beckett's German journey. Indeed, this is the very sentiment Beckett conveys to Mary Manning Howe while also dwelling on the physical and mental 'mess' and his all-pervading sense of failure. All the ingredients of Beckett's post-war work are there in this brief self-analysis to Manning Howe. What Nixon achieves in this study is to fill out and evaluate the multiple cultural strands which would embellish and reinforce the basic pointlessness and futility of Beckett's vision as expressed in this letter.

Usefully, Nixon reminds us of the cultural history behind the diary as a literary form. Unlike some modernist writers (Kafka and Woolf spring to mind), Beckett was not an habitual diarist. His German Diaries conform to the particular sub-genre of the travel diary and they minutely record, as Nixon recounts, all the "offal of experience" from Beckett's journey. In doing so, the Diaries range from miscellaneous observations on art and literature down to what Nixon terms "the pathology of everyday life". This juxtaposition of high and low, art and pathology, the sublime and the ridiculous is, in itself, a Beckettian paradigm reminding us of the contradictions in the most moving moments of Beckett's art (the ending of *Waiting for Godot* comes to mind). The diary is also, importantly, a series of entries based on the 'present state' of the author and it is a mode which would influence Beckett's most important fictional work, for example, Malone's notebook and pencil antics in *Malone Dies*. Furthermore, as Nixon also notes, diary writing is, of its nature, fragmentary, a series of snapshots rather than a chronological panorama. The diary can present a succession of moods, events, activities without giving them a schematic logic. And this sense of the discontinuity in experience is of course central to all of Beckett's fiction.

Equally valuable, is Nixon's exposition of the manner in which a diary can problematise the autobiographical self who writes it. Thus, "[b]y splitting the self

into a recording ‘I’ and a recorded ‘I’, a distancing perspective is established which allows even more observation of the self [...] the immediacy and the specifically self-reflexive nature of the diary collapses this gap between the teller and told, resulting in a self-contained act of self-writing.” These insights enable Nixon, towards the close of his analysis, to link Beckett’s “self-writing” in the Diaries with his use of first-person narrators for his most important post-war prose beginning with the war-time novel *Watt* (itself a kind of journal or diary of the oddities in Mr Knott’s domain) through to the famous, problematic narrators of the *Trilogy*. If Beckett in London in 1934-35 had attempted a talking-cure with Wildred Bion, in Germany from 1936-37, he attempted a writing cure with his Diaries. If neither mode of therapy was notably successful, both provided Beckett with insights and materials which would emerge fully after the war. Nixon’s book provides invaluable information on the numerous writers, artists, collectors, art historians, book dealers whom Beckett encountered in Germany and as a whole, Nixon’s book provides an excellent overview for English readers of Beckett’s engagement with German language, art and literature. However, what distinguishes the book is Nixon’s superb analysis of Beckett’s artistic development during a period when nothing of substance was being created by him. In retrospect, it was an incubatory period during which Beckett’s creative methodologies were still being formed. But Nixon’s exhaustive archival research has given us the best guidance possible as to how these seemingly aimless wanderings through Germany actually yielded artistic insights which would serve Beckett well as a mature writer.

Finally, we cannot ignore that fact that Beckett visited Germany as it was entering into the darkest period of its history. Indeed, Beckett’s visit from September 1936 to April 1937 coincided with a general tightening of Nazi regulation in the cultural sphere so that many of the Expressionist paintings Beckett most wanted to see were banished to basements and were not accessible (although Beckett showed great resourcefulness in accessing paintings that were officially off-limits). In addition, Beckett encountered museum curators, artists and art historians whose livelihoods had been taken away by Nazi edict. Beckett’s Diaries show a predictable fatigue and disgust with what he saw of the Nazi regime. However, as Andrew Gibson notes, “To intellectuals hungry for a meditated Beckettian dissection of contemporary Germany, the diaries may seem frustrating [...] Beckett’s responses to Nazi Germany were quite often visceral as much as intellectual, and frequently turbulent and intense, if in some ways contained.” Beckett could see the sinister and also (for a foreigner) absurd and comic malignity of the system and its leaders. He could sympathise with German intellectuals adversely affected by the regime and indulge in some offhand anti-Nazi satire in the Diaries without taking a systematised political stance against Nazism. This has sometimes surprised Beckett scholars given Beckett’s wartime record as a decorated member of the French Resistance. However, it is clear that Beckett saw and absorbed what was going on around him, including his reading of German newspapers and acquisition of banned or soon to be banned books, and Nixon demonstrates Beckett’s awareness of the “Kulturkampf” surrounding him. The long-range influence of this close-up encounter with Nazism on Beckett’s political outlook should not be underestimated.

Nixon’s book is an important intervention in Beckett studies. We are unlikely to see a more coherent and persuasive analysis of Beckett’s pre-war encounter

with German culture and Nixon's citations from the Beckett archive are exemplary.

Barboar, Sarah, David Howard, Thomas Lacroix, and Judith Misrahi-Barak, eds. *Diasporas, Cultures of Mobilities, 'Race'*. 2. *Diaspora, Memory and Intimacy*. Montpellier: Presses Universitaires de la Méditerranée, 2015. 258 pp., ISBN 978-2-36781.

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Diaspora, Memory and Intimacy is the second collection of essays that constitutes *Diasporas, Cultures of Mobilities, 'Race'*. This volume addresses mobility and its contribution to the construction of transnational identities from a multidisciplinary context. The volume itself is based on multinational case studies, and its concern is to question the "incorporation and subjectification of the diasporic condition" (10). The contributors provide different approaches that debate how the subject, through mobility and interaction with the Other, can perceive the self. The study concludes that recognition of the self can only be attained through notions of de-territorialization. To fully elaborate on the issue of diasporic self-construction of identity, Sarah et al opt for dividing the volume into three main sections, and in each section the contributors explore an aspect of the "complexities of the diasporic experience" (10).

Section one, "Questions of theory, history and memory", focuses on the different theoretical manoeuvres relative to diaspora and the cultures of mobilities from various spatial perspectives. In Chapter one, "African Diaspora Theory", Maggi Morehouse argues for a theory specific to the African diaspora. With the help of a multidisciplinary approach that ranges from literature and sociology, Morehouse explains that the African diaspora theory can provide "a framework for understanding the socio-historical experiences" (19) of mobility from the perspective of racial differences. Through the analysis of the autobiographies of Olaudah Equino and Mary Prince and Bruce Chatwin's novel *The Viceroy Ouidah*, she concludes that "organic theory" can provide an interesting framework to understand African dispersal and community formation. An anthropological approach to literature is developed in the following Chapter of "D'exiles en migrations", where Mélanie Pénicaud seeks to locate the exilic Iranian within the wider scope of migration. In her analysis, Pénicaud concludes that the experience of migration need be read in line with the experience of exile if one seeks to capture the "heuristic" approach of exile (47).

The question of subalternity is also emphasized in "Fighting against post-colonial optimism". Through her reading of Monique Truong's *The Book of Salt* and Linh Dinh's two short stories, Debora Stefani points out that both concepts of "transnation" and "interstices" block the diasporic subjects from obtaining agencies and therefore freeze them within the scope of subalternity. Comparing between how memory is transmitted among different diasporic groups is the issue

of section four. Evelyne Ribert's intention from studying two Spanish migrant groups – “the Spanish refugees who arrived in France after the Spanish Civil War (1936–39) [...] and the Spanish immigrants who arrived in France during the 1950s and 1960s” (64) – is to show how memory is transmitted between the exilic and the diasporic. The sociological approach she follows and the interviews she conducted permit to realize the following conclusion: whereas the economic migrant tries to rewrite the past, the past is perceived as silent for the refugee. This is so because memory is territorialized as trauma that the refugee wants to forget.

Section two, *Intersecting identities*, debates the sites where the diasporic subjects construct identity. ‘race’ and nation are two main strands of these intersections that help in the construction of diasporic identities. In her “A quest of identity”, Adriana C. Oliveira focuses on how the notion of the nation problematizes the construction of identity. Through the study the phenomenon called “dekassegui”, “an emigration of Brazilians of Japanese descent to Japan” (83), Oliveira advocates that the difficulty of accepting Brazil as home rests in the individual's view of identity as different, which culture, race, and language are considered as push factors to this complexity.

A similar view is adopted in “Carrying Africa’, becoming Lebanese”. In this Chapter, Ghenwa Hayek studies the representation of returned African Lebanese in selected Lebanese fiction. This study reveals “a gnawing anxiety over the meaning of Lebanese identity and the viability of Lebanon itself” (102). Also, Suzanne Scafe studies how space, place, and affect constitute important indicators in forming the diasporic in the study of Diana Evans's *26A* and *The Wonder*. Scafe points out that the affect of space and place are “significant [in the] reconfigurations of a national imaginary” (117). In so doing, Scafe sees both space and place as sites of intersection where the notion of the nation is reconstructed. Another intersection of race and space in the formation of diasporic identity is illustrated in “Meeting Mr Hyde and Dr Stone”. In this Chapter, Christine Vogt-William also uses Diana Evans's novel *26A* to suggest that both diaspora and race constitute two main emblems that help in the “shaping of home spaces” (136), which places the diasporic subject in the space of the in-betweenness.

Section three is devoted to the study of mobility of the diasporic body. Zoran Pecic in his “Re-creating the queer narrative” attempts to discuss the role of mobility in the construction of sexuality. He argues that sexuality is perceived “as a mobile tactic of deterritorializing the relationship between diaspora and queer” (157), and in so doing geography becomes an important indicator in reshaping the territory of sexuality. When body becomes suggestive of diasporic identity construction, dance, according to Pat Noxolo is introduced as a tool that helps in the imagining of geographies. In “moving maps”, Noxolo suggests that dance carries a number of meaningful elements that deterritorialize the Africa-Caribbean diaspora in Europe, and also push the diasporic to remap the notions of both place and space. The case of New Zealand differs from the previous case studies. Whereas Aurélie Condevaux discusses the different sociopolitical factors that guide the relationship between the dominant groups, which opt for a homogeneous nation, and the minorities calling for a wider scope of multicultural state, Joanne Drayton in her “Across the Board” project uses the “push–pull” factors as a way of examining the consequences of colonialism on the natives. In

doing this, she seeks to explore how the diasporic identity is formed in New Zealand, and the ways in which these formations are articulated.

To conclude, this volume is an excellent contribution to the studies in diaspora. With the different perspectives and case studies that are presented to the reader, *Diaspora* discusses both the notion of deterritorialization and transnationalism.

Le Juez, Brigitte and Olga Springer, eds. *Shipwreck and Island Motifs in Literature and the Arts*. Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2015. 351pp., ISBN: 978-90-04-29875-0.

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This collection is the fruit of a summer school held at Dublin City University in July 2011 on the subject of “Interdisciplinary and Comparative Perspectives on Motifs in Literature and the Arts: The Shipwreck and the Island”. It bears the hallmarks of the interdisciplinary eclecticism and diversity of such a gathering and the contributions range from the theoretical, to explorations of insular or island themes in popular culture, to studies of classic writers from the early modern period to the twentieth century and in contemporary literature with forays into music and the visual arts along the way. Individually, there is much good scholarship here with illuminating readings of a range of texts and authors – Shakespeare, Milton, Defoe, Robert Louis Stevenson, Aldous Huxley, Edith Wharton among them – but the volume struggles to hold together in places despite the editors’ best efforts to provide a framework for the disparate material.

The volume is divided into five sections: “Shipwrecks, Islands and Subjectivity”, “The Island as Aesthetic Concept”, “Weathering the Tempest – Images of Shipwrecks and the Islands from Ancient to Modern Times”, “The Island as Feminine Space” and “Experimental Shipwrecks and Island as Laboratory”. As Le Juez and Springer explain in their helpful “Introduction”, the volume combines “analyses of shipwrecks and islands from different scholarly angles, examining works of Anglophone, Francophone, Gaelic, Germanic and Hispanic origins” (3). Perhaps the overall linking theme is that of the *Robinsonade* since Daniel Defoe’s landmark 1719 depiction of Robinson Crusoe’s desert island autonomy can be regarded as a hinge text linking ancient to early modern to modern views of “the insular” and what it might tell us about modern interrogations of subjectivity and identity. Equally, Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* (1610/11) is also an archetypal text here since it sets up another important island theme, the idea of rejuvenation of self with the island serving as a separate realm where the standard mores of social life and polite society do not apply. These problematics are implicitly or explicitly addressed in several of the essay contributions. Volkmar Billig usefully explores “‘I-lands’: The Construction and Shipwreck of an Insular Subject in Modern Discourse” in the opening chapter convincingly demonstrating how islands have informed “the subjectivist

discourse of European modernity” (17) via Kant and Rousseau among other influential thinkers. Similar intimations of modernity are reviewed by Heather H. Yeung in relation to the Hebrides, islands that inspired some major works in literature, music and art of the Romantic period, notably works by Walter Scott, Byron, Mendelssohn and J.M.W. Turner. Another broad overview is provided by Barbara Freitag who examines the “phantom island” (123) of Hy Brasil which haunted the maritime maps by European cartographers from the mid-fourteenth century as a “cartographic error” which was only expunged in the nineteenth century but which provided much cultural ballast and nautical confusion in the intervening years.

For those readers who are not specialists in island studies or who have not yet absorbed the full range of approaches offered by the archipelagic turn in literary studies, these general essays may be of greater interest than the more specialised contributions focusing on a single text or author. Surprisingly, the islands of Ireland and Scotland receive relatively scant attention in the volume as a whole and this reader missed discussions of Irish poets like Richard Murphy whose 1963 volume *Sailing to an Island* contains major poems of the sea, not least “The Cleggan Disaster” about a terrible maritime tragedy off the coast of Connemara in 1927. Indeed, an anthology like *100 Island Poems of Great Britain and Ireland* edited by James Knox Whittet (2005) demonstrates the embarrassment of riches in Irish and British archipelagic poetry, very little of which receives attention in this volume. Equally, Paddy Bushe’s *Voices at the Worlds Edge: Irish Poets on Skellig Michael* (2010) similarly shows how responsive contemporary Irish poets can be to the islands and the coastal regions of Ireland. Paddy Bushe’s own poem “Stormbound” might almost be tailor made for consideration here, as would the poems in Richard Murphy’s major collection *High Island* (1974).

This book weighs in to current debates more effectively by its inclusion of essays that take a cultural studies approach to island themes. Michael Hinds’ witty analysis of atomization within pop music culture in his essay “Robinson in Headphones: The Desert Island as Pop Fetish” is both enjoyable and provocative. Equally, Pat Brereton’s contribution on “Shipwrecks and Desert Islands: Ecology and Nature – A Case Study of How Reality TV and Fictional Films Frame Representations of Islands” shows how the trope of the island and the *Robinsonade* manifests itself in the popular modes of reality TV. If Robinson Crusoe represents a kind of hardy masculinity typical of the British literature of Empire, several contributors here show how more contemporary writers have sought to question the very gendered genre that the *Robinsonade* can represent. The fourth section of the book on “The Island as Feminine Space” is thus a useful intervention to these debates with certain stereotypes coming under the microscope, for example, in Sara K. Day’s essay “‘Maybe Girls Need an Island’: Desert Islands and Gender Troubles in Libba Bray’s *Beauty Queens*” and in Amy Hicks’ essay “Recreating Home for the New Girl: Domesticity and Adventure in L.T. Meade’s *Four on an Island*”.

One might suggest that the eclecticism of *Shipwreck and Island Motifs in Literature and the Arts* is both its strength and its weakness. The volume is effective in interrogating certain motifs and in showing how the genre of island literature has crossed generic boundaries and traversed both literary and non-literary modes of representation. Having said that, the volume doesn’t provide an

inclusive overview nor does it explore anything like the full extent of such representations and it is surprisingly silent on many excellent texts by Irish, Scottish and Welsh authors. One may thus welcome the consideration given in the volume to several lesser-known novels, as well as the theoretical rigour of the essays, while, at the same time, some readers may regret the omissions mentioned in this review.

Tearle, Oliver. *T.E. Hulme and Modernism*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013. 192 pp., ISBN 978-1441156655.

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It is likely that most readers first came across Thomas Ernest Hulme through Ezra Pound's famous remarks in *The complete poetical works of T.E. Hulme*, itself an addition to his own *Ripostes*. That these remarks influenced Hulme's posthumous reputation is undeniable; they are in all possibility one of the main reasons for the existence of that reputation. A little more than a century after his death, Hulme's importance is recognized and his scant writings have been exhaustively studied. Robert Ferguson (2002) produced a thorough biography of our author, who is also one of the theorists of modernist poetry studied by Rebecca Beasley (2007). It might be a slight exaggeration to refer to such a discipline as "Hulme Studies", as Tearle does in the book under review, but Hulme can hardly be said to be languishing in obscurity.

T.E. Hulme and Modernism, despite its title, is not primarily concerned with the relationship between the two, which is well established. Rather, it illustrates a point that Tearle makes towards the end of the book: "one of the reasons Hulme has continued to attract attention from critics is that his role in the development of modernism is always being reassessed, through the lenses of various critical theories and fashions - New Criticism, deconstruction, historicism" (133). This book, then, constitutes one of those reassessments through the lens of a different critical fashion, to wit, critical-creative writing. The justification for this focus is that "Hulme was one of the first writers who attempted to fuse his creative and his critical work into a coherent unit" (6). Although Coleridge scholars might beg to differ about this pioneering status, it is certainly true that Hulme did seem to strive towards this fusion.

Throughout the pages of this book Hulme is presented as an originator of imagism, as an influence on modernism as a whole, as a predecessor of postmodernism and – most insistently – as an early practitioner of critical-creative writing. And herein lies the rub: the book's title goes in one direction and its main argument seems to go in quite another. *T.E. Hulme and Modernism* is likely to be noticed by readers who are already conversant with modernism, and who probably are already familiar with the points that Tearle makes about modernism in general and imagism in particular (see, for instance, 38 or 74). It is

true that these hypothetical readers might not be familiar with the critical-creative approach; but it is not certain that they will be interested in it.

T.E. Hulme and Modernism is structured around four chapters and an afterword, all of which are titled after hyphenated terms found in Hulme's own writing. Of those four chapters, the first two are perhaps the most focused, dealing respectively with Hulme's theories (about which Beasley's work is probably the most important source) and his poetry. The other two chapters address Hulme's contemporaries and his influence, and they are much more wide-ranging.

In the first chapter, the discussion of the relationship between Bergson's ideas, the image as conceptualized by Hulme and Eliot's objective correlative is of the utmost interest, as is Tearle's summary of Hulme's notion of counters. These two points, particularly the latter, could have been developed further because they are crucial to the issue at hand. One must add that the assertion, concerning Hulme's translation of Bergson's *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, that "how much of the translation was actually his own work has been questioned" (p. 36) is not backed by any reference. It is an important claim and one which surely requires attribution.

The second chapter, 'Star-Eaten: Hulme's romantic images' displays the strengths and weaknesses of the book: it includes a discussion of Hulme's relationship to imagism, which is probably the most important aspect of his career; but this discussion is marred by a fairly limited critical reading of specific texts.

A book exploring Hulme's relationship to modernism could be expected to have as its central chapter a discussion of Hulme's relationship to his contemporaries, but to a large extent the third chapter is a missed opportunity. Tearle mentions Hulme's "shifting allegiance to different philosophical and theoretical positions (Bergson, Worringer, Sorel)" (84) but, of these three decisive figures, only Bergson is discussed in the first chapter. Tearle's rationale is that most of Hulme's relationships with his contemporaries "are dealt with comprehensively by Robert Ferguson in his biography" (ib.); this might be a valid argument but leaves the reader wondering what, then, is the function of a chapter about Hulme and his contemporaries.

In the fourth chapter, 'Marking-Time: Hulme's influence', these contradictions come to a head. It seems to be the most important chapter for the author's project, while being furthest away from the book's title. The very notion of influence, as used here, is questionable: it is legitimate to write, as Tearle does elsewhere, of Robert Herrick's influence on Hulme. Hulme's own influence as explored in this chapter, however, is quite a different thing. This idea had already been mentioned in p. 9, where Hulme had been posited as "an unwitting poststructuralist, anticipating Derrida's philosophy of deconstruction".

In the final analysis, *T.E. Hulme and Modernism* would probably benefit from a different title which was more illustrative of its actual content. As it is, the discord between title and content is likely to have detrimental effects. On page 98, Tearle asks a very pertinent question: "if Eliot seems at first glance, along with Pound, the writer who was most directly influenced by Hulme, and we now realize that we have cause to doubt even that influence, then what exactly is Hulme's value as a writer and thinker?" It is troubling to realize that, by the end of the book, this question remains unanswered.

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Ramel, Annie. *The Madder Stain: A Psychoanalytic Reading of Thomas Hardy*.
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190 pp., ISBN 978-90-04-29340-3.

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Annie Ramel, in her book, *The Madder Stai: A Psychoanalytic Reading of Thomas Hardy*, looks at the work of Hardy through Lacanian theory. Counteractively, Hardy's repressed "generic woman" (2) conjures up disjunction, and submission, whereas the madder stain interpretation of the metaphoric extension of the Lacanian Real springboards the impossibility of its conjunction within the symbolic order. Thus, the psychoanalytic analysis of Hardy's novels, and poetics asserts a scholarly approach with the problematic presentation of self through a perception of hollow vision, and the struggle for nothingness which ends up in the absolute signifier.

Hardy's repressed woman as a constructed being promotes Lacan's notion of "Woman does not exist" (*The Seminar Jacques Lacan Book XX*, 7)¹ which Lacan argues against the backdrop of sexual difference. The madder stain in *Tess*, becomes Eustacia's red ribbon in *The Return of the Native*. These are the *objet petit a*, or the unknowable Real, functioning as object of gaze and voice. Ramel's focus is either on "the limits of diegesis" or the Name of the Father that never functions in Hardy's novels. Her psychoanalytic perspective enunciates the "collapse of symbolic order" (21) through the analysis of various motifs. For instance, the hole of the ring resonates the nullification of mutual relationship between husband and wife. Likewise, wife is sacrificed as a victim in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. The hollowness of the ring is the nothingness, or the Real which is never accessible.

Elfride's lost ear-ring, in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, is associated with feminine *jouissance*, music and art, but for Ramel feminine masquerade may end up in "ontological void" if it is not disguised. Symbolic order, or the logos is shaken by the position of the subject. Elfride's lost ear-ring leads to her tragic end of nothingness. This is how accessories and costumes interact with being to

¹ Lacan, Jacques. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XX: On Limits of Love and Knowledge: Encore 1972-1973 On Jouissance*. Ed. Jacques Allan Miller. Trans. Bruce Fink. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1998.

The note indicates that the capital letter of "Woman" is a reference to "Woman in singular in essence" not women as a group (7).

construct the position of the subject, which is also effective for nothingness, or the calculations for the tragic end.

Ramel also uses the Lacanian psychoanalytic topological notion of space as moebius strip to explain the use of directions and their metaphoric extensions in Hardy's novels. East stands for rising sun, and origin whereas west represents bright land. Therefore, east and west are interchangeable although they seem to stand for opposite directions in *Far from the Madding Crowd* (Ramel, 73). Psychoanalytically, then, it may be stated that the directions of locus also resist totalising principles of binary oppositions since they are metonymic extensions of each other although they may be fixed by ideological quilting.

Ramel elucidates *objet a*: what is before the subject is a deceitful object but what is behind is the true object. This may also be interpreted as appearances and realities from the vantage point of Plato's cave. Plausibly, the true one cannot be replaced whereas the deceitful one is absent infinitely, so it longs to be filled in by other objects. The deceitful one triggers the metonymy of desire. For instance, "mould" in *Far from the Madding Crowd* is *objet petit a* because it is absent. *Das Ding* is also explicated with the hollowness in the swamp in the novel to conclude that the centre of the mud should always be kept away from since that it may deceive the passer (83) by and cause his/her destruction.

Anamorphosis is suggested in the statement "looking awry". (95) Awry looking leads to uncanny images of life as it does in *The Return of the Native*. What is "grotesque" (95) in *The Return of the Native* becomes "appreciable" (qtd. in Ramel, 95). Ramel sustains the notion that psychoanalytical readings mostly focus on deceit its each and every terminological analysis of the texts. Her focus on ideology reveals keen eye, evil eye as agent of disorder, or intruder a moral "watchdog" (105), pagan eyes as interpretation of the object gaze for Eusticia's "quiet eye" in *The Return of the Native* (98). Ingeniously, Tess's "silent cry" or the sound of silence are the recurring senses for object voice in the book that corresponds to Zizek's interpretation of vivifying voice and mortifying gaze (132) which is attributed to the "muted heroine" (135) Tess due to her hazardous counteraction against the backdrop of colonising masculine gaze and voice, and specifically Hardy's textual voice.

A missing gap in vision is shown as a lack which leads to impulsive anxiety. The red stain in *The Return of the Native* is a surplus object of gaze, the madder stain in *Tess* is a spot filling structural emptiness. Since Tess is a constructed being within her silent cry, she has to be further punished by the Other, for her involuntary deceitful appearance in the gaze of the Other, and in Hardy's textual voice.

The conclusion looks at Zizek's claim that the absence of unseen things are filled in by heard things, which may be interpreted as the prioritisation of speculation, and stigmatisation.

Martiny, Erik. *The Pleasures of Queueing*. Mastodon Publishing, 2018. 210 pp., ISBN 978-1-7320091-1-0.

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The Pleasures of Queueing by Erik Martiny might be described—to quote the novel’s narrator—as “a kind of parody of a family chronicle.” Epigraphs by Colette, John McGahern, and P.G. Wodehouse set the tone. Knowing what I know—that Martiny has taught Anglophone literature and is not unfamiliar with the works of Vladimir Nabokov—the phrase “family chronicle” cannot help but evoke the subtitle of Nabokov’s *Ada, or Ardor: A Family Chronicle*. But *Pleasures* gives little indication of Nabokov’s influence, apart from some multilingual wordplay, occasional bouts of ribald alliteration, and snippets of both translated and untranslated French. Nor is the novel “radically postmodern” (again, borrowing the narrator’s own assessment of himself and his work), if by postmodern we mean a text suffused with intertextuality, metafictional self-awareness, pastiche, maximalism, irony, hyperreality, fragmentation, and non-linear chronology. If anything, *The Pleasures of Queueing* is a Bildungsroman that puckishly challenges “the standards of the gentility principle”—which is no surprise, given that this is precisely what the narrator claims he likes to do. The sex scenes are explicit and good-humored. Bawdiness notwithstanding, the narrator’s aim, one senses, is not to *épater la bourgeoisie*, but to write frankly and without prudishness about growing up in Cork, Ireland in the 1970s and 1980s as part of a huge and wildly eccentric Franco-Irish family.

The novel’s chronology is straightforward, proceeding linearly from the narrator’s conception in 1971 to his departure in 1994 from the family home en route to Paris to become a writer, the eventual author, presumably, of the text that we now hold in our hands.

It is halfway through the novel that we learn the narrator is a writer, or aspires to be one: “When all is said and done, it is our father’s reading of Camus and the experience of enduring fleas that make me want to become a writer. Writing seems like the perfect way of turning bad into good, pain into pleasure, weariness into wonder, a way of transmuting shit into gold when shit happens as it inevitably does” (120). The reference to Camus is explicit, but the characterization of writing as transmutation implicitly recalls Baudelaire’s “*Tu m’as donné ta boue et j’en ai fait de l’or.*”

A more or less conventional, but convincing, coming-of-age tale, *The Pleasures of Queueing* nevertheless flirts with traits of postmodernism: the narrator’s asides demonstrating a knowledge of the future: “There are no public phones in the school. The smart phone hasn’t been invented yet” (86); intertextuality (references to other authors from Thucydides to Dante to Hemingway to Philip Larkin and Roth to James Joyce abound); and echoes of Rabelaisian maximalism: “Rain, rain, rain. Grisly drizzly. Rain in small quantities, rain in large quantities. Rain that needles your skin and your spirit, rain that bounces back up into your face. Fine-grained rain, bead-curtains of rain, prison-bars of rain. Rain for breakfast, rain for dinner. Rain at night, rain in the

morning, rain at dusk, rain in the afternoon. Darkness at noon, greyness at dawn. Rain for autumn, rain for winter, rain for spring. Even rain for summer. Rain in your tea, rain on your sandwiches, rain in your soup, rain in your gravy, rain in your porridge, rain in your toilet. Rain in your bed” (195).

The reviewer of an author’s first novel is disadvantaged in at least three ways. First, there is no track record, no body of work with which the novel can be compared: a debut novel can only be assessed as better than another, or worse, in retrospect. Second, taste in literature is deeply personal and not based on objective criteria: *Finnegans Wake* is hailed as a masterpiece, but most folks I know - even passionate readers of modernist fiction - find its riotous polysemy impossibly opaque and the experience of attempting to decipher it frankly dull. Finally, whereas the reviewer of a scholarly monograph can justify her criticism by citing factual inaccuracies or errors of interpretation in the book, the reviewer of fiction can merely state whether she enjoyed the book, why she enjoyed it, and perhaps offer a few reasons for believing others might enjoy it too.

The language of *The Pleasures of Queueing* is rich, ebullient, open-hearted, and fun. A sprinkling of rare words (*eukaryotic*, *acarid*, *elasticated*) comes across as playful rather than pedantic. The linguistic cocktail of French, “standard” English, and the slangy Irish English used by the characters is effectively deployed. At its best, Martiny’s rendering of a child’s linguistic consciousness recalls the opening lines of Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* “I ask them things like what are clouds made of. They stare and hem and haw a little and then they say ‘it’s, it’s, it’s smoke, it’s smoke dat gets caught on de sky.’ When I tell them that’s not true, they say ‘de clouds, it’s, dat’s, it’s candy floss dat, em, dat, em, dat floats up. Like bloons. Like balloons, like.’ ‘So why are some of them grey, almost black?’ ‘Der black because, because, because... Der black, der grey because der dirty. You need ta hoover de dark wans” (113). Lovingly crafted imagery captures not only the sodden Irish landscape but the magic of burgeoning adolescent infatuation: “I walk her home through the squelching, soggy paddy fields, thanking the rain for inconveniencing our steps into making our hips and shoulders knock together. We wade through an endless football field of mud to get to her place, dribbling the ball of desire, weaving it round our feet as we step round the muddier patches, for ages not daring to score” (135).

Shandy-esque in its combination of the comic, the tragic, the grotesque, the absurd, and the all-too-human, *The Pleasures of Queueing* is a refreshingly bright read in an age that seems to favor dystopia, dysfunction, and catastrophic decline. It makes a convincing case that “in creatively inspirational terms, the next best thing to an unhappy childhood is an eccentric one” (88).

Notes on Contributors

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