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Adaptation, Appropriation and Translation - Dancing cheek to cheek, or leading on a merry dance: Understanding textual adaptation as a dynamic between dancers

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Introduction – It takes two to Tango.

The papers contained within this volume were initially presented at a Theatre and Drama Network (TDN) conference exploring *Adaptation, Appropriation, and Translation*, in 2023. The aims of that conference were to explore the complex relationship between adaptations and their original source material, to examine the ethics of adaptation, and to reevaluate the meaning of adaptation within contemporary theatre, film, literature, and media studies.

Adaptation is a term most commonly associated with the work of Linda Hutcheon, whose 2006 *A Theory of Adaptation* offered a ground-breaking analysis of the process and meaning of adaptation, as well as coining seminal definitions of the process. Hutcheon's influential "repetition with variation" (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 4) is critical in appreciating the nuances of the tangential relationship between the original, often canonical work, and the resulting new creative product. To apply Hutcheon's definition is to acknowledge that there must be sufficient similarity between the two versions (repetition) so that an audience can understand that they are fundamentally connected, and that one is a product of the other, but there must also be sufficient distance (variation) to warrant the new product being made. This complex dance between the two versions comprises the meaningful definition of adaptation. Sometimes the dance is very close, and the distance between the two barely noticeable; at other times the dance partners are on the opposite side of the dance floor seemingly disconnected, and yet still dancing the same dance, and in some proximity to each other, creating a connection, albeit from a distance, between the two versions. In the same way as a dance should be a visually entertaining and pleasurable event, an audience should derive a certain satisfaction in

viewing the adaptation through the lens of the original. In holding one in front of the other, and in noting the changes as well as the repetitions, audiences can anticipate changes, as well as enjoying the familiarity of engaging with a well-known original. In noting changes, it is always useful to reflect on why these occur. Exploring the purpose of the variation, as well as acknowledging where there is repetition, is the act of analysing adaptation. Why might a new writer insert a change of location, for example? Of character? Of period? In exploring these variations, critics can unearth political messages, for example, as well as correct 'errors' in the original, revealing contemporary concerns and preoccupations. At all times, the synthesis between the two versions is critical – there can be no adaptation without an appreciation of the original, otherwise the playwright, novelist or filmmaker would just have created original content, and not engaged with a preexisting text. Just as a dance takes place between two partners, an adaptation also requires a partner text.

Appropriation is a term with a slightly more complex meaning. It suggests a more nuanced relationship between the two versions, perhaps one whereby ownership of material is rather more contested or unclear. To use the term in its usual form, for example, if you were accused of 'appropriating' finances, or 'appropriating' some land, we might assume that this was an illegal acquisition, taken without legal entitlement or in accordance with due process. Or you might be being accused of 'appropriating' another culture – adopting signifiers from a culture other than your own in ways that are partial, stereotypical, or simplistic. In either case, to be accused of appropriation is to be charged with taking something unfairly, in bad faith, or without due diligence or respect. There is also a suggestion of an imbalance of power, that one party has executed a takeover of the other from a position of greater influence or authority. In this sense, to 'appropriate' a text, might be to take one and to use it unethically, or to 'take it over' obliterating the original and leaving no trace of it within the new version.

In looking for a definition of this term within Adaptation Studies, scholars often refer to Julie Sanders, who seeks to place an understanding of what we might call 'appropriation' within how we already define adaptation. Acknowledging what I have outlined above regarding the slipperiness of the relationship between the two texts, she writes, "appropriation frequently affects a more decisive journey away from the informing source into a wholly new cultural product and domain… appropriated […] texts are not always as clearly signalled or acknowledged in the adaptive process" (Sanders, 2006, p. 26). There may be any number of reasons for this. The new version might be completely rewritten, and only contain a small element of the original. It might be that they are located in very different contexts, and so the messages and meaning of the work are starkly contrasted. It could be that the appropriation is based on a pervasive and well-known cultural myth,

and so barely requires much gesturing towards the source material. However, in order to avoid charges of plagiarism, an appropriation must stand in some relation to its original. It must in some way gesture to the source material, even if it is in quite oblique ways, for example the name of a character or location, or a specific plot device. To continue the analogy, this may still be a dance, but it is one in which the partners only barely acknowledge each other, choosing instead to enact their own interpretation of the music, albeit still on the same dance floor, and still in sight of each other.

At the heart of all appropriation lies what Sanders describes as a "querying [of] the ability or even necessity of being 'original'" (Sanders, 2006, p. 1). This argument, which recalls Roland Barthes' *Death of the Author* as a theory to end authorial interpretation and instead liberate reader empowerment to determine meaning, asserts that there is nothing original in textual creation, and that all stories, ideas, images, and meanings are already part of a network of texts from which all 'new' writers must draw. Several theorists and philosophers, including Barthes, Julia Kristeva, and Jacques Derrida, suggest that texts are culturally interdependent and inherently connected, thus rendering the need to define any single one as 'original' or 'first' impossible. A simple example of this in practice is rehearsed within this very volume. Bilge and Okan's article on *The Taming of the Shrew* explores reinterpretation of Shakespeare's classic story as a twentieth century ballet. In Western culture, Shakespeare is often placed in the position of the canonical originator of text, such is his profound impact on theatre and literature. However tempting it might be to think of Shakespeare as the originator, it is worth remembering that he was also a mediator of pervasive cultural tales and stories: *The Taming of the Shrew* was even at its first performance an amalgamation of traditional myths and stories from Europe and India, as well as existing Tudor texts (Dates and Sources | The Taming of the Shrew | Royal Shakespeare Company). In this way, even our cultural signifiers of canonical dominance, such as Shakespeare himself, are subject to the laws of appropriation.

Translation, the third key term under consideration in this collection, carries connotations of geographical location. A simple definition of the term suggests that the activity of translation "involves a simple process of linguistic transfer" (Bassnett, 2014, p. 2), a literal movement of meaning between one language and another. This process takes place within a context of national borders – a transference of meaning from one country's language into another. Of course, while a simple 'hello' might easily translate into 'bonjour' or 'hola', more complex sentences or concepts defy literal transfer. As Bassnett makes clear, languages never map onto each other directly, and so there are always gaps to navigate, leading her to argue that "translation has been refined in recent years as a form of rewriting" (Bassnett, 2014, p. 3), suggesting an altogether more creative and assertive process whereby new

meaning can potentially be generated. In this way, the dance between the original and the translation is complicated; at first it may appear that the partners are performing the same dance in perfect synchronicity, but throughout the performance there will be gaps and new additions, elements that differ, that don't fit, that appear to be at odds with each other.

Many of the articles contained within this collection are concerned with the translation of work between one nation and another. As I have argued elsewhere, in shifting the context of a piece of theatre from one country to another, perhaps the most pertinent term to employ is 'translation' rather than 'adaptation', taking into account as it does the implied shift of language, culture, and politics – "the act of translation necessarily involves the movement of a text between languages and also frequently nations" (Rees, 2017, p. 180). In examining the three terms under consideration here, 'translation' would at first appear to be the one with the closest relationship of texts, seeking to achieve a close fidelity of meaning between sources. However this is achieved, we also must take into account the necessary linguistic gaps and slippages, however, as two languages often fail to map onto each other with perfect symmetry. In the same way, translation also typically infers a transfer of national context, and as such, the reader should also be alert to the probable transference of national culture, society and politics as well, as two countries also stand in contrast to each other. In this 'dance' of adaptation, translation also takes into account different national flavours – the texts might be performing to the same song, but one partner may be dancing a South American Tango, while the other is dancing a European Viennese Waltz!

The articles contained within this volume all explore different positions between an original text and its adapted version. There is a broad spread of types of material as well, including plays, songs, films, classical texts and contemporary work, demonstrating that adaptation is a popular form for many different artistic engagements. The authors within this collection also examine a wide range of source material, from a spread of eras and places, including Britain, Türkiye, and America, as well as engaging with well-known, canonical work by writers such as Shakespeare, Austen, and Shelley, alongside lesser known works, creating a complex and dynamic dance between heavyweight literary sources, and comparatively featherweight newcomers!

In all cases, the authors explore adaptation critically, taking into account all of the complex webs of meaning and connection outlined above. They all critically reflect on the ethics of adaptation, taking into account what we might term the ethics of 'appropriation', with all the implications of that term. To put it simply, who's story is it to tell? And who

has the right to 're'tell it, to *translate* it into a new story, which may or may not pay homage to its original. In exploring this complexity, all the articles here reflect meaningfully and carefully on the adaptation's relationship with its original. In some cases, authors also wish to examine what we might see as an adaptation's attempt to readdress 'errors' in the original text, to give voice to marginalised characters, to unravel new meanings, place texts in new contexts, to reveal contemporary concerns.

About this collection – the articles.

Özbaş places metafiction and metatheatre centre stage in her article's uncovering of a trilogy of plays performed at Cambridge University between 1598-1601, marking the end of the Elizabethan age and the Tudor era. These anonymous plays, adaptations of Roman comedies by Terence, were staged originally around 100 BC. This layering of two arguably ancient historical periods exposes a Tudor fascination with neo-Roman comedy. The Tudor period was also, as Özbaş argues via an analysis of literary narcissism, a period preoccupied with shoring up the authority of textual interpretation and of securing the status of the literary text. In so doing, adaptation in this context, performed in this case through Renaissance corridors of academic power, is more about the Tudor appropriation of classical stories than a more reflexive adaptation approach. This article has great value in exposing and analysing lost or lesser known moments of English theatrical history, and in discussing theatre in non-traditional spaces, in this case a fusion of Roman classical comedy and Renaissance academic drama, framed by a Tudor imperative to rebrand the past within their own distinctive likeness.

Gülter's analysis of Rupert Goold's 2006 production of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company, explores the process of reinterpretation of classical work, aiming to understand the production of meaning-making in the act of shifting the context of Shakespeare's plays. The production in question is staged within an Arctic, Inuit setting, which Gülter's article weaves into a critique of global warming, climate change, and climate crisis. By adapting a play already preoccupied with exploring the impact of human conquest of land, of the interaction between humanity and its environment, and with disturbed and frightening weather patterns, Gülter argues that this relocation of action is an act of political reinterpretation. By prioritising a reading of the play that emphasises ecological catastrophe, the RSC production is part of a body of work we might term ecological theatre, adjoined with ecocriticism. This paper also challenges what we might consider as 'adaptation', using instead the term 'appropriation', which implies a slightly different relationship with the source material; one perhaps that

takes what it needs from the original text in order to reframe the action in a new cultural or political context, in this case, one that examines the impact of colonisation and dominance not in Jacobean England, but instead in the twentieth century. Of course, the term 'appropriation' might also be applied to humanity's conquest of the landscape, and its impact on the environment, as well as the act of appropriating a text for performance.

Kılıç's chapter takes a feminist approach to Marina Carr's 2015's adaptation of Euripides' *Hecuba*, exploring the concept that adaptations can exist to highlight and legitimise previously ignored or overlooked aspects of the canonical text. This repositioning of priorities has a political purpose, as the plot can be changed or shifted to create an alternative narrative or outcome. In exploring the gaps and silences of the original, Kılıç's article offers a repositing of the classical tale, as well as an updating to reflect upon the relevance of this myth in contemporary warfare. Throughout the analysis, there is a focus on the ethics of adaptation; of the ethical encounter within adaptation, applying Levinas to explore the responsibility of rewriting, reimagining, and witnessing.

Poore explores *The Interview*, a play without a text, to analyse the tension within definitions of adaptation, documentary, and history plays, troubling what we might mean by what is 'real' and what is generated. The subject matter, the Panorama interview of Princess Diana in 1995, is a subject so frequently mediated through a wide variety of films, television, drama, and literature, that it becomes an historical event already dislocated from its original source, so retold that the original has become increasingly marginalised, particularly given the forged documents we now know were used to secure the story. Given the unethical basis of the original interview, it is itself an appropriated story, stolen without sufficient integrity and care, as indeed Diana herself is an appropriated icon, her image subject to a myriad of retellings and adaptations. Throughout this article, it becomes clear that this is a story with which we are all familiar, and yet none of us actually know it; it is an event shrouded in scandal, mystery and appropriation and yet the drama of its performativity is familiar to all. Tantalisingly, Poore ends this analysis with a brief consideration of royal conspiracy theory as a form of adaptation; a subject that certainly deserves an exploration of its own!

Bilge and Okan's article seeks for its source that most appropriated of canonical writers – William Shakespeare. It is difficult to think of a series of texts more looted for their stories in adaptation that the Bard. Their fascinating approach explores the text located not within a new text but within dance, analysing the ballet adaptation of John Cranko's *The Taming of the Shrew* in 1969 by exploring adaptation from theatrical text into choreography.

Setting their analysis of this performance against the development of second wave feminism, and emphasising the importance of movement within the text, this article unravels other meanings within the original Shakespeare text, and offers a retelling of the gender relations in the play.

Günenç's exploration of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, adapted for the stage by Emma Rice in 2022, focuses on the 'deconstruction' of the original text. The bleak and battered moor of the original Victorian text is refigured, for example, as evoking a Greek tragedy, tapping into that other well-mined source of tales for adaptation. Most importantly, this article analyses the way in which Rice juxtaposes the contemporary refugee crisis with the characterisation of Heathcliff in the original. In exploring his liminal identity as a refugee, orphan, and immigrant, Günenç argues Rice aims to 'restore the nobility' of this iconic, and much misunderstood and maligned, character. The adaptation at the heart of this article therefore aims to represent and explore the margins of the original text, seeking to throw light onto that which is marginalised, ambiguous, and oblique in Brontë's narrative.

Another canonical text – in this case Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* – comes under consideration in Gündüz's article. In this exploration of the many iterations of one text, Gündüz's focus is on the relocation of the classic story into different cultures and new genres, most specifically *Bride and Prejudice* and *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, adaptations that invite the reader to see the original Austen novel in a wide network of other texts and meanings. This article demonstrates an interesting dynamic between past and present, exploring the role of nostalgia and memory, as well as hybridity and parody, in the contemporary retellings of historical texts, and exploring how such appropriations help shape our understanding of the Regency era. Throughout these diverse and eclectic retellings of Austen's novel, a strong sense of the gender relations and politics of the original remain, as contemporary writers and storytellers rewrite their own cultures and concerns into the new parodies and iterations of this well-worked tale.

Üstün-Kaya's article explores the translation of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* for a Turkish audience in the form of the 2023 Netflix series *Yaratılan*. Through an outline of what Hutcheon has identified as the fidelity fallacy, Üstün-Kaya outlines some of the key differences between the original text and the new series, exploring the fascinating slippage between languages and meanings, analysing the relationship between the source material and its new translation. In exploring the resonances of meaning between Victorian England and contemporary Türkiye, the article draws on different definitions of adaptation to also incorporate translation between languages and intertextuality.

Festa takes a broad approach to adaptation, examining not the translation of one text within another but instead the appropriation of cinematic genres. In exploring the violence of Quentin Tarantino's *Django Unchained*, the article reflects on the appropriation within the film of previous cinematic traditions, particularly the Western and Blaxploitation films. The argument that Tarantino's film makes use of black history, and applies it to the imagery of the classic Western, forces us to consider who has the right to tell whose stories, and in what ways. The article's conclusions, that white men make money from the exploitation and appropriation of black culture and black stories, is depressingly familiar.

Pesen's paper tackles a different form of adaptation, examining the translation of 1960s French religious song 'La Mamma', originally by Charles Aznavour, into Turkish by Zeki Müren as 'Annem'. Utilising a range of methodological approaches, including archival research and content analysis of the original vinyl covers, this fascinating article explores the importance of listening to song in one's own language. Understanding translation as an act of cultural storytelling, Pesen's analysis outlines a translation process that results in a musical fusion, blending Turkish cultural elements with global pop culture.

Conclusion – Foot loose and fancy free?

As the variety and diversity of subjects, genres, and nations explored in this collection make clear, adaptation is a process that can be explored in relation to many different texts and performances, from song and dance, to classic plays and literary texts. In exploring this vast diversity, it might be tempting to understand that anything can be termed an adaptation, that any cultural product with even the most tangential relationship with an original can be analysed in this context.

Perhaps so, and certainly Adaptation Studies offers scholars a broad church in which to explore texts and performances, but it is also important to remember that, to continue the analogy, while adaptation may offer dancers the opportunity to dance free from some formal constraints, some rules of engagement are also still necessary, if we wish to avoid stepping on the shoes of our dance partner. To return to Hutcheon, adaptation is best understood as 'repetition with variation', a definition that also helpfully could be said to describe a dance – the similar or corresponding movements reoccur throughout the performance, helping to establish the character of the dance, but there must also be variation, places where the dancers move in a different direction, changing the tempo, going in for a lift, or building to a crescendo in the music.

My hope with this Preface has been to consider adaptation, appropriation and translation, as an analogy to a dance, a dance in which partners perform a complex and at times fractured relationship with each other. In exploring this analogy, and suggesting that it is comparable to the distance or closeness of two dancers performing on a stage, I have attempted to consider the relationship between an adaptation and its original source – however complex we acknowledge the term 'original' to be. In using this analogy, it has been my intention to argue that, while some adaptations may have a distant or tangential relationship with their original, the process is never a 'free for all' dance, cutting loose from all formal restraints, and striking out on its own. In order to be understood and recognised as adaptations, there must be some sort of formal relationship with the original work, and therefore, while Adaptation Studies may offer a wide range of topics and genres to investigate, we must always understand this process as a dance between two (or sometimes more) partners, rather than a solo effort. It is in the intricate relationship between the dancers where the adaptation takes place – the joy of adaptation is always in the pattern of the dance steps between an original source text and its offspring. The dance of adaptation requires multiple texts, dancing together, but performing their own steps, in new and distinct rhythms.

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Research Article

Terence in England: Literary Narcissism, Self-Reflexivity, and Metatheatrical Comedy in The *Parnassus* Plays

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ABSTRACT

This article aims at exploring the Terentian influence on the group of academic dramas known as the *Parnassus* plays which was staged at the University of Cambridge from 1598 to 1601 in the context of literary narcissism. Identifying the literary narcissist paradigm as heir to the cultural politics of the *fin-de-siecle* and drawing on the revival of interest in metatheatricality in contemporary classical scholarship, first it will be argued that Terence's prologues not only further a bouletic manner of authorial intention but also generate a metatheatrical form of self-commentary. As a development on that point, the Terentian influence on the university stage in seventeenth-century England will be discussed. In identifying a visibly Terentian sentiment in the *Parnassus* plays, it will be maintained that the trilogy allows an early modern reading in self-reflexivity that is documented in the metafictional programme of the prologue. The anticipated conclusion draws on the point that the narcissistic agenda of the *Parnassus* plays signal a growing liberty taken with self-commentary at a mimetic level which, due to its Terentian background, facilitates a reproduction of metatheatrical comedy. The importance of this point lies within the fact that by reproducing the literary narcissism of Latin laughter, university drama under the Tudor rule secures the sardonic wit of its Roman forebearers as annexed to the mechanics of Renaissance authorship. In turn, it re-establishes the prologue as a paratextual act of metatheatricality which informs the character of its comedic structure.

Keywords: Literary narcissism, self-reflexivity, Terentian comedy, Parnassus plays, prologues

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Introduction

A fair *quid pro quo*: Narcissism, textual desire, and metafiction

"Denn einzig in der engen Höhle / Des Backenzahnes weilt die Seele."[1] These are the lines that the great German humourist Wilhelm Busch attaches to his visual description of a poet who suffers from an unbearable toothache in the Achtes Kapitel of his *Balduin Bählamm*. We learn from the description that the poet's pain is so exceedingly unbearable that the Lebenskraft (life-force) is now directed inwards and the traditional attention he used to pay to the outer world becomes considerably insignificant. Not only is the price of butter and the taxes that are due payment are banished from his thoughts, but also any amatory engagement is cancelled until the foreseeable future. It is not a condition that he particularly embraces with open arms and yet once it arrives at the scene, it overwhelms the self and imprisons the psyche into the narrow cave of the molar. The self is now entirely disinterested in the external world while being over-concerned, or better put, obsessed with preserving its well-being.

Not only is Busch's self-centred poet a post-Romantic hero as typical of *fin-de-siécle* literature but also, he is a narcissist. For this particular reason, it is hardly a means of amazement to find out that Freud echoes Busch's lines concerning the 'aching' poet in his essay on narcissism where he considers the narcissist as someone who "withdraws *libidinal* interest from his love-objects" (Freud, 1957, p. 82) and "treats his own body in the same way in which the body of a sexual object is ordinarily treated" (Freud, 1957, p. 73). He also considers the poet's concentration on his sickness as a marker of a fixated introversion through which he centralises the pain and suffering and abandons any interest in the outer world. But more importantly than that, the corollary between the condition of the poet and the somatic response to physical pain facilitates a clearer view of the psychic transaction that occurs in the narcissistic self. For the corporal pain,

1 The entire stanza reads as follows: "Das Zahnweh, subjektiv genommen, / Ist ohne Zweifel unwillkommen; / Doch hat's die gute Eigenschaft, / Daß sich dabei die Lebenskraft, / Die man nach außen oft verschwendet, / Auf einen Punkt nach innen wendet / Und hier energisch konzentriert. / Kaum wird der erste Stich verspürt, / Kaum fühlt man das bekannte Bohren, / Das Rucken, Zucken und Rumoren- / Und aus ist's mit der Weltgeschichte, / Vergessen sind die Kursberichte, / Die Steuern und das Einmaleins. / Kurz, jede Form gewohnten Seins, / Die sonst real erscheint und wichtig,/ Wird plötzlich wesenlos und nichtig. / Ja, selbst die alte Liebe rostet – / Man weiß nicht, was die Butter kostet – / Denn einzig in der engen Höhle / Des Backenzahnes weilt die Seele, / Und unter Toben und Gesaus / Reift der Entschluß: Er muß heraus!!-" See Busch (1907).

in his estimation, is met with a psychological reaction to that pain. The result is an unhealthy occupation with an ideal self which is, in return, a response to the loss of infantile narcissism (ideal ego) in the form of the reconstruction of the past in the present tense (ego ideal) since:

> He is not willing to forgo the narcissistic perfection of his childhood; and when, as he grows up, he is disturbed by the admonitions of others and by the awakening of his own critical judgement, so that he can no longer retain that perfection, he seeks to recover it in the new form of an ego ideal. What he projects before him as his ideal is the substitute for the lost narcissism of his childhood in which he was his own ideal. (Freud, 1957, p. 94)

The reconstruction of infantile self-love by the adult in Freud's thought as preceded by the Enlightenment ideal of subjectivity "imbues the subject with an unfathomable surplus of meaning" and "spiritualizes the subject and obscures the transparency of subject-object relations" (Mathäs, 2010, p. 19). Under this view, this spiritualisation, or better put, idealisation displays a comprehensive sketch of obsessive self-regard which has been viewed as neurotic and unhealthy even prior to Freud's take on the subject.[2] It is unhealthy due to the very contention that an overindulgence in self-love signals repression and "this ideal ego is now the target of the self-love which was enjoyed in childhood by the actual ego" (Freud, 1957, p. 94). It represents a paradise lost and found only at the expense of nostalgic revivification that is considered highly detrimental to the actual ego.

While Freud's narcissistic paradigm is imbued with negative connotations—one which is also possibly cemented in the rise of anti-Semitism in late nineteenth century Vienna which forced him to retreat from "the public political realm to focus on the interior world of the psyche, thereby opening up the creative imaginative space" (Ashplant, 2012, p. 32)—it breathes positive unorthodoxy into our understanding of fictional self-reflexivity. For, at a psychoanalytical level, the narcissistic self forms a transactional relation with the observable world where s/he trades for an ideal at the expense of reality. However, later s/he needs to come to terms with the illusiveness of the libidinal interests of the actual ego. Correspondingly and at a figurative level, this should mean that the mimetic self

2 See Mathäs (2010) and Drichel (2016). Drichel's inquiry into the Cartesian narcissistic fantasy "as a successful defense against the pain of emotional trauma" compels us to be suspicious about whether Freud's analysis of narcissism is simply an unprecedented nineteenth-century exposition of modernity's narcissistic state of neurosis.

also trades for an ideal of veracity at the expense of reality but should later come to terms with the illusiveness of the 'realistic' interests of its textual ego. In other words, the libidinal desire of the text which has been traditionally characterised by a desire for truthful representation since Aristotle needs to be repaired by self-reflexivity or auto-inspection.[3] In this literary sense, the narcissistic paradigm of the *fin-de-siécle* facilitates a reading of textual self-inspection which overcomes the conceptual limitations of an eons-old obsession with truthful representation. It alternatively suggests that literary narcissism calls for a self-examination of that mode of representation. Just as the standards set for narcissistic personality disorder reveal the need for the individual's engagement with her own self "making it the basis of more than just pathological behaviour" (Hutcheon, 1980, p. 1), the textual self's engagement with itself is more than a sign of an author's pathological intentions. If so, the self-reflexivity of Busch's narcissistic poet might not be simply considered a case of the vanity of human wishes but also the human wish to know, understand, and comment on herself.

It would hardly be fair to assume that the precepts of literary narcissism rest solely upon the psychoanalytical methods of Freud and his circle. Afterall, as Michal Beth Dinkler maintains, to acknowledge that would mean to admit to "the common view that narrative narcissism belongs to modernity" (Dinkler, 2017, p. 34) and affirm postmodern metafiction as its twenty-first century inheritor; a move which sweepingly excludes earlier forms of metafictionality. It would require us to leave behind earlier texts that display a self-conscious attire. Instead, important to our mission here is to understand that Freudian narcissism informs a paradigmatic shift in the critical reception of metafiction which altogether does not alter the very fact that narcissism is "the original condition of *narrative*" (Dinkler, 2017, p. 34). For *narrare*, the Latin root for narrative, signals a dialogic, if not dynamic, interpretative relationship between reality and any medium of artistic expression when *storia* refers to a pent-up exposition of artistic expression where the narrative is caught up in a historicised frame. To put it more clearly, narratives are forms of artistic self-inspection whereas stories are mainly concerned with providing finished accounts of such and such observations. The 'narrative condition' which exigently calls for narcissism, then, "is process made visible" (Hutcheon, 1980, p. 6) and veers away from the non-reflexivity and stativity of a story.

When considered from this perspective, literary narcissism allows us to think through metafiction as a mimetic umbrella term for this process of self-inspection. As Linda

3 It could be speculated that this corresponds to the 'ego ideal' of a literary text.

Hutcheon suggests in her *Narcissistic Narrative*, when we leave behind the fact that literary scholars in the twenty-first century promoted metafictionality as a revisionary literary response of postmodern aesthetics and instead elaborate on it as a wider concept that rises above postmodernism's reception of artistic representation, metafiction itself would become a form of mimetic dynamism, a means of identifying a self-reflexive pattern in literature. In this wider context, then, metafiction would become something more than the crowning achievement of postmodern autotelism that celebrates the artwork's ability to transcend the very life it wishes to hold up a mirror to. It is the sign of a narrative which displays the overt awareness "in explicit thematizations or allegorizations of their diegetic or linguistic identity within the texts themselves" (Hutcheon, 1980, p. 7). Literary narcissism, so to speak, is a writing upon itself where "the distinction between literary and critical texts begin to fade" (Hutcheon, 1980, p. 15), producing metafictional auto-inspection. On this account, the following part will refer to an ancient *exemplar* whose comedic vision is built exactly around that blurred distinction which informs, as will be discussed, the narcissistic comedy of the seventeenth-century university drama in England.

A *palliatae* upon *palliatae*? The bouletic prologue of Terence

Self-reflexivity in Roman comedy seems to be a rather novel distinction in classical scholarship since the focus used to be on "language, the establishment of a fixed text, and the question of the plays' relationship with their so-called Greek originals" that represents a "*Quellenforschung* on steroids" (Sharrock, 2019, p. 6). The almost grievous critical eye so readily searched for the Greek original and rarely gave a second thought to the unique linguistic, social, and cultural spaces of meaning in Roman comedy that it was forced into the shape of a *palliatae* within which no authenticity, let alone auto-referentiality resides as distinct from the traditionally revered standards of Greek comedy. However, since the current trends in scholarship have started to recognise the level of originality in Roman comedy not only has its innovation become distinguishable from the so-called Greek models but also the degree of self-reflexivity has garnered much scholarly interest. For that reason, the "poly-perceptive" slave (*multimodis sapis*) (Plautus, 2008, p. 60) of *Miles Gloriosus* who is later defined in *Menaechmi* as one whose "nose knows more than all the city prophets" (Plautus, 2008, p. 83) has been growingly considered as part of the Roman playwright's "self-conscious awareness of theatrical convention in a new concept of comic heroism" which is elongated by the slave's "self-transformational power of the *versipellis* (skin-changer)" (Slater, 2000, pp. 11-2).

Terence's comedy, on the other hand, which is "no less determined by theatrical exigencies" (Goldberg, 1986, p. 60) and no less attentive to the need to inculcate the attention of the audience through self-explanation, does not appear to make a Plautine statement of self-reflexivity. For, although "he deserves to sit at the head of the table" of the metatheatrical party (Sharrock, 2019, p. 8), his methods of delivering his metatheatrical scheme validate the point the point that scholarship makes with regards to its subtlety. As distinct from Plautus, the metatheatrical delicacy of Terentian comedy seems to reside in his unwillingness to identify "the authorial voice closely with one character" (Sharrock, 2009, p. 141) by typically building up the clever slave as a skilled 'textual' draughtsman. Instead, he "allows his own presence as playwright, separately from any cipher, to intrude more directly on the plot" (Sharrock, 2009, p. 141). To achieve this point, he develops the traditional function of the prologue as an informative narrative device and transmogrifies it to proclaim his authorial control over the play as a dramatic assertion of self-referentiality.[4] The prologue becomes more than the Aristotelian ἀρχὴ λόγου (*archē logou*, beginning of a speech which functions as an introduction for a speech (Aristotle, 1926, p. 426-7).[5] For instance, the prologue to *Andria* stands out as a reply to the playwright's critics who insinuate that his plays are the patchwork of his wealthy patrons and not his or are corrupted translations of Greek originals. In response, he produces a formidable attack on his opponents and continues:

> faciuntne intellegendo ut nil intellegant?
> qui quom hunc accusant, Naevium, Plautum, Ennium
> accusant, quos hic noster auctores habet,
> quorum aemulari exoptat neglegentiam.
> potius quam istorm obscuram diligentiam. (17-21)
>
> (But isn't their cleverness making them obtuse? In criticising our author, they are actually criticising Naevius, Plautus, and Ennius, whom he takes as his models, preferring to imitate their carelessness in this respect rather than the critics' own dreary pedantry.) (Terence, 2001, pp. 50-3)

4 The other methods are identified as the comedic reversal of the Plautine clever slave and the farcical mode of anti-realism. See Sharrock (2009).

5 Gianni Guastella notes that the ancient Roman actor who spoke out the prologue (Prologus) became so dominant a feature of Terentian comedy that it would later appear as Calliopius in the Carolingian manuscripts of Terence. See Guastella (2015).

As much as the prologue emerges as a defensive means of explanation, it does not necessarily take on the role of an introductory speech. It is explanatory but certainly not introductory. The playwright seeks to drive off the accusation that his plays are repetitions upon Greek originals or Roman 'translations' of them and by acknowledging Plautus, Naevius, and Ennius as his dramatic models, he wishes to disregard the wrongly attributed role of a dramatic impostor, or even worse, a corrupter. In this context, the prologue's defensiveness unfolds a self-reflexive tone which is highly conscious of the literary coordinates of the playwright's works since the audience is asked to think of the play's merit in relation to a literary tradition that precedes his newly started career. But also, it harbours an implicit declaration of the author's inventiveness as it defines the mimetic and performative choices that the playwright wishes to make and does eventually. He declares that he would *prefer* to borrow a scheme of carelessness from his dramatic models rather than becoming a fastidious copyist. However, he does not guarantee to provide a verbatim 'translation' or re-arrangement of that carelessness which should mean that he is not particularly eager to re-produce their *negligentia*. This, in return and uneasily enough, casts a veil over his innovation which also explains why "he nowhere mentions that he has added material out of his own invention; for this, though true, was precisely what he did not want the crowd to know" (Beare, 1947, p. 74). But also, through that innovative bleakness the prologue implicitly makes a promise of originality which resists carelessness and the earlier addition "to the expository function of a prologue the trappings of a comic routine calculated to settle the crowd and make it tractable" (Goldberg, 1986, p. 60). Hence the threat that if they will carry on with their attacks the playwright will speak of his critics' malpractices and will force them to admit to their own grievous designations (*dehinc ut quiescent porro moneo et desinant / maledicere, malefacta ne noscant sua*, 22-3) (Terence, 2001, p. 53).

In a parallel manner, the prologue to *Heauton Timorumenos* displays a need for explanation but not introduction. In addressing the playwright's decision to credit an old actor with a role intended for young actors, the actor continues as follows:

> nunc quam ob rem has partis didicerim paucis dabo.
> oratorem esse voluit me, non prologum.
> vostrum iudicium fecit, me actorem dedit,
> si hic actor tantum poterit a facundia
> quantum ille potuit cogitare commode
> qui orationem hanc scripsit quam dicturus sum. (11-5)

> (Now I will explain briefly why I have taken on this role. The playwright wanted me as an advocate, not as a prologue speaker. He has turned this into a court, with me to act on his behalf. I only hope that the eloquence of the actor can do justice to the aptness of the arguments which the writer of this speech has contrived to put together.) (Terence, 2001, pp. 180-1)

Here, the stage is likened to a courtroom (*iudicium*) where the defendant will respond to the complaints of dramatic contamination made about him or will, alternatively speaking, decide on the legal validity of those complaints. As a result of that, the audience is asked to act in the capacity of a jury so that the blamelessness of the playwright will be made clear although it creates the illusion of legal objectivity on the audience's part (*arbitrium vostrum, vostra existumatio valebit*, 25-6, Terence, 2001, p. 182). But also, much similar to the prologue to *Andria*, it is a statement of originality since it is not intended for the actor by the playwright to provide an expositional outline of the play as normally expected. Instead, the actor who recites the prologue acts in the capacity of a defender of the playwright's many narrative virtues. He makes a passing but decisive reference to the superiority of his talents and the play's:

> facite aequi sitis, date crescendi copiam
> novarum qui spectandi faciunt copiam
> sine vitiis. (28-30)
>
> (Make sure that you are fair, and give those writers a chance to flourish who give you the chance to see new plays not marred by faults.) (Terence, 2001, p. 183)

The Terentian prologue's obsession with invention shows that it intends to overcome the limits of a foreword. Due to this quality, it presents itself as a careful and innovative re-fashioning of a rhetorical βούλησις (*boulesis,* deliberation) (ὅ τι γὰρ ἂν βούληται εὐθὺ εἰπόντα ἐνδοῦναι καὶ συνάψαι, the speaker should say at once whatever he likes, give the key-note and then attach the main subject) (Aristotle, 1926, pp. 426-7) since it reflects on the dramatic deliberation of the author.[6] It would hardly be a convincing

6 Gianni Guastella discusses the novelty of the Terentian prologue with regards to the Aristotelian discussion of the prologue being an informative speech. It is an immensely valuable point, but we can hardly pass on Aristotle's preferred vocabulary with regards to the playwright's exertion of his wish or will over the play and the audience. Hence, my contention that Terence is a composer of bouletic prologues. See Guastella (2015).

argument to make that the bouletic move of Terence is not heir to the oratorial principles of Cato and Cicero where individual talent declares its independence from tradition where capturing the attention, good-will, and appreciation of the audience is of perennial importance (Goldberg, 1986, pp. 41-5). However, the rhetorical principle is accompanied, if not overshadowed, by Terence's narrative deliberation since the prologue establishes itself as a 'deliberative' playground where originality expresses itself through knowing self-commentary. This, in return, establishes a new comedic standard. For, however oratorial the form and content of the prologue might be, it does not simply strive for persuasion; it expresses emphatic authorial control over the textual design while also rendering it a bouletic comedy. A comedy of this sort, then, falls in line with the thoughtful comedy described in *Tractatus Coislinianus* where the anonymous author writing in line of the Aristotelian tradition portends that not all comedies share the same characteristics and only in some do we observe "instances of thought, character, and spectacle" (Janko, 1984, p. 39). If so, the self-commentative prologues of Terence emerge as instances of thought and spectacle where affirmations of originality coincide with autotelism. In other words, narcissistic fits of deliberation produce thoughtful comedy. In the end, the bouletic intervention bears a couple of dramatic consequences: first it helps the playwright assert his own deliberation in the re-furbishment of older material which makes the sincere promise of dramatic unorthodoxy in the guise of a defence. Second, it helps averting the eyes of his audience from the comic routines of Menander and Plautus by "embroiling them in a controversy" (Goldberg, 1986, p. 60) which "metathetrically [*sic*] points out to his audience that he has transformed standard comic routines into something fresh and funny" (Knorr, 2007, p. 172). Far from promoting the image of an apologetic scrivener, the prologue promotes Terence's textual ambitions as the endeavours of a literary narcissist through which comedy is promoted as a source of textual self-consciousness. Drawing on this conclusion, I will now turn to university drama under the Tudor rule and elaborate on how it carves a vernacularised form of high-Roman comedy out of the Terentian marble.

The narcissistic comedy and the comedy of narcissism in The *Parnassus* Plays

Terence might not have been eager to "clarify his method of composition or to advance a literary theory" but the bouletic motive in his prologues reveal a literary narcissistic technique which adorns him with "the easy grace of a master, not the labored fidelity of a pedantic copyist" (Goldberg, 1986, p. 51). For this reason, it is hardly surprising

to find out that through the vernacular reception of Terence in fifteenth and sixteenth century Italian comedies known as the *commedia erudita* (learned comedy), the university drama in England became a major medium for the theatrical production of Terentian drama since "the most natural public for Roman comedy in the original was to be found in an academic environment, among those who taught and studied the texts as part of the humanist educational package" (Andrews, 1993, p. 31). But the neo-Roman revival in Italy which was later passed on to England was further met with the medieval English university's earlier dramatic practices which revolved around academic celebrations such as Feast of Fools, the Lord of Misrule, Christmas Prince where

> Small communities graded in the rigid fashion necessary to collegiate and semi-clerical institutions must have taken keen delight in the 'inversion of status' common to these various forms of revelry, and in the creation of mock dignitaries who bore for a time undisputed sway. (Boas, 1914, p. 4)

In connection with this point and due to the revived interest in classical learning—whether it was a product of Renaissance humanism or not[7]—Oxford and Cambridge which "were ideally suited to become centres of a neo-classic dramatic art" with their "stately buildings and ample endowments" (Boas, 1914, p. 13), already hosting vernacular forms of ludic entertainment, Terentian comedy made a swift but natural entry to the university stage. Despite the limited critical commentary and archival research on university registers, documented evidence points towards an Oxford production of *Eunuchus* at Merton at 1566 and 1567, and Cambridge productions at Jesus and Trinity between 1562 and 1564 as part of a larger cycle of reproduction of Roman drama between 1549 and 1592 (Boas, 1914, pp. 386-90). In other words, historical evidence allows that the academics' vernacular interest in a carnivalesque break from their studies caused a fusion between the ludic relief on the university stage that was later to be informed by a growing interest in Roman comedy under the Tudor rule and beyond.

Due to this revival of interest and the formation of what can be called an Anglicised *commedia erudita* (Brand, 1995, p. xxix), the anonymous *Parnassus* plays which were staged at St. John's at Cambridge between 1598 and 1601 display a similar Roman interest in seventeenth-century England. Upon closer inspection, it becomes clearer that the plays which "were all of them Christmas toys" (Leishman, 1949, p. viii) elongate

7 Since newly found evidence suggests that the scholarly attribution of post-medievalism to university drama in England is "due to narrow definitions of "dramatic activity," which often privilege plays written in a dialogic format" and "fail to consider the range of texts that were performed at the medieval university." See Meacham (2020).

the prological argument of Terence where it is employed as a narcissistic device for self-reflexivity.[8] In freely adapting Terence's method, the first play of the trilogy, *The Pilgrimage to Parnassus* starts off with the following act of deliberation:

> SPECTATORS, take youe noe severe accounte
> Of our twoo pilgrims to Parnassus' mount.
> If youle take three daies studie in good cheare,
> Our muse is blest that ever shee came here.
> If not, wele eare noe more the barren sande,
> But let our pen seeke a more fertile lande. (1-5)

While asking for the attention of the audience, the prologue furthers a negation unto itself: although it dictates that the Muses would be content with a three-day study "in good cheare," it identifies the pilgrimage to Mount Parnassus a trivial one which, in return, trivialises the Parnassian endeavour it promises to narrate. In a self-reflexive manner, it comments on its own 'artifice' of failure as a narrative design which promotes a pre-exposed uneasiness. This uneasiness is later furthered by the presentation of Consiliodorus, father to Philomusus and uncle to Studioso who prepares the young gentlemen for their pilgrimage to Parnassus although he knows that "Learninge and povertie will ever kiss" (1.76). He offers seemingly thoughtful insight into the many advantages of bathing their "drye and withered quills" (1.38) and washing their "tounge in Aganippe's well" (1.42) knowing that "fortune will with schollers nere abide" (1.78). Conscious of the futility of learning, Consiliodorus insistently asks them to "Returne triumphant with your laurell boughes" (1.107). In a similar manner, although Philomusus and Studioso are seemingly convinced of the gravity of the pilgrimage, Philomusus asks:

> *Philom:* Come, Studioso, shall wee gett us gone?
> Thinks thou oure softe and tender feet canne bide
> To trace this roughe, this harsh, this craggie waye
> That leadeth unto faire Parnassus' hill? (1.117-20)

Drawing on the minutest instances of hesitation, the play has it that the pilgrimage becomes a suspicious affair, a pointless endeavour. Later, our readerly suspicions are

8 I am not referring to prological argument as inclusive of the *argumentum* as is the case with Plautus since "Unlike Plautus, Terence made the prologue independent of the play and gradually eliminated the *argumentum*." See Cioni (2018).

certified when we observe Philomusus and Studioso's entrance into the land of "Logique" (1.31), where they are immediately welcomed by a certain Madido who passionately recites Horace's *Epistles* and yet is a staunch critic of the pilgrimage to Parnassus since he believes "one pinte of wine shall inspire youe with more witt than all they nine muses" (2.260-1). Second, they enter the realm of "Rhetorique" (3.293) where they run into a Stupido who speaks of the rhetoricians'"diabolicall ruffs and wicked great breeches full of sin, that it would make a zealous professor's harte bleed for grife" (3.364-5). To document his claim in experience, he leads them to an Amoretto who is an ardent reader of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*. But Amoretto proves himself as another frivolous wanderer when he explains the motive behind his love for Ovidian poetry and says: "I love thee, Ovid, for Corinna's sake, / Thou loves, Corinnia, as turtle loves her make" (4.392-3). Even worse, through his influence, Philomusus declares that he "alwayes was sworne Venus' servitoure" (4.462) and Studioso expresses his wish to "staye somwhat longer in this lande / To cropp those joyes that Amoretto speakes of" (4.500-1). Contrary to Consiliodorus' advice, they both revel in sensual pleasure and blame "poetrie's faire baites" (5.526) for the delay in their journey. Later, once they step their feet upon the territory of philosophy, they are once more reminded of the pointlessness of their endeavour. Ingenioso, a student of philosophy, tries to unconvince them that the pilgrimage is of any value. When Studioso asks him to join them in their pilgrimage, Ingenioso replies:

> What, I travell to Parnassus? why, I have burnt my bookes, splitted my pen, rent my papers, and curste the cooseninge harts that brought mee up to noe better fortune. I, after manie years studie, havinge almost brought my braine into a consumption, looking still when I shoulde meete with some good Maecenas that liberallie would rewarde my deserts, I fed soe long upon hope, till I had almoste starved. (5.615-22)

And not disheartened at all by Ingenioso's words, we hear Philomusus' final remarks on their seemingly never-ending, scholarly aptitude for learning:

> *Philom*: Let vulgar witts admire the common songes,
> I'le lie with Phoebus by the Muses' springes,
> Where wee will sit free from envie's rage,
> And scorne eache earthlie Gullio of this age. (5.726-9)

Their eagerness to continue with their journey strikes us as an unexpected move since scholarly ingenuity, hypocrisy, and metatheatrical commentaries on the vainness of the pilgrimage are not exactly catalysts for a heroic travelogue. Its only expectedness descends from the bouletic prologue's narcissistic influence on the play which growingly widens the conceptual gap between the mock-pilgrimage and the illogicality of the renewed hopes of Philomusus and Studioso.[9] In other words, the prologue uncovers the process of comedic failure according to which the travelogue is knowingly trivialised.

The second play, *The Returne from Parnassus* is a development on the first play's prological self-reflexivity although its sense of authorial control gains larger emphasis since it includes "first-person references to the narrator or author as a narrating self" (Dinkler, 2017, p. 39). The Stage Keeper refers to the playwright as a local of "Chessire" (11) who vainly studied in Germany, but he also narrates his dramatic influence:

> *Stage Keeper*. Howe gentle? saye, youe cringinge parasite,
> That scrapinge legg, that doppinge curtisie,
> That fawninge bowe, those sycophant's smoothe tearmes,
> Gained our stage muche favoure, did they not?
> Surelie it made our poet a staide man,
> Kepte his proude necke from baser lambskins weare,
> Had like to have made him senior sophister.
> He was faine to take his course by Germanie
> Ere he coulde gett a silie poore degree. (1-9)

The provocative first-speech pokes fun at the playwright. For, the suggestion is that the playwright dramatises the vainness of his own "poore degree" which prolongs the theme of the pointlessness of scholarly ambition as part of his own real experience. Due to this elongation, not only the moralistic imperative that lurks behind the comedic design is exposed but also the enforcement of the idea that "wit is but a phantasme and idea, a quareling shadowe" (1.1.170) which comments on the playwright's personal disillusionment. And yet, instead of producing feelings of tragic frustration, the play turns it into a means of metatheatrical commentary that is intertwined with its comedic mode of self-inspection. Thus, the prologue applauds the efforts of the playwright in gaining the stage "much favoure" due to his auto-inspectional honesty which fortifies the central comedy in the

9 There is ample textual evidence to assume that Philomusus' ambitious ignorance is a response to Marston's elitist Philomuse in *What You Will* which, in return, explains the self-reflexive comedy of the play.

play. Taking the prological model as its example, the storyline furthers the comedic journey of Philomusus and Studioso who are now portrayed as disillusioned travellers who have left the tower of learning empty-handed. Studioso is resentful that "wee, foolish wee, have sacrificed our youth" (1.1.93) and Philomusus refuses to dip his quill in Hellicon (1.1.129). Ingenioso resents that he has more in his head than he has in his purse (1.1.168-9) and seeks for the support of a wealthy patron although he later resigns from his office since the Patron gives him "a ungratious nodd" (1.1.347).[10] This sense of disillusionment later catches the end of a "melancholicke that our departure from Parnassus doth create" (1.1.445-6). Not surprisingly, however, the graver the company's sense of melancholy becomes, the greater the play's self-reflexive comedy becomes visible, implying that the superficiality of the melancholic layer that the playwright adds to the play is also a lurid expression of scholarly futility. The self-mockery reaches its climax when Studioso declares in a mock-Shakespearean manner: "Fairewell, Parnassus! farwell, faire content!" (1.1.481)[11]

As much as the play's self-deprecating mood furthers a literary narcissistic comedy, it also invents a comedy of narcissism. A complaint is issued by a Draper, a Tayler, a Tapster, and Simson at the beginning of Act 2 who are promised payments by Philomusus, Studioso, and Luxurio. However, they are never paid properly, and the honesty of the townsmen (2.1.569) is ill-treated by the scholarly company who wander around with a "blacke frise coat" (2.1.587) philosophising about the fickleness of Fortune rather than paying them back. This is followed by scenes that depict Philomusus as a newly hired sexton to the clownish Percevall, Studioso as a servile tutor to an aristocratic "dandipratt" (2.1.766), and Ingenioso as a fake eulogist in service of a Gullio who can never afford to be "seene at the courte twise in one sute of apparell" (3.1.930). Added to their dishonesty is their speeches on the "vanitie" (2.1.809) of their employers which results in their akratic behaviour, rendering them consciously blind to their own vanities. In hope of defying Fortune and looking for financial means of providing for themselves, they commit intellectual debauchery. In a cyclical manner, the play concludes itself with the exact frivolity which is looked down upon by the speaker of the prologue. As an extension on that point, it also shows us that a narcissistic comedy is made possible by a dramatic unveiling of the comic hero's over engagement with herself; that ironically speaking, "true good witts have badd memories" (3.1.1037-8).

10 This is a point which deserves special treatment with regards to the afterlives of Maecenas in Elizabethan/Jacobean literature. For a very recent and illustrious treatment of the subject see Gowers (2024). *Rome's Patron: The Lives and Afterlives of Maecenas*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

11 Compare and contrast with Othello's "Farewell the tranquil mind, farewell content, / Farewell the plumèd troops and the big wars / That makes ambition virtue!" (3.3.353-5).

The third play, *The Returne from Pernassus*, *or The Scourge of Simony*'s prologue takes a rather unconventional shape since it is spoken by the Boy, the Stagekeeper, Momus, and Defensor in the form of a lengthy dramatic dialogue instead of a monologue. However, the verbal dominance of Momus is particularly eye-striking who acts out the role of a humbling figure as is usual with his mythological demeanour. He frowns upon the play itself as "not good inuention" (50) which he foresees will be "pittifull drie" (62). The Defensor later silences Momus and outlines the core of the final conflict. However, Momus's judging remarks with regards to the play's dryness and unoriginality defines again our readerly response to the final chapter of Philomusus and Studioso's journey and beyond. For, the travellers to Parnassus are seen trying their hand at becoming "Phisitians" (1.4.439) while Ingenioso is seen as a penniless satirist and a follower of Juvenal, and Amoretto an irredeemable bribe-taker and impostor. As a final act, the pitiful dryness of the narcissistic comedy repeats itself when we are introduced to Philomusus and Studioso's aspirations to become actors at Richard Burbage's theatre but to no avail. Will Kempe puts it to Philomusus that he "wilt do well in time, if thou wilt be ruled by thy betters, that is by my selfe" (4.3.1872-3) and yet the closing scene voices Philomusus' desire to become a shepherd at Kent (5.4.2190) upon deciding that a theatrical career and the fame it might bring will soon be forgotten once they are "coopt vp in silent graue" (4.3.1917). As two characters in search of their 'author,' they are finally humbled by the Momian prologue, the "paultry Crittick" (11). Therefore, the unorthodox unveiling of the comic journey becomes an extension of the prological act that partially furthers a moralistic dictum. But aside from its vernacular moralism, the prological act lays bare "a supreme philosophical game" reminding us that "humour is a *cold* carnival" (Eco, 1984, p. 8); one which extends the Chessire-man's Momian criticism.

The bulk of textual evidence presented above allows us the conclusion that the prologues of the *Parnassus* plays are narcissistic constructs which offer narrative spaces of self-engagement with the process of artistic creation. Rather than assuming the role of introductory speeches, they assume the role of deliberative speech-acts contributing to the meaning-making processes of the plays since the prologue "has as its chief function to ensure that the text is read properly" (Génette, 1997, p. 197). It is a paratext that is only seemingly external. In fact, it provides internal evidence for the plays' narrative strategies. In addition,

> Although we do not always know whether these productions are to be regarded as belonging to the text, in any case they surround it and extend it, precisely in order to *present* it, in the usual sense of this verb but also in the strongest sense: to *make present*, to ensure the text's presence in the world (…). (Génette, 1997, p. 1)

Along with the stylistic contribution of the bouletic prologue, it is hardly an escapable fact that the paratextual status of the prologue in university drama is a cultural symptom of the Elizabethan/Jacobean fascination with solidifying textual authority. From this perspective, its use coincides with the Renaissance "link between humanist antischolasticism and experimental discovery" that "was complicated by a continuing search for a revitalized political telos in the relationship of things and thoughts, outer and inner sources of articulation" (Wiemann, 1996, p. 108). Aesthetically and historically speaking, then, the neo-Terentian prologue in the *Parnassus* plays is a proclamation of *auctoritas*, an outlet for a self-crowning achievement as modelled after the fact that "the Renaissance stage was an experimental, not a propitiatory, institution" (Agnew, 1986, p. 110). To put it more clearly, in a world which growingly enabled an experimental culture of literary autonomy the prologue became a paratextual space where individual assessments of theme, structure, and plot became possible. To achieve this point, the anonymous writers of the trilogy turn to a Roman comedic authority only to establish/deliberate their individual presence on the stage. Although the historical and socio-economic components that go into the making of both periods differ from one another, the final effect remains similar: they lay claim to comedic unorthodoxy and self-inspection by imposing narcissistic deliberation on the text.

Conclusion

Taking its cue from twentieth-century psychoanalysis, literary narcissism primarily refers to the self-occupational status of a literary text. However, when considered in a wider context, it transcends the limits of a psychoanalytical framework and exposes the autotelic universe of a literary text. As an expression of this autotelism and in the context of early modern English drama, the prological paratexts emerge from the *Parnassus* plays as markers of this literary narcissistic endeavour where they do not simply imply a solipsistic self-engagement but also contribute to "the creation of rhetorically effective discourse structures" (Alcorn, 1994, p. 17). In accordance, the prologues of the anonymous *Parnassus* plays play a significant rhetorical role and

provide clear outlines of authorial deliberation. Following in the footsteps of Terentian comedy, they emerge as markers of a narcissistic dramatic tradition in seventeenth-century English drama since they veer away from the Plautine use of introductory speeches. Since out of this Roman fabric the English "comic writers learnt to cultivate a more intellectual species of wit in place of their former crude buffoonery" (Hale, 1920, p. 129) as accompanied by the English university's effervescent culture of festivity, the academic group which contributed to the composition of the trilogy inherits from Terence a mode of narcissistic self-commentary. As a distant marker of the neo-classical adaptation of the Terentian inheritance, the *Parnassus* plays employ the prologue as a subversive narrative device which reproduces a metatheatrical culture of self-reflexivity. Through that, the prologue becomes an intimate space of textual and physical performance where the playwright provocatively takes the lid off the comedic product and lays bare the comedic process. Eventually, the innovation of the *Parnassus* plays lies in the fact that they declare the emergence of a self-centred comedy on the university stage in the seventeenth-century out of whose body a self-criticism and poetic source of authority can easily flow if it chooses to take a narcissistic look into the artistic pond that is called theatre.

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Research Article

The Ecomaterialist Appropriation of the Shakespearean Stage: Tracing the Entangled Worlds in Rupert Goold's *The Tempest* (2006)

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary environmental concerns and ecological issues stimulate updated adaptation and appropriation of dramaturgy, allowing the playwrights, directors, stage designers, and performers to reconsider conventional strategies of theatre. Pushing intellectual and creative boundaries, the material-based practice of ecological theatre has recently found expression in theatre and performance studies. Drawing mainly upon recent ecomaterialist notions, this paper traces the entanglement of the material worlds in Rupert Goold's *The Tempest* (2006). Therefore, this paper aims at investigating how Goold reappropriates the stage by employing William Shakespeare's canonical text under the specific conditions of the Anthropocene, directly depicted on stage through arctic scenery, shipwreck, storm, and human despair against nonhuman climatic forces. By analyzing the 2006 production of *The Tempest* from an ecomaterialist point of view, this paper indicates that Goold pays particular attention to the entanglement of humans and more-than-human worlds, fostering the idea that a human being is an integral component of the material environment that contains and sustains, rather than being a distinct entity. Thus, by assigning distributive agency to the matter on stage, Goold uncovers nonhuman performance and suggests that each performing actor uniquely participates in the process of meaning and affect.

Keywords: *The Tempest*, Rupert Goold, the Anthropocene, Ecomaterialist Theatre, Material Entanglement

Introduction

Art has always been at the forefront of cultural change and interaction, reflecting the fluctuations in social values and tendencies. As an art form, theatre offers an instinctive way to reimagine the contemporary issues that pervade the global agenda. Thus, it has the capacity to reshape perceptions of humanity's attitudes toward the realities of the twenty-first century. In his book, *Politics of Performance*, Baz Kershaw interrogates the extent to which theatre can "change not just the future action of their audiences, but also the structure

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of the audience's community and the nature of the audience's culture" (1992, p. 1). According to Kershaw, the concept of "performance efficacy" can be illustrated as "the potential that theatre may have to make the immediate effects of performance influence, however minutely, the general historical evolution of wider social and political realities" (1992, p. 1). As Kershaw emphasizes, theatre evidently aims to "alter, or confirm" the spectators' perceptions of real-world realities (1992, p. 2). Hence, theatre emerges as a cultural production that addresses social and political milieu, extending beyond its textual meaning.

In a similar vein, in *Reading the Material Theatre*, Richard Knowles provides "a more fully contextualized and politicized understanding of how meaning is produced in the theatre" (2004, p. 9). Knowles states that an analysis of the performance in relation to its production and reception allows for a variety of possibilities. To put it more clearly, Knowles insists that performance texts can either reconfigure "versions of society, history, nationality, ethnicity, class, race, gender, sexuality, ability or other social identities," and particularly in "the degrees to which the transgressive or transformative potential of a particular script or production functions on a continuum from radical intervention and social transformation to radical containment" (2004, p. 10). Taking Kershaw and Knowles's text-to-performance studies into consideration, it is possible to argue that theatre has been considered a catalyst for cultural transformation and engagement, mirroring the shifts in social values and trends. Theatre as an art form provides an intuitive means to radically reimagine contemporary world challenges and foster transformation of humans' attitudes toward those challenges.

The appropriation of the canonical hypotexts is an alternative to offer a radical reimagination of the contemporary problems that pervade the global agenda in the twenty-first century. Thus, this paper aims to analyze Rupert Goold's appropriation of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, by artistically re-visioning the stage elements under the specific conditions of the Anthropocene, including climate change crisis, global warming, and environmental deterioration. In so doing, the paper will interrogate the extent to which theatre scholars, directors, stage designers, and performers can transform the stage to propose solutions to our current ecological condition. Building upon recent scholarly works by new materialists, including Jane Bennett, Karen Barad, and Stacy Alaimo, the paper revolves around the appropriation of the Shakespearean early modern space according to the ecological conditions of the Anthropocene. Tracing the intersections between recent new materialist interpretations and stage appropriations, the paper will delve into Goold's 2006 production of *The Tempest* that radically points to the material entanglement of the humans and nonhuman actors.

The Anthropocene, "human-dominated geological epoch" (Bonneuil & Fressoz, 2016, p. 16), is characterized by the gradual deterioration of the earth's ecosystems and biodiversity due to human influence. The Anthropocene has become widely recognized since 2000 when Eugene F. Stoermer and Paul Crutzen "emphasize the central role of mankind in geology and ecology" (2000, p. 17). While humans obsess with themselves, like Narcissus by the lake, the more-than-human worlds that surround them seem to have become more unpredictable and aggressive. The sea levels have gradually increased and become irreversibly polluted. The deterioration of fish life, plankton, and coral reefs may be related to climate change effects and the contamination caused by human waste. Countless species have faced the threat of endangerment or extinction. Rampant mining activities, excessive fertilizing, and intensive agriculture practices are causing the destruction of ecosystems, leading to a catastrophic decline in biodiversity. Climate change has been caused by the widespread combustion of fossil fuels and the subsequent rise in atmospheric carbon dioxide levels (Bonneuil & Fressoz, 2016, pp. 11-23). The global south is experiencing waves of migration due to deforestation, drought, desertification, poverty, and famine. The occurrence of oil spills and the release of radiation from nuclear power plants, along with the persistent risk of nuclear warfare and the significant growth of the global population to 7 billion, all prompt concerns regarding the long-term viability of both human and nonhuman life (Ellis, 2018).

The Anthropocene underscores an array of theories that present alternative philosophies to anthropocentrism by signifying the existence of more-than-human worlds. In addressing the devastating consequences of the Anthropocene, for instance, recent ecocritical studies clearly point out the fact that "Existence is entangled, symbiotic, hybrid. There is no clearly defined borders which allow fixed notions of being" (Ferrando, 2014, p. 170). This point of view deconstructs the assumed ontological hierarchy between humans and nonhumans, subject and object. Thus, the horizontal re-visioning of the more-than-human world calls for an awareness of the distributed agency of each existential performance in spacetime. In this vein, new materialism, object-oriented ontologies, and social assemblage theories also provide insights into understanding the Anthropocene.[1]

1 Cultural theorists' interest in the Anthropocene and the related philosophies has steadily increased in the 21st century. Donna Haraway's *Natureculture*, Bruno Latour's *Active Network Theory*, Rosi Braidotti's *nomadic subject*, Karen Barad's *agential realism* and *intra-action*, Jane Bennett's *thing theory*, Jason W. Moore's *the Capitalocene*, and Timothy Morton's *the ecological thought* have developed new philosophical grounds from which theatre and performance studies derive fresh insights.

In the Anthropocene, theatre and performance studies enthusiastically *adopt* the aforementioned insights and endeavor to *adapt* or *appropriate* stage under the specific conditions of the Anthropocene. To put it more clearly, theatre can be considered a mesh in which human and nonhuman materiality is inevitably entangled. Shifting away from the representationalist trap of conventional theatre, such an endeavor enables theatre and performance scholars, directors, stage designers, and playwrights to reconsider how nonhuman performance can uncover the ecologies of human theatre. Then, the idea of entanglement will be encouraged, fostering the realization of the differences by moving away from the central anthropocentric focus. Therefore, all the elements that come together within the theatrical space, from the dramatic text to the dramatic personae, from the stage to the sound, from the light to the audience, are unique within this mesh, and there is no hierarchical relationship between them. In light of those considerations, the following discussion will first deal with new eco-aesthetic paradigms in theatre and performance scholarship, interrelating them with recent ecomaterialist assumptions, and then trace those intersections in Rupert Goold's *The Tempest,* first presented by the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) in 2006.

Ecomaterialism in Theatre and Performance: A Theoretical Background[2]

The more-than-human worlds that surround humanity have become more uncertain; thus, the certainties previously claimed by scientists and scholars are gradually disappearing. This is evident in various aspects, such as the melting glaciers, the core function of technology in sustaining human life, and the increasing resistance of viruses to chemical treatments, among others. Human dominance as the master of the universe has never before been challenged and degraded to such a significant degree. According to Karen Barad this is the consequence of "particular practices that [humans] have a role in shaping and through which we are shaped" (2007, p. 390). Then, what remains to be explored and analyzed within theatre and performance studies? The answers are

2 Serpil Oppermann writes, "ecomaterialism is currently conceived as a project of theorizing the earth's human and other-than-human dwellers in terms of multiple becomings with a detailed consideration of what, in fact, is the major concern of this approach: the global dynamic of crisis ecologies as a result of human-driven alterations of the planetary ecosystems, otherwise known as the compulsive powers of the Anthropocene […] Accordingly, ecomaterialism is the epigenesis of the new materialist theories, developing in gradual differentiation through their platform and amplifying their ecological frameworks […] Ecomaterialism, in other words, compels us to reckon a living world with the protean conditions of being mineral, vegetal, animal and human; a material world in which earthly beings, things and forces are environed with the same ecological, geological and also biopolitical plight" (2018, p. 120-121).

varied; however, the main concern focuses on the "distribution of agency over human [and] nonhuman" actors on stage, positing humans "are not the only active beings" (Barad, 2007, p. 218, 391).

Considering that the theatre stage "functions as a field of exchange where myths take flight, moving between the permeable spheres of self and community and then out into the terrain of our lives" (May, 2007, p. 95), it is significant to note that everything that exists on stage actively participates in the process of meaning and affect. It is, therefore, no coincidence that the theatre stage is a space of interaction where human and nonhuman bodies, substances, temporalities, cognitive processes, and discourses are entangled with each other, signifying ecology. In other words, the theatre stage is an intersectional space where actors meet the audience, the dramatic text integrates with the body, and the audience is involved in the process of meaning construction. This intersectionality refers to ecological existence, as "Ecology includes all the ways we imagine how we live together. Ecology is profoundly about co-existence" (Morton, 2010, p. 7). Ecology refers not only to the biological existence of organisms but also to how humans relate to each other and the more-than-human worlds. Thus, incorporating the term ecology into the theatre and performance arts requires a different conceptual and theoretical framework beyond its reception in the biological sciences.

This emphasis on co-existence fosters fresh insights into contemporary theatre and performance arts that point to the entanglement of human and nonhuman on stage, blurring the distinctions between these entities. In this regard, towards the end of the twentieth century, the theatre scholar Una Chaudhuri reinforced the role of "the arts and humanities – including the theater" in dealing with the ecological problems in the Anthropocene by coining the term "ecological theatre" (1994, p. 25). Chaudhuri argues that in the context of the humanist paradigm that marked the Age of Enlightenment, theatre solely focuses on the social aspect of human life. Thus, the widespread conviction in the anthropocentric characteristics of contemporary theater results in a position that is "programmatically anti-ecological" (1994, p. 24). To foster ecological theatre, Chaudhuri addresses the necessity "for a turn towards the literal, a programmatic resistance to the use of nature as metaphor" (1994, p. 29), pointing out theatre's capacity to convey a new spatial dimension. According to Chaudhuri, the widely held assumption that modern theatre revolves around anthropocentric themes leads to a deliberately anti-ecological position. Chaudhuri describes the initial phases of a process called "a remapping of humanism" (1994, p. 30), which involves the development of a new

theatre practice that focuses on materialism and ecology, rejecting the tendency to generalize and use nature as metaphor. By enabling the theoretical reconceptualization of theatre studies with an ecological trajectory, this new materialist approach also offers entry points from which human and more-than-human world entanglements can be conveyed to the audience.

This shift toward a new materialist-based theater and performance practice allows for the realization of "our material embeddedness and enmeshment in and with the more-than-human environment" (Arons & May, 2012, pp. 2-3). This entanglement is provided by theatre's materiality, as theatre is "both a living art form and a site wherein bodies, communities, politics, commerce, and imaginative possibilities intersect in a material way" (May, 2007, pp. 97). The dynamism of the material world provides multiple paradigms for theatre and performance arts by "displacing the human subject from the center of the 'world' and locating it instead in an agential landscape of flows, systems, and networks" (Lavery, 2016, pp. 230-231). Such a reconsideration both allows for a new spatial dimension in the Anthropocene, where geological debates are intertwined with philosophical ones, and stimulates new arguments in theatre and performance studies. To put it more clearly, the material world is composed of a complex web of connections, forming networks that generate significant signifying influences (Iovino & Oppermann, 2014, p. 1-2). Thus, the new materialist-based theatre derives from "a dynamic process of material expressions seen in bodies, things, and phenomena coemerging from these networks of intra-acting forces and entities" (2014, p. 7). Paying particular attention to the material configurations of human material-discursive constructs and nonhuman entities, this viewpoint allows for the process of adapting and appropriating the theatre space through new spatial dimensions. As the nonhuman entities are intricately linked to human lives, the recognition of the continuity between human and more-than-human worlds provides fertile ground for the appropriation of the canonical hypotexts in the Anthropocene.

The emphasis on the entanglement of human and more-than-human worlds challenges dualism of subject and object in the material world and incorporates the idea of agency to promote new theatrical strategies. As Chaudhuri highlights, "a programmatic resistance to the use of nature as metaphor" (1994, p. 29) entails the appreciation of the intrinsic value of every unique element on stage. Such a materialist-based theatre perspective problematizes anthropocentric conventional theatre codes. Moreover, this offers a performative space in which the evolving relationships between

humans and nonhumans in our contemporary lives are being explored on stage. As the relationships between these entities reinforce the agency of nonhuman matter while defying the priority of human power, the contemporary appropriations pay particular attention to the limits of humans' sense of control dispersed by the huge effects of the anthropogenic climate crisis. In this vein, ecomaterialism that has recently emerged in the field of ecocriticism involves dissolving the traditional separation between subject and object in the material world and incorporating ideas of agency to promote awareness of ecological issues. It is, therefore, no coincidence that ecomaterialism challenges reductionist and dualistic forms of thought that create antagonism and hierarchies between humans and nonhumans. As Oppermann writes,

> Placing a concerted emphasis on multiple modalities of becoming that involve messy interactions of human and non-human agencies, flows of elements and geobiochemical forces in the highly problematized zones of naturecultures, ecomaterialism also liberates us from our speculative exceptionalism. (2018, p. 122)

Ecomaterialism centers on the concept of our inherent interconnectedness with the natural world, acknowledging the expansion of our understanding of human identity in the face of environmental vulnerability. From an ecomaterialist standpoint, the relationship between humans and nonhumans is intricately entangled and those entities share common ecological predicaments. These connections exist throughout several domains, including the economic, political, cultural, scientific, and tangible realms. Therefore, ecomaterialism begins by expanding one's sense of self and erasing simplistic divisions in order to embrace ecological approaches to interact with the environment. Therefore, the paper considers Goold's production of *The Tempest* (2006) as an ecomaterialist theatre appropriation.

The human interaction with the nonhuman environment is a central point to the contemporary literary theories that call for a radical reorientation. As political theorist Jane Bennett questions, "Why advocate the vitality of matter? Because the image of dead or thoroughly instrumentalized matter feeds human hubris and our earth destroying fantasies of conquest and consumption" (2010, p. ix). Displacing the human subject from the center of the universe and positioning the human being within agentic flows propose a horizontal relationship between "humans, biota, and abiota" (2010, pp. 111-112). Thus, the emphasis on the interconnectedness of all things challenges

the traditional view that separates matter, agency, humans, nonhumans, nature, and culture. Bennet's approach posits the vitality of matter pushing humans to acknowledge that matter in the environment does not exist just for humans' benefit. That is, Bennett favors a more sustainable interaction with the vibrant matter to defy human arrogance.

In a similar vein, Karen Barad's examination of the matter, rooted in her expertise in quantum physics, brings a more performative perspective. Barad's approach has been taken by theatre and performance studies to examine how performance and actions produce effects beyond mere meaning creation. According to Barad, "matter is not a thing but a doing" generating continuously evolving patterns (2007, p. 183). Barad's concept of "intra-action" elucidates the materializing of all human/nonhuman and social/natural bodies. The intra-acting bodies, which are inseparable from each other, actively participate in the formation of identities and subjectivities, asserting that human agency must be considered fundamentally dependent on its responsiveness to the nonhuman agency. Barad's notion of intra-action goes beyond mere interaction and highlights a deep and mutual entanglement between human and nonhuman agencies; thus, the emphasis on "doing" redirects the focus to the performative interpretation of the phenomena. Building on both Bennet and Barad, Stacy Alaimo elaborates on the notion of "trans-corporeality" to describe the bodily natures of human and nonhuman environments. In Alaimo's terms, transcorporeality refers to the study of intangible material forces, such as the movement of substances and forces between individuals, locations, and socio-economic and eco-political systems. Thus, it explains how the material world affects human bodies, knowledge, and actions. Alaimo highlights that a fresh recognition of material might uncover extensive and sometimes unexpected outcomes of a certain activity on many populations, species, and ecosystems (2012, p. 22).

Recent theatre and performance scholarship applies ecomaterialism to stage appropriations, paying particular attention to the emphasis on the recognition of the entanglement between humans, beings, and places. Such an emphasis fosters the idea that humans are integral components of the ecology rather than distinct entities. Materiality in theatre and performance studies refers to the incorporation of ecological concepts throughout the whole process of theatrical production. Thus, this tendency ultimately stimulates innovative forms of creative expression and involvement. In other words, ecomaterialist concern in theatre appropriations emphasizes agency and materiality, re-visioning the stage in which neither human nor nonhuman or the matter is given priority. In this sense, ecomaterialism enables the comprehensive flourishing

of a variety of materials, emphasizing the human body's dynamic presence amid other material entities. Such attention allows for new considerations for stage adaptations and appropriations, stimulating attention to the idea of entanglement. Thus, incorporating ecomaterialism into the appropriation of dramaturgy involves collaborating with both humans and nonhumans to co-design. The directors take into account various levels of interdependence in order to broaden their perspective on the materials in the performance. In so doing, they provide 'voice' to nonhuman entities, recognizing their vitality and capacity for action. This can enable stage adaptations/appropriations to envision thought-provoking ways in which humans and the more-than-human worlds depend on each other and inspire alternatives to prevailing canonical narratives. More importantly, this tendency in adaptations/appropriations clearly emphasizes that the theatre production and presentation should be based on actively integrating with the natural environment in a manner that is artistically stimulating.

Tracing the Entangled Worlds in Rupert Goold's *The Tempest* (2006)

In the dramatic text of *The Tempest* (1611), the material space holds significant and diverse importance, reflecting both the influence of the Ottoman Empire and the Mediterranean region, as well as the emerging spread of Atlantic trade and colonialism. The play originally performs Renaissance London; however, the spaces are in mutual exchange, affecting and being affected by each other. For instance, an unidentified island in North Africa, Tunis, Naples, and Milan are in continuous entanglement. The period is the age of discovery, and the play reflects English desire for the New World's riches. Additionally, there are mentions of the Americas in other parts of the text, including references to "Bermoothes," "Setebos," and "Indians." The play also highlights significant regions that were part of the Ottoman Empire, namely Argiers and Tunis, which served as crucial harbors in the North African coastal area referred to as "Barbary." These regions were closely linked to the activities of the "Barbary pirates." The Ottoman corsairs, also referred to as privateers, were primarily Muslim individuals who operated from the African coast. They were sponsored by influential and affluent individuals and their main activity involved intercepting merchant vessels in the Mediterranean and beyond (Scott, 2020, p. 23). The so-called "uninhabited island," despite being inhabited by Caliban, Ariel, and various spirits before Prospero's arrival, is significant in relation to the doctrine of discovery. This doctrine, which paved the way for the concept of terra nullius, was used to justify European conquest of the Americas by claiming that

the indigenous populations did not have ownership rights over the land due to their non-Christian beliefs or lack of legal possession rights. The drama frequently references Montaigne, who raised doubts about the harsh methods employed in the colonization of the New World (Cless, 2010, p. 109).

Simultaneously, the material space is adequately adaptable to accommodate significantly different conceptualized locations. The island is depicted as having contrasting characteristics of fertility and productivity, as well as being a desolate and unproductive wilderness. It can be argued upon Gonzalo's comments: "Here is every thing advantageous to life," to which Antonio sarcastically responds, "True, save means to live" (II.i.50–1). Caliban, possessing superior expertise of the terrain, presents the beauty of the physical setting that combines contrasting elements such as fresh springs, fruitful terrain, and desolate places as follows: "all the qualities o'th' isle,/The fresh springs, bine-pits, barren place and fertile" (I.ii.337). Then, it is possible to assert that the variety of spaces in the original text allows for creative stage appropriations. During the early 2000s, several prominent performances and literary adaptations occurred in or referenced areas such as the Arctic North, Sub-Saharan Africa, New Zealand, Palestine, and Trinidad (Scott, 2020, p. 24).

Within this complex and ever-changing setting, the play highlights the tension between humans and nonhuman powers in driving the main plot. In the story, a storm and shipwreck are elaborated to highlight the entangled relationship between those forces. The storm performs as an agential force that affects the fate of the humans and brings the humans' entanglement with nonhuman forces to the light. Especially the materials are presented as fundamental for sustaining life on the island, and this aspect is immediately underscored. Caliban is the inhabitant of the island and claims ownership when he utters, "This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother" (I.i.333). Thus, he plays a significant role in providing materials that will sustain life on the island for the shipwreckers. Prospero, who considers himself the owner of the island, is aware of this fact and mentions Caliban as follows: "We cannot miss him. He does make our fire,/ Fetch in our wood, and serves in offices/ That profit us" (I.ii.311-3). As the quotation highlights, Caliban is the provider of the life-giving materials that humans need to survive. In the play, the representation of the entanglement between humans and nonhumans can be taken as a challenge to defy human sovereignty. This tendency is also clear in Gonzalo's 'Commonwealth' speech, calling for a more egalitarian life. Gonzalo remarks as follows:

> I' th' commonwealth I would, by contraries,
> Execute all things; for no kind of traffic
> Would I admit; no name of magistrate;
> Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,
> And use of service, none; contract, succession,
> Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;
> No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;
> No occupation, all men idle, all;
> And women too, but innocent and pure; No sovereignty— (II.i.148–57)

According to Thomas Bulger, Gonzalo's speech delivers the principles and qualities inherent in *The Tempest*'s utopian vision, which is intended to provide superior substitutes to current conditions. As the first scene delivers a macrocosmic chaotic realm, humans are geographically displaced and the existing order is suspended. In other words, *The Tempest* signifies a realm in which time is disordered and the conventional social hierarchies are disrupted by the perilous conditions of the storm. The humans are in conflict with the material world, where the established orders are declared ineffective. Thus, humans must reestablish the balance on individual, societal, and cosmic levels (1994, p. 38).

The Tempest evolves into a process of both creation and performance, as humans are physically entangled with the materials around them, allowing them to become "active participant[s] in the world's becoming" (Barad, 2003, p. 803). In this performative space of entanglement, *The Tempest* enables the flow of "agentic assemblages" (Bennett, 2010, p. 111) where each material asserts vitality and agency. As the above quotations reveal, the humans are geographically displaced due to the storm and they need materials such as fire, wood, and food to survive on the island. These materials perform a vital role, asserting vitality and agency in the formation of life on the island. Here, the attention to matter visualizes how humans are entangled with their environment that sustains them. In this regard, rather than being a play that deals with particular references to humans, *The Tempest* provides a much more comprehensive reading for contemporary theatre, performance, and Shakespearean studies. Especially the summer of 2006 witnessed "a dozen Shakespeare productions" (Dessen, 2006, p. 13), one of which is Rupert Goold's *The Tempest* with its expansive stage, serving as the foundation for the action. Additionally, stage elements such as light, temperature, and audio are used appropriately (Hartwig, 2007, p. 26). It is significant to note that Goold's stage evolves

into a totally different setting from the original one that met the spectators with a Mediterranean scene. Such a Gooldian appropriation addresses the recent global ecological issues that pervade theatre and performance endeavor in the Anthropocene.

The primary motivation for this metamorphosis is the initial ecocritical focus in the field. The ecocritical stance in the appropriations of dramaturgy interrogates the extent to which Shakespearean texts effectively confront and potentially highlight the dangers posed to both human and nonhuman existence in the Anthropocene. Lynne Brucker and Dan Brayton question, "Can reading, writing about and teaching Shakespeare contribute to the health of the planet" (2011, p. 2). Although theatre and performance scholars acknowledge that the connection between the ecocritical lens and theatre/performance scholarship has been gradually and steadily developing over the past twenty years (Arons & May, 2012, p. 3), there is currently limited evidence of the integration of these two fields with Shakespearean ecocriticism. In his *Shakespeare and Ecology*, Randall Martin emphasizes the need for more exploration in this field by stating that "Shakespeare's greatest possibilities for becoming our eco-contemporary, however, arguably lie not in academic discourse but in performance [that] comes from Shakespeare's extraordinary global reach and seemingly inexhaustible capacity for reinvention" (2015, p. 167). As mentioned above, the variety of material space and the richness of the entangled worlds in Shakespearean dramatic works are productive and fruitful to be reproduced in the contemporary period. Thus, *The Tempest* enabled the directors and stage designers to reappropriate the original Mediterranean space according to the specific conditions of the Anthropocene, when the entanglement of the human and more than human worlds posits much more significance. In this way, the performing nonhuman actors on stage explicitly point out the current ecological implications and how they affect humans. Martin also suggests that Shakespeare's plays demonstrate an understanding in the early modern era that the interactions between human and more-than-human worlds and their surrounding ecosystems were undergoing transformation (2015, p. 168). Their explicit or situational portrayal of emerging challenges such as climate change, population expansion, deforestation, environmentally harmful farming methods, and the militarization of gunpowder highlighted the existence of tangible, although occasionally remote and intricate disruptions to survival existence. Shakespeare's keen observations of both small and large interconnected systems of living organisms also encourage audiences to draw parallels between human and nonhuman materialism, allowing for an ecomaterialist reading of Goold's *The Tempest*.

It is essential to delineate certain fundamental elements of ecomaterialism in stage appropriations, while acknowledging that these may vary and develop over time, being determined by the specific productions and performances. For instance, the appropriation of theatrical space into a distinct location is important. It is not necessary to have a realistic portrayal, but the appropriation of a suitable environment for the performance is important. This assessment is determined by the material environment of the stage, such as the set, light, design, actors' bodies, the audio elements, and their influence on the performance, particularly on the audience. All those dramaturgical aspects contribute to the creation of meaning and the circulation of affect. Whether a matter such as storm performing as an actor, or an ephemeral one such as sound or light that construct the dramatic environment, the matter meets with the audience through sensual interactions. Brian Massumi elaborates this process as a bodily interaction, "where the body is only body, having nothing of the putative profundity of the self nor the superficiality of external encounter" (2002, p. 59). To paraphrase Massumi, the meaning and affect are constituted by a material interaction, independently from any social and cultural influence. Then, it is possible to argue that dramatic meaning is "mutually constitutive" (Knowles, 2004, pp. 17-18). The dramatic production's material ecosystem in relation to the contemporary world offers new statements for the audience. In the case of Goold's appropriation, it both deliberately makes its setting pertinent to the contemporary audience's concerns and stimulates thought-provoking insights into our current ecological crisis.

Rupert Goold's *The Tempest*, designed by Giles Cadle and starring Patrick Stewart, significantly deviates from the original text. Challenging traditional performances, Goold artistically situates the play on an arctic island. As Linda Hutcheon states, "the desire to transfer a story from one medium or one genre to another is neither new nor rare in Western culture" (2003, p. 39). In this sense, Goold creatively re-visions the stage and makes "the adapted material [his] own" (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 20). In the original text, Shakespeare specifies that the play takes place on a Mediterranean island situated equidistantly between North Africa and Naples. The play's New World elements, which draw from Montaigne's "Of Cannibals" and a modern Caribbean shipwreck story, have often been the main subject of analysis and discussion among critics and performers so far. Goold's unconventional decision to appropriate the stage to an arctic desert, despite its long-standing tradition of being staged elsewhere, strongly challenges the typical interpretations of *The Tempest* (Hartwig, 2007, p. 27). In so doing, Goold's *The Tempest* "move[s] away from simple proximation and towards something more culturally loaded"

(Sanders, 2006, p. 21). It effectively achieves the transformation of space into a specific location, which may be considered to be the primary characteristic of an ecomaterialist theatre. Goold's deliberate selection of the setting, as Miranda refers to it as a "brave new world" (V.i.183), challenges the audience's expectations, redirecting their focus towards both the conventional reality of the play and the unconventional environmental setting. Thus, it certainly "create[s] new text in which the old stories are reimagined and reinterpreted from formerly excluded perspectives" (Burnett, 2002, p. 7).

The stage is featured with stratified snow-white panels, resembling a block of ice that has covered the arctic desert and protruded towards the center. The interior scenes which take place in Prospero's hut are characterized by a wooden background placed in front of the stage. Although the wooden cabin is only heated by a converted oil drum furnace, it nonetheless offers some insulation from the freezing external temperatures. Goold himself defines the stage design as a "shifting, evaporating, oft-claimed but never owned environment" (qtd. in Bate and Wright, 2008, p. 141). The hut is one of just two artificial structures in the surrounding area, along with Caliban's "cave," which is formed by repurposing the remains of an old boat. Here, the emphasis is on human characters' adaptation to the environment. As mentioned above, Goold's production deviates significantly from the original Mediterranean tropical setting yet its strong ecomaterialist tendency is in perfect harmony with Shakespeare's ecological perspectives. Goold effectively includes a harsh arctic and/or post-catastrophic landscape as a dynamic character in his adaptation of the dramatic story about adapting to survive in challenging environmental conditions. Here, Goold assigns 'voice' to material entities beyond humans, recognizing their vitality and capacity for action. In so doing, the appropriation, engaging with the liveliness of the nonhuman world can help challenge preconceived notions of the relations between human and more-than-human worlds. Connecting with the vibrant matter and the agency of nonhuman entities enables the appropriation of dramaturgy to provide thought-provoking and artistically stimulating insights for the presentation of the entangled worlds on stage. According to Bennett, the idea of vibrant matter envisions interactions between human and nonhuman entities, by shifting the emphasis from human subject to a complex "assemblage" of diverse aspects and dynamic materials. Bennet's notion of assemblage, derived from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, recognizes the distribution of matter among a diverse array of actants, including "trash, bacteria, stem cells, food, metal, technologies, [and] weather" (2010, p. 23). Taking Bennett's elaboration into consideration, Goold's presentation of the harsh arctic as a vibrant character that is consistently contingent upon collaboration can be illustrated as the

manifestation of new aesthetic paradigms and theatral strategies in the Anthropocene. In this sense, the Anthropocene "provide[s] the contemporary conditions for [...] an updated ecotheatre, dedicated to putting the vast resources of live, embodied performance at the service of radical reimagination called for by the perilous predicament we find our species – and others – in today" (Chaudhuri, 2014, p. 2). This updated form of theatre diverges from conventional anthropocentric theatre by juxtaposing humans with immense and unpredictable phenomena, such as the climate crisis and global warming. Reconfiguring theatre in response to the ecological predicaments of the Anthropocene allows for exploring alternative methods of effectively addressing contemporary discussions regarding pressing global environmental issues and their consequences for both humans and nonhumans.

Goold's arctic scenery rather than a tropical one can be illustrated by special reference to Jane Bennett's theory of "thing power." Bennett illustrates the notion as "the curious ability of inanimate things to animate, to act, to produce affects dramatic and subtle" (2010, pp. 5-6). The harsh environment in the production brings into focus "the shared materiality of all things" (2010, p. 13), blurring the distinction between subjects and objects. In the original text, Caliban shows the highest level of adaptation to the natural environment and he is depicted as an indispensable character for sustaining life on the island. While the original text depicts Caliban as an indigenous inhabitant, Goold subverts his reception by casting him as a white actor, John Light, although he is still an "animalistic human" (Hartwig, 2007, p. 28). Hartwig suggests that "Caliban can be seen as an emblem of colonial oppression and as the natural, the connection between humanity and the more-than-human world" (2007, p. 28). Here, Caliban's representation as a blurred image – both human and nonhuman - through theatre can be considered a manifestation of ecological co-existence, highlighting the entanglement. Thus, Goold's attempt at staging each entity as a vibrant matter, including harsh arctic landscapes and human characters, allows it to become "an active participant in the world's becoming" (Barad, 2010, p. 803). Thus, each entity brings its own agential power to take action in the dramatic space, offering new directions in stage appropriations. The appropriation of the stage allows for exploring the infinite possibilities of either changing or affirming the audience's attitudes towards ecological problems that pervade the global agenda. In this way, *The Tempest*, "refreshingly new-minted" (Benedict, 2007) effectively addresses ecological issues.

The opening scene reveals a violent sea storm by displaying the picture of a marine transmitter from the 1960s onto a semi-transparent stage screen. Goold intends to

convey the fear a passenger feels when a storm hits. As the voice transmits a sequence of fishing and weather updates, the radar display indicates the movement of an impending storm. Then, the black-and-white video casts the mariners' futile attempts against turbulent waves and fierce winds (Martin, 2015, p. 168). Paying particular attention to Bennett's concept that things are active and dynamic entities, which experience a constant state of change and self-transformation, it can be argued that life on earth cannot be restricted to our anthropocentric actions and viewpoints. Human activities occur inside an intricate network of materials, where each element has an impact on the others. The storm scene in the play explores the idea of a tangible connection between humans and more-than-human worlds, contributing to a broader understanding of ecology that emphasizes ecological existence. Within this regard, Goold's appropriation of the stage creates a theatrical space for the audience to go deeper into discursive and theoretical structures and reconceptualize them in a nonhierarchical ontology by emphasizing an ecomaterialist understanding of theatre. Ecomaterialist theater, which performs all human and nonhuman materials on the stage by associating them with all the processes of the earth, offers new intellectual grounds for the audience to reconceptualize these phenomena and offer new artistic understandings. In this way, ecomaterialist theater points to the horizontal performativity of all human and nonhuman bodies through the visual, auditory, and spatio-temporal unity offered by theater and performance arts in making sense of the challenges of the Anthropocene, as Goold's production presents.

When the stage screen ascends gradually and a snow-covered stage design begins to appear. Prospero's shabby shelter made of wood and discarded metal attracts attention while gloomy light and feeble heat are transforming the stage environment. Prospero also undergoes a transformation with the appearance of "a crossover monster of Inuit or post-human fantasy" (Martin, 2015, p. 168). Prospero's shipwreck calamity is staged through an inhospitable landscape and stage elements, including light, heat, and sound. Bennett's emphasis on the essential physicality inherent in matter and its involvement in an assemblage is well shown in Goold's production. Each material involved in the eco-global conflict has a crucial energy, always pulsating with vitality, and asserts its active involvement in the continual interactions that engulf the biosphere. However, being alive does not consistently elicit a positive impact on other beings. In other words, ecology also encompasses the presence of devastating entities that may awaken a menacing energy or aggressive liveliness that engenders human and nonhuman survival. The production's dynamic materiality consists of human characters

and unpredictable nonhuman powers who actively participate in ecological terror. In this vein, the harsh arctic environment "has efficacy, can do things, has sufficient coherence to make a difference, produce effects, alter the course of events" (Bennett, 2010, p. viii). Hence, it is inherently dynamic beyond human endeavor, shifting attention to "the creativity of agency, to a capacity to make something new appear or occur" (Bennett, 2010, p. 31). It certainly has a thing-power and has the ability to affect and be affected beyond human-centered actions. The production's distributive agency among the human and nonhuman powers prompts us to contemplate the agency of an ecological assemblage.

The storm as a performing actor in this ecological assemblage serves as a cautionary message about our own disregard for the environment. The burned oil container and arctic desert indicate potential environmental outcomes, including the destruction caused by a global conflict, possibly involving nuclear weapons, over depleting fossil fuel resources. The original text's reference to the human abuse of the natural world in Act III provides a declaration for Goold's production:

> *A clap of thunder sounds and lightning flashes*.
> *ARIEL enters in the form of a harpy. ARIEL flaps his wings on the table, and by means of some kind of device on stage, the food disappears from the table.*
> *[To ALONSO, ANTONIO, and SEBASTIAN]*
> You are three men of sin, whom destiny,
> That hath to instrument this lower world
> And what is in't, the never-surfeited sea
> Hath caused to belch up you, and on this island
> Where man doth not inhabit—you 'mongst men
> Being most unfit to live—I have made you mad;
> […] The elements
> Of whom your swords are tempered may as well
> Wound the loud winds or with bemocked-at stabs
> Kill the still-closing waters as diminish
> One dowl that's in my plume. (III.iii.53-68)

Ariel's speech clearly outlines Shakespeare's original imagery of human mistreatment of the natural world. This imagery evidently influenced Goold's ecomaterialist interpretation. Ariel, the native resident of the island, serves as the genuine embodiment

of nature. Ariel is cast by Julian Bleach, who accurately reflects the character's origins and surroundings. He is "dressed in black, with hair standing on end as if inverted icicles, pale as the snow, and barefoot," reciting the play's melodies in a raspy and resonant voice (Hartwig, 2007, p. 28). Ariel is depicted as the inhabitant of the polar wilderness and his entanglement with the arctic realm is reinforced by his capacity to be visible from any location on stage. Goold, attracted by the analogies between *Dr. Faustus* and *The Tempest*, defines him as "something truly terrifying and threatening" (qtd. in Bate & Wright, 2008, p. 131). In Act III, following the stage instruction, "Enter several strange shapes, bringing in a banquet" (III.iii.18), which seem to be Eskimos, characterized by their attire of huge winter coats with fur-lined hoods. They present raw-meat to the aristocrats during the banquet. Pressing himself out of the dead animal's body, Ariel's imagery serves as a representation of "the material interrelatedness of all beings, including the human (Alaimo, 2010, p. 151). The idea of material entanglement enables humans to map subtle interactions and influences among various entities across time and space. This mapping is essential for conceptualizing material exchanges between entities within an extensive global network, where world ecology and world politics are interdependent and need scientific negotiation (Alaimo, 2010, p. 16). In this sense, Goold's dark images reveal the production's tendency to move away from anthropocentrism, creating spaces in which the dynamic performativity of nonhuman actors, forces, processes, politics, and economics can be staged.

Goold's attention to Prospero's primitive living conditions refers not only to human reliance on primordial life for survival but also to the global climate change crisis. The audience witnesses ice melt through the collapse of Prospero's house as the performance proceeds. This stage effect symbolizes the fragmentation of the earth, which is a clear allusion to the consequences of the global climate crisis (Hartwig, 2007, p. 30). By such a stage effect, Goold aims to portray the effects of the anthropogenic climate crisis on humans' survival. However, this new spatial paradigm provides a number of avenues for interventions to mitigate the catastrophic consequences of environmental violence for all living beings. As May highlights, "skills like radical empathy, deep listening, collective embodied practice, and a sense of self-as-community—all central to theatre as a way of knowing—are essential to" create global climate change awareness (2016, n.p.). Thus, Goold's arctic stage design, Ariel's representation as an arctic creature, and the ecological calamities Prospero experiences during the performance provide a unique and extensive performance for the audience. The attention to matter as the central element of the production demonstrates an increased sensitivity to nonhuman

entities that interact with humans. This tendency in dramaturgical appropriations engenders a uniquely ecomaterialist comprehension of theatre, indicating that an embodied materiality is perpetually engaged in interaction and co-creation with its environment. In this sense, the key aspect of an ecomaterialist approach to the performance lies in its establishment of a specific setting on the stage, where the reconsiderations of the actions and the characters are most meaningful. The arctic setting of *The Tempest* will undoubtedly impact future performances of the play.

Conclusion

This paper adopts an ecomaterialist approach to analyze Rupert Goold's production of *The Tempest* (2006). Thus, it indicates that Goold's appropriation of the stage allows for tracing the intersections between ecological materialism, theatre and performance studies. The production creatively involves human and nonhuman agency, both in terms of its material aspects and its theatrical elements. Re-visioning the stage under the specific conditions required by the Anthropocene, Goold offers fresh insights into the performance appropriations. *The Tempest* provides fertile ground to investigate ecomaterialist theatre to emphasize a dynamic flow of the materials in theatral space. Indeed, directly depicted on stage through arctic scenery, shipwreck, storm, and human despair against nonhuman climatic forces with a sense of vibrancy respond to the intricate challenges of the global ecological crisis. It is, therefore, no coincidence that *The Tempest* provokes ecological thinking and a dynamic ecomaterialist understanding of democracy.

Goold's production allows to examine the function and aspects of performance in the Anthropocene, in which humans and more-than-human worlds are constantly entangled in a material way. To put it more clearly, Goold employs a canonical text but re-visions the stage to portray current ecological challenges such as climate change, global warming, and environmental deterioration. More importantly, the characters are thrown into harsh arctic conditions and they have to fight against the climatic forces for survival. Prospero's cell and Caliban's cave which offer insufficient protection from the freezing external temperatures portray human despair. The emphasis points out that humans are in constant entanglement with nonhuman forces. In the production, the Anthropocene, characterized by the gradual deterioration of the earth's ecosystems and biodiversity due to human influence, is brought forth to address the requirement for a horizontal re-vision of the relationship among animals, plant-life, ecological system

and energy flows. By assigning distributive agency to the materials on stage, Goold uncovers nonhuman performance and suggests that everything that exists on stage actively participates in the process of meaning and affect. In this vein, Goold's production regards stage as a space of interaction, where human and nonhuman bodies, substances, temporalities, cognitive processes, and discourses are entangled with each other, signifying ecology. To conclude, Goold's representation emphasizes human and more-than-human entanglement and challenges the dualism of subject and object in the material world. By doing so, the production employs the notion of agency to promote new theatrical adaptations. Promoting a connection with more intricate, egalitarian, and ecological ways of existence, *The Tempest* (2006) will undoubtedly impact future performances of the play.

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Research Article

"What is Hecuba to [me]?": The Impossibility of Catharsis and Rupture of Representation in Marina Carr's *Hecuba*

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ABSTRACT

Marina Carr's *Hecuba* (2015), an adaptation of Euripides's tragedy *Hecuba* (424 BC), resonates with Hamlet's famous line "What is Hecuba to him, or he to her?" (Shakespeare, 1599/2003, 2.2.511) for the contemporary spectator by arousing pain and guilt instead of a cathartic effect. In the adaptation, Carr portrays a different presentation of the Queen of Troy from her representations in several classical texts. Contrary to the classical picture of a vengeful mad queen, she retells the untold story of the tragic queen and reveals Hecuba's sorrow, pain, love for her children, and the vulnerability of a woman who is surviving a war. In *Hecuba*, Carr manages to build an ethical encounter between Hecuba and both Agamemnon and the spectator. In doing so, she breaks the representation by applying experimental theatrical devices that disturb the spectator in their comfort zone and subvert the cathartic effect. The play leaves the spectator with the burden of heavy pain and responsibility for the Other. In this respect, this article discusses the impossibility of the purgation of feeling in contemporary theatre through a Levinasian ethical approach in relation to the Other in Marina Carr's *Hecuba*.

Keywords: Marina Carr, Euripides, *Hecuba*, Levinas, Ethics

Introduction

In her plays, Irish playwright Marina Carr portrays a very sensitive, observant, and exceptional point of view towards conventional perceptions of female conditions. Especially in her first plays, she takes the spectator on an uncanny, disturbing intrusion into the dark side of traditional family relations. She manages to depict paradoxically strong but, at the same time, silent women who are suffering in their prison, their

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homes. In the same vein, Carr's adaptations of the classical texts reveal the untold stories of mythological female figures who are confined to mythical stories, and as Kübra Vural Özbey maintains, she "brings the female voice and agency into sharper focus in her adaptations" (Özbey, 2023, p. 398). In *Hecuba*, Carr sheds light on the universal phenomenon of war and the untold stories of the invisible victims of it: women and children. This revelation of the often overlooked narratives of women and children in war is sure to enlighten and make the audience more aware of these significant but neglected aspects. In the play, Carr retells the story of another strong but captive woman, the Trojan Queen, Hecuba. Regarding her adaptation of Euripides's *Hecuba*, in an interview with Dan Hutton, she states, "I fundamentally disagreed with the idea of [Hecuba's] killing her two little grandsons in revenge. I just never bought that. So I've written my own version of what might possibly have happened on that beach" (Carr, qtd in González Chacón, 2016, p. 35). Consequently, Carr re-evaluates the conditions and overlooked casualties of the war depicted in Euripides's tragedy with the same title, *Hecuba*.

Euripides's handling of the Trojan War and its aftermath in his plays is significant in terms of his attempt to present the tragic fate of the defeated King Priam's noble wife, Hecuba, and her attendants and children. Similarly, in his other tragedies, he pursues the stories of the neglected in war and provides a questioning look at the suffering of women, children, and other disadvantaged groups. Maria González Chacón draws attention to Euripides's standpoint on the Trojan War and states that "[h]is tragedies address the issues of women, the stranger or foreigner, colonialism, freedom, social injustices in the form of different oppressions, men and women fighting each other, men and women as they are, women as heroines, children as victims, and slaves as the keepers of truths and honors" (González Chacón, 2016, p. 26). Still, as Carr emphasises in the interview above, a discrepancy in Hecuba's story needs to be clarified and challenged. Carr gives an independent voice to Hecuba in her adaptation using an experimental dialogue technique. Therefore, Carr makes her characters, especially Hecuba, speak directly to the audience and turn the spectators into participants in the play. This way, she enables a face-to-face encounter between the audience and the actors/characters, creating a Levinasian ethical encounter.

Emmanuel Levinas argues that an ethical relationship can only be achieved by recognising the alterity of the Other and agreeing to be responsible for the Other without reciprocity, without rendering his/her alterity to the sameness. For Levinas,

the face of the Other is a call for responsibility, and an ethical encounter can only be triggered by a face-to-face encounter. The face is incomprehensible and beholds its undecidability infinitely and "resists possession, resists [Subject's] powers" (Levinas, 2007, p. 197). This resistance frees the Other from the determination, categorisation, and totality of the Subject. Considering the nature of theatre, Levinas's argument can be re-evaluated regarding the ethical encounter between the actors/characters and the spectator. As an art form, theatre brings these two indispensable components together at the same place and time to experience and actively participate in the production. As the artwork is being created, the spectator witnesses the process. In this respect, even by leaving their homes and dressing for an event at a particular place, the spectator challenges the perception of passive consumers of an artwork.

However, according to Levinas, ethical encounters cannot be achieved in works of art because of art's representative aspect. Therefore, he perceives art as an unethical phenomenon. He maintains that "[t]here is something wicked and egoist and cowardly in artistic enjoyment. There are times when one can be ashamed of it, as of feasting during a plague" (Levinas, "Reality", 1987, p. 12). Levinas's opposition to art and its lack of ethics lies behind the idea of representation and the collective response to this representation. In other words, this collective response means being a member of the totality, thus rendering the individuality of a single spectator.

As one of the essential elements of Greek tragedy, catharsis offers "purgation of the feelings" and lets the spectator enjoy the relief of pity and fear after the performance. As this is the story of an Other, the spectator feels no responsibility. Being aware of the representational aspect of the play on stage, a spectator of a classical tragedy does not feel defamiliarisation and can be purified from emotions as a result of sympathetic identification with the characters. However, Marina Carr's employment of experimental techniques hinders the reader/spectator from identifying with the characters and breaks the representation by creating a face-to-face encounter between the actor/character and the spectator. Consequently, through defamiliarisation, she constructs an ethical stance and leaves the audience with some burden and heavy feelings instead of catharsis/relief. Moreover, in the ethical encounter with the actor/character, the spectator does not expect reciprocity in this encounter. This Levinasian face-to-face encounter between the spectator and the actors/characters results in an ethical encounter. Thus, the spectator feels the burden of responsibility for the Other with his/her singularity, without rendering him/her into sameness. In this respect, contrary to

Levinas's argument on the unethical nature of art, theatre is a form of art capable of constructing an ethical bond between the two parties without reciprocity.

Euripides's *Hecuba*

Euripides recounts the tale of the women who survived the Trojan War in *Hecuba* and gives them a chance to document the brutality and atrocities of the war. He presents Hecuba, the Trojan queen, as a grieving and vengeful mother whose sons and husband are butchered, her daughter Polyxena is sacrificed for Achilles, and her last son Polydorus is killed by the greedy Polymestor. In the end, Hecuba avenges Polydorus by gouging Polymestor's eyes and killing his sons. The play ends with Polymestor's prophecy of Hecuba's transformation into a dog and her only daughter Cassandra's murder in Agamemnon's palace by Clytemnestra, Agamemnon's wife.

In his time, Euripides was accused of portraying women incorrectly in his plays, as his depiction of active women was not considered decent for his age. Unlike the obeying, silent, and, at the same time, strong representation of noblewomen, he depicts them as openly expressing their frustration with society and their position and victimisation in it as female members. In this respect, many classical dramatists accused him of being a "misogynist" because of his unconventional depiction of women, which is considered an insult to the decency of the women of his time. However, a contemporary critical examination of his characters reveals that he portrays "frequently women acting and why they were acting" (Storey & Allan, 2014, p. 144). Maria González Chacón emphasises Euripides's frequent employment of woman condition as the subject matter in his plays and states that "[o]f the seventeen plays by Euripides that survive, twelve take their title from and have a woman or a group of women as protagonists. They are usually strong, kill enemies and sacrifice" (Gonzáles Chacón, 2016, p. 26). Moreover, Helene P. Foley draws attention to Euripides's unfamiliar handling of these female protagonists/women and maintains that "Euripides' female characters in particular adopt the full range of rhetorical techniques that were normally the province of men and acquired as part of an education for public life from which women were excluded" (Foley, 2001, p. 275). Euripides's *Hecuba* is one of those plays in which he depicts a female character in the act and her motivation behind it. Storey and Allen draw attention to Euripides's genuine standpoint on the wars and the position of women in them, stating that in *Medea,* Euripides "takes a figure of traditional myth with three strikes against her: a foreigner, a woman, and a practitioner of the dark arts, and makes a living and sympathetic

human character out of her, who attracts the sympathy of the chorus of Corinthian women, as well as of most modern audiences, with her proclamation at lines 248–51" (Storey & Allan, 2014, p. 145). In these lines, Medea maintains, "They say of us women that we live a life free from danger inside the house, while they fight in battle. Idiots! I would rather stand three times in battle than bear one child" (qtd in Storey & Allan, 2014, p. 145). In *Hecuba*, Euripides presents the stories of women in times of war through the tragic queen of Troy, Hecuba. He portrays

> a woman, who has lost everything, husband, position, city, children, and who suffers two final catastrophic events: the loss of her last daughter and the discovery that the young son whom she sent away for safety has been murdered. All that is left for her is a bloody revenge and then madness. Euripides dramatizes the final collapse of a previously heroic woman. (Storey & Allan, 2014, p. 143)

In the play, despite her precarious condition, Euripides depicts a strong and valiant woman accompanied by female servants who also lost their children and husbands in the war. S. E. Wilmer points to the depiction of a victimised woman as a strong figure in Greek tragedies like Clytemnestra, Medea, Electra and Hecuba, stating that they resist and "empower themselves and are empowered by the support of other women to take action to overturn their oppression" (Wilmer, 2005, p. xx).

Marina Carr's *Hecuba* as an adaptation

Marina Carr's re-vision[1] of Euripides's *Hecuba* from a feminist perspective is another way to support the vulnerable and empower the silenced and discarded victims of wars. In her *Hecuba*, Carr achieves this by "offering a revised point of view from the 'original', adding hypothetical motivation or voicing what the text silences or marginalizes" (Sanders, 2016, p. 23). Regarding her adaptations, Melissa Sihra points out, "[i]n returning to the landscapes of classical Greece, Carr's plays reveal a need in contemporary theatre for imaginative spaces of possibility, transformation and a fundamental 'search for myth' at

1 The term "re-vision" refers to Adrienne Rich's definition as "the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction- is for us more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival" (Rich, 1972, p. 18). She argues that an insightful analysis of literature, driven by a feminist perspective, would view the work as a key to understanding our lives, our past, our constructed self-image, the ways in which language has both confined and empowered us, and how we can embark on a new way of perceiving and living (p. 18).

a time which the playwright considers is plagued by a 'lack of belief' and limited by 'an existence on the rational plane'" (Sihra, 2005, p. 116). Like Euripides, Marina Carr's *Hecuba* is dedicated to exposing the tragedies of the unfortunate groups of society by giving voice to Hecuba and other Trojan women in her play. Although Euripides's attitude towards the Trojan War and its aftermath is outstanding in terms of telling the story of a woman whose home is shattered and children are killed and captured as a trophy by the enemy, Marina Carr's adaptation sheds light on some discrepancies in the play, especially the depiction of Hecuba as a vengeful, mad woman who can kill other children, her grandchildren, without any remorse to take revenge from Polymestor. In Carr's adaptation, Polymestor does not betray Hecuba by killing her son Polydorus for gold; in fact, his two sons are killed, and he is blinded not by Hecuba but by the invaders.

The tragedy of the noble queen becomes the tragedy of an ordinary woman in a war-ridden place, and it is no more a distant, unreachable Other who is experiencing the atrocity. Carr's anachronistic technique of dialogue structures an ethical responsibility for the Other no matter how distant the time and place are. Marina Carr retells this story and presents a different version of Hecuba's story. In this respect, Clare Wallace also uses the same cue as Hamlet and asks, "What is Hecuba to Marina Carr?" (Wallace, 2019, p. 7). In the introductory notes to *Hecuba*, Carr maintains that

> I always thought Hecuba got an extremely bad press. Rightly or wrongly I never agreed with the verdict on her. This play is an attempt to re-examine and, in part, redeem a great and tragic queen. History, as they say, is written by the winners. Sometimes I think myths are too and the fragile Greek state circa 500 BC needed to get certain myths in stone to bolster their sense of themselves and validate their savage conquests. It was easy to trash her. She was dead. She was Trojan. She was a woman. No doubt she was as flawed as the rest of us but to turn a flaw to monstrosity smacks to me of expedience. This is my attempt to show her in another light, how she suffered, what she might have felt and how she may have reacted. (Carr, 2015, p. x)

Adaptations and appropriations bring attention to the gaps, absences, and silences that can be found in the original text. Catherine Rees points out those gaps and emphasises the political function of adaptation, stating that "adaptations can utilise the synergies, and gaps, between two texts to invite audiences to recognise these echoes and, frequently, to see the act of adaptation as a political act where the new dramatist seeks

to challenge or critique either the assumptions of the earlier text or their own national and cultural environment" (Rees, 2017, p. 179). In this regard, among several adaptations of Euripides's *Hecuba*, Marina Carr's experimental approach stands out, challenging the original text's assumptions, especially in form. Gonzáles Chacón maintains, "Marina Carr is mainly interested in the emotional passions that moved *Hecuba* and, thus, she is determined to unveil her most private thoughts in the play's dialogues. In order to achieve this, Carr uses free reported speech through which each of the characters in the play retells what the others say and, in addition, add their own interpretations" (Gonzáles Chacón, 2016, p. 35). Consequently, we can hear Hecuba's voice telling her story directly, how she suffers from losing her children and grandchildren, and how she can empathetically understand Polymestor's betrayal by handing Polydorus to Agamemnon. On the other hand, in the play, Carr gives voice to the different parties of the story. As every character directly tells their version of the story, they turn into a member of the chorus narrating, commenting on, or evaluating the events and other people. In her interview with Holly Williams, Marina Carr states that "everyone becomes everyone else's chorus –they comment on the other person" (qtd in Gonzáles Chacón, 2016, p. 35). Even Agamemnon tells his version of the events and how he feels for real: how he felt helpless and furious when his daughter Iphigenia was killed for the sake of wind to head for Troy and how other warriors decided to sacrifice Hecuba's daughter Polyxena for the same reason to leave Troy. Nevertheless, Carr does not make him a victimised character like Hecuba. Several studies (Sihra, 2005; Wallace, 2005; González Chacón, 2016; Wang, 2020) on Marina Carr's *Hecuba* emphasise her experimentation with language and turning those classical "female figures from monstrous murderers into precarious beings who suffer irreparably from the loss of their children" (Wilmer, 2005, p. 281). In her play, Carr transforms their vulnerability and otherness into their strength. In the light of Levinasian ethical thinking, which argues that the ethical starts with the face of the Other, this study also explores how Marina Carr preserves the alterity of every character, including violence-inflicting ones like Agamemnon, Polymestor, and Neoptolemus, without rendering them into totality or sameness.

Emmanuel Levinas and the Ethical Encounter in Marina Carr's *Hecuba*

"What is Hecuba to him?" (Shakespeare, 1599/2003, 2.2.511) is a famous line Hamlet utters in *Hamlet*, which has been a matter for many others for centuries. While reading Marina Carr's *Hecuba*, the very same question occurred to me as well, and it took me

several days to kiss my son's neck without thinking about the following lines from Carr's *Hecuba*:

> **Hecuba** These are the remains of my sons I say, pointing to the dung heap of limbs, heads, necks, necks I loved and kissed. (Carr, 2015, p. 214)

Then the question became, "What is Marina Carr's Hecuba to me?" Why did I not feel the same misery, pain, responsibility, and even guilt while reading Euripides's *Hecuba*? This ethical bond with Hecuba from Carr's outstanding adaptation results from her employment of experimental techniques, creating an anachronistic defamiliarisation between the reader/spectator and the character/actor. By using direct speech, she successfully brings these two components of theatre face to face, igniting a Levinasian ethical relationship.

Extraordinary and unpredicted political, economic, technological, and cultural developments in the last decades of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century brought ethical discussions forward. These developments, which shrink the individuals into precarious Othered conditions, challenge the understanding of the "ethical" in the traditional sense. Referring to the otherness of the Other and the unconditional responsibility for the Other constitute the core of Emmanuel Levinas's ethical discussion. David Wood defines Levinas's ethical stance as "unpromising and uncompromising language of difference and alterity" (Wood, 2014, p. 3). Because of his emphasis on the singularity of the otherness and the asymmetrical relationship between the Other and the Subject, the Levinasian ethical approach has received wide attention in the blurred and precarious experiences of the contemporary human being.

In *Ethics and Infinity*, Levinas explains the asymmetrical relationship between the Subject and the Other depending on no reciprocity and explains, "I am responsible for the Other without waiting for reciprocity, were I die for it. Reciprocity is his affair. It is precisely insofar as the relationship between the other and me is not reciprocal that I am subjection to the Other" (Levinas & Nemo, 1985, p. 96). This unconditional recognition of the alterity and singularity of the Other and responsibility without a demand outstand to attain an ethical stance towards the unprecedented catastrophes of the twentieth century. The asymmetrical unconditional recognition and responsibility, which is based on the alterity of the Other, is the idiosyncrasy of the Levinasian ethical stance. Alex Sierz draws attention to this idiosyncrasy by comparing Levinasian ethics to the

arguments of the traditional understanding of ethics, which stands on the notion of a "good life". In this regard, he interrogates how to pursue this ethical notion in the contemporary war-ridden age, asking, "How should you behave to your fellow men and women? What does it mean to be true to yourself? In the postwar era, after the twin shocks of the Holocaust and the Atom Bomb, these questions have been clarified by a range of philosophers, among whom Emmanuel Levinas has been predominant, and the greatest inspiration" (Sierz, 2014, p. x). For Levinas, the primary condition of this ethical relationship is the encounter with the face of the Other. William Large explains the singularity of the face in the Levinasian ethical approach as follows: "The human face is ethical because it is expressive. It speaks. It is only because I relate to the face through speech that I relate to the other as a singularity: this other in front of me now who speaks to me, and not the 'other' as a category that could be said of many things" (Large, 2015, p. 78.) Levinas's argument on the Subject's infinite responsibility for the Other without rendering its otherness to the mainstream, to the totality, challenges the position of the Subject in traditional Western ethical approaches.

Recently, literary criticism has also turned to ethics, paralleling the rise of interest in ethics in different disciplines. As Robert Eaglestone asserts, Levinasian ethics "offer a new and different way of attending to the ethical in the textual and of the responsibility inherent in the reading" (Eaglestone, 1997, p. 8). Compared to other forms of art, theatre offers the most direct relationship with the reader/spectator because it is "produced in the necessary presence of an audience and through the collaborative activity and enabling capacity of others, theatre is thus, arguably, the art form which provides the ultimate forum for ethical debate" (Cochrane & Robinson, 2016, p. 3). However, for Levinas, because of being a "representation", art hinders the ethical encounter with the Other, and in "Reality and its Shadow" he declares art as being unethical. Participation is another aspect of art, making it an unethical experience. Because of being a part of a group, the reader/spectator becomes a part of the totality; thus, as Helena Grehan maintains, for Levinas, "through 'participation' the subject will somehow become deaf to the need for responsibility, and, as a consequence, will not be able to hear the call of the other, that most powerfully informs his mistrust of art. It is as if the fact of participating in a collective (for example as an audience member) negates any possible individual responses" (Grehan, 2009, p. 30). However, in its literal meaning, theatre and its audience share the common ground of being in the same place during a performance. In this respect, considering Levinas's suspicion about the totalising effect of participation, Jacques Rancière emphasises that the spectator is always already an active receiver of

the artwork. He argues, "Drama means action. Theatre is the place where an action is taken to its conclusion by bodies in motion in front of living bodies that are to be mobilised" (Rancière, 2009, p. 3). Thus, this condition preserves the spectator's individuality and singularity.

Nicholas Ridout draws attention to the role of the spectator in the ethical approach to theatre and its being a performative art. Thus, performance "encourages the spectator to stop seeing the performance as an exploration of his or her own subjectivity and, instead, to take it as an opportunity to experience an encounter with someone else. Performance, in this view, invites the spectator to assume ethical responsibility for the fragile life of the other" (Ridout, 2009, p. 8). According to the Levinasian ethical encounter, face-to-face interaction between the characters/actors and the reader/spectator enables ethical engagement. Recent experimental developments in theatrical productions, specifically in performance, have strengthened this ethical bond by rupturing the representation. Moreover, like several experimental techniques, adaptation defamiliarises the spectator with the text they already know by activating them. Sanders points out the relationship between adaptation and the active role of the reader/spectator, stating that it "is their mobilization of the familiar that sets off a chain reaction which produces new meanings for these versions" (Sanders, 2016, p. 116). By providing an infinite number of new meanings, adaptations contribute to the Levinasian argument of the indefinability of the face and, consequently, the Other.

Face and speech are the primary elements of theatre, and Levinas's argument on the human face as the ignitor of the ethical relationship finds its reflection in theatre. Speech is a theatrical tool that is used simultaneously with the face during theatrical performances. Considering the developments in contemporary theatre, which prioritises performance and "word," the ethical encounter is more achievable in contemporary plays. Mireia Aragay draws attention to the intersection of Levinas's ethical approach and the face and speech as the fundamental elements of theatre and states that theatre and performance "seem to be based, almost literally, on co-presence, on the face-to-face encounter between embodied, vulnerable spectators and Others wherein the former are summoned to respond, to become actively engaged in an exemplary exercise of ethical 'response-ability'" (Aragay, 2014, p. 4). Recent experimental practices brought performance forward rather than text-based acting on stage; the spectator's position is blurred, and the interaction between the spectator and the actor has become more direct, engaging them in an ethical

encounter. Because of the breakup of representation with experimental practices, contemporary theatre disturbs the spectators in their comfort zones and engages them as active participants of the production facing the Other.

Although Euripides's tragedy is a significant attempt to voice the Othered victims of war by directing the focus to women, children, and the old, a face-to-face encounter is hindered because of the traditional representative nature of the play. For this reason, according to the Levinasian ethical approach, an ethical bond cannot be built with the Other because of the tragedy's cathartic effect on the spectator. Regarding the extraordinary developments of the contemporary age, the theatre has also undergone unconventional developments, especially in terms of performance, to convey these extraordinary experiences. Political, sociological, technological and cultural developments in the twenty-first century parallel the transformation of ethical approaches to these developments. Regarding literary criticism, an ethical view of literature and theatre necessitates a new perspective that recognizes the alterity, indefinability, singularity and otherness of the Other.

Emmanuel Levinas is also one of the many to bear Hamlet's renowned questioning and explain his ethical understanding of the Other in *Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence*. He states, "Why does the other concern me? What is Hecuba to me? Am I my brother's keeper?" (Levinas, 1998, p. 117). For Levinas, ethics is an unconditional responsibility for the Other, and the ethical relationship starts with the encounter with the face of the Other. In this respect, in *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas articulates the role of the face in his ethical stance, stating that "[t]he face is present in its refusal to be contained. In this sense, it cannot be comprehended, that is encompassed" (Levinas, 2007, p. 194). As the face is incomprehensible, this encounter must be free from any attempt at defining or describing. This ethical encounter with the Other does not define or categorise the Other to the sameness and "[i]f one could possess, grasp, and know the other, it would not be other. Possessing, knowing, and grasping are synonyms of power" (Levinas, *Time*, 1987, p. 90). In this regard, in addition to the theatre's nature as an art form performed in the form of a face-to-face encounter and the spectator's presence in the production procession, Carr's experimental revisit of *Hecuba* with innovative techniques in both form and content disturbs the spectators in their comfort zones and stimulates their active participation.

The opening of her play reveals Carr's intention to reverse the narrative of the classical tragedy, which opens with the ghost of Hecuba's youngest son, Polydorus. He

recounts the tragedies his family experienced and prophesies about the future events and sorrows that await them. On the other hand, Carr's *Hecuba* opens with Hecuba's lengthy speech in "*the throne room. Hecuba surrounded by her women*" (Carr, 2015, p. 211). She reiterates Hecuba's motherhood and allows her to voice the female experience of grief in the face of the body parts of her slaughtered sons. Hecuba describes the horrors of the conditions in which they are in a direct speech, confirming the intention of building a direct relationship with the spectator. The directness of her speech, short phrases, and the calm tone she attains to tell such a terror achieves defamiliarisation as in the opening lines:

> **Hecuba** So I'm in the throne room. Surrounded by the limbs, torsos, heads, corpses of my sons. My women trying to dress me, blood between my toes, my sons' blood, six of them, seven of them, eight? I've lost count, not that you can count anyway, they're not complete, more an assortment of legs, arms, chests, some with the armour still on, some stripped, hands in a pile, whose hands are they? Ears missing, eyes hanging out of sockets, and then Andromache comes in screaming, holding this bloody bundle. My grandson, intact except for his head, smashed off a wall, like an eggshell. They're through the south gate, she says, they've breached the citadel, they're here. (Carr, 215, p. 211)

Through this pornographic description of the violence and atrocity around the Trojan Queen, Carr manages to create a defamiliarising effect and disturb the representation, allowing a face-to-face encounter with Hecuba. In Euripides's *Hecuba*, Polydorus describes the violence during and after the battle; however, his depiction matches the messenger figures in the classical tragedies, where the audience does not see the violence on the stage but becomes familiar with the situation through the narrative and representation. In this way, Carr's *Hecuba* takes the first step towards a Levinasian ethical encounter, which depends on the face-to-face encounter: Hecuba and the spectator. She makes the spectator respond to the call of the Other, demanding unconditional responsibility. For Levinas, this unconditional responsibility results from "meeting the face", which is free from intentionality and definition. He argues that "since the Other looks at me, I am responsible for him, without even having taken on responsibilities in his regard; his responsibility is incumbent on me. It is a responsibility that goes beyond what I do" (Levinas & Nemo, 1985, p. 96). In the play, being the Other for both the victorious Greek army and the twenty-first-century spectator, Hecuba is given the chance to voice her

own story and her perception of the events around her. As Clare Wallace maintains, Carr is "strategically giving [Hecuba's] voice priority. Hecuba also physically occupies the centre stage here" (Wallace, 2019, p. 9). She even presumes the role of the chorus, describing the stage and the action on it, putting the spectator in a position to respond to her call without reciprocity.

As an experimental technique, Carr makes Hecuba and other characters use both direct and indirect, employing tags like I say- s/he says. In addition, they tell their own stories, retell what other characters tell, express their inner feelings and thoughts, and describe the stage to the spectator as if giving stage directions. Therefore, as González Chacón argues, "dramatis personae address the spectators/readers directly, and this brings Greek tragedy closer to contemporary audiences. The classical mode has definitely been modernized through this technique, which, moreover, results in a deeper analysis of Hecuba's psychology and contrasts heavily with the one line dialogues between characters in Euripidean version" (González Chacón, 2016, p. 35). Besides the innovative attempts in form, regarding the content, Carr also brings the Other to the centre without rendering them into totality; she gives them a voice and the opportunity to retell their version of the events, making them visible. Still, her achievement in the ethical stance mainly results from her innovative theatrical form. She ruptures representation through experimental performance; thus, she does not allow the spectator to experience the purgation of feelings. She builds a Levinasian ethical bond with the spectator and between the characters, depending on an ethical relationship without reciprocity and totality.

Regarding the ethical relationship between the spectator and the play, the Levinasian argument on the impossibility of ethics through art is challenged by Carr's subversion of catharsis in the play. Carr constructs the dialogues as direct and indirect speech that intermingled and overlapped with the respondent's lines. As Michael Lloyd asserts, throughout the play, "dialogue includes self-referential comments, stage directions, and quotations of other characters' words" (Lloyd, 2019, p. 101). Here, the characters address the audience, creating a Brechtian alienation effect. In this way, Carr brings the spectator and the actor face-to-face, positioning the spectator as a respondent to the call of the Other. In the following dialogue, both Hecuba and Agamemnon "narrate" their exchanges, and instead of acting, they describe their actions:

> **Hecuba** They told me many things about him, this terror of the Aegean, this monster from Mycenae, but they forgot to tell me about the eyes.

> Sapphires. Transcendental eyes, fringed by lashes any girl would kill for. I pretend I don't know who he is. And you are? I say. You know damn well who I am he laughs, and you may stand.
>
> **Agamemnon** And she says she'll stand when she feels like it. So I lift her off the throne. Now that wasn't too difficult, was it? I say. I can't resist twirling her though I know I should show more respect. Used but good. Still good. I was expecting an auld hag with her belly hanging down to her knees. But she's all right, there's bedding in her yet. (Carr, 2015, p. 213)

This innovative technique disrupts the representation by disturbing the reader/spectator in their comfortable seats. Michelle Wang draws attention to the activating effect of those techniques on the spectator and puts forward the following statement: "Rapid shifts between direct and reported speech accentuate the play's narrative (rather than dramatic) qualities, enriching the reader's/audience's access to character interiority by paradoxically fragmenting and redistributing subjectivity. In doing so, Carr dynamically elicits our active participation in joint meaning-making through an experimental mode that foregrounds the characters' mutual implications in each other's lives" (Wang, 2020, p. 400). In her version, Carr reevaluates the mode of narration, which is a defining element in classical tragedies. In these works, a chorus or a messenger narrates the events for the audience, or the characters express their thoughts and emotions to the audience in lengthy speeches or monologues. Without our contemporary visual or audio technologies, presenting the events, characters, their thoughts, emotions, and motives through dramatisation to the thousands in the open-air theatres was a difficult task. Thus, narration by the messengers and the characters solved the problem for the playwright, the actors and the spectator. Under these conditions, "a shown dramatization cannot 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" (Hutcheon & S. O'Flynn, 2013, p. 23). Like Euripides, Marina Carr exploits narration, keeping the familiar form of the tragedy. However, her experimentation with postmodern self-references, speech tags, tone, and disturbing content disrupts the traditional form of narration. She defamiliarizes the audience by taking away their familiarity with the form and breaks the representation. Being the receiver of these utterances and the face-to-face encounter, the reader/spectator becomes responsible for the Other. Consequently, by forbidding them from totalising engagement with the play, Carr posits the audience in an ethical zone as the direct respondents of the call of the Other. In Levinasian ethical criticism, they feel obligated to be for the Other

and respond to its call without expecting reciprocity. As previously emphasised, this ethical relationship is sparked by the experimental, defamiliarising attempts that break the boundary of representation.

By naming the play after Hecuba, like Euripides, Marina Carr places the Trojan Queen at the centre of the play. However, she allows other characters to challenge the representations of their stories by retelling them in their own words. She preserves their Otherness and their singularity in the totality of wartime madness. Polymestor, for instance, depicted as the betrayer in Euripides's text for killing Hecuba and Priam's last son Polydorus for gold, turns out to be the victim here. In Carr's adaptation, he does not kill the child but has to give him to Agamemnon to rescue his sons, who are held captive. Polydorus describes Polymestor's despair when Agamemnon's men take him to his death in the third scene, stating, "Polymestor throws himself on the ground, kisses my feet" (Carr, 2015, p. 236). Agamemnon becomes the scene's narrator and describes Polydorus's maturity and courage in the face of death:

> **Agamemnon** [Polydorus] raises [Polymestor] up, a gesture of such tenderness, he studied his father well, the poise, the economy of movement. It is not your fault, he says to Polymestor. In your place I would've done the same though you sense he wouldn't. (Carr, 2015, p. 236)

Unlike Euripides's maddened Hecuba, as the play reveals, Carr's Hecuba is not the one blinding Polymestor and killing his children, but Agamemnon's men do it. In contrast, Hecuba tenders Polymestor instead of torturing him and gouging out his eyes. Wallace points out that in this new version of Hecuba, Carr "diminishes the protagonist's agency and complicates the play's capacity to speak to a contemporary feminist anger" (Wallace, 2019, p. 3). Hecuba's anger is not directed at Polymestor; instead, she is depicted more as a woman grieving the loss of her children and the devastation of the war. In this version, she is not the vengeful mad queen. As Clare Wallace points out, "Hecuba's violence is turned instead on her own body" (Wallace, 2019, p. 10). Instead of tricking and attacking Polymestor and his children, she tears her own body. Like the rest of the speeches in the play, Cassandra tells what happened after Hecuba finds Polydorus's dead body among a pile of children's corpses:

> **Cassandra** She tears at herself, goes at her arms, neck, face with her nails, I will put myself on my own pyre she says, she rams a fist down her throat,

> bangs her head off the ground, finds a stone, carves herself till the blood runs in ribbons, this experiment is over, she cries, over. (Carr, 2015, p. 256)

Agamemnon is another character to whom Marina Carr gives the opportunity to display his Otherness and express his inner feelings. Rather than portraying the arrogant, proud, self-confident commander, his direct address to the spectator reveals that he has become both the part and victim of the totality, unable to express his singularity in his actions because of his unnamed fears. In her version, Carr gives him a chance to express his feelings and despair over killing his own daughter as a sacrifice to the Gods. When Odysseus reveals that the men are impatient for the wind and asks for another sacrifice, Agamemnon expresses his sadness and anger:

> **Agamemnon** And what would they know about symmetry? Spit it out! What do you mean? I know damn well what he means. Well, he says, we sacrificed a girl before the war. We certainly did, I say. We sacrificed my girl. Fucking cannibals had me slit my own daughter's throat for the fucking wind to change. Iphigenia, twelve. . . We don't slit the throats of children in Mycenae. No. You do it or we storm the palace and take your whole family out. Her eyes. Iphigenia's eyes . . . (Carr, 2015, p. 232)

In Euripides' text, Hecuba's daughter Polyxena is killed by Achilles's son Neoptolemus, and Euripides emphasises how swiftly he cuts her throat to lessen her pain. However, in Carr's *Hecuba*, it is Agamemnon who slits Polyxena's throat in two unsuccessful attempts to kill her, and in the end, she is stabbed by a priest to end her pain. Unlike his classical vengeful depiction, Neoptolemus is presented here as an affectionate young man who is ashamed of the things done in the name of his father, Achilles. Hecuba expresses his sadness because of this sacrifice:

> **Hecuba** Then the boy is there, Neoptolemus, he pulls at my sleeve, my father would never have wanted this, he says, tears in his eyes, never. But Agamemnon's men shove him aside. (Carr, 2015, p. 247)

By bringing the spectator and the actors face-to-face, Carr turns the spectators into witnesses to the most brutal scenes on the stage. Wang maintains that "[t]hough violence and death typically occurred offstage in Greek theater—where pathos in Euripides's play, for example, is elicited through the use of character laments—

contemporary playwrights like Carr move these events onstage in order to emphasize their ethical and political stakes" (Wang, 2020, p. 411). These unsettling scenes, told with obscenity on stage, burden the spectator with ethical responsibility. Through the employment of innovative theatrical forms, the defamiliarising effect intensifies and disturbs the contemporary spectator, preventing them from participating in the "act of totality", which is one of the reasons for Levinas's sceptical approach to the arts.

Marina Carr's treatment of Helen is also very significant when evaluating *Hecuba* as a war play. In Euripides's text, she is presented as the reason for the Trojan War and is condemned by Hecuba. However, in Carr's adaptation, she turns out to be a meaningless justification for the invaders of Troia:

> **Hecuba** You saw our beautiful city, our valleys, our fields, Green and giving. You had never seen such abundance. You wanted it. You must have it. You came to plunder and destroy.
>
> **Agamemnon** I say, where's Helen? We can't find her.
>
> **Hecuba** Helen? Helen? Helen was never here and well you know it! (Carr, 2015, p. 216)

Melissa Sihra describes *Hecuba* as "a war play which exposes the devastating civilian cost of conflict and violence upon women and children" (Sihra, 2005, p. 265). Euripides's *Hecuba* is one of the most rewritten texts in Western literature about the theme of war, especially the tragedies of civilians. Making a connection with the violence in the contemporary age, Christina Lamb asserts, "Euripides's play was written more than 2,400 years ago, yet it feels remarkably contemporary. […] From Aleppo to Kandahar, Baghdad to Gaza, hundreds of thousands of women and children have been left widowed, orphaned and homeless by the rockets or bombs of armies and terrorist groups" (qtd. in Sihra, 2018, p. 265). Thousands of children have been killed and are being killed at the moment in search of some "Helens" like terrorists or nuclear bombs, and as Cassandra prophesies, "They will lie about what happened this day" (Carr, 2015, p. 257). In her lengthy speech in the first scene, Hecuba describes the atrocities with the anachronistic word: genocide. She questions the civilian deaths and butchering of the vulnerable in the following lines:

> What about the women? The children? The women too, they are killing the women he says, all the old ones, the ugly ones, the ones past childbearing, past work. And the children? I say. Priam's head is oozing on to my dress. The children he says, all the boys and all girls under ten. . . . Not enough room on the ship he says . . . And I think this is not war. In war there are rules, laws, codes. This is genocide. They are wiping us out. (Carr, 2015, p. 212)

The ethical encounter between the spectator and the victims of these atrocities—the Others—results in an ethical relationship that places responsibility on the Subject. For the contemporary spectator who is already witnessing these atrocities happening around the world on TV, social media channels and other media tools, the ethical burden becomes heavier. This responsibility and the recognition of the Other in their vulnerabilities linger in the consciousness of the reader/spectator, further reminding them of the precarious position of human beings in the face of wars. One of the most significant figures in her adaptation is the cursed prophetess Cassandra, who is only mentioned by Polymestor at the end of Euripides's work. Although her mother ignores her, she shares her visions throughout the play. She ends the play by explaining to the audience how they will lie about Hecuba, referring to Polymestor's prophecy in Euripides's text.

Conclusion

Echoing the famous questioning of Hamlet, Marina Carr's adaptation of Euripides's *Hecuba* paves the way for ethical questioning: "What is Hecuba to us?" and why we cannot experience the purgation of feelings, pity and fear but feel the responsibility for the unknown Other and even guilt because of our position as a witness to her condition. Carr creates an ethical relationship between the characters and the spectator because of the unconventional handling of the classical play and bringing it to the contemporary spectator as a direct addressee. In addition, because of the nature of adaptations and appropriations, Carr provides untold stories of the characters or bestows them to tell their version of the stories, thus filling the gaps in the story. Added to the experimental practises like the direct speech of the characters/actors to the spectator retelling their version of their stories, creating an anachronistic situation, representation is disturbed, and defamiliarisation gives way to a Levinasian ethical encounter between the spectators and the actors.

This ethical bond disturbs the spectator and obliges them to respond to the call of the Other, acknowledging its Otherness. In the play, Hecuba, a fictional character from an ancient time, calls the spectator's attention, binding them to respond, and she demands recognition of her alterity. The spectator takes responsibility for the Other and recognises her undefinability. Bearing the responsibility of the Other at the end of the play, the spectator cannot experience relief, a catharsis. Instead of having a cathartic impact, Marina Carr's *Hecuba* makes the modern audience feel hurt and even guilty. Carr's adaptation portrays a different picture of the Queen of Troy from her representation in several classical texts and other rewritings. Carr retells the unheard tale of the tragic queen and portrays Hecuba's grief, agony, love for her children, and the vulnerability of a woman surviving a battle, in contrast to the traditional portrayal of a spiteful queen. She destroys the representation in this way by using experimental theatrical tactics to disturb the audience in their comfort zone and subvert the aspect of catharsis. The play leaves the audience with a feeling of guilt and an intense sense of grief for the Other. In relation to the ethical connection between the viewer and the play, Carr's inversion of catharsis facilitates the building of an ethical relationship between the reader/spectator and actor/characters. This encounter prioritises the singularity and alterity of the Other. In the end, the starting question, "What is Hecuba to me?" finds its answer: Hecuba is my responsibility, with her Otherness and alterity, without reciprocity.

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Research Article

The Interview and its Intertexts: Staging Princess Diana in a Mediatized Age

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ABSTRACT

The 1995 BBC interview with Princess Diana, on its flagship current affairs programme *Panorama*, is one of the most famous events in television history. It has since become infamous with the publication of the Dyson Report in 2021 and the BBC's acknowledgement that the reporter Martin Bashir used deception to secure the interview. Recordings of the *Panorama* programme, and all programmes featuring Bashir, have since been erased from the BBC's platforms. This article takes a stage drama about these events, *The Interview* by Jonathan Maitland, as a case study, a 'problem play' that requires us to rethink the usually discrete categories of adaptation, documentary drama, history play, and factual and fictional writing. The article draws on Eckart Voigts's concept of recombinant appropriation in order to understand how the stage play borrows from previous and recurring representations of the Princess. It then uses Seda Ilter's idea of mediatized dramaturgy to question how far *The Interview* explores the cultural implications of this dense intertextual network. Finally, the article argues more generally for an account of intermedial adaptation that works across both spatial and temporal dimensions. The decentred, multidirectional 'rhizomatic' or 'archontic' webs of adaptational relationships need to be complemented by multiple chronologies for us to be able to read adaptations in their cultural moment.
Keywords: Adaptation, appropriation, documentary drama, history play, Princess Diana

Introduction

The Interview by Jonathan Maitland premiered at the Park Theatre in Finsbury, North London, in November 2023, directed by Michael Fentiman. The play reflects on the interview that Diana, Princess of Wales gave to Martin Bashir on the BBC's *Panorama* programme in 1995, an interview credited with hastening the end of Diana's marriage to Prince Charles and exposing the cruelty of life as an outsider in the royal family. The intensity of stage and screen activity around reimagining the life of Princess Diana makes *The Interview* an apt case study in the theatrical adaptation of recent historical material. This essay asks how the example of *The Interview* enables us to extend or

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expand on two relevant theoretical models: Eckart Voigts' formulation of *recombinant appropriation,* and Seda Ilter's concept of *mediatized dramaturgy*. Of the former, I ask what happens when a theory that is so well-adapted to digital remediation is applied to a work of theatre; of the latter, I ask what opportunities might exist for a play about such an endlessly remediated subject – Princess Diana – to be subversive in its theatrical form. The second part of the essay asks how these insights about mediatization and appropriation in *The Interview* require us to look again at rhizomatic, or networked, meta-theories of adaptation. I will propose that a metaphor of rhizomatic or archontic intertextualities – including adaptations, appropriations, historical dramas *and* documentaries – enable us to visualise the connections between texts more holistically. This is especially the case since recent work on adaptation and history has called into question the categorical distinctions between these types, and since adaptation in practice uses all these kinds of material. With the case study of *The Interview* in mind, however, I argue that a networked mapping of relationships is insufficient in itself; its spatial account of intertextuality must be accompanied by a temporal one. A synchronic 'thick description' of the way that a topical play like this operates, must also offer a diachronic account of how these tropes and common elements have travelled.

As the above overview suggests, I see *The Interview* as a 'problem play' in a number of productive ways that force a rethink of how we usually conduct analysis of both adaptation and the history play. Firstly, it would not be possible to write a case study that compares source with adaptation, in the time-honoured but overfamiliar model that Kamilla Elliott has highlighted (Elliott, 2020, pp. 212-16), because *The Interview* does not have any agreed singular 'source' or 'original', but instead adapts from a range of materials. Following the conclusions of the BBC's Dyson Report in 2021 that concluded that Bashir has forged documents and misled the Princess in order to pressure her into giving the interview, the *Panorama* programme is no longer available on any BBC platforms, and Bashir has also been removed from all BBC archive recordings available to the public. Secondly, given this striking absence of the 'source' – and given the range of fictionalised treatments of Princess Diana's life story, as well as the various fictions that were presented as fact in her lifetime – any play on this subject now places itself in a nexus of factual and fictional intertexts through which an audience will interpret it as an intervention. A third problem that *The Interview* presents is that, unlike most new plays in UK theatre (Edgar, 2021), it does not exist as a published play text, but as

a live performance and, currently, as a streamed recording from Original Theatre.[1] Hence, the idea of text and performance informing each other and working as a process rather than a finished or bounded product[2], cannot be applied knowledgeably here with the publicly available resources. A performance that exists live and on video but not as text, and an adaptation that has no available direct source, but which is surrounded by documentaries and dramas representing or functioning as proxies for the source, demands that we theorize and interpret it accordingly.

Recombinant Appropriation and 'Old Media'

With this set of relationships in mind, it makes sense to explore the ramifications of considering *The Interview* as what Voigts (2017) calls a 'recombinant appropriation'. Voigts' focus is on how we account for more recent cultural forms, such as 'compiled videos, samplings, remixes, reboots, mashups, short clips, and other material involving text, sound, vision—typically found (and lost) on web-based video databases' (2017, p. 286). He proposes that, as 'remix and mashup vids and clips tend to refunction and remodel existing material, they are better called "appropriations" than "adaptations" and adds that 'the qualifier "recombinant" […] suggests that these texts and practices conjoin all sorts of material from multiple sources' (2017, p. 286). One of the examples that Voigts discusses is the comedic appropriation of the film *Downfall* (2004), which led to the online circulation of 'hundreds of subtitled variations on a scene in which Hitler (Bruno Ganz) has a violent outburst in the Führerbunker on learning that promised troops will fail to arrive in the final stages of World War II' (2017, p. 288). Members of these participatory communities became known as Untergangers, after the original German title for *Downfall*, *Der Untergang* (Voigts 2017, p. 292). Applying this interpretative framework to the decidedly old-media cultural form of the theatrical performance offers some benefits, however, given the particularity of *The Interview* as already discussed. Voigts writes of the Untergangers that '[T]he case signals a shift from an adaptational mode dominated by hermeneutic concerns (rereading texts) to a performative, appropriative attitude toward text as material to be transformed or "versioned" (Voigts, 2017, p. 292). This seems an apt description for a play based on a royal interview that no longer officially exists, by royal order, and which is quite different

1 In the absence of a published text, where I have quoted from the play in this article, I have used a time stamp for the recorded performance.

2 See, for example, the work of M. J. Kidnie (2009) on Shakespeare's play texts, their adaptations in performance, and how this can influence subsequent editions of the play.

from a novel-to-stage adaptation. The absent source continues to be recirculated in dramatized recreations of the interview, in the discourse of the BBC's Dyson enquiry that acknowledged Bashir's wrongdoing, and even embedded in other fictions[3], but it is not available to be 'read' as a source text in the way that, say, the novel *Jane Eyre* is. Hence, every iteration on stage or screen now is performative, a reversioning of previous versions of the Diana interview.

Voigts indicates that the recombinant appropriations that he discusses can be recognised as such by their observation of the *scripts* and *protocols* of that specific genre (examples that he gives include supercuts, response videos, animated GIFs, and fan edits). I suggest that this same pattern of transmissibility applies to the Princess Diana *Panorama* interview. As a theatre production, *The Interview* follows the protocols of these previous iterations, as we would expect any history play or adaptation to do. This is exemplified by the production's poster image, which features the visual signifiers of Diana's hair, outfit and posture. As one audience member says in the Park Theatre's 'Audience Reactions' video for the production, it was just like the Diana that he remembered 'in the way she was dressed, the way she presented, the way she had a little head tilt' (Park Theatre, 2023). There are also lines from the *Panorama* interview that those who saw the broadcast or who are familiar with British culture will likely recognise, all of which are used in *The Interview*: 'Yes, I adored him. Yes, I was in love with him. But I was very let down'; 'She won't go quietly, that's the problem. I'll fight to the end'; 'Well, there were three of us in this marriage, so it was a bit crowded'.[4] So, in a more literal way than perhaps Voigts intended in his theorization, there are scripts that immediately invoke Princess Diana, and which can be re-combined with those visual protocols – and with those presented in other, fictionalized media representations – in different combinations, for new appropriations.[5]

3 For example, footage from the original *Panorama* interview is embedded in Stephen Frears's film *The Queen* (2006), where Eizabeth II is shown rewatching it as a video recording.

4 These quotations are taken from the interview transcript, which is available on the American PBS website *Frontline*: https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/royals/interviews/bbc.html .

5 For example, *The Crown*'s recreation of the interview renders the last of the above quotations as, 'But I won't go quietly. I'll battle till the end'. *The Interview* reinstates the slightly more distanced 'she' that appears in the PBS transcript, but places it in the mouth of Paul Burrell, Diana's butler, with the concluding line, 'Well, she has now'. (*The Interview*, 2023, 1hr.16m).



Figure 1. Poster image for *The Interview* at the Park Theatre, 2023.

The last point I want to draw from Voigts' chapter is his hope that '[a] reinvigorated adaptation studies will renew the focus on issues of distribution, circulation, and performance that were superseded by the comparative textual readings that have given adaptation studies a bad name for so long' (Voigts, 2017, pp. 294-5). By this, I take Voigts to mean that we need to consider the paths and patterns through which texts – and cultural ideas of what certain texts are, and mean – are shared and 'versioned', especially in a mediatized world (that is, a world in which media themselves are 'a social phenomenon exerted on contemporary society and individuals', not simply a means of transmitting or conveying material [Ilter, 2021, p. 16]). This stands to reason, since even in the online contexts that are the focus of Voigts's chapter, memes, redubs and

fansubs are successful because they respond to what came before; the scripts and protocols have to be recognisable for viewers and participants to be in on the joke. Frequently on social media, we might see a recombinant GIF or caption that someone in the replies admits to not 'getting', and occasionally a seasoned user will lead the confused poster through the internet 'lore' that explains what previous piece of media the new post is parodying, recalling, or 'shitposting' on. The process is much faster and more easily documented on social media, but the same principle applies to recombinant appropriations that move between television, film, and theatre. With this in mind, the next section of this article tracks some of the salient versions of the *Panorama* interview that represent key intertexts of Maitland's play.

Historicizing and Mediatizing *The Interview*

This essay takes it as axiomatic that the meaning of a play in a given production is significantly influenced by the historical moment in which it is staged. In keeping with Ilter's concept of a mediatized age, however, we might also say that the play's meaning is influenced as much by its media moment, which might include the adaptations, representations, news stories and scandals that are circulating at that historical moment, whether or not they are current or contemporary in their historical setting. In other words, because our media-saturated, on-demand culture makes 'everything available all at once' – collapsing boundaries of space and time and creating a sense of both cultural acceleration and cultural repetition – identifying the salient features of this media merry-go-round at the time of a live theatre performance becomes a difficult but necessary task in such cases. In what follows, I attempt to construct a historical narrative of media representations of the British royal family, Princess Diana, and the *Panorama* interview, and then to highlight their particular clustering around the play's premiere in October 2023. I therefore offer a combination of a diachronic overview of Princess Diana on stage and screen, followed by a synchronic snapshot of the particular timeliness of Maitland's play during its run.

During Princess Diana's lifetime and in the years shortly after her death, the public conversation was dominated by a series of 'tell-all' biographies. Most significantly, Andrew Morton's *Diana: Her True Story*, based on recordings that the princess secretly gave to the journalist, was published in 1992, and part of the *Panorama* interview's impact at the time was that it confirmed that the account in the book was not journalistic sensationalism. Kate Snell's book *Diana: Her Last Love* was published in 2000, as was

Shadows of a Princess by Patrick Jephson, Diana's former private secretary whose position became untenable when Bashir convinced Diana and her brother that he was in the pay of the Secret Services. A year later, Paul Burrell, Diana's former butler, published his memoir, *A Royal Duty*. It was only with the release of Stephen Frears's film *The Queen* in 2006 – scripted by Peter Morgan and starring Helen Mirren – that Diana began to make the transition to dramatic fiction. The film deals with the aftermath of Diana's death in Paris in 1997, and how the public mood swung against the Queen, and consequently does not feature Diana directly.[6] Shortly after this came Tina Brown's book *The Diana Chronicles*, tying in with the tenth anniversary of the princess's death in 2007 (Jonathan Maitland credits Brown's book, and Jephson's *Shadows of a Princess*, as sources for *The Interview*). Since this point, Diana has increasingly been seen on stage and screen. Oliver Hirschbiegel's 2013 film *Diana*, starring Naomi Watts, was based on Kate Snell's book, which claimed that Diana had wanted to marry the surgeon Dr Hasnat Khan. After the success of *The Queen* and the stage play *The Audience* (which also starred Helen Mirren as Elizabeth II), Peter Morgan's longform television drama series *The Crown*, charting the royal family since Elizabeth's accession to the throne, began in 2016. The show covered the *Panorama* interview in considerable detail in Season 5, Episodes 7, 8 and 9, and Diana featured overall in three of *The Crown*'s six seasons; her first appearance in the show was in 2020. Diana's unhappy relationship with the royal family was revisited in surreal fashion in Pablo Larrain's 2021 film *Spencer*, written by Stephen Knight and starring Kristen Stewart. Joe DiPietro and David Bryan's *Diana: The Musical* was filmed by Netflix ahead of its Broadway opening, which was scheduled for March 2020 but delayed to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. By this point, it was common for Princess Diana biodramas to include the media context for how details of her unhappy marriage came to light, and so journalists and biographers are written into the story. So, for example, Andrew Morton and Paul Burrell feature as characters in *Diana: The Musical*, while Morton, Burrell, Jephson and Bashir are all part of the cast of characters in *Diana*, as well as in *The Crown*.[7]

6 In *The Queen*, we can see the combination of actors playing real people (Elizabeth II, Tony Blair) spliced with television footage of Diana (and later US President Bill Clinton and South African President Nelson Madela paying tribute). The addition of lines on the screen works as visual code to suggest a lower-quality television videotape recording, and hence to separate the fictional 'news footage' from what is presented as the film itself. In Morgan's later series *The Crown*, the actresses playing Diana also appear in the mocked-up 'news footage' in place of their real-world counterparts, to make the fictional world appear more sealed-off from the intrusion of real-life public figures.

7 On stage in July 2023, Diana's absent-presence could also be experienced in *Peter Smith's Diana* at Soho Theatre, a solo performance piece which has an oblique relationship to the historical princess. *The Evening Standard* review suggests that the show had, in a previous version, featured Smith lip-synching to Diana's interview, a fascinating precursor to *The Interview*'s absent source (Desau, 2023).

Homing in on the period of *The Interview*'s opening, it is important to note that playwright Jonathan Maitland is a journalist turned playwright, who knew and worked with Bashir ('Q&A with *The Interview* Writer Jonathan Maitland', 2023). Maitland himself had appeared as a talking head on a Channel 4 documentary *The Diana Interview: Truth Behind the Scandal* (originally aired in November 2020 and re-broadcast in an updated version in May 2021). In the documentary, he is credited as a 'Playwright and Broadcaster', but speaks to his own knowledge of Bashir and, more broadly, of how ideas of trust have changed in public perception since the interview. Channel 4's documentary investigation led to the establishment in 2020 of the BBC's Dyson Inquiry into the *Panorama* interview, and the subsequent Dyson Report of 2021, which exposed Bashir's methods and the BBC's subsequent failure to investigate him.

The Interview premiered in the same month that Netflix released the first half of *The Crown*'s final season of episodes, following the Princess Diana storyline up to her death in 1997. The next month, during the play's run, the London production of *Diana the Musical* opened at the Eventim Apollo. *The Interview*'s theatrical life was therefore wedged between two earlier attempts to dramatize Diana's life that, strangely, both pre- and post-date the production, in the sense that both were produced prior to *The Interview* but continued their runs after Maitland's play closed. Paul Burrell can be seen on the production's webpage at the Park Theatre, praising the play and Yolanda Kettle's performance as Diana (Park Theatre, 2023). Kettle, in turn, had previously played Camilla Fry in Season 2 of *The Crown*.[8]

As this selective history shows, then, there is a consistent traffic – a feedback loop – between fact and fiction in the appropriation of Diana's life to different media and contexts. Stories initially dismissed as fiction are verified as factual; the journalists and royal staff become the princess's mouthpieces, then their books become sources for

8 Entangled with this history there is, of course, a broader narrative of changing fictional depictions of the royal family, and Elizabeth II especially. In an article responding to *The Interview* and to the announcement of a play about the Queen Mother's valet, *Backstairs Billy,* journalist Mark Lawson notes that 'both shows overlap with *The Crown*' and also that 'It's hard to imagine … that either play could exist without the example of *The Crown*' (Lawson, 2023). Lawson's journey through 'royal representation on stage and screen' omits the Diana films in its pursuit of identifying what he calls 'Peter-Morganatic offspring', and also overlooks the influence of Moira Buffini's popular play *Handbagged*, about the relationship between the Queen and Margaret Thatcher (a work that theatre critic Matt Wolf does acknowledge in his programme note for *The Interview*) (Wolf, 2023'; see also Poore, 2024, pp. 99-104). Missing from Lawson's account, I would suggest, is how deferential *The Crown* is, when compared to *The Windsors* (Channel 4, 2016-), to the royals' *Spitting Image* puppets in the 1980s, or indeed to the Sex Pistols' number-one single 'God Save the Queen (1977) and Jamie Reid's accompanying artwork, which became synonymous with punk rock.

fictional representations, and then they, as historical figures, become characters in the story itself. A journalist becomes a playwright and contributes both to the documentary about the historical Diana, as well as to the re-fictionalisation of Diana in historical drama. The same names recur and circulate, sometimes popping up as participants in the events, as writers recalling them, as actors embodying them, or as audience members commenting on the actor playing them. This free exchange seems to support Thomas Leitch's claim that 'fictionality and non-fictionality cannot be categorically distinguished because they are not substantive but performative, both dependent on the ways they are framed by both producers and audiences' (Leitch, 2018, p. 77).

Two Modes of Mediatization

Having explicated the ways that *The Interview* works as a recombinant appropriation of previous factual and fictionalised representations of Princess Diana, we can now consider whether the play itself reflects this interpolation of media about her and the *Panorama* interview. In other words, does the play's own construction reflect its intertextuality and its intermediality, beyond its timing and headline content? Ilter's book *Mediatized Dramaturgy* helps us to address these questions to *The Interview*. In what follows, I will offer a close reading of Maitland's play in its Park Theatre production of October-November 2023, based on my experience of the performance on 17 November.

Ilter explains that 'when we think about a mediatized culture, we think about the contemporary world in which we are constantly inundated with information, our attention spans are shorter, our spatio-temporal experience has transformed, our interpersonal relationships are demarcated increasingly by social media and our perception of virtual reality and physical reality as distinct states and experiences has radically changed' (Ilter, 2021, p. 4). Later, she adds that 'The increasing power of media over other societal and cultural institutions is an important aspect of mediatization' (Ilter, 2021, p. 15). Most of *The Interview* is set in 1995, as Bashir courts Diana in the hope of gaining an interview with her as an exclusive for the BBC's *Panorama* programme over rivals like NBC's Barbara Walters, and Oprah Winfrey. Hence, the technology dates from the beginnings of the digital age: Nokia mobile phones and television equipment so bulky that it fills a hotel suite in Eastbourne (where the clandestine editing of the interview took place). But the play also looks back on the 1995 interview from more than 25 years later; we hear in voiceover Prince William's 2021 statement in response to the Dyson Report, the BBC's decision to remove Bashir from all of its digital platforms,

and, briefly, Donald Trump denigrating the 'fake news' media. The play explicitly connects the *Panorama* scandal with the 'post-truth' media landscape that we have inherited in the 2020s; a speaker calling herself Truth says to Bashir at one point, 'You started a fire that burned truth to the ground' (*The Interview*, 2023, 56m). On the other hand, at least one character in the play also argues that trust and ethics have become more important *because* of this 'post-truth' media environment, hence the significance of the investigation. Matt Wiessler, the graphic artist whom Bashir instructed to create fake bank statements, says in direct address: 'Twenty-five years later, things were different. The world had changed quite a bit', shortly before Bashir is interrogated by a panel of BBC executives (*The Interview*, 2023, 54m). The play is also critical of the attempt to censor controversial media post-hoc by removing it from digital platforms, which begins to look like a post-truth media tactic in itself – even Orwellian, in the sense of the 'memory hole' in which politically-inconvenient news was obliterated in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.[9] Diana's ghost addresses Bashir at the end of the play, rebuking him that 'So much of what I wanted to say that day, I chose to say that day. But it's been silenced. De-legitimized. Censored. By my own son […] Your lies […] gave them the knife that plucked out my tongue' (*The Interview*, 2023, 1hr.13m). In summary, then, *The Interview* certainly discusses – and indeed historicizes – media ethics and changes in our mediatized society.

However, Ilter draws a distinction between plays which 'use media as thematic content' and those which 'respond to media culture *implicitly* through aesthetic reflection and inquiry, namely, through their dramaturgical structure, without necessarily referring to new technologies in their content' [emphasis in original] (Ilter, 2021, p. 29; p. 1). The former are 'dramatic [as opposed to 'no-longer-dramatic'] mediatized forms' which 'tend to reproduce the dominant narratives, motives and structures of the late capitalist system', whereas the latter provide an 'aesthetic resistance to the proliferation of familiar representational structures [and are] therefore, a political response to the ubiquitous, agreed-upon machineries and discourses of later capitalism' (Ilter, 2021, p. 24; p. 25). For Ilter, then, there is a an overt and a covert version of mediatization – it is either explicit or implicit. The former, 'mere thematization', explores mediatized culture as content, the latter, more subversively, as form (Ilter, 2021, p. 30). The former challenges our perceptions in superficial ways; the latter challenges us more fundamentally to make sense of mediatization's political functions and impacts.

9 It may be recalled that Orwell's statue sits outside the BBC's London Headquarter Broadcasting House, with the inscription, 'If liberty means anything at all, it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear'.

So, for all its appropriative and recombinant qualities, as discussed earlier, does *The Interview* exhibit a merely thematized response to mediatization, or a dramaturgical one? The first half of the play, as Maitland explains in the theatrical programme, 'looks at the months leading up to the interview, when Bashir is trying to persuade Diana to do it […] and the "will she, won't she?" element of it' ('Q&A with *The Interview* Writer Jonathan Maitland', 2023). This is presented as straightforward documentary drama: Paul Burrell is established as our narrator and our bedrock of a trustworthy perspective, while Martin Bashir and, occasionally, Martin Wiessler, interject or compete to influence the narrative. As such, there is the familiar problem of documentary theatre that audiences are unable to check sources for themselves, especially in the real-time of performance. We might speculate that parts of the script are based on new, extensive interview material from Burrell; his appearances and positive feedback in the 'Audience Reactions' video would strongly suggest so. As Stephen Scott-Bottoms pointed out in relation to documentary dramas of the early 2000s, including David Hare's *Stuff Happens*, 'the world-shaping role of the writer in editing and juxtaposing the gathered materials' gives the playwright a 'mysteriously omniscient role', a role which at times 'begins to acquire a certain aura of privileged information' (Bottoms, 2006, pp. 59-60). This is also true of the sequence where Bashir is shown viewing the *Panorama* interview footage with Steve, the editor, and where they argue about the parts that should and should not be broadcast. As Maitland makes clear in the theatre programme, 'We include off-cuts of some fascinating stuff that didn't make it, alongside the famous moments that did' ('Q&A with *The Interview* Writer Jonathan Maitland', 2023). So far, then, so conventional: it's a play that capitalizes on the interest in Diana, Bashir, and the *Panorama* interview by offering behind-the-scenes insights into 'what really happened'.

However, the second act of the play is more varied in technique, its approach to the material being much less dependent on theatrical realism. After the point where the interview takes place in Burrell's narrative, three of the actors begin to multirole, and, as three microphone-holding 'Announcers' from the BBC, they act as a form of chorus, contradicting and then re-contradicting themselves as they rehearse the BBC's changing official line on Bashir and his scoop. When Bashir and Steve discuss the editing of the interview, the footage is 'replayed' by Diana (Kettle), who is sitting in the front row of the audience. Later, Bashir is in conversation with an actor who announces herself as 'The Truth' and another who says he is 'The Agreed Narrative'. Here, it is as if Bashir finds himself in a medieval morality play, in conversation with abstract concepts; when 'The Agreed Narrative' keeps changing his name and settles on 'J.S. Mill the philosopher' at

Bashir's suggestion, it feels as if he is a Vice, or a Mephistophelean figure in a battle of wits with the journalist. Truth's monologue announces another stylistic shift on the nature of trust in a post-truth society, which seems like it would not be out of place in one of Caryl Churchill's later plays:

> I don't trust my doctor.
> I don't trust my government.
> I don't trust what I read.
> I don't trust what I eat.
> I don't trust my mother.
> I don't trust my hands are my hands or my feet are my feet.
> I don't even trust that language has meaning. (56-57m)

A few minutes later, as Bashir is questioned by the two actors (possibly BBC executives, possibly the voices of his conscience), the play takes on a more Shavian quality as Bashir defends himself at greater length by questioning conventional thought, an Andrew Undershaft or Jack Tanner for the mediatized age.[10] Invoking the example of Watergate, Bashir insists that 'Every big story starts with an ethical compromise' (*The Interview*, 2023, 1hr.03m-1hr.04m). Finally, in the play's closing moments, Bashir is visited by Diana's ghost, in a move that suggests Shakespearean tragedy (the ghosts of Richard III's victims, of Hamlet's father, of Banquo in *Macbeth*).[11]

While these rapid switches of theatrical framing undoubtedly take us well beyond the limitations of documentary-drama realism, I am not convinced that they represent a mediatized dramaturgy. *The Interview* therefore remains at the level of the overt in Ilter's classification, presenting 'media as thematic content' (2021, p. 29).The fragmentary qualities of the second half are still framed, in the end, by Burrell's closing words; we also cannot know, as audience members in the theatre, how much of the material in the second half is invented, how much verbatim transcription from public records, how much insider-knowledge, how much drawn from off-the-record interviews. So, in a sense we are even more at the mercy of the 'mysteriously omniscient' playwright than

10 Andrew Undershaft is the controversial industrialist of Shaw's Major Barbara. Jack Tanner is the outspoken hero of *Man and Superman*.

11 In this context, Diana's line about having her tongue plucked out perhaps also invokes Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus*. The trope of the ghost is a fascinating one to trace in its mutations and reversionings: in *Spencer*, Diana glimpses the ghost of Anne Boleyn, Henry VIII's ill-fated second wife, and *The Crown* controversially introduced the ghost of Diana to converse with her ex-husband and the Queen.

we were in the first part where each of the actors played named individuals. The dramaturgical fluidity of the post-interview sequences therefore seems more a strategy to give the playwright full license over controversial material, than to generate 'aesthetic resistance to the proliferation of familiar representational structures', in Ilter's words (2021, p. 25). The point on which the play ends, too, seems rather unmotivated, dramaturgically speaking. Burrell, addressing the audience directly, becomes indignant at the thought of Prince William's insistence that the interview no longer be available. Although he 'will not have a word said against Wills' as he has 'known him since he was a baby', Burrell decries his actions: 'What right has he got […] to take the words out of her mouth? No one person owns what she said that day. Once said, once out, her words belong to all of us' (*The Interview*, 2023, 1hr.16m). In this last-minute final analysis, then, the story becomes not really about Bashir after all; he was the enabler, the patsy; in Burrell's telling, despite his disavowals quoted above, Prince William is revealed as the true villain. Yet the play, perhaps understandably, does not follow the logic of that conclusion, which would suggest a different shape for the drama, and a focus on the machinations of the royal family in the 2020s rather than the 1990s. The focus on individuals also obscures the role of a pliant BBC, which acceded to the Prince's demands as an act of contrition for its previous promotion and celebration of Bashir and the interview, and to seek to protect its own reputation.[12]

What the play also doesn't do, in performance, is acknowledge that there are other dramatizations of this story in circulation. Despite the choice of frequent direct address, and of Burrell as narrator, the references to other media are limited to Burrell mentioning his book – a moment that prompted laughs of recognition on the night I attended. Despite this, the 'world of the play' appears to be one in which there is no *The Crown*, no *Spencer*, no *Diana: The Musical*. The script must ignore this media-saturated landscape of fictional Dianas, even as it capitalises on this currency. Hence, there are layers of knowledge that the audience will possess that the show, itself a product of recombinant media, avoids acknowledging. It therefore lacks some of the knowingness, the arch self-awareness, of the recombinant appropriations that Voigts discusses (2017, p. 286, p. 296). Put another way, *The Interview* is a documentary drama about Diana; it is intermittently aware that it is a documentary, but not so much that it is a drama, and its consciousness does not extend to the existence of other documentaries and other

12 In doing so, the BBC was following a pattern of removing content from archive and streaming services whenever the people featured had been publicly disgraced and/or the subject of criminal investigations, as in the cases of Jimmy Savile, and later, Russell Brand and Huw Edwards.

dramas on this same subject. Overall, then, despite its fractured dramaturgy, I would posit this as a liberal response to mediatization rather than a radical one. It decries censorship and cover-ups and celebrates and embodies multiple perspectives, rather than seeking to dismantle the machinery that generates these perspectives. Pragmatically speaking, The *Interview* is perhaps as much of a challenge to established modes of representation as a commercial, legally viable work in London theatre can be, while still advertising itself as a play about the Princess Diana *Panorama* interview. The overt representation of a mediatized and recombinantly appropriated story – in the conservative context of British theatre – here seems to actively work against any covert exploration of processes of mediatization and recombinant appropriation in the play's form.[13]

Adapting History, Documentary, and Fiction

In the second part of this article, I want to ask what wider insights we can gain about adaptation from the case study of *The Interview*. Following Kamillia Elliott's example, I will examine how a case study like this can teach us to adapt theorization rather than to distort the text to meet theoretical precepts, or to judge it as a 'bad theoretical object' if it fails to conform.[14] In what follows, I will make use of Voigt's definition of adaptation as 'an umbrella term for cultural borrowing or cultural appropriation' (Voigts, 2017, p. 294).

To begin with, *The Interview* challenges categorical distinctions between an adaptation and a history play; as noted at the beginning, this is a play without a single source, but with multiple factual and fictional intertexts. It also represents and historicizes events of nearly 30 years ago. Since the 2010s, a growing body of work has explored whether historical drama can be seen as a form of adaptation, not from one primary source but from a multiplicity of primary and secondary sources (Raw and Tutan 2012; Leitch 2015, Leitch 2018; Strong 2019). Tom Bryant's recent book *The Dramaturgy of History* refers to his process as a dramaturg – in collaboration with playwrights such as Lisa Loomer, Nancy Keystone, and Robert Schenkkan – as 'the adaptation of history to drama' (Bryant, 2024, p. 1). Bryant discusses the range of historical research that may be undertaken for the writing and development of a play, from 'highly specialized forms of research'

13 Here it is perhaps worth noting that none of Ilter's examples of mediatized dramaturgy address such already-crowded representational territory as *The Interview.*

14 See Elliott 2020, p. 32; p. 66; p. 210.

– legal, medical, newspapers – to 'a few key books', or a single source that is relied upon so heavily that an attribution is required (Bryant, 2024, p. 3). In the broadest understanding of this relationship, held by Raw and Tutan, 'adapting history is not just the preserve of professional historians, but something undertaken by everyone, regardless of age, race, gender, or class, a means of coming to terms with their particular worlds' (Raw & Tutan, 2012, p. 21).

Nevertheless, there are advantages to reading a play like *The Interview* through the singular lens of the history play. One way of characterising Maitland's drama is as a metahistorical play, Mark Berninger's term for a type of history play that is 'dominated by self-reflexivity', 'featuring 'a discussion of different views of history or a discussion of how history is made', and which therefore often has two distinct timelines, past and present (Berninger, 2002, p. 40). In my recent book *The Contemporary History Play* I propose the classification 'dual biodrama' to cover history plays that depict two lives in parallel (Poore, 2024, pp. 96-99). Bryant, similarly, refers to 'the convention of the duelling narrators' when discussing the dramatic tension that powers Lisa Loomer's play *I Am Roe*, and this trope occasionally surfaces in *The Interview* in Burrell and Bashir's attempts to wrest narrative control from each other (Bryant, 2024, p. 55). In its exploration of how television has shaped perceptions of politics, *The Interview* might also be analysed alongside other plays that feature historic interviews and confrontations, such as Peter Morgan's *Frost/Nixon* (2006) and James Graham's *Best of Enemies* (2021).

As the commentary in the first part of this article made clear, there are also benefits to reading *The Interview* as a documentary drama which responds to the expectations of that genre, rather than a history play. Rebecca Benzie and I have elsewhere made the case for an overlap between documentary plays and history plays – that individual works for theatre can be both at the same time – even if the distinction is upheld by others, notably including Freddie Rokem (Benzie & Poore, 2023, p. 10).[15] Classifying a play one way and not another affects the theoretical frameworks and critical histories that a scholar might access in order to analyse and evaluate it, of course. But what is also at stake in making these distinctions is the associations that such labels have in the perceived currency, prestige, or marketability of individual plays. Mindful of the

15 Rokem states in *Performing History:* "Docu-drama" and its closely related forms of stage realism, however, are not primarily interested in drawing attention to the time-lag between the "real" events and their theatrical re-enactment. They are more like newspapers, which report events as closely as possible in time to their occurrence' (Rokem, 2000, p. 7). *The Interview* certainly draws attention to the 'time-lag' between the events and their reckoning, and consequently surely qualifies as a history play by Rokem's measure.

arguments of Leitch (2018), Bignell (2019), and Kidnie (2009), among others, that what constitutes an adaptation is pragmatically defined by producers and audiences, it must be conceded that *The Interview* does not announce itself – does not invite itself to be read – as an adaptation, nor as a history play. Everything about the production design and *mise en scene* tells us that it expects to be understood as documentary drama – any other interpretation is reading against the grain.

Accounts of Adaptation in Space and Time

An account of *The Interview* and its intertexts needs to include all these relationships and more, whether conventionally classified as history or historical drama, documentary or docudrama, film, TV or theatre, whether reverential, investigative, sentimental, or satirical in tone. These mutually informing connections across different media, knowledge domains, and theoretical distinctions strongly suggest a networked idea of adaptation, either along the lines of the rhizomatic model proposed by Deleuze and Guattari, or the 'archontic' model derived from Derrida, and advanced in relation to adaptation studies by Abigail Derecho and then Suzanne R. Black. In Douglas Lanier's application of the rhizomatic model to Shakespeare adaptation, 'rhizomatic structure […] has no single or central root and no vertical structure. Instead, like the underground root system of rhizomatic plants, it is a horizontal, decentered multiplicity of subterranean roots that cross each other, bifurcating and recombining, breaking off and restarting' (Lanier, 2014, p. 28). Similarly, for Black, each new adaptation adds to the archive, which constitutes 'a non-linear series of non-hierarchical relations'; furthermore, 'Critical, as well as fictional, texts become part of the archives they reference and must be acknowledged in any theoretical approach' (Black, 2012, p. 4). Having deployed this approach – Black's archontic network specifically – in a previous work on Sherlock Holmes adaptations, I can testify to its value. Imagining a mapped relationship between, say, the BBC series *Sherlock* (2010-2017), the Arthur Conan Doyle stories, and other film and television adaptations – as well as histories, genres and politics outside these domains – is vital in understanding how it draws on all these sources. After all, the adaptation principle of *Sherlock*, according to the series creators, was that 'everything [is] Canonical' (quoted in Poore, 2017, p. 50). It's equally true that the web of connections travels both ways; readers and viewers may encounter the adaptation first, and discover the source text later, and what the source text means changes according to the ways that they are approached by individual readers and framed by the culture at large. The decentred model of adaptation seems appropriate when exploring reenactments of

an interview that has been removed from the public domain, and where the interplay between media and between different categories and genres of factual and fictional material is especially marked.

However, the back-and-forth nature of the archontic model, and the 'fluidity of ceaseless change' that characterises the rhizomatic concept, do not necessarily mix well with the kinds of historicizing approach that the first part of this essay undertook (Lanier, 2014, p. 27). Visualising intertextual relationships as a web or as underground rhizomatic plants suggests a mapping in space rather than a chronology. Yet for topical plays about recent history like *The Interview*, timing is crucial. It informs the kind of intervention in the public sphere that the play makes, and the prior knowledge, and feelings, that audiences are likely to bring to the production.[16] As noted earlier, there is also more than one chronology that is pertinent to *The Interview*. There is the chronology of mediated representations of Diana during her lifetime and up to the present, entwined with a chronology of when events from the past have become the focus of renewed interest in the present, as with the Dyson enquiry. To this we might add the history of history plays and of documentary drama specifically, since the prior existence of biodramas, behind-closed-doors plays, and interview plays influences audiences' expectations and playwrights' reference-points. What a problem case such as *The Interview* teaches us – with its extreme topicality, its recombinant and self-aware use of scripts and protocols, and its censored source – is that both synchronic and diachronic accounts are necessary to understand its precise theatrical moment.

Conclusion

As Black argues, in an intertextual landscape that has the potential to expand infinitely, 'divisions must be knowingly imposed' placing an 'artificial boundary' around certain sections of the archive for purposes of analysis. This article has sought, in a range of ways, to strategically redraw the boundaries that have conventionally separated investigative reporting from biopics, for example, or documentary plays from adaptations, because *The Interview* demands that we look at how these boundaries start to erode, and become untenable, when they are repeatedly traversed from different angles by cognate disciplines, genres and art forms. This tracking requires a type of double vision,

16 Here it is worth noting the demographic mix on the night that I saw the production. *The Interview* did not only attract people likely to remember the *Panorama* interview at first hand. There was a noticeably high proportion of theatregoers who appeared to be 'Generation Z', and whose experience of Princess Diana is therefore likely to have been mediated entirely posthumously through series such as *The Crown*.

to perceive both potentially infinite intertextual space, and its interaction with time. While the chronologies that I have outlined have been predominantly linear and causal, it should be noted that the reappearances of Paul Burrell, Peter Morgan, Helen Mirren, Yolanda Kettle, and so on, in different times, contexts, and mediums, gives this history an uncanny sense of looped time. It is a feeling of déjà vu that is entirely rational: we *have* been here before.

By the same token, as I have demonstrated, all histories themselves exist in historical time, and reflect the time in which they were written. In *The Dramaturgy of History*, Bryant includes a discussion with playwright Robert Schenkkan on what his landmark dramas of 1960s American history, *All the Way* and *The Great Society,* might have focused on if they had been written in the 2020s (Bryant, 2024, pp. 87-88). Returning to *The Interview*'s ruminations on changing perceptions of trust, it might be said that the attraction of a play with this degree of historical distance from its original events is that most of the players are still alive, but there is a drastic difference in attitudes that has taken place within a human lifespan. Such works, like the Schenkkan plays, might be grouped together in another networked relationship as 'generational shift' history plays, which activate a complex mix of different forms of knowledge – history and memory – in those old enough to remember them, and operate quite differently on those who are not.

Finally, to return to Voigts' recombinant appropriations – it seems that the scripts and protocols of staging Princess Diana have now entered their parodic phase, with comedy performance *Charles and Diana: The Reunion Tour* by Tracey Collins and Russell Lucas, set to tour the UK at the time of writing. Meanwhile, the scripts and protocols of the 'royal interview scandal' have been comprehensively absorbed by television streaming platforms; in 2024, both Netflix and Amazon Prime announced dramas based on Prince Andrew's 2019 interview with Emily Maitlis on *Newsnight,* in which he attempted to clear his name after repeated allegations about his association with child sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein. The Netflix drama, *Scoop*, even cast Gillian Anderson as Maitlis, who played Margaret Thatcher in *The Crown*, while the Amazon Prime three-part series, *A Very Royal Scandal*, cast Michael Sheen – who starred in the Peter Morgan dramas *The Queen*, *The Deal*, *The Special Relationship,* and *Frost/Nixon* – as Prince Andrew. More ominously, the scripts familiar to the public from Diana's story and its numerous adaptations, have fed into widespread suspicion about the health and wellbeing of Catherine, the current Princess of Wales. Speculation on social media, under the hashtag 'whereskate', reached a peak in March 2024 after Kensington Palace shared a digitally

altered photograph of the Prince and Princess and their children (Addley, Milmo & Roth, 2024; Spring, 2024).[17] Although a video, filmed by the BBC, announcing Princess Catherine's cancer diagnosis and that she would be undergoing preventative chemotherapy, caused much of the speculation to abate, an air of mistrust persists about the possibility of history repeating itself with the Windsors. While it is well beyond the scope of the present article, there is much more to be said about the role of conspiracy theories in both the life of Diana and its aftermath. In the light of my argument here, it might have to be admitted that conspiracy theories, too, constitute ever-shifting adaptations of history.

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"When in Music We Have Spent an Hour": Choreographer John Cranko's Recontextualization of *The Taming of the Shrew* as a Ballet

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ABSTRACT

William Shakespeare's works have always been the centre of attention in adaptation and translation studies, not only because the subject matter of his works is universal but also because there is still too much to comment upon what the three-dimensional characters go through in his oeuvre. This study primarily aims at displaying how dancing is used as a communication tool in John Cranko's ballet adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew*, with music by Domenico Scarlatti and Kurt-Heinz Stolze. While discussing the unique norms and conventions of ballet, this study intends to investigate the standing point of the adaptors during the process of translating Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* into music and bodily movement. Starting with an emphasis on the musical nature of the source play, this paper traces the role of music in the "taming" scheme. In that respect, one of the primary concerns of this study is analysing Katherina's "taming" process in John Cranko's choreography, which is the central theme of the source play. With a close analysis of the choreography employed in the ballet adaptation, this paper aims at comparing and contrasting the gender relations that are portrayed in the source text and its ballet adaptation.

Keywords: *The Taming of the Shrew*, John Cranko, Shakespeare, ballet, adaptation

Introduction

The temporal, transcultural, and intermedial journey Shakespearean plays go through is, undoubtedly, a consequence of the universality of the Bard's subject matters and his three-dimensional approach towards those subjects. The everlasting desire to adapt Shakespearean oeuvre into ballet and opera is stimulating by its very nature since the incontrovertible power of the Bard, his language, is challenged by the dominance of music in opera, and the lack of verbal language in ballet. Furthermore, Shakespeare's

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language, which has a distinct rhythm and musicality of its own, is replaced with the music created by the composer or the choreographer of the adaptation. While this replacement provides the composer, the choreographer, and/or the librettist with a certain sense of freedom, the audience's prior knowledge of the source text, or hypotext in Gérard Genette's terminology, is determinant in the audience's expectations: "For the reader, spectator, or listener, adaptation as adaptation is unavoidably a kind of intertextuality if the receiver is acquainted with the adapted text" (Hutcheon, 2013, p. 21).

When a play such as *The Taming of Shrew*, in which language is one of the most substantial tools, is adapted into a ballet or an opera, the prior knowledge of the audience has the potential to be vital. Yet, one has to remind oneself Hutcheon's argument that "an adaptation is a derivation that is not derivative - a work that is second without being secondary. It is its own palimpsestic thing" (Hutcheon, 2013, p. 9). Hence, throughout this paper, the concept of fidelity, which is often emphasised in adaptation studies, is not going to be a concern in analysing the relationship between the adapted work and the adaptation. Rather, this study intends to discuss how opera and ballet adaptations – and most significantly John Cranko's ballet choreography (1969) – recontextualize Shakespeare's storyline. More importantly, the main focus of this study is displaying how Cranko's choreography challenges the depiction of Katherina as the "shrew".

The Taming of the Shrew is one of the most musical Shakespearean plays since it "contains one hundred musical references. Eighty-four are 'allusive' and sixteen 'denotative'" (Waldo & Herbert, 1959, p. 187). Although the majority of the musical references are spread over the scenes in which Bianca's suitor Hortensio[1] is disguised as a lute instructor, the general theme of the play, "being in tune or harmony with others," is often presented with musical references and allusions. The witty remarks addressed by and to Katherina as well as the association between "taming the shrew" and tuning a musical instrument are reminiscent of Hamlet's furious words to Guildenstern, in which he likens himself to an instrument they intend to play upon: "Call me what instrument you will, though you fret me, you cannot play upon me" (III. ii.361-363). A similar allusion is displayed in Act II Scene I, when Hortensio recalls his personal experience with Katherina:

1 It is significant that in the opening scene of Cranko's adaptation, musical instruments, such as the lute, are used as props by Bianca's suitors. Hence, the significance of music and harmony is visually emphasized in the ballet from the beginning.

> […] she hath broke the lute to me.
> I did but tell her she mistook her frets,
> And bow'd her hand to teach her fingering,
> When, with a most impatient devilish spirit,
> 'Frets, call you these?' quoth she, 'I'll fume with them.'
> And with that word she struck me on the head. (II.ii.lines 149-153)

While in these lines, which are spoken by Hortensio, the ostensible theme is playing a musical instrument, the audience, as well as Hortensio's fictional addressee, recognize the fact that it is, in fact, Katherina, who is tried to be played upon. Ironically, the musical instrument, the lute, becomes a weapon in Katherina's hands suggesting that Katherina's control over the musical instrument – and, hence, music and harmony – is stronger than Hortensio.

An overview of the opera and ballet adaptations of *The Taming of the Shrew*

It is no coincidence that the first opera adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew* is an *opera buffa* (Italian comic opera) *Il duca di Atene* composed by Ferdinando Bertoni in 1780. Most of the opera adaptations choose to focus on one storyline of the multi-layered source play. The structure of the hypotext, which includes an induction, main plot, and subplots, presents a complex storyline that requires to be shortened and simplified in accordance with the norms and conventions of the opera. Since it takes longer to sing a word than to speak it, Shakespeare's play (like most of the source texts) needs to be shortened by omitting certain scenes, incidents, characters, and even plots. The most common practice in adapting *The Taming of the Shrew* into other genres such as cinema, opera, and ballet is excluding the whole Induction, which focuses on a drunken tinker, Christopher Sly, and turns the story of Katherina, Petruchio, and Bianca into a play within a play, which is performed to divert Sly for he is tricked by a nobleman to believe that he himself is a nobleman too. Amongst the opera adaptations of *The Taming of the Shrew*, Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari's *verismo* opera *Sly, ovvero la leggenda del dormiente risvegliato* (1927) [Sly, or the legend of the awakened sleeper] is one of the very few opera adaptations that totally focus on the Induction of the source play. Moreover, this *verismo* – in other words, realistic – opera is constructed as a real tragedy that ends with the suicide of Sly. Another opera adaptation depicting the story of Sly, while disregarding the whole Katherina, Petruchio, and Bianca plot, is Dominick Argento's

one-act comic opera *Christopher Sly*, which premiered in 1962. Amongst the numerous opera adaptations of *The Taming of the Shrew*, Vittorio Giannini's adaptation with the same title is one of the most well-known and acclaimed versions. Premiered in 1953, Giannini's adaptation is an *opera buffa* that he started composing before World War II; yet, the opera was first staged in its entirety in 1958 by the New York City Opera. Due to the composition history of the work, it is possible to find traces of the changes in musical forms and techniques that took place during and after World War II. The latest opera adaptation of the play that is still being performed is composed by Vissarion Shebalin to a Russian libretto written by Abram Akimovich Gozenpud. The libretto contains only a few lines from Shakespeare's source text and most of the subplots as well as secondary characters are omitted. The opera, which premiered in 1955, follows the *opera buffa* tradition in accordance with the traditional reading of the source play.

One of the common characteristics of the opera and/or ballet adaptations of *The Taming of the Shrew* is the lack of the multi-layered structure of the source play – i.e., the play within the play presenting Katherina and Petruchio's story as a fiction that is staged before Christopher Sly. Hence, what Phyllis Rackin argues in *Shakespeare and Women* cannot be applied to the adaptations that are mentioned in this study: "Framed by the Induction, the taming plot comes to the audience as a farcical theatrical performance rather than a representation of actual life" (Rackin, 2005, p. 55). The taming process for Shakespeare's contemporaries is challenging since that period was marked by various powerful women, including Queen Elizabeth I: "Given what we know about the widespread economic activity of women in sixteenth-century England, the roles of the women in the taming plot look much more like a wistful fantasy than a recognizable representation of the kind of women that Shakespeare and his first audiences would have been likely to encounter in their daily lives" (Rackin, 2005, p. 56). From this point of view, the depiction of the taming process as well as the portrayal of Katherina as the shrew transform substantially over time. Moreover, the opera and ballet adaptations of verbally powerful works – such as Shakespeare's plays – employ distinctive languages and sign systems in commenting on the previously mentioned changes. Current adaptation studies concentrate on the relationship between the source text and the adaptation under headlines regarding performative perspective, plot adjustments, choreographic annotations, dance traditions, multiculturalism, and gender studies.[2]

2 Alan Brissenden (1981, 2001), Vera Krasovskaya (1991), Jane C. Desmond (1997), Sally Banes (1998), Jim Hoskins (2005), Julie Sanders (2007), Nancy Isenberg (2008, 2009, 2019), Iris Julia Brühle (2019), and Elizabeth Klett (2019) are strongly recommended regarding these studies.

Although it shares certain characteristics with opera with respect to their use of music as a medium for communication, ballet and dance provide the adaptor with a challenge (or an opportunity) to free themselves from verbal language. As defined in the Cambridge Dictionary, the French-originated term choreography means, "the art of arranging the steps and movements of dancers during a performance, such as for a ballet or stage show".[3] In other words, choreography is the language one creates to tell a story – or an abstract visual performance – using human body movements. Although the art of classical ballet, which evolved from the sixteenth-century French court dances, has its own traditional vocabulary, today, the alphabet and terms of choreographic language may vary according to its creator. Just like a fingerprint, the movement language of a choreographer is unique, carrying traces from their background, emotions, and choices in life. Stories have started to be told using choreographic languages since the creation of the genre called *ballet d'action* in the eighteenth century. Still, classical ballet terms are indispensably used in contemporary dance education or during the creation process of today's choreographies. Moreover, historical texts, legends, folktales and literary masterpieces also inspire choreographic creations.

Another connection established between ballet and literature is the text used during rehearsals. *Libretto* (It.) refers to the words or text of an opera, oratorio, musical, or ballet. Since the beginning, ballet creators, like the ones in the art of opera, have written and used librettos. These texts were written by different actors in the creation process, sometimes by a playwright or a dramaturg, and sometimes by the choreographer himself/herself.[4] Although the nineteenth-century ballet scene witnessed such collaborations, the twentieth century presented the most striking ones in dance history. Unlike opera librettos, ballet librettos are not given with the programme notes during the performances or archived with the music score. They can mostly be found in the personal archive of the choreographer, within the choreography notes, if preserved.

John Cranko's *The Taming of the Shrew*

Shakespearean plays such as *Anthony and Cleopatra*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Macbeth*, *A Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, and *Othello* have inspired choreographers since the *ballet d'action* era. Another fruitful piece for adapting

3 https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english-french/choreography

4 The analysis of the collaborations during the writing process of a libretto is the subject of another research.

the dance scene from the playwright's heritage is *The Taming of the Shrew*.[5] This paper mainly focuses on this masterpiece's 1969 staging, choreographed for the Stuttgart Ballet, by John Cranko (1927-1973).

Cranko is one of the most prominent choreographers of twentieth-century dance art – as mentioned in his official biography given by the The Stuttgart Ballet which he founded, and where he directed, and created his most prominent pieces: "Cranko had a gift for nuanced story-telling and clear dramatic structure".[6] He created more than a hundred pieces during his lifetime, and a considerable number of them were literary adaptations. His breakthrough came with a Shakespeare masterpiece adaptation: *Romeo and Juliet* (1958); and after that, his adaptation of Pushkin's *Onegin* was staged (1965). While directing a company and choreographing in the blooming age of twentieth-century dance, Cranko thought of another masterpiece to complete his trilogy of full-evening narrative works, and that was *The Taming of the Shrew*. He never knew that one day, among his several long or short creations, *The Taming of the Shrew* would become the most popular one: "John picked on this subject, he said, because "I was reading *The Taming of the Shrew* one day, and I suddenly asked myself, why has no one made a ballet of this? It's so visual" (Percival, 1983, p. 196).

Similar to several twentieth-century dance pieces, *The Taming of the Shrew* is an end-product of a collaboration. Karl Heinz-Stolze and Walter Erich Schäfer[7] were the thinkers and deciders; dancers Marcia Haydée (b. 1937) as Katherina and Richard Cragun (1944-2012) as Petruchio, who were also Cranko's life-long friends, contributed to the creation process. Haydée is considered to be Cranko's prime muse and inspiration throughout his life, while Cragun as a highly talented ballet dancer and Haydée's partner both on and off stage, was a natural-born Petruchio with his humorous, self-determined character, strong body control and technique.

5 Some of the ballet adaptations of *The Taming of the Shrew* in which the sets and costumes are not related to the Renaissance can be listed as follows: Choreographer Stephen Mills's version of *The Taming of the Shrew* with music by Antonio Vivaldi, Alessandro Scarlatti, Domenico Scarlatti, and Vincenzo Tomassini in 2004 for Ballet Austin in the United States. 10 years later, in 2014, the acclaimed contemporary choreographer and director of Les Ballets de Montecarlo, Jean-Christophe Maillot created his own version of the piece, with the music of Dmitri Shostakovich, premiered by the Bolshoi Ballet. The latest choreography of *The Taming of the Shrew* is the only production with an original score composed by Jan Kučerain 2018, was choreographed by Alena Pešková for the JK Tyl Theatre in the Czech Republic.

6 https://www.stuttgart-ballet.de/company/john-cranko/

7 Prof. Walter Erich Schäfer (1901-1981) was a German dramaturg and playwright who collaborated with John Cranko in the Stuttgart Ballet. The two also authored a book called *Über den Tanz. Gespräche mit Walter Erich Schäfer*, published by S. Fischer Verlag in 1974.

Given the fact that the choice of music is one of the determinant factors for an adaptation to have a long-lasting popularity, the music used in *The Taming of the Shrew* is significant in various aspects. It is observed that Cranko's work is a multi-layered adaptation: Not only the story but also the music is an adaptation: Domenico Scarlatti's (1685-1757) pieces were arranged by Cranko's lifelong friend Karl-Heinz Stolze (1926-1970). As an eighteenth-century composer, Scarlatti is mostly known for his compositions for the keyboard, which cover a significant part of music history structurally and technically. For Cranko's *The Taming of the Shrew*, Karl-Heinz Stolze adapted some pieces from Scarlatti, presenting full-length ballet music with about two hours of duration.[8] Despite the overall success of the ballet, some dance critics, such as John Percival, discuss this particular choice of music with respect to its negative aspects as well:

> With all its virtues, *The Taming of the Shrew* had one serious limitation. Scarlatti had long been one of John's favorite composers, but it was actually Schäfer who suggested using his music for this ballet. As for *Onegin*, Kurt-Heinz Stolze made a score based on a selection of short pieces by the old composer, in this instance from among his 550 keyboard sonatas, freely adapting the music when necessary, as well as arranging it for the orchestra. Although skilfully done, it disturbed some music lovers simply by being done at all, and even for those happy to accept it without complaints of sacrilege, there was a sameness to the score that prevented it from enjoying a full success. (Percival, 1983, p. 197)

Needless to say, that Stolze's attitude towards Scarlatti's music is similar to Cranko's attitude towards Shakespare's play. In this context, one should keep in mind that the adaptation is a new creation, with intertextual and intermedial connections to previously created works. Hence, the combination of Stolze's composition based on Scarlatti's music and Cranko's choreography based on Shakespeare's play is a unique entity of its own. Furthermore, another aspect of Cranko's multi-layered adaptation is his choreography since it contains various sources, such as some prominent movement motifs of *commedia dell'arte* and dance traditions of the Renaissance. Although Domenico Scarlatti is not a Renaissance composer, his music provides a perfect foundation for

8 The nineteenth century is known to be the golden age of classical ballet, in which most of the masterpieces of this art form are created. *Giselle* (1841), *Le Corsaire* (1856), *Coppelia* (1870), *La Bayadère* (1877) *Swan Lake* (1877), *The Sleeping Beauty* (1889) are brilliant examples of these masterpieces and all are durated almost two hours. This tradition will not continue in the next century but Cranko must have felt this Shakespeare adaptation should be among the classics.

capturing scenes of the era. The relationship between music and dance of that period can be defined as smooth and imitative. Musical ideas match the dances, and motifs performed by the instruments can also be observed in the footworks of the dancer. Using an eighteenth-century music arrangement, Cranko created extremely subtle movement patterns. Nevertheless, one can clearly see that he could not allow himself to add his signature twentieth-century nuances to the piece. For instance, powerful lifts during the first *pas-de-deux*[9], turn-ins[10], and flexed feet performed by the dancers perfectly reflect their quarrel. The music was planned precisely to accompany the libretto, in which two main things in the original text do not take place; "the plot around Sly" and "the arrival of Vincentio, Lucentio's father." In Percival's words, "as usual, John adapted his source considerably when turning it into dance. Many irrelevances were stripped away, including the prologue of the tinker, Timothy Sly, which John admitted "I could never understand" - in common with most readers and most producers of the play" (Percival, 1983, p. 197).

In accordance with the predominant theme of the source play, the most intriguing moments of the ballet adaptation focus on the taming process, which takes place in three utterly artistic, dynamic, and theatrically strong scenes. These are the two scenes of *pas-de-deux* –danced by the leading couple – and a short scene titled "the horseback journey," which takes place twice. Kate is uncontrollable/"untamed" in the first one, but things change, and she becomes happy, peaceful and "tamed"[11] in the second.

> John claimed that the essential plot of the ballet was conveyed in their three big duets. In the first, Kate is stronger; by the second Petruchio has the upper hand; and in the third, they find a balance. By this development, and by his sympathetic treatment of Kate, John disarmed at least some of those who find Shakespeare's play unforgivably anti-feminist. John's Kate was a more modern character: a free woman who chooses her own terms for life. (Percival, 1983, p. 196)

9 *Pas-de-deux* (*Fr.*): Dance for two. This French term of classical ballet is also used for dances for three, four… etc. performers' dances. E.g.: *pas-de-trois*, *pas-de-quatre*.

10 "Turn-in/out" refers to the position of the feet in ballet. While "turn-out" is the base of the six principal positions of the art of ballet, from the beginning of the twentieth century, "turn-in" positions are used by choreographers as a symbol of protesting these hard-to-perform, unnatural positions forced by the tradition.

11 One should note that throughout this paper the word "tamed" is used in quotation marks in order to emphasise the patriarchal view that is alluded in the title of the source play as well as the ballet adaptation.

All three scenes emphasize what Shakespeare underlines about the leading roles. Although some ballet and dance critics of the 1970s, especially from the United States, argued that the physical actions of Kate – such as punching and kicking – are far away from Shakespeare's description of the character, one should not forget that creating movement from a text may give rise to such actions in order for the feeling to be reflected plainly. In order to allow the most vocal character of the source play to "speak" her mind without words, Cranko's choreography provides her with a physical platform and liberty. Hence, the tension between the two leading characters is presented through sharp and strong body movements. Furthermore, in terms of gender relations, which is the predominant theme of the storyline, the 1960s and 1970s were challenging times. As Isenberg mentions,

> only months before John Cranko's 1969 ballet of *Taming of the Shrew* opened in Stuttgart, German feminists had begun their separatist movement by marching angrily out of leftist political rallies and throwing tomatoes at the men they had once considered their comrades. A whip-cracking Petruchio, and in the final scene a submissive Kate – as the earlier twentieth century had been portraying them – conflicted harshly with the feminist call for a new sexual politics. Cranko took up the challenge and in his choreography articulated a progressively more balanced relationship between Kate and Petruchio. He did this through a series of three pas de deux that provide the structural foundations of his work. (Isenberg, 2016, p. 1824)

The particular interest in Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* in 1960s can be linked to the heated discussions concerning gender equality and women's rights of the era in light of the second wave feminist movement in Europe and the United States. While Betty Friedan, the author of *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), founded National Organization for Woman (NOW) in 1966, Action Council for Women's Liberation (*Aktionsrat für die Befreiung der Frauen*) was initiated in West Berlin in 1968. The questions and criticism raised by such organizations around the globe were inevitably reflected in the artistic works of the period as well. Only two years before Cranko's ballet adaptation, Franco Zeffirelli's film adaptation with the same title, featuring Elizabeth Taylor as Kate and Richard Burton as Petruchio, becomes a huge success, associating the fictional couple with the then-married leading actors. The debates concerning Katherina's final speech presenting her – on the surface – as a submissive wife acknowledging her husband's absolute power as the patriarch is challenged and left open to discussion through

Elizabeth Taylor's acting and Franco Zeffirelli's direction. In this respect, Cranko's choreography, which displays the changes in the dynamics of the couple's relationship too, is a visual sign of his perception of (and commentary on) the source text.

As far as Kerby-Fulton is concerned, "Cranko's Kate is an intelligent nonconformist who disdains the pallid (and ultimately superficial) sweetness of her sister's winning ways as much as she disdains the suitors stupid enough to fall for them" (Kerby-Fulton, 1993, p. 1386). As a consequence of what Shakespearean scholarship presented for centuries, modern and contemporary adaptors are able to reflect the previous arguments in their adaptations in accordance with their own points of view. Hence, Katherina's reasons for being the "shrew" are reflected in Cranko's choreography more evidently, although she only uses her body as a tool for communication. In Kerby-Fulton's words, Katherina's "shrewishness, in its comic moments, is clearly promoted by sibling rivalry, but in its more serious moments, it reflects the dilemma of the woman unwilling to play the conventional courtship game, for whom antisocial behaviour is the only line of defense" (Kerby-Fulton, 1993, p. 1386). On the other hand, Cranko's depiction of Petruchio is utterly energetic and fun loving.

The first *pas-de-deux* of Kate and Petruchio, in other words, their first real dialogue, is the most popular scene of Cranko's adaptation. The battle between the two main characters is highly physical and utterly speedy. While Petruchio intends to turn Kate into a puppet-like creature whose body and, hence, mind he can control, Kate fights back and proves her strength against the patriarchal limitations imposed upon her.

> John Cranko's Kate in his *Taming of the Shrew*, however, is as far a cry from ballet's virginal Giselles, seductive sylphs, and fairy-tale Cinderellas as she is from its Juliets, Desdemonas, and Ophelias. She shows no signs of the ballerina's grace and delicacy of line or movement when she stomps across the stage hard on her heels, chin out, arms pumping aggressively, when she lifts her leg with bent knee and flexed foot, and extends her arm with a thrust and a punch. But if we stop for a moment to reflect on the ballerina as a real woman who to achieve her art and a place of prominence in a world of fierce competition must show great strength, resolution, and self-assertiveness, we can see Cranko's Kate bringing this real woman into the limelight – the dancing woman who knows her own mind and is determined to get what she wants. (Isenberg, 2016, p. 1824)

As the couple moves away from their social environment and thus gets closer to one another, their communication, as well as their dance, starts to change as well. It can be suggested that the mutual understanding between the two characters starts to form and is made visible to the audience before the finale. Kerby-Fulton comments on one of the most significant scenes, focusing on the gradual understanding and communication growing between Katherina and Petruchio:

> By the fourth scene of Act II, all sense of the imperious tamer has disappeared and there is an almost quixotic element in his insistence, for example, that Kate dutifully agree that a bystander is a water pump because he says so. Kate catches the spirit and Cranko transforms what seemed an absurd and whimsical test of her submissiveness in Shakespeare into a moment of fun as she enters into his imaginative world by gamely trying to extract water from the peasant's arm. (Kerby-Fulton, 1993, p. 1386)

In the source play, Katherina's final speech (V.ii.lines 137-180), where she underlines the need for female subservience in the relationship between man and woman, is still open to debate: On the one hand, Shakespeare is sternly criticized for presenting her as a champion of male supremacy, against which she seems to be fighting in the beginning of the play. On the other hand, the opposing view suggests that her final speech is ironic, and it is basically designed as Katherina's strategy to survive in that misogynistic society. Given the fact that the referred monologue is the longest speech in the source play, it would be problematic to agree with the argument that the final speech is a testimony that Katherina is tamed. Besides, it is apparent that Cranko's choreography is in accordance with the second view as well. Both the music and the body movements in the final scene suggest that Katherina and Petruchio come to terms with their differences, and there is finally genuine harmony between the couple. The aggressive movements in the first *pas-de-deux* are replaced by unified and softer dance figures, which are accompanied by a serene melody.

Conclusion

As Julie Sanders states, "dance is undoubtedly a highly kinetic discourse" (Sanders, 2007, p. 65). Hence, it is possible to read and discuss a ballet choreography like a narrative written in verbal language. In that respect, the narrative techniques and/or theatre conventions are reflected with slight differences in the ballet form as well. The

wedding scene in the final act can be described as a *tour de force*, a well-known tradition of classical ballet companies on such productions, which present a crowded cast. Colourful costumes and plain scenery match the times of the source text. Cranko deliberately chooses not to adapt his choreography to twentieth century by keeping the mood and atmosphere of the Shakespearean Renaissance comedy taking place in Padua, Italy.

One should keep in mind that this choreography was created specifically for a famous and talented couple, Marcia Haydée and her partner Richard Cragun. Hence, it is possible to suggest that Shakespeare and a real-life ballet couple are the muses of this adaptation. Both soloists were ready to devote themselves to the piece. On the home video recording of the ballet, an interview with the prima ballerina Marcia Haydée gives information about the creation process and her motivation during the performance. She states that she had quite a hard time because she had never danced in a comedy role before, and she thanks Cranko and her partner Cragun for their support. The dancers in the supporting roles in the original cast were; Susanne Hanke as Bianca, Heinz Claus as Lucentio, Egon Madsen as Gremio and John Neumeier[12] as Hortensio.[13]

Although the music of the ballet is an adaptation of various works composed by Scarlatti, it can be suggested that it communicates to the story and characters written and adapted by Shakespeare. This multi-layered adaptation presents the audience how the body can communicate without words and how Scarlatti's music reenacts the Shakespearean atmosphere with techniques that are unique to ballet and dance.

The dialogues or group speeches were adapted to the ballet by Cranko, using the same structure as the source text. In other words, the dialogues were choreographed

12 John Neumeier (b. 1939): Beside dancing in the original cast of *The Taming of the Shrew*, Neumeier is another important figure in twentieth century dance. The American dancer and choreographer became the director of the Hamburg Ballet in 1973 and since then, he has choreographed several pieces, including literary adaptations for ballet from the works of Shakespeare such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1977), *As You Like It* (1985), *Othello* (opera, 1977), *Hamlet* (1997). Apart from these, *Shakespeare's Lovers* (1985) is a special project in which Neumeier combined *the pas-de-deux* from his Shakespeare's adaptations. The only guest choreographer of this project was John Cranko with his famous *pas-de-deux* choreography from *The Taming of the Shrew*.

13 Unfortunately, there is no open-access visual recording of Cranko's ballet with the original cast and leading roles performed by the legendary couple Marcia Haydée and Richard Cragun. The Stuttgart Ballet's official DVD recording of John *Cranko's The Taming of the Shrew* is a production of UNITEL in co-production with NHK, SWR, ARTE and Stuttgart Ballet. The DVD is recorded live at the opera house of the State Theatre Stuttgart in 2022.

as *pas-de-deux*, the three, four, or more peoples' speeches as *pas-de-trois*, *pas-de-quatres*, and so on. In Cranko's choreography, Bianca and her suitors are the supporting roles. Nevertheless, the choreographer assigns high-level technical tasks to these characters as well. They are expected to be physically well-conditioned dancers and refined comedians simultaneously. In addition, Bianca and Lucentio are almost the second stars of the ballet, showing their technical talents in the two *pas-de-deux* created for themselves in the piece.

Given the fact that the duration of a ballet in accordance with the norms and conventions of the particular art requires a significant number of omissions during the adaptation process, it is striking to see that Cranko introduces new characters and sup-plots to the source text, such as "a sub-plot about Lucentio's tricking his two rivals for the hand of Kate's sister, Bianca, into marrying a couple of whores in the belief that it is Bianca herself they are wedding" (Percival, 1983, p. 197). This can obviously be read as a direct consequence of the fact that this particular ballet adaptation is created by John Cranko, basing his story on Shakespeare's almost four hundred years old play. Hence, the additions as well as the omissions are reflective of Cranko's liberty as a creator.

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Research Article

Adaptation and Deconstruction: Emma Rice's (2022) Adaptation of *Wuthering Heights*

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to analyse the adaptation of Emily Brontë's canonical work focusing on Emma Rice's play *Wuthering Heights* (2022) and its transformation of the conventional forms of Brontë's canonical original into more experimental directions. Adaptation is "an acknowledged transposition of a recognisable other work or works" (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 8). Catherine Rees clarifies the distinctive appeal of adaptation whereby "another attraction of adaptation is the opportunity it offers for presenting texts in a new context" (Rees, 2017, p. 3). Within this context, Emma Rice's play, analysing the original text in a new format, interprets Catherine and Heathcliff as Greek gods. The theatrical version of *Wuthering Heights*, performed at Bristol Old Vic in front of a live audience, retold a canonical story. Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* had a great impression on the Victorian community when it was first published. Through studies and the medium of adaptation, Brontë's work has been analysed and discussed in the ages and reached more and more readers and audiences. This study delves into how an adaptation of *Wuthering Heights* in the form of performance is represented by Emma Rice. Through music, dance, grief, hope, passion and revenge, Rice portrays a contemporary revenge tragedy by adapting Emily Brontë's magnum opus into a theatrical performance. By referring to the ancient chorus, Rice tries to represent Catherine and Heathcliff as a tragic heroine and a hero. In Rice's adaptation, Heathcliff's adoption is turned into an experimental performance.

Keywords: Adaptation, Deconstruction, *Wuthering Heights*, Emma Rice, Adoption

Introduction

Since the emergence and origins of drama and performance, theatre has changed over the ages with geographical, political, cultural and social developments, pushed the fourth wall with avant-garde movements and rejected and deconstructed traditional rules of unity. Although elements such as anachronism, deconstruction of the role of the author, the death of the character, new perceptions and theatrical theories and periodisation are observed in texts and performances, there has not been a complete break from the origins, in that references have been made to the period in which they emerged and returns to those dates have been experienced. As "a literary-historical

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event" (Szondi, 1987, p. 6), theatre functions as a supplement without forgetting the past and without breaking away from its roots because "total separation from roots is impossible" (Günenç, 2022, p. 200). Margherita Laera identifies the functional roles of the theatre:

> Theatre also rewrites. It constantly does. It rewrites history, relationships, stories and rules. It refashions beliefs, recycles old and used objects and reassembles them into new embodied experiences. Above all, theatre repeats, and incessantly so. It repeats itself and the act of returning and rewriting, as though it were struck by an obsessive compulsion to reiterate and re-enact, again and again, the vestiges of its past. In so doing, it adapts itself to present contingencies and situations, like an animal species struggling to survive through evolution. (2014, p. 1)

Through palimpsest ("our memory of other works that resonate through repetition with variation") (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 8) and adaptation, theatre rewrites the tradition and reshapes classical works both in its texts and performances. "'Adaptation' is applied to a wide variety of theatrical operations, uses and contexts, in which a transformation of sorts takes place. It not only refers to the dramaturgical practice of turning, for instance, a novel into a play script, a domain traditionally covered by playwrights" (Laera, 2014, p. 2). In adaptations, playwrights take the traditional space, time, events, and characters to different dimensions and subjects. Emma Rice transforms the novel (*Wuthering Heights*) into the text of a play, an experiential performance with a theatrical operation.

This paper will outline the theoretical background of adaptation before clarifying some critical concepts regarding the distinctive ideas and perspectives created by Emma Rice in her adaptation. The theatrical version of *Wuthering Heights* was performed at the Bristol Old Vic in front of a live audience to retell a canonical story. When Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* was published, it had an impact on the Victorian community. Through studies and the medium of adaptation, Brontë's work has been analysed and discussed over the ages and has reached more and more readers and audiences. This study delves into Emma Rice's theatrical adaptation of *Wuthering Heights* and the shift from novelistic to theatrical representation. Through music, dance, grief, hope, passion, and revenge, Rice adapts Brontë's magnum opus into a theatrical performance and portrays a contemporary revenge tragedy. By referring to the ancient chorus (the Moor), Rice

represents Catherine and Heathcliff as the heroine and hero of a tragedy. In Rice's adaptation, Heathcliff's adoption turns into an experimental performance. The purpose of this paper is to study the adaptation of Emily Brontë's canonical work, focusing on Emma Rice's play *Wuthering Heights* (2022) and its transformation from conventional into an experimental form. Within this context, Emma Rice, analysing the text in a new format, interprets Catherine and Heathcliff as Greek gods in her play.

Definition of Adaptation and Adaptation in Theory

Adaptation is "an acknowledged transposition of a recognisable other work or works" (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 8). Catherine Rees identifies the distinctive feature and attraction of adaptation as "the opportunity it offers for presenting texts in a new context" (Rees, 2017, p. 3). Texts are presented in new contexts because the nature of knowledge changes, the cultural structure changes, and society changes, and within this general context change cannot exist without transformation. In order for change to adapt to new channels and become operational, the concept of adaptation is needed. Adaptation as "both process and product" (Hutcheon, 2016, p. 31) is the reflection of connection; a new format can be created from old versions with new resources, new literacy and new interpretations of literature. Adaptation is an on-going process rather than "a new practice; authors, playwrights, directors, composers, choreographers, and designers have been adapting material since civilizations arose" (Kinney, 2013, p. 7) and for that reason the author/director/creator should know stories, characters, plot, events, and many other things that help to create radical stories, new characters, and events. As readers, viewers, scholars and audiences, we can engage with alternative texts, films, events and performances.

Adaptation also questions whether it is original because "rewriting" helps to reformat the original text and even to create a radical form by using characters or distinctive dialogue from the old text. Through theoretical tools such as intertextuality, irony, pastiche and palimpsest, previous and contemporary works are brought together as "bounded text", a term that describes "the process by which any text" (Sanders, 2016, p. 2) is "a permutation of texts, an intertextuality" (Kristeva, 1980, p. 36) that deconstructs "notions of the original and godlike authorial control" (Nicklas & Lindner, 2012, p. 15). As Rainer Emig puts it, "Adaptation has from its inception been regarded as an intertextual phenomenon. Mikhail M. Bakhtin and Roland Barthes are the godfathers that accompany Julia Kristeva on the path to coining the term "Intertextuality"", (2012, p. 15). Authors

analyse or revise earlier works and intertexuality helps to derive the story, characters and space from one text to the new format. Through palimpsest and intertextuality, the author can re-interpret hidden events, stories and characters' feelings and deconstruct the original story.

Catherine Rees writes of the idea of adaptation, "We enjoy the adaptation because we can see the familiar story through the lens of the new format" (2017, p. 2). Within this framework, it is not possible to analyse Tim Crouch's *I Shakespeare* without knowing Shakespeare's distinctive plays and their old format. Crouch evokes and revitalises a canonical playwright and his works. Otherwise "the viewer could not appreciate the knowing in-jokes, the sense of irony and destiny, the reversal of focus away from the major protagonists and onto the hapless minor characters" (Rees, 2017, p. 3). In *Contemporary Approaches to Adaptation in Theatre*, Kara Reilly suggests that "By knowing the stories and adapting them, new generations revivify them and breathe life into them, making them afresh, exciting and unique to the moment in which they are staged" (2018, p. xxii). As a member of a new generation, Rice reorganises and revivifies a canonical work and reshapes it with performances for new audiences.

Adaptation also reflects the political aspects and understanding of societies, periods and cultures. Political understanding is shaped by revolutionary changes, imperial rule, race, gender, economy, geography, and ideology. Adaptation therefore plays a functional role across cultures and societies. Shakespeare's distinctive plays have been translated, rewritten and adapted at different times to analyse ideology (e.g. Marxism, Socialism), gender politics, post-colonial apprehensions and political issues. Therefore, "Adaptation studies is a field of increasing importance in media, film and literary studies" (Nicklas & Lindner, 2012, p. 1). Such an increase in importance also affects canonical artefacts. Within this context, Emily Brontë's source novel *Wuthering Heights* has become one of the most favoured "Victorian novels for screen adaptation, with a long list of versions" (Barbudo, 2015, p. 45). Maria Isabel Barbudo proposes that "*Wuthering Heights* is one of the novels whose adaptations are being approached within this vein, with the analysis of themes deemed central and recurrent in the novel" (2015, p. 46). Rice actually reflects Klein and Parker's description of an approach to adaptation that "retains the core of the structure of the narrative while significantly reinterpreting or, in some cases, deconstructing the source text" (1981, p.10). While retaining the basic ideas of the canonical work, Rice's experimental adaptation introduces the original text to social issues and brings to the stage a universal problem that has been rejected. The Victorian era actually portrays

"repressed and oppressed modes of sexuality; criminality and violence; the urban phenomenon, the operations of law and authority; science and religion; the postcolonial legacies of empire" (Sanders, 2016, p. 176). Themes of love, home, devastation, otherness and revenge are exemplified in different adaptations. Focusing on themes such as refugees, otherness, love and revenge and deconstructing the source text, Emma Rice adapts Emily Brontë's masterpiece into a theatrical experience. This study explores Emma Rice's *Wuthering Heights* (2022) as an adaptation of Emily Brontë's canonical work.

Emma Rice's Adaptation of *Wuthering Heights* (2022)

Emma Rice founded the touring theatre Wise Children and is the artistic director of her own company. Prior to Wise Children, Rice was the artistic director of the Globe Theatre (2016-18). Rice, "after two seasons, had received what amounted to a vote of no confidence from the board that had appointed her, and her departure caused an outcry in the world of theatre" (Kellaway, 2018) because she sought to go beyond traditional structures throughout her artistic direction and to use different techniques in light, sound and stage direction. Neil Constable refers to Rice's signature style: "We are finishing this weekend a wonderful Emma-style new musical *Romantics Anonymous* which played alongside *Secret Theatre*. A new play and a new musical in the playhouse with technology and support" (qtd. in Bowie-Sell, 2018). Rice brought radical revisions to Shakespeare's plays such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Taming of the Shrew* at the Globe. With the same radical consideration and stylistic innovation, she staged her adaptation of Emily Brontë's canonical work *Wuthering Heights* by deconstructing it. Rice's version of *Wuthering Heights* establishes a connection with the original, allowing the audience to observe the new performance from the original's point of view. Rice's adaptation represents a successful adaptation by deconstructing and challenging the audience with the new performance while offering references to the original. Rice effectively demonstrates her familiarity with the original work by doing her homework well and introducing new themes of the rough and windy moors. John Ellis emphasises that "adaptation trades upon the memory of the novel, a memory that can derive from actual reading or as is more likely with a classic of literature, a generally circulated memory" (1982, p. 3). Rice's adaptation is based on her childhood experiences, during which she had the chance to go to the Moors and witness the weather of Wuthering Heights, breathe the air and read *Wuthering Heights* several times. As John Ellis highlights, the novel, which is considered one of the classics of English literature, is presented in a different and more lively way with such memories.

The Moor is represented as a character in the form of a Greek chorus in the adaptation. The chorus works as a storyteller and analyst in the play. Rice removes Nelly Dean as the primary narrator since she does not want her production to feel too domestic. Rice wanted her characters to feel more like gods than busy bodies. Rice built a chorus of the Yorkshire moors and layered the structure of a Greek tragedy over the story (Biggs, 2022). Rice's adaptation "shows us the thought of history" and "adaptation presents history's ghosts to us as we perceive and interpret it in the contemporary moment" (Reilly, 2018, p. xxii). Rice, analysing and reinterpreting the ghost, history and character structure, stages a contemporary performance. Her characters are "superhuman; Catherine, Heathcliff and Hareton the Gods of Chaos, Revenge and Hope" (Rice, 2021). Instead of Nelly Dean as a shrouded character in Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, the Moor witnesses and narrates everything in Rice's adaptation:

> I am the Moor
> Ravaged by the stabbing rain,
> Wizened by the rascal sun,
> Tormented and mighty.
> I hold fast.
> I am the Moor
> Nothing here can shift me.
> Nothing here can change me.
> I stick to the earth and I stick to my story
> I am the Moor. (Rice, 2022, p. 9)

As Arifa Akbar describes the Moor in Rice's play, "The Yorkshire moors are human – fittingly for a story in which they are such an animate feature – and appear as a Greek chorus" (2021).

Rice's deconstruction is not only a deconstruction of traditional performance techniques, but also focuses on refugee crises, cruelty, revenge and tragedy. Rice is committed to analysing and interpreting the works of very prominent authors in different ways. At the same time, she observes political discourse in a universal sense and what happens around the world. She expresses that "I was… really inspired and moved and angry about what was happening in the Calais Jungle (a refugee and immigrant encampment in France) at the time, and watching politicians argue over how many unaccompanied children we would give safe passage to, and that was when

I had the revelation that Heathcliff was an unaccompanied refugee child" (Ciocia, 2022). The character Heathcliff is an orphan found in the Liverpool docks and is taken by Mr Earnshaw to Wuthering Heights, to his home. In nineteenth-century England, "The plethora of employment opportunities and subsequent prosperity of the middle class also drew immigrants to England. Many of these immigrants settled in city centres such as London, Liverpool, and other industrial towns" (Churchill, qtd in Caywood, 2017, p. 3). Brontë's canonical work portrays "a perceptible framework in which it is possible to observe different perspectives, multiple complex interrelationships, voices" (Madran, 2009, p. 206) and different political points. Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* tries to draw attention to population growth and unaccompanied children after the Industrial Revolution. According to research, over nine million people travelled through Liverpool between 1830 and 1930 to settle in England. Liverpool was also a major hub for the transatlantic slave trade. (Caywood, 2017, p. 4). Social changes during the Industrial Revolution otherised immigrants and brought racism to the fore. After the industrial revolution, the rise of the middle class was observed alongside racist and abusive attitudes towards dark-skinned immigrants like Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*.

Emma Rice draws attention to the refugee child Heathcliff, his otherness and his revenge on society. Rice attempts to explain why Heathcliff is restricted from social rules and reconciled with society. Christine Brooke-Rose articulates the concept of the palimpsest as a fiction of history itself. Although its historical expression is varied (1992, p. 125), palimpsest in narratives provides "not an alternative world, but an alternative history" (p. 131) and carries the central idea of revealing the voice of the other (Günenç, 2021, p. 304). This alternative historical perspective allows authors to ask cultural, social and political questions. Through asking these questions, Rice creates a "network of politics-history-society-sexuality" (Spivak, 1987, p. 121). In her adaptation, Rice aims to give Heathcliff the identity of nobility that he was deprived of. Stevens clarifies the otherness of Heathcliff whereby "We know only that he is "Other": Foreign, dark and brutalized. Clearly, Heathcliff stands for a new and rising force in Britain" (2022). In the play, Mr Earnshaw describes Heathcliff: "Look at him! See how he shines. Black granite in the Liverpool rain. Words fall from him like chips from a sugar loaf" (Rice, 2022, p. 13). Rice characterises Heathcliff with a colonial and Indian background complete with a Jamaican accent.

After the Russian invasion, the world has witnessed refugee crises. The war between Israel and Palestine will also cause a new wave of refugee crises. Unfortunately, many innocent people, women, and children have been killed, therefore, we witness many

unaccompanied refugee children. Rice intends to create active observation and empathy in the audience. Focusing on Hutcheon's term "repetition of variation" (2006, p. 4) Rice's play can be said to clarify the purpose of her adaptation, how "political or ethical commitment shapes her decision to re-interpret the source text" (Sanders, 2016, p. 3). Echoing Hutcheon's notion of 'repetition with variation', Rice follows the process of the canonical work and creates an adaptive product. She tries to form a close connection with the original work, coordinates her understanding of the context and period of Brontë's work and reinterprets the urbanisation that started with the industrial revolution. During the Victorian period, people migrated to harbour cities under the effect of the industrial revolution. Both the community and characters in the narrative displayed a sense of transformation. Considering the increase in the rate of migration in this process and the fact that an industrial city like Liverpool was also affected by this migration, it can be concluded that children were left without care and as orphans due to the working conditions. The orphan status of Heathcliff can be explained in this context. The fact that Mr Earnshaw takes Heathcliff to Wuthering Heights is an indication that his fate of loneliness and vulnerability will continue. Mr. Earnshaw takes Heathcliff's coat off, picks up and kisses him, and shows his surprise to his children Catherine and Hindley: "Open your eyes! *They open their eyes and look with horror*" (Rice, 2022, p. 14). Catherine and Hindley show their reaction and ask: "What is that? And Mr. Earnshaw answers: 'That' my loves, is a new member of our family! I have called him Heathcliff" (Rice, p. 14). *Wuthering Heights* depicts life without shelter, primitiveness, and defencelessness in harsh climatic conditions.

Heathcliff, portrayed as a villain[1] and gypsy, is characterised by his weaknesses "as well as the weaknesses of the society surrounding him" (Shapiro, 1969, p. 285) in Brontë's masterpiece. Brontë "condemns him when Heathcliff ruthlessly accepts the values of the people he hates and seeks fulfilment through an empty revenge" (p. 285). After Mr Earnshaw's death, Heathcliff is not accepted as a person, he is described as the other/an object and "as a usurper of his parent's affections and his privileges" (Brontë, 1987, p. 30). Rice's adaptation attempts to give Heathcliff an identity. Rice not only makes us support reprehensible characters, but also tries to make us love a singing Heathcliff. Through her experimental performance, Rice wants to create empathy in the audience. Rice tries to deconstruct the novel's gothic characteristics. Instead of a windy and dark

1 In the play Catherine identifies Nero who "was adopted by his uncle, he was no ordinary man. An actor, a poet and a murderer, he cared deeply and cared not at all" (Rice, 2022, p. 24) Heathcliff: "I like this Nero" (p. 24). As an adopted child like Nero, the nature of Wuthering Heights turns Heathcliff into an uncivilised and villainous character.

mood, she adapts *Wuthering Heights* through music, dance, video and "puppetry-notably dogs represented by skulls mounted on scythes- are seamlessly integrated" (Curtis, 2022). In Rice's adaptation, the childhoods of Heathcliff and Catherine are described with puppets.

Emily Brontë's masterpiece *Wuthering Heights* merges romanticism and realism with gothic elements. *Wuthering Heights* contains elements such as revenge and creates an atmosphere of fear. Indeed, Rice is not only inspired by the events in *Wuthering Heights* but also by one of Brontë's inspirations, William Shakespeare. Watson elucidates that most readers associate *Wuthering Heights* with *Romeo and Juliet* (1949) because of two distinctive places (Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange) and contrasting families (Earnshaws and Lintons), which disapprove of the protagonists because "Brontë lived in a region where there was a sharp and complicated conflict between landed and industrial capital" (Eagleton, 2005, p. 8). These two tragedies portray the themes of love and death. In both works, the two households are in opposition to each other. In *Wuthering Heights* and *Romeo and Juliet*, the young men and women share similar destinies. "*Wuthering Heights* and *Romeo and Juliet* feature a similar style of double action in which the lovers' tragic choices mirror one another" (Pinion, 1995, pp. 195-196, qtd in Colvin, 2021, p. 384). Instead of two different societal standards, Rice integrates the two families into their society. In her adaptation, Rice portrays two lovers as the hero and heroine who love each other intensely, as in *Romeo and Juliet*: Catherine: "I love him… Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same" (Rice, 2022, p. 40). Rice's adaptation supports Terry Eagleton's argument about *Wuthering Heights*: "It is a function of the metaphysical to preserve those possibilities which a society conceals, to act as its reservoir of unrealised value. That is the history of Heathcliff and Catherine" (2005(1975), p. 120). To identify the unrealised value, Rice portrays Heathcliff and Catherine as the heroes and heroines of the ancient period.

Adaptation and the palimpsest style offer new direction and inspiration for the author. New direction and inspiration are created by history, ideology, politics and society for theatrical adaptation. Fischlin and Fortier define theatrical adaptation as "an intertextual apparatus, a system of relations and citations not only between verbal texts, but between singing and speaking bodies, lights, sounds, movements, and all other cultural elements at work in theatrical production" (2020, p. 7). Rice portrays a new system that contains old and new performance styles, speaking bodies, video, music, dance and ideology. Like Gilles Deleuze's comments on Carmelo Bene's radical

adaptation of *Richard III,* which Deleuze understands as deconstructing the major role of Shakespeare and distorting character and plot (Fischlin & Fortier, 2020 p. 6), Rice's adaptation does everything possible to stage a radical performance. She fragments actual characters, adds fictional characters, distorts the plot, and creates political language. Her intention "to disrupt the work of the major author is, therefore, to disrupt the basis of the state and its rulers" (Fischlin & Fortier, 2020, p. 6). Rice's *Wuthering Heights* deconstructs the basis of the ideology of the ruling class in the Victorian period and represents the margins, deconstructing the existing material as well as remaking the canonical work in the contemporary period.

Conclusion

Theatre is in perpetual motion. It re-evaluates, constructs, defines, and writes history, characters, and events and creates relationships. It reconsiders minor characters, bringing them to life and presenting them to the audience in new experiential performances. Rice's adaptation is structurally characterised by puppets and skeletons as well as many different characters. At the same time, the deconstruction of the fourth wall through techniques such as dance, music and video devices stands out in the adaptation. Narratively, Rice deconstructs the ethics and morality of the nineteenth century and turns to the refugee child through unaccompanied minors. The number of refugee children will inevitably increase with the wars. Rice tries to deconstruct the ethical and moral thought of different kinds of people's choices in the nineteenth century. She tries to restore the ethical and tragic aspects of the society by reading the text closely. Sanders elucidates that adaptation is a practice of transfer, an act of revision in itself, which transforms a given genre into another genre, as well as an empowering procedure dealing with addition, expansion, aggregation and interpolation (2016, p. 18). Adaptation creates two authorships for the performance. Rice, as well as being a playwright, has adopted a new purpose. She not only uses the characters and story of the original work but also tries to convey universal problems to the audience from different angles through a more experiential performance. In her theatrical adaptation, Rice portrays a network of relationships that refer to the past and present, with puppets, songs, and bodies in dialogue, and all the other traditional, social and political components that play an active role in the emergence of performance. Focusing on Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Heathcliff, Rice portrays the tragic side of an unaccompanied refugee child. Like the great Roman emperor Nero, adopted by his uncle, the unaccompanied Heathcliff, adopted by Mr Earnshaw, seeks revenge on both

life and the inhabitants of Wuthering Heights. By giving an identity to the Moor, which narrates the story like the chorus of the ancient period, Rice attempts to represent Catherine and Heathcliff as the hero or heroine in a tragedy. Heathcliff's adoption becomes an experimental performance in Rice's adaptation.

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Research Article

Nostalgic Austenmania: Transcoding *Pride and Prejudice*

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ABSTRACT

The enigmatic charm of the Jane Austen novels, especially *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), continues to attract even 21st-century readers and spectators. The appeal of the Regency Era romances that lead spectators to find nostalgic and romantic impulses through visualised portrayals via appropriations have been inspired by 1990s adaptations of the Austen oeuvre, which now incrementally has been continuing with spin-offs, sequels or mash-ups to mention some of the diversions of her work. Regarding the contributions of these adaptations, it is significant to move away from criticising them for not being faithful to the source. Instead, for the cultural milieu, it may be more beneficial to see them as creating cultural meaning based on existing materials. This approach is justified by the fact that literature is also inherently interconnected through intertextuality. Remembering the previous, adapted versions of *Pride and Prejudice* together with the significant thematic and stylistic aspects of the novel, these re-visitings as sources of the reminders of the so-called good old days transform the codes of the text with the reminiscences of the pre-existing cultural products. The aim of this paper is to explore how some recent adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice* are influenced by previous adaptations and contribute to the study of Austen and its adaptation. Examples of these adaptations include *Bride and Prejudice* (2004), which introduces a cultural variation; *Austenland* (2013), which integrates the text into a tourist resort; and *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (2016), which combines blended genres into a mash-up.

Keywords: Adaptation, Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, Austenmania, intertextuality

Introduction

"It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single person in possession of a good Pride and Prejudice adaptation must be in want of another one"
(Anne E. Bromley)

Why do we still have rapturous feelings when tracing Austen's heroines, especially Elizabeth Bennet? Is it because of the enigmatic charm of the literary style of Austen, as Sir Walter Scott succinctly reveals: "[t]hat young lady had a talent for describing the involvements

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and feelings and characters of ordinary life …"(Anderson, 1972, p. 114). Regency romances, such as Elizabeth and Darcy's love, evoke nostalgic escapist fantasies in the ordinary lives of modern readers and spectators. The Regency Era romance is one thing, but the continuity of this demand incrementally is also due to BBC products, Andrew Davies's screenwriting of Austen texts, Colin Firth's Darcy, Emma Thompson, internet Austen-sites, Jane Austen tours, and so on. *Pride and Prejudice* continues to attract the attention of 20th- and 21st-century spectators, as examples of some of the recent adaptations titled *Bride and Prejudice* (2004), *Austenland* (2013), and *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (2016) indicate. Since it is necessary to make the distant Austen's world congruous to the interests of the contemporary spectators to reach their appraisal, the producers, screenwriters, and directors are involved in a collaborative process of filmmaking that requires certain tools. Interestingly, however, while conducting this adaptation process as a form of translative recreation, some conventional expectancies of the spectators should be complemented as if it is a formulation. This combination includes the Austen texts of romance, witty young heroines, Regency manners and their modern interpretations with costumes, balls, tricky relations, and erotic implications that lead to the final kiss of the main couple. In this article, I aim to explore how *Bride and Prejudice* (2004)*, Austenland (2013),* and *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (2016), as recent appropriations of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, deviate from the original text by deploying it in a different culture, within popular cultural traits, and in a blended genre depiction, respectively. When reimagining Austen's works, *Bride and Prejudice* and *Austenland* explore new cultural settings, such as an Indian backdrop and a romance resort. *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* applies a combined approach to the horror genre with romance. Therefore, these adaptations provide unique perspectives on Austen's works.

'Austenmania'[1] in Adaptation Milieu

Jane Austen's novels have never been out of print due to the never-ending interest, and as a consequence, the world of Austen continues with the newly produced adaptations in the cultural landscape. As "there is an ever-growing preoccupation with Austen adaptations" (Cartmell, 2012, p. 25), especially in television and cinema, Austenmania never ceases to continue in other cultural spheres, such as web pages, music, and tours to Austen's England; her works are among the most preferred ones.

1 "'Austenmania' [that had an outbreak in 1990s] generally distances us from the history of the Regency period while, at the same time, still having the capacity to bring us occasionally much closer to it" (Sales, 1994, p. 239).

"Austen's novels, by far the most consistently (even obsessively) remade, provide a model and an incentive for the vogue of updating other classical texts into contemporary media" (Pucci & Thompson, 2012, p. 1) compared to other 18th- or 19th-century novelists' works. As Eckart Voigts-Virchow comments:

> Similar to the cases of Shakespeare, Joyce and Beckett, authors that have become icons of national identification, appropriations of Austen raise urgent questions of canonicity and authorship. Austen is not so much a literary author, but a meeting ground, an affinity space, a textual as well as contextual, cultural and social universe. (2012, p. 38)

Considering the contextual aspects of Austen's novels, multi-faceted characters involved in a web of complex social relations having deeper evaluations blended with the societal dynamics that include issues about class, rank or gender together with more personal yet social issues like love and marriage, lead readers and spectators to think about these points more and more, sometimes with longing, sometimes with a fresh eye that makes her texts relevant for all times. Despite Austen's novels being located in the Regency period, which is the early 19th century, and thereby being focused on the issues, manners, events, and cultural codes of that time, her texts' constant popularity in contemporary times through several mediums is a phenomenon to be analysed.

In contemporary times, within the cultural landscape, we are familiarised with the notion that every text reminds other texts, which means that there exists a continuous "intertextuality" and "intermediality" in adapting and appropriating (Nicklas & Lindner, 2012, p. 19). Different texts in different contexts bring back, insert, merge, and divulge among the newly produced cultural and literary materials. When this active involvement of the spectators is concerned, we reach a point where Austen adaptations attract the spectators via their expectations to be involved in a Regency-era romance domain. It is inevitable that, especially after the postmodern era, we trace the written, visual and audio material by using some other previously produced works intertextually, and the Austen world is enriched in that sense. As Linda Hutcheon states, when it is "seen from the perspective of its *process of reception*, adaptation is a form of intertextuality: we experience adaptations (*as adaptations*) as palimpsests through our memory of other works that resonate through repetition with variation" (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 8). That is why, as "[t]he inherent intertextuality of literature encourages the ongoing, evolving production of meaning, and an ever-expanding network of textual relations" (Sanders,

2006, p. 3), by providing varied perspectives and experiences, adaptations of the Austen-oeuvre nourish the main material.

> Today, there seems to be widespread consensus amongst researchers that there is not the one and only meaning of a piece of literature which a responsible adaptation will translate into a new work of art. To the contrary, the meaning of the 'original' will be enriched and re-actualized by the adaptation, which in this sense becomes a reanimation of the preceding work. (Nicklas & Lindner, 2012, p. 2)

Hence, we may deduce that rather than solely focusing on "fidelity" criticism, through which the written text from the canon is found to be superior to screen adaptations, current adaptations deviate from the original in several ways and methods. In other words, by re-visualising the source, neo-adaptations create something unique, and originality is maintained by the transcoded elements of the new product. Transcoded elements like the usage of modern costumes, dialogues, and even the perspectives, these re-workings serve as the "appropriations" that the producers, directors, and screenwriters prefer to maintain the attraction of the Austenique spectators.

While tracing the adapted versions of Austen's work in the 1990s, named as "Austenmania", a particular moment in modern times, a proliferation of Austen's work was seen either because "[t]here seems to be a trend in the 1990s to include or allude to the author in adaptations of 'classic texts'…" (Cartmell, 1999, p. 26) or a longing for the past "in the 'post-feminist' [world of] 1990s" (Sonnet, 1999, p. 59). These earlier adaptations prepared us to confront the specificity of the Regency contexts in Austen texts, which is why contemporary adaptations operate as multi-layered historical transformations of the romance genre interposed by intertextuality reinforced transhistorically. These attempts also need a requirement to name the inclination of contemporary times in re-positioning Austen texts, perhaps by reconsidering the previous adaptations that left traces in cultural memory as well, which is why these most recent Austen appropriations create new images with mise en scènes that will bring new possibilities into the Austen world. *Pride and Prejudice,* as one of the most appealing of Austen's works, thoroughly presenting her views about relations, life, and marriage in Regency England, has been adapted many times; thus, the probabilities of some recent adaptations will be traced in this article.

The cultural sphere that Austen occupies is often described as a feeling of "nostalgia" for the good old times, "as an escape from modernity into some idealized past" (Pucci & Thompson, 2012, p. 2). However, this raises the question of whether the "longing for the past" is the sole feeling experienced by readers and spectators who continually seek something in Austen's works. To some extent, the faithful followers of period romances stick to that feeling of nostalgia. While viewing, there exists a "nostalgic response to period drama [which] is achieved not simply by the text itself but in the relationship between the text and its audiences" (Cardwell, 2008, pp. 142-149). Thus, this kind of sticking to romance is particularly embraced by fans of Austen romance novels. Perhaps this is related to the Austen characters, particularly her heroines, who reach a transformative potential via self-realisation and romantic love. Austen characters, with their unique portrayal, transgress the boundaries of romance codes, which is why her depiction of the transformation story of the hero and the heroine turns out to be a core material for the deviation of the romance consumers' preferences to create potential digressions and re-handlings. Considering several recent adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice,* it is seen that some deviation techniques in adapting and appropriating -like mash-up, pastiche, and inter-genre usages of this specific novel that presents a unique "template" both for "romantic comedies" and "heritage productions" pave the way to the inspiration for cinematic and television productions via "[i]ts fairytale qualities and its 'shamelessly wish fulfilling qualities' seem at odds with its more serious dimensions" (Cartmell, 2010, p. 19), yet, somehow, it still serves as a core sample.

Besides nostalgic feelings, another reason for this urge to remember the Regency era may be related to the partiality of preserving the present concerns and reconnecting with particular past periods. This is due to the rupture between the past, present and future, which steers us through the possibility of our failure to keep memories in the very post- or even post-postmodern moment to appeal to our memory by remembering Austen or Regency; we try to reconnect with the past through historical media products. As Pierre Nora explains: "Societies based on memory are no more: the institutions that once transmitted values from generation to generation – churches, schools, families, governments – have ceased to function as well…" (qtd. in Pucci & Thompson, 2012, p. 9). Both the past and the present are neither satisfactory nor demandable. As Andrew Higson expresses, "nostalgia" in postmodern times, shown through the period drama, consists of:

> … the upper middle-class and upper-class past is displayed in a beguilingly realist manner, in the sense that the mise en scene is replete with apparently

> authentic historical detail… This combination of spectacular display and rich realist detail - which is by no means confined to the English heritage films – is another example of … postmodern nostalgia: it renders the past as co-existent with the present; it recovers the past as something that can be experienced by present day spectators. (2013, p. 129)

The past co-exists with the present due to the recent gaps filled by the so-called conservative aspects; still, there exists "a temporal ambivalence, a tension between past and present, both in terms of the process of memory and remembrance, and in the different ways in which past and present are valued" (p. 124). Hence, with a well-constructed social organisation and inimitable character portrayals, the Austen world is haunting the present. Exemplified by Elizabeth, for instance, Austen's portrayals presented unforgettable characters. With her livelihood and keen judgment of her surroundings, her uniqueness may be the reason why people want to see and read about her. About Elizabeth, Austen (1813) writes to her sister: "I must confess that I think her as delightful a creature as ever appeared in print and how I shall be able to tolerate those who do not like her at least I do not know" (as cited in Johnson, 1890, p. vi). This sense of irreplaceability is not only about Elizabeth but also related to her portrayal of Darcy, whose embodiment, especially after having a transformation process, seems as a man to be like the ideal in the eyes of women through his behaviours and tenderness.

As will be discussed further, the Regency Era romance has certain generic codes that attract the spectators, so it is intriguing how this ongoing effect of Austenian romance is achieved. By producing different genre-wise adaptations/appropriations, the 21st-century revisitings hint at a bilateral retro fascination: remembering the Regency and a nostalgic glimpse into the 1990s. In several adaptations, we see the genre's transformation; romance is transformed into gothic, mystery or comedy, through which nostalgia maintained by costume drama is deviated via genres that playfully re-consider the Austenique romance and can be called "mash-ups". When transformed via genre-deviation, this co-existence of the Regency romance heritage is a medium of revival which may tie the contemporary spectators to the lost past. When we come to more recent adaptations that deviate from the genre conventions, the presentist scope is obtained by this re-handling of the stylistic devices with the blending of the genres. When taken as a whole, these interconnected texts of adaptations as cultural products form an intertextual paradigm. Each film adaptation reveals some of the different

aspects of the original texts with a new emphasis or angle, including the embeddedness of the period when it was produced. "Therefore, an adaptation is a derivation that is not derivative – a work that is a second without being secondary. It is its own palimpsestic thing" (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 9). By using the visual components that cinema as the film-making oeuvre obtains, this renovative handling of the Austen text, together with the spectator's reception, contributes inevitably to the source material, which is why "texts are said to be mosaics of citations that are visible and invisible, heard and silent; they are always already written and read" (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 21). Austen-world reminded by well-behaviours, good manners, adored dances and unforgettable love with the pure rural areas of Regency England and the luminous balls; consequently, the present-day spectators may imagine the blurred sides.

> The Austen phenomenon is located within the interstices of the oral, visual, and spatial delivery systems, systems that reinforce each other and in turn reinforce the interaction among these media. Increasingly, this is the way cultural experiences are disseminated and consumed: see the film, read the book, buy the soundtrack, check out the Web site, visit the actual Austen sites in English country houses. (Pucci & Thompson, 2012, p. 5)

These inter-mediatic texts that try to deploy Austen's world lead spectators to watch these adaptations. What is more, Austen's "characters strike a perfect balance between recognisable types and individuals with complex motivations and idiosyncratic personalities. Readers and watchers identify with them and yet cannot fully predict their behaviours" (Troost & Greenfield, 2001, p. 3). This may be one of the reasons why we repeatedly have these adaptations. Yet, in 21st-century versions, related to the demands and participation of the fans of Austen novels and adapted versions, we trace these transcoded variants more. In a way, the claims of the consumers/participants are decisive in (re)/shaping the Austenique. Yet, it is also related to the fact that "[t]he concerns at the center of Austen's plots – sex, romance, and money – are central concerns in our own era" (Troost & Greenfield, 2001, pp. 3-4). Likewise, even in the twenty-first century, her central topics affect the spectators' ability to find a connection between her world and theirs. But somehow, the recalled Regency past reminds us of the genteel, upper-class, luxurious one rather than the less-known or ignored lives of marginalised people. In other words, "we seek difference, but a familiar difference" (Troost & Greenfield, 2001, p. 4) within these adapted versions of Austen's books.

These films give people the chance to escape from the harsh and uncertain issues of the twenty-first century. Thus, the longing for a secure environment, as in Regency and Austenian, is required, not because of desiring a more socially restricted community but of her criticism of it: "While we may desire to escape to the world of this older, genteel class, we are simultaneously uneasy about such a wish: Austen gives us the historical fantasy yet provides harsh ridicule of those who are too snobbish in their class distinctions" (Troost & Greenfield, 2001, p. 4), which is why we have ambivalent feelings about this experience of nostalgia in multiple ways. The visual material certainly transformed the world of Austen. The images and depictions of the settings of rural England, including the details of the costumes and domestic decorations or the heroes riding horses, all change our perception of Austen's Regency.

The unavoidable fascination of the spectators when losing themselves in the charm of the Austenian Regency while shuttling back and forth between the past and the present affects the repositioning of Austen in the contemporary cultural landscape. With the renewed fast-paced and more colourful adaptations compared to the earlier adaptations, the visual re-imaginings of Austen texts create acquaintanceship and attract the spectators to perceive the remote historical material as if they are their own. Within the act of filmmaking, it is necessary to make the distanced Austen's world congruous to the interests of the 21st-century spectators. Interestingly, however, while conducting this translative recreation, some conventional expectancies of the spectators should be complemented as if it is a recipe. While mediating between the presentation of the past and present presentation concurrently, the postmodern self-conscious appeals and nostalgic feelings toward another moment, primarily to Victorian or Regency as distant temporalities, somehow attract the spectators' attention. Together with this neo-formulaic tendency in the appropriation process, how the transcoded *Pride and Prejudice* notions have been presented is the very spot that functions for Austenmania in the 21st century.

Pride and Prejudice as the Most Appealing Austenique Text

There have been several adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice*[2]: the 1938 BBC version, the 1940 version produced in the United States, the 1949 version TV series in the US, a 1952 mini-series in the UK, and the 1952 and 1967 versions of TV mini-series of BBC,

2 As Rolf Beuer (2000) asserts, nearly "186 'completions, sequels, adaptations, pastiches, and fictionalisations' of Austen texts, 71 of which used *Pride and Prejudice* as a source text" (as cited in Voigts-Virchow, 2012, p. 40).

1980 version whose script was produced by Fay Weldon (the famous feminist novelist), famous 1995 version directed by Simon Langton which created a phenomenon called "Darcymania" because of the inspirational acting of Colin Firth, 2003 *Pride and Prejudice: a Latter Day Comedy*, 2004 *Bride and* Prejudice of which the setting is India, 2005 version directed by Joe Wright and 2007 *Becoming Jane* proposing the idea that Elizabeth's story is also Jane Austen's. 1995 *Pride and Prejudice*, for instance, is an appealing version of adaptation in that so many spectators adored how it deciphers the novel via Andrew Davies's re-creations while adapting it to the screen. To create an active feeling to the letters that reveal some truths about the position of the characters, he benefits from "additional scenes, flashback, and voice-over," for instance when the letter about Wickham is presented, "Darcy moves to the window, which frames him. The camera zooms out and away from Darcy to a flashback, depicting the history between Darcy and Wickham with a voice over by Darcy" (Raguz, 207, pp. 353-4). Whereas, in the 2005 version, while the voice-over of Darcy delivers the contents of the letter, "… Keira Knightley [acting as Elizabeth], whose shoulders gradually droop the more she learns about the wickedness of Mr Wickham" (Raguz, 2017, p. 355), the more she realises the fact that she is wrong in her judgements of people. In this way, there is no need to add a speech since her body language shows how she feels and how she is transformed.

Using cinematic and narrative techniques, instead of focusing more on the debates about fidelity or infidelity to the adapted text, 90s adaptations transformed how Austen texts revealed the characters and the spectators' perceptions.[3] Lights, colour, music and editing all lead readers to imagine their lustful longings. "Francois Truffaut calls this kind of film-editing and shooting 'the contrary of variety,' a use of a variety of technologies to paradoxically blend into a single impression of unity within which this host of technologies assaults the viewer continually" (as cited in Gallager, 1989, p. 266). In some instances of the renovated adaptations of Austen novels, we see "the film's mise-en-scene visually recalls other much loved films… these meta-adaptive moments foster nostalgia" (p. 246). Balls, music, and dance are embedded into Regency-decorated houses within the idyllic English countryside, reminding us of the peculiarities of heritage cinema. While benefiting from these new techniques to renew Austen's world, adaptations deploy some similarities like the use of "archaic dialogues" (Moody, 1997,

3 As an example of "camera-driven" works, for instance, the 1995 adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* "fetishises the looks of the heroes … by a variety of devices" (Moody, 1997, n. p.), such as the camera continuously focusing on Colin Firth as Darcy. What is more, not only the camera but also Elizabeth, acted by Jennifer Ehle, gazes at him, and the camera angles create unforgettable mise en scènes of Firth, and he becomes the iconic figure of Darcy.

n. p) accompanying the illuminating balls, elegant costumes of men and women, and green rural England depicted as the essential parts of all these adaptations.

In addition to cinema's stylistic devices, *Pride and Prejudice* stands out exclusively due to Austen's unique portrayal of human nature through her characters. Within the web of social interactions, she presents how people's essentialism and harsh judgements may affect our personality and life depending on the outside realities. From the explicit individualism of Elizabeth to proud Darcy[4] and the flirtatious Lydia to surrendered Charlotte, all the characters represent and reveal several dimensions of the essence of human beings within society. Elizabeth is a distinguished character because she resists society's expectation of people to preserve their status (mostly via marriage) and wants to resolve the so-called fragility of her femaleness. Hence, one of the reasons why this work is apt to be an adaptation milieu is related to the timeless notions of Austen characters (like the unique individualism of Elizabeth), in addition to the feelings of nostalgia that the contemporary spectators feel for the old times embodied by these characters. *Pride and Prejudice* is so proper to be adapted to screen in that, as George Bluestone (1966) asserts:

> … given the special attributes of its style, possesses the essential ingredients of a movie script… [resembling] to the components of Jane Austen's style – a lack of particularity, an absence of metaphorical language, an omniscient point of view, a dependency on dialogue to reveal character, an insistence on absolute clarity. (pp. 117-8)

Austen texts are suitable for the adaptation process "because her plots are well constructed, her casts of characters and settings are relatively limited, and her subject matter is archetypal or romantic – characteristics that accord with definitions of cinematic based on narratological criteria" (Monaghan, 2009, p. 12). Yet, for some critics the difficulty of adapting her novels stems from the fact that she uses dense "irony" in her narration, she emphasises the "inner" worlds of the characters, and she maintains "spare descriptions

4 The difference in the costumes attracts our attention, together with the deviations through the scenes in which director Simon Langton and writer Andrew Davies added that Darcy's wet clothes have turned out to be one of the iconic moments in the adaptation history. With this re-portrayal of Darcy, the spectators' gaze is transformed into female gazes that objectify Darcy as the object of desire, this time, Darcy becomes an indispensable image of the desired spectacle "with [his]appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that [he] can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 11), which paves the way to a concept called Darcymania, in way deconstructing the preferences of the spectators even by reflecting a classical world.

of characters and places" (p. 13). Yet, this difficulty also paves the way for the enriching aspects of the re-handlings of the source material. Moreover, through her characters' evaluations of themselves, we see the discrepancies between our inner feelings and how we utter or show them. As Nicholas Marsh asserts, "We are aware of constantly telling stories to ourselves and about ourselves, trying to explain our feelings and actions, trying to capture life in words; and we also know that we can never entirely succeed – life experience is too fluid and complex to be contained in words" (1998, pp. 236-7). For instance, as Mr. Collins proposes to Elizabeth, he rationalises his act, but these are Austen's criticisms towards the society that created such stereotypical absurd situations:

> My reasons for marrying are, first, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish. Secondly, that I am convinced it will add very greatly to my happiness; and thirdly—which perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier, that it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honour of calling patroness. (Austen, 2006, p. 97)

That shows how life and relationships are too complicated to not to be deduced to certain formulaic so-called rationalisations, which is seen when Elizabeth responds to him, explaining, "I am very sensible of the honour of your proposals, but it is impossible for me to do otherwise than to decline them... You could not make me happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who would make you so" (p. 98). In this way, Austen both achieved to compare the ridiculed version of Mr. Collins' rationalism versus Elizabeth's ironical rationalism about the society's socio-eceonomic interests about marriage. These kinds of ironical satires about characters' relations and positions within society become a prolific source for adaptors.

Another aspect of the continuous adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice* is its being a core model for the romantic comedy genre, as Deborah Cartmell (2010) claims:

> Indeed Austen's novel provides the template for so many romantic comedies as well as repeatedly being repackaged into 'heritage productions'. Its fairy tale qualities and its 'shamelessly wish fulfilling qualities' seem at odds with its more serious dimensions, but nonetheless explain why the narrative structure is so frequently used in romantic comedies. (p. 19)

When the spectators question the function of marriage with or without romantic involvement, beginning in the 1990s as a turning point in gender issues concerning the postfeminist era and carrying onwards. When the interest in romance fiction is concerned, "it becomes clear that romance novels perform this compensatory function for women because they use them to diversify the pace and the character of their habitual existence" (Radway, 1991, p. 89). These qualifications that create a romantic world are also related to its inspirational notions, evoking sensations for females who long for an ideal love relationship:

> Because they focus on the inevitability of marriage in a woman's life and subtly explore the relationship between marriage and happiness, Austen's novels allow filmmakers to explore what has again become a central concern and anxiety of our times and certainly of many women's lives: finding the appropriate mate. Of course, most of the adaptations play on the concomitant fear of never finding such 'fullfillment.' (Voiret, 2012, p. 234)

As Janice A. Radway also explains in her article "Women Read the Romance: the Interaction of Text and Context" (1983), this may also be because there existed specific structures of romance novels and "by continuing to maintain that a woman's journey to happiness and fulfilment must always be undertaken in the company of a protective man" (p. 53). Nevertheless, with Austen's heroines, the ironical stance toward stereotypical gender notions has always been questioned. Besides, because of her ironical depictions of the confinements of the society where she lives, there also appear to be some comical behaviours and situations. "While describing 'female difficulties' in plentiful, believable detail, she nevertheless manages to envelop women's lives in romantic comedy" (Ross, 1991, p. 167), surrounded by typical figures and social ills of those times. In Elizabeth's case, with her keen judgment, wit, and the romantic entanglements she faces, she is already in a romantic comedy environment. Mostly verbally, she directs her witty evaluations to Darcy:

> From the very beginning—from the first moment, I may almost say—of my acquaintance with you, your manners, impressing me with the fullest belief of your arrogance, your conceit, and your selfish disdain of the feelings of others, were such as to form that groundwork of disapprobation on which succeeding events have built so immovable a dislike; and I had not known you a month before I felt that you were the last man in the world whom I could ever be prevailed on to marry. (Austen, 2006, p. 215)

The satirical tone, which contains comic elements in Austen's writing, comes to the forefront, especially when we see stereotypical members of the Regency society. Elizabeth's intelligence and ironic stance make her an unforgettable character, positioning her as a figure eligible for multi-dimensional evaluations. *Pride and Prejudice* shows us how a person gains a thorough insight through making some deducements after learning from their own misjudgements, "She grew absolutely ashamed of herself. Of neither Darcy nor Wickham could she think without feeling she had been blind, partial, prejudiced, absurd" (p. 188). After learning the truth and how she misinterpreted everything, she felt disappointed. This is a universal and timeless issue when human beings are concerned regardless of gender. Throughout the novel, Elizabeth confronts some possible relationships and specific challenges against which she responds mostly ironically. Yet, she loses herself in her inner turmoils to decide what is right or wrong. Considering the social norms of the Regency period, it was very problematic to lead a lonely life without a proper marriage candidate, which is why "for the young ladies of the peerage, being presented to the queen at court marked their entry into fashionable society and the marriage market. Once she had been presented, a young woman then … set her mind upon finding a suitable husband…" (Hughes, 1998, p. 179). On several occasions, she comes to the edge of marriage because, as a woman, this is necessary for her future security. Since Elizabeth is a multidimensional character, her ups and downs are intertwined with the social expectancies of other characters.

Some Recent Adapt/(Appropri)ations of *Pride and Prejudice*

Austen's novels are suitable for adaptation because they present universal themes that do not require specific placement or time. Her depiction of the importance of human beings' refrainment / urge to be socialised has taken place in her books, "From group to group, from person to person, and from moment to moment, the sociability that produces a community or a culture may seem to a reader welcoming, warming, stimulating, challenging, irritating, alienating" (O'Farrell, 2009, pp. 480-1). Her inclusion of free indirect discourse deciphers her characters' inner worlds. Signifying the domination of the two protagonists' inclinations in a love relationship makes *Pride and Prejudice* apt to adapt. Darcy is so proud of his social position in Regency England, whereas Elizabeth is prejudiced against him due to his detestment of her. Adapting *Pride and Prejudice* into all sorts of genres, like murder mysteries, zombie movies, children's literature, modern romantic comedies, or Bollywood or Pakistani versions, never ends. Modern-day adaptations benefit from the prevalent, popular genres inserted into

Austen plots as mash-ups. A strictly faithful presentation would be impossible while adapting and appropriating, specifically in contemporary times. This is due to the difference in the mediums and the inevitable presentist handling of the producers. As Rosemary Arrojo asserts: "Our translation of any text won't be faithful to the original but to what we consider the original to be, to what we consider what constitutes it, - to our own interpretation of the original text, that will be always a result of what we are, feel and think" (2000, p. 41). Mostly, we admire those places and times of England together with our longing gazes to witness how Darcy transforms from a so-called arrogant man to an ideal man for Elizabeth, who has a rather dense emotionality. Yet, with the conventional codes of that world transferred by transcoding them to tempt the spectators somehow, there appear varied versions of *Pride and Prejudice*.

Struggling within the confinements of the time, particularly shown via the families' demands from their daughters and sons to marry the proper marriage candidate, when the characters are able to understand both their own desires and the other person who would be a possible match, the novels' thematic concerns go beyond the times it had written. Contextually speaking, Jane Austen's recognition as a writer who uses satire to criticise society's perfunctory morality paves the way for her novels to become multi-faceted. For instance, in *Pride and Prejudice*, beneath the romantic plot, the characters struggle to find themselves in a society where the opinions of others are also important. In other words, the outcome of the plot of marriage arousing curiosity is accompanied by a thoroughly presented essence of human nature and behaviours, including their ups and downs, good and bad sides. In the case of *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth and Darcy eventually reach the point of loving each other and are united as a pair, but they also experience a transformation of self-assessment, and specifically, mutual understanding of certain moral issues signified in the title of the novel, "pride" and "prejudice". Austen's texts create:

> powerful images translating our desire to go beyond our present stereotyped dichotomies, they also offer a complex sample of male and female characters presenting more or less traditional masculine and feminine traits. The staging of those diverse characters and relationships allow filmmakers to explore unabashedly our conflicting and at times regressive understanding of gender and gender relations. (Voiret, 2012, p. 233)

Perhaps one of the reasons for choosing Austen's texts to adapt is the confusion of modern women who try to choose between love and maintaining power, marriage and remaining single, which is why Austenmania proceeds due to its thematic concerns like finding the ideal spouse, mutual love and marriage (if possible).

The novel consists of several instances the adaptors prefer to use regardless of genre or time differences. "At the occasion of this first ball, Jane Austen introduces her novel's main topics: prejudice based on 'first impressions' and 'pride' as a trait of a non-virtuous character" (Fricke, 2014, p. 350). When the protagonists see each other at a ball for the first time, we see Darcy, who is reluctant to dance. He wants to be with people who are his equals in terms of socioeconomic status. When Bingley shows Elizabeth, he immediately answers: "She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me; and I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men" (Austen, 2006, p. 12). This rudeness on Darcy's side is because of his not taking any measures to prevent himself from being overheard by Elizabeth. As seen, the popularity of this novel might also be related to Austen's use of the formula of "good romance" (Radway, 1991, p. 73), which maintains a transformation story of a male character who is very loving, considerate, and cordial in his treatment of the female character. As Voigst-Virchow categorises, the current adaptations blend different genres into the conventional Regency romance formula. In this way, the appropriated world of Austenique appeals to the interests of contemporary spectators who want to consume and participate in this exclusive oeuvre. These revisitings sometimes self-reflexively represent Austenique - as in the case of *Lost in Austen* (2008) or *Persuasion* (2022), and as mash-ups like,

> - *Bride and Prejudice*
> Alternate Timeline, Space and Ethnicity in the movieverse
> - *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*
> Alternative Universe
> Pastiche and generic crossover Regency romance/ horror. (Voigts-Virchow, 2012, p .43)

As for interpreting some adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice* that use different adaptation techniques, it can be seen that they are mostly doubly adapted when transformed to the screen: once from Austen's novel and then from the re-visiting novel. Austenites who are fans of hers, specifically her novel *Pride and Prejudice*, demand the

world of Austen, and there are many works called fan fiction that emerge as spin-offs, sequels, and mash-ups. *Bride and Prejudice* (2004) is directed by Gurinder Chadha and shot mostly in English, adapted into Bollywood style as a musical comedy. Suitable for the Austen world, there is no kissing, which also appeals to the conventions of Bollywood cinema; this movie becomes a medium to represent "a clash of cultures rather than … class confrontation" (Cartmell, 2010, p. 101). At the beginning of the movie, while we see Darcy complaining about the unknown world of India, Lalita (Elizabeth) utters to her mother: "All mothers think that any single guy with big bucks must be shopping for a wife" (as cited in Cartmell, 2010, p. 55).

The plot takes place in India, where Lalita meets Will Darcy, a wealthy American who is Balraj's friend. Balraj is affected by Lalita's sister, Jaya. The movie transforms the story when Darcy leaves his first-class seat to be with Lalita in economy class. This way, the plot is modernised yet remains parallel to the original. The deviation related to the cultural differences concerning the neo-colonial features leads the main characters to have "pride" and "prejudice," this time directly tied to their nationality and authentic culture.

> Lalita- You said yourself that you're used to the best. I'm sure you think India's
> beneath you.
> …
> Darcy- Don't you want to see more investments, more jobs?
> Lalita- Yes, but who does it really benefit? You want people to come to India without having to deal with Indians.
> …
> Lalita- Isn't that what all tourists want here? Five-star comfort with a bit of culture
> thrown in? Well, I don't want you turning India into a theme park. I thought we got
> rid of imperialists like you. (Chadha, 2005)

Lalita preserves prejudices about Darcy, a Westerner and wealthy young man. They both carry their Indian and American pride. This contextual digression is also similar to the existing cultural clashes in real life:

> Chadha explained some of her hybrid choices regarding the film ... Neither Eurocentric nor Indocentric, she 'operate[d] in [a] global cultural paradigm.' Wanting her theme to reach 'the Diasporic, cosmopolitan, global audience around the world,' she chose 'a story they're going to be familiar with' as well as one that fits 'contemporary Indian society.' (Kasbekar, 2021, n. p.)

Being an American but following the footsteps of the authentic Darcy, this time in a multi-cultural atmosphere, Darcy's transformation signifies a cultural synthesis: "He has not gone native [I shudder at the expression], but he has learnt to combine east and west successfully". That is why a new understanding of the neo-colonial perception makes sense in the contemporary multi-cultural world. Lalita, too, "exemplifies an ideal fusion of Eastern and Western values" (Kasbekar, 2021, n. p.) in her loyalty to Indian traditions and her personal preferences.

In *Austenland* (2013), directed by Jerusha Hess, which is adapted from Shannon Hale's novel *Austenland*, the inspiration point is women wanting romantic adventures who thought their possible suitor should resemble Darcy of Colin Firth in 1995 *Pride and Prejudice,* which is a very current appeal for modern spectators – especially women – who are in search for romantic love. As the title indicates, *Austenland* presents a place for a holiday that includes the theme of Austen's world of *Pride and Prejudice*, "In *Austenland* the economic imperative of this literary tourism is also clearly and comically exposed" (Wardle, 2018, p. 256). This shows again how, in our (post)/postmodern world, we want to consume everything, even classical novels, by being a part of them. Similarly, in recent attempts at commercialising such experiences, Netflix offers "live experiences for *Bridgerton*, *Money Heist*, *Stranger Things*, *Squid Game*, and *Netflix Bites*, Netflix House [which] will … create an unforgettable venue" (Goldblatt, 2024, n. p.). This shows how present consumers want to experience these fantasy worlds by actively participating in them:

> The country house asserts its pastoral credentials in the first long-shot where it is shown perched on a hill, framed by trees, fronted by a lake and bathed in sunshine. In addition, the film audience hears a classical music score inviting further comparisons with previous filmic constructions. The film thus deliberately crafts its location from the tropes of classic literary adaptations and biopics, and yet at the same time these conventions are commandeered to become part of a parody or pastiche of those films. (Wardle, 2018, p. 256)

Jane, the protagonist, is obsessed with Colin Firth's Darcy version, and she saves money to go to an Austen theme resort where there are male actors who would give you the feeling of romance, but no touching is allowed. She is in her 30s and explains her status, "I am single because all the good men are fictional" (Taylor, 2013, n. p.). Jane attempts to find the love that she needs, and this resort proposes that they will either grant her romance or she will get rid of her delusional tie with the story of *Pride and Prejudice*. Taken by a Rolls Royce, American tourists attracted by the Austenian world, seeking romance, which is expressed as "LC – life-changing experience … get to play the heroine of your very own Austen history" (Wardle, 2018, p. 257), which is the motto of the travel agency. Perceiving the pretence of role-playing, she soon realises that she wants to experience real love. Jane has the copper package related to her economic situation, a significant aspect of modern life that blends high and low, serving the consumerist mentality of popular culture. Involved in several acts with the paid actors, with specific roles dedicated to specific visitors, they pretend to be involved in romantic plots. However, with some comic elements, romance is parodied via conventional depictions of previous romance adaptations. In the movie, we see "…an unsurprising duel for Jane's affections between a Wickhamishly devious groundskeeper … and Mr Nobley, a Darcy-esque grump…" (Taylor, 2013, n. p.), through which Jane also begins to question whether it is worthwhile to experience a fake love rather than an authentic one. While Nobley confesses her true love to Jane, she realises Martin's steps to romance with Jane are scripted. Later, it is revealed that Nobley is in love with Jane, and she accepts him. Thus, the movie emphasises that authenticity in love is preferable, not pretension, even in contemporary times. While parodying the appeal of present-day spectators to Austenique material, this movie, at the same time, delves into both the classic Austen text as well as its adaptations, as Linda Hutcheon asserts about "the modern use of parody:"

> does not seem to aim at ridicule or destruction. Parody implies a distance between the backgrounded text being parodied and the new work, a distance usually signalled by irony. But the irony is more playful than ridiculing, more critical than destructing… (1978, p. 202)

Pride and Prejudice and Zombies (2016) is an adaptation of the novel with the same title. It was written by Seth Grahame-Smith and parodied *Pride and Prejudice*, providing both comedy and horror. Directed by Burr Steers, this movie adapts the original Austen plot, but in this version, England is occupied by zombies, which is why even the girls are armed. This world is different from the world of Austen. This time, another question

arises: Why remember the Austenian world via romance that includes a zombie invasion, which is a 20th-century monster? (Biajoli, 2016, p. 5):

> Two antithetical, distinctly marked, generally crystallized genres collide in pastiche - … the Austen canon vs. zombie canon… These texts both re-produce Austen as pastiche (*Pride and Prejudice*…) and at the same time re-situate and actualize Austen texts in a confrontational popular horror environment (… *and Zombies*). (Voigst-Virchow, 2012, p. 48)

Transformed into a place of zombie invasion; this time, conflicts arise because of zombie-human encounters. For instance, Darcy's stabbing of Wickham in the chest, thinking that he is not dead, is one of the examples. Thus, in this version of *Pride and Prejudice*, surviving in a world filled with zombies is the most important struggle, not the marriage issue for both men and women. Yet, there is a parallelism between zombie survival and coping with the strict rules of the Regency-era marriage market. The novel version begins similarly: "It's a truth universally acknowledged that a zombie in possession of brains must be in want of more brains" (Grahame-Smith, 2009, p. 7). By merging Regency-era romance features borrowed from Austen's original text and providing a popular, exciting form of horror movies about zombies, this movie turns out to be an extraordinary version of *Pride and Prejudice*. To minimise the gender boundaries of the romance genre by carrying the plot into a zombie threat, this version creates a male world, inserting action as well (Voigst-Virchow, 2012, p. 44). This version proves that Austen mash-ups are preferable for current spectators. It has become "a graphic novel as well as a computer game… .[it] made it to third place on the *New York Times* bestseller list and 27th place on amazon.co.uk's bestseller list" (p. 46). In this way, by blending several styles, genres, and/or mediums, the world Austen devises continues to be presented and fantasised.

Conclusion

The repulsion from certain societal restrictions of Regency or stereotypical gender roles creates a continuing attraction to Austenique Regency romances. This is why adaptations and appropriations achieved by deviations continue to be produced in large numbers and using varied methods. As Jim Collins (2013) has also asserted, Austen fans are involved in producing stories and creating a "transauthorial, transmedial and transnarrative universe" (p. 647), which proves how recent Austen adaptations have become transcoded versions of Austenmania. It is also observed that as a result of the

fans' conscious and continuous demands for Austenique in general, and *Pride and Prejudice* specifically, adaptations contribute to the new meaning creations of the classic text. This is achieved mostly through newly handled material concerning both the thematic and style-wise issues of the novel re-visited with spin-offs, sequels, or mash-ups that use different cultures and presentist perspectives and introduce different genres. As seen in the specific appropriations of *Pride and Prejudice* discussed in this article: "Bride" reinforces the idea of marriage in Indian culture, "land" is about the cultural commodity that people want to consume the Austenique, and the insertion of the "zombies" contributes to alternate worlds by mixing up genres. This shows the idea: 'It is a truth universally and timelessly shown that every modern spectator who desires to have some romantic involvements should be in want of a neo-adaptation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*'.

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The Fallen Adams: An Intertextual Analysis on *Frankenstein* and *Yaratılan*

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ABSTRACT

Frankenstein (1818), written by Mary Shelley, has been relentlessly adapted for all forms of art since it was written. One such form is a recent television drama series that has re-envisioned *Frankenstein* for a Turkish audiences. To this end, this paper examines an intertextual analysis of the dialogical relations between a literary text and its adaptation into a television series, with a focus on the fidelity approach in adaptation studies and the premise that all modifications are essentially rewritings in which the original content may be remade and recontextualized. Within this scope, the Turkish adaptation of Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) into a Netflix series as *Yaratılan (Created)* (2023) by Çağan Irmak is analysed to present to what extent the hypertext recalls and mirrors the hypotext, regarding the "fidelity criticism" in adaptation studies. Although the novel involves the societal, historical, and ideological issues of the 19th-century British culture, it is proper to claim that Irmak not only ingeniously conveys Shelley's messages to the 21st-century Turkish audiences but also provides new perspectives for a popular source material while being "faithful" to the novel.

Keywords: Dialogic Relations, *Frankenstein*, *Yaratılan*, Adaptation Studies, Intertextual Analysis

Introduction

Mary Shelley's gothic piece *Frankenstein* (1818) has been a rich source for artists, authors, and directors since it was written. A recent television drama series that reimagined Frankenstein for a Turkish audience is one example of this type. With an emphasis on the fidelity approach in adaptation studies and the idea that all changes are essentially rewritings in which the original content could be remade and recontextualized, this paper investigates an intertextual analysis of the dialogical relations between a literary text and its adaptation into a television series.

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In light of the "fidelity criticism" in adaptation studies, the Turkish adaptation of Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) into a Netflix series, *Yaratılan* (Created) (2023), by Çağan Irmak, is examined to show the degree to which the hypertext echoes and reflects the hypotext. It is appropriate to assert that Irmak not only cleverly adapts Shelley's messages to Turkish audiences in the twenty-first century but also offers fresh viewpoints for a well-known source material while remaining "faithful" to the novel, despite the fact that it deals with the societal, historical, and ideological issues of 19th-century British culture. In the analysis section of the study, the main focus is on how Irmak preserved the messages of the original text by appropriately reshaping them in the cultural, historical, and social contexts of the Ottoman-Turkish society.

Theoretical Background

Rooted in film analysis, adaptation studies involve recontextualized versions of prior texts to explore the dialogical relations between the source text and the new text. Adaptations could be found "on the television and movie screen, on the musical and dramatic stage, on the Internet, in novels and comic books" (Hutcheon, 2013, p. 2), and cinematic adaptations have provided audiences with visual representations of classics and well-known books (Corrigan, 2017). However, adaptation studies have enhanced debates on whether a literary piece is superior to its adjusted form or "a wilfully inferior form of cognition" (Newman, 1985, p. 129). However, whatever the discussions are based on, it should be noted that there is an intertextual relationship in literary adaptations and that literature and cinema have equal significance for audiences.

Derived from Bakhtin's concept of "dialogism," Julia Kristeva (1986) coined and defined the term "intertextuality" as "any text [that] is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (p. 37). Hence, intertextuality refers to "[A]ll possible relationships of a text with other texts" (Baldick, 1990, p. 112) or the transformation of new texts in accordance with prior texts (Fairclough, 1992). For Bakhtin (1981), words are in relationship with each other, and the fusion of words in a dialogue causes "dialogic intertextuality … [which] removes the hierarchical relationship between the source text and adaptation" (p. 279). Hence, embracing all cultural and artistic productions, including music, painting, sculpture, visual arts, mass media, architecture, and cinema, intertextual relations are accepted as "an attempt to understand literature and culture in general" (Allen, 2000, p. 174).

Similar to Kristeva, Robert Stam (2000) referred to Bakhtin's concept of "dialogism" and "dialogic intertextuality" in adaptation studies, advocating that an adaptation is not a mere imitation of a source text but rather a combination of all prior or other texts. Hutcheon (2013) also clarifies that adaptation is "not derivative—a work that is second without being secondary. It is its own palimpsestic thing" (p. 9). The adapted text is the extended or altered intent of the original source. Dialogic intertextuality, thus, eliminates the hierarchical positioning between the hypertext and the hypotext[1] and focuses on the similarities and differences between a source text and an adapted text. Similarly, Palmer (2017) asserts that film adaptations are samples of hypertexuality, which fuses a hypertext with a hypotext. Therefore, derived from Bakhtinian dialogism, this new approach to adaptation studies provides the belief that each adaptation is unique and should be evaluated separately from a source text.

According to Bazerman (2004), intertextuality is observed not only between written texts but also among all forms of art, and Andrew (1984) asserts that "adaptation is the appropriation of a meaning from a prior text" (p. 97). The original source (hypotext) is enriched with the involvement of the audience in this endless process:

> We read a novel through our introjected desires, hopes, and utopias, and as we read we fashion our own imaginary mise-en-scene of the novel on the private stages of our minds …we feel the loss of our own phantasmatic relation to the novel, with the result that the adaptation itself becomes a kind of 'bad object'. (Stam, 2000, pp. 54-55)

Through rewriting or reproducing a literary text, the reader/audience can become an active endeavour, and interpretation becomes a "growing, evolving, never-ending process" (Irwin, 2004, p. 232). Rather than eliminating the essential elements of the original text, adaptation disseminates a literary text through a transformative process (Ray, 2000, p. 45). Based on this perspective, adaptations renew and recreate what was initially developed within a different context, in addition to expanding and diversifying it.

This diversity in adaptation studies is interpreted and exemplified by Barthes (1977), who considered a literary work as "stereophony of echoes, citations, [and] references" (p. 160). The fidelity in adaptations is evaluated through a "compare and contrast"

1 The hypotext is the original/earlier text that serves as the source text, and the hypertext is a new text that derives from the hypotext (Brownen & Ringham, 2006, p. 100).

strategy (Kline, 1996); thus, adaptation involves the concept of intertextuality, which provides comparative studies among texts and films (Genette, 1997, p. 5). Therefore, films are resourceful for adaptation studies in retrospect as "[r]e-vision-the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction – is for us more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival" (Rich, 1972, p. 18). Nevertheless, the adapted version of a literary text might create frustration for the audience: "[a]daptation as a pale copy of the real thing is an entrenched belief prevalent in popular press reviews of film adaptations, where the final paragraphs almost always contain an obligatory return to the inevitable 'not as good as the book' conclusion" (Cartmell & Whelehan, 2007, p. 3).

The field of adaptation studies has enhanced debates and conflicting ideas in literary studies since its emergence in the late 1950s. Bryant (2013) clarifies adaptation as "an announced retelling of an originating text… transgression of the originating work… [and also] a liberation (pp. 48-49). While Stam (2005) used "reading, rewriting, critique, translation, transmutation, metamorphosis, recreation, transvocalization, resuscitation, transfiguration, actualization, transmodalization, signifying, performance, dialogization, cannibalization, reinvisioning, incarnation, reaccentuation" (p. 25) as synonyms for adaptation, Sanders (2006) listed its scope as "variation, version, interpretation, imitation, proximation, supplement, increment, improvisation, prequel, sequel, continuation, addition, paratext, hypertext, palimpsest, graft, rewriting, reworking, refashioning, re-vision, reevaluation" (p. 3). Similarly, Hutcheon (2013) explained adaptation as "repetition, but repetition without replication [and] an announced and extensive transposition of a particular work or works" (p. 7). Through adaptations, literature becomes accessible to larger groups, and as stated by Desmond and Hawkes (2006), "[T]he novel may help us understand the film more thoroughly, much as the film may help us understand the novel more fully and guide us to see the book in new ways" (p. 99).

There are distinctive categories and forms of literary adaptations, and Andrew (1984), for instance, categorised adaptation modes into three: "borrowing, intersection, and fidelity of transformation" (p. 98). Borrowing is "the most frequent mode of adaptation. Here the artist employs, more or less extensively, the material, idea, or form of an earlier, generally successful text..." (Andrew, 1984, p. 98). When "the uniqueness of the original text is preserved to such an extent that it is intentionally left unassimilated in adaptation" (Andrew, 1984, p. 99), it intersects. Finally, transformation occurs when "the skeleton of the original can, more or less thoroughly, become the skeleton of a film" (Andrew,

1984, p. 100), which preserves the "spirit" of the original work. In other words, although the content of a literary piece constitutes the skeleton of a film, sociological and historical varieties enhance the background of a movie.

Another film theorist, Geoffrey Wagner (1975), also groups adaptations into three categories: transposition, commentary, and analogy (p. 222). Transposition refers to a method "in which a novel is directly given on the screen, with the minimum of apparent interference …[while] commentary occurs where an original is taken and either purposely or inadvertently altered in some respect … [with] creative restoration [and through] analogy, the film becomes 'another work of art'" (Wagner, 1975, pp. 222-227). One of the main concerns in adaptation of fiction into screens is the "fidelity" (Hutcheon, 2013, p. 6) which "depends on a notion of the text as having and rendering up to the (intelligent) reader a single, correct 'meaning' which the filmmaker has either adhered to or in some sense violated or tempered with" (McFarlane, 1996, p. 8). For a considerable amount of time, the discussion surrounding literary adaptations to the big screen revolved around issues of source faithfulness and the preference for the literary versions over their film counterparts (Whelehan, 2006). The majority of adaptation theorists believed that adaptations lacked the symbolic depth and "spirit" of the original texts and that they were "minor," "subsidiary," "derivative," or "secondary" productions (Hutcheon, 2013, p. 10).

With the rise of adaptation studies in the late 1950s, the main criticism in adaptation studies was "fidelity criticism," which is considered to be "a critical tool to interrogate the relationship between an adaptation and its source text" (Bialkowski, 2001, p. 203) or to compare the hypotext with the hypertext. Numerous film critics consider adaptation as a threat to literature, claiming that "[T]he book is always better than the movie. A movie based on a literary source is often seen as a secondary work and consequently of secondary value" (Chair, 2006, p. 13). Hence, preserving "the spirit rather than the letter of the text" (Sinyard, 1986, p. x) prevents the adaptation to be "a second-hand product, a copy, an originless entity" (Kiraly, 2013, p. 179) because "...the literature comes first as source, the film comes later as derivation. The literature is regarded as the original (a supreme value in art), and the film is regarded as a copy" (Desmond & Hawkes, 2006, p. 41). Hence, regarding the fidelity of adaptations, the film has oddly been accepted as inferior to literature by certain film critics.

However, it is also essential to remember that a great adaptation is the one that succeeds in replacing the novel's memory with its visual representation (Ellis, 1982, p.

3). With this perspective, an adaptation, "like any translation, is a separate entity, with a life of its own ... a medium with a separate and independent life" (Chair, 2006, p. 97). A filmmaker who adapts a literary text creates an original text by adding new interpretations rather than copying the source text:

> ... it shouldn't be necessary ... to insist that fidelity to the original text ...is a wholly inappropriate and unhelpful criterion for either understanding and judgment. ... it is hard to suppress a sort of yearning for a faithful rendering of one's own vision of the literary text ... every reading of a literary text is [a] highly individual act of cognition and interpretation; that every such response involves a kind of personal adaptation on to the screen of one's imaginative faculty as one reads. (McFarlane, 1996, p. 15)

In other words, "[F]idelity to its source text—whether it is conceived as success in re-creating specific textual details or the effect of the whole-is a hopelessly fallacious measure of a given adaptation's value because it is unattainable, undesirable, and theoretically possible only in a trivial sense" (Leitch, 2003, p. 161).

As "adaptations are distinct from mere copies or reproductions, they must also be intentionally made to diverge from the source in crucial respects" (Livingston, 2010, p. 105), the audience is "interested in comparing their images with those created by the film-maker" (McFarlane, 1996, p. 7). In other words, the fidelity approach in film adaptations leads to a false comparison that could lead the audience/viewer to a persistent obsession with fidelity, leading to "false expectations about the film's intentions and form …judging it [the film] by the standards of the book" (Cardwell, 2007, p. 52). Thus, while some filmmakers respect the original work, many others tend to transform the source text into a different form.

In adaptation studies, film critics advocate that evolving from numerous analyses of literary texts to film adaptations, the adapted versions should be considered as distinct and individual representations. Both forms possess unique styles (Aras, 2017, p. 35) as interrelated subsets:

> For the reader, spectator, or listener, adaptation […] is unavoidably a kind of intertextuality if the receiver is acquainted with the adapted text. It is an ongoing dialogical process, as Mikhail Bakhtin would have said, in

> which we compare the work we already know with the one we are experiencing. (Hutcheon, 2013, p. 21)

From another perspective, adaptations can also be seen as "mutations" that help their "source novel 'survive'" (Stam, 2005, p. 3). However, at this point, cultural, historical, and social contexts should also be reconsidered. According to Scognamillo (1973), a film or a play can be rewritten or reproduced by adding local names and environments to recall or remind us of the source text, as seen in the adaptation of Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* (1818) into a series as *Yaratılan* (2023) by Çağan Irmak. Ultimately, this paper examines an intertextual investigation of the dialogical relations between a literary text and its adaptation into a television series, with a focus on the fidelity approach in adaptation studies and the premise that all modifications are essentially rewritings in which the original content may be remade and recontextualized. Within this scope, the Turkish adaptation of Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) into Çağan Irmak's *Yaratılan* (Created) (2023) streamed by Netflix was analysed to gauge the extent to which the hypertext recalls and mirrors the hypotext, regarding the "fidelity criticism" in adaptation studies. Although the novel involves the societal, historical, and ideological issues of nineteenth-century British culture, it would be proper to claim that Irmak not only ingeniously conveyed Shelley's messages to twenty-first-century Turkish audiences but also provided fresh insight into a popular source material while being "faithful" to the novel.

Recreating *Frankenstein*

Before scrutinising the intertextual and dialogic relationship between *Frankenstein* and *Yaratılan*, it would be proper to provide an overview of the historical periods and plots of the source text and its adapted version. Initiating the series with the statement "Inspired by Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein,*" Çağan Irmak informs and reminds the audience about the originality of his story within a Turkish context. *Yaratılan* narrates the story of Ziya, a doctor candidate in İstanbul during the last periods of the Ottoman Empire, when Turkish society witnessed the developments in both religious and positive sciences and the reforms brought with "Westernization" (Perin, 1946, pp. 56-7), when there was severe dualism, regarding science, religion, and values in the society (Özsoy, 2020, p. 252).

Derived from a novel, *Yaratılan* exhibits fidelity in adaptation in terms of the events, characters, settings, thematic and narrative persistence, and the messages of Shelley.

Shelley's novel begins when Captain Robert Walton meets Victor Frankenstein, who is in a pitiful circumstance, at the North Pole. On his deathbed, Victor narrates the whole story to Captain Walton; how Victor left his home in Geneva to pursue studies in chemistry and natural philosophy at the University of Ingolstadt; how he was fascinated with the mysteries of life, eternity, God, and the universe; how he developed an intimacy with his professor, who experimented with the "creation of a being;" and how his tragedy began after the creation of the monster. The novel ends with Victor's death, as the monster walks towards its own death to the north. A similar pattern is observed in the series: The series starts as İhsan carries Ziya to a distant snowy mountain and begs a group of treasure hunters to cure him. The story is told to the leader of the group by Ziya: how he left his home in Bursa[2] to study medicine; how he was impressed by his Professor İhsan who experimented with the "creation" of a (human) being; how Ziya convinced İhsan to pursue the experiments; and how his tragedy began with the recreation of İhsan. *Yaratılan* ends as Ziya and İhsan die together on the ice.

In *Yaratılan*, the setting is between Bursa and İstanbul during the nineteenth century, during the last periods of the Ottoman Empire, recalling the Enlightenment period, reflected in *Frankenstein*. Shelley's novel questions the impacts of the collision caused by the Enlightenment period and "gives vivid expression to what many regard as the evils of modern science-dehumanizing, destructive, mechanistic, malevolent-a monstrous, masculine birth of the male mind" (Hutton, 2011, p. 17). Shelley's critique of the conflict between science and religion, rooted by the clash between the ideals of Romanticism and the Enlightenment period, is rewritten as a critique of the "false modernization" during the last phase of the Ottoman Empire. Victor is fascinated with the ideas of his professor, Mr. Waldman, who is obsessed with "the elixir of life" (Shelley, 1993, p. 45) and desires to "pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers, and unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation" (Shelley, 1993, p. 46).

Fidelity to the original text can be observed in the character depiction in the series *Yaratılan* as "characters are crucial to the rhetorical and aesthetic effects of both narrative and performance texts because they engage receivers' imaginations through […] recognition, alignment, and allegiance" (Smith, 1995, pp. 4-6). Both Victor and Ziya are curious and in search of eternal life by challenging God and Nature. While in the novel,

2 Bursa was the capital of the Ottoman Empire, and the first university İznik Orhaniye was established in 1335. The city contributed to the cultural, historical, religious, and educational areas of the Empire until İstanbul was conquered. In the series, the story is narrated in Bursa, where modernization and Westernization initiated.

the monster has no name, in the series, the recreated being is İhsan, reminiscent of the word "insan," which means "human" in Turkish (Karadağ, 2003).

The series artistically provides the audience with the messages conveyed in Shelley's novel. First, the constructed motif in the novel, "science clashing with religion/Nature/God," is rewritten as the dualism between science and religion in many scenes in *Yaratılan*: "What you call science is beautiful, but it is a monster at the bottom of the well of ghouls[3] (Irmak, Episode 2, Track 11). Similarly, Mr Krempe, the college professor in the series, reminds the students about the superiority of God over science:

> Professor: Man proposes and God disposes. You must accept death and know that we are helpless against it. We should not change what has existed since Ibn Sina.
> Ziya: Why not pursue solutions? Islam encourages research on treatment, so we should look for a cure[4]. (Irmak, Episode 2, Track 41)

Second, in many scenes, "man's desire for the unknown" strengthens Shelley's message regarding the clash between science and Nature/God. Victor's hunger for uncovering "the elixir of life" (Shelley, 1993, p. 36) symbolizes his desire to be immortal (Thornburg, 1984), as he confesses at the beginning of the novel:

> My temper was sometimes violent, and my passions were vehement; but by some law in my temperature, they were turned not towards childish pursuits but to an eager desire to learn, and not to learn all things indiscriminately. I confess that neither the structure of languages nor the code of governments nor the politics of various states possessed attractions for me. (Shelley, 1993, p. 32)

Similarly, Ziya's obsession with the unknown and immortality is triggered after reading his father's forbidden book *Kitab-ı Kıyam* (Book of Doomsday) and losing his mother to the plague. Consequently, the scene depicting Ziya's tendency to persuade İhsan for experimentation recalls Victor's desire for immortality:

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3 "İlim dediğin güzel ama ucu gayya kuyusunun dibinde bir canavar".

4 Profesör: Tedbir elden, takdir Allah'tan. Ölümü kabul etmelisiniz ve karşısında çaresiz olduğumuzu bilmelisiniz. İbni-i Sina'dan beri var olanın üstüne koymamalıyız.
Ziya: Neden çarelerin peşine düşmeyelim? İslam'da hastalıkların araştırılması konusunda teşvik vardır. Allah derdi ve dermanı birlikte verir, o halde dermanı arayalım.

> Let everyone remember us, let no one forget us. I did not come here to be thankful for the thrown bone. I did not come to be a doctor and a coward like my father. One must have an adventure in this life. One should not say goodbye and die; in fact, people should not die[5]. (Irmak, Episode 3, Track 20)

Although it is argued that "adaptation is repetition…but repetition without replication" (Hutcheon, 2013, p. 7), it is highly crucial for the reproduction's fidelity to involve the cultural context in which it is created: "Stories do get retold in different ways in new material and cultural environments; […] they adapt to those environments by virtue of mutation – […] in their adaptations. And the fittest do more than survive; they flourish" (Hutcheon, 2013, p. 32). The creation scene, for instance, differs in the series and lacks the act of "creation," instead, Ziya does not create a living being. While Victor steals the body parts of the dead people on the streets and uses the brain of Professor Waldman to place "the best quality of brain" for his creature, Ziya revives İhsan, whose body and face are burnt in the fire during the experiment.

Furthermore, the series is clearly preconditioned by the emphasized motif of the "clash between nature and nurture," which is foregrounded by Shelley in the novel. Both the monster in *Frankenstein* and İhsan in *Yaratılan* are abandoned by their creators and humiliated by the people. As the monster helps the farmers, İhsan aids the woman who is blind and her pregnant granddaughter Esma while hiding in their cottage. However, the reasons for the deeds of İhsan and the creature are both society and Ziya and Victor. After being refused by his "god," the monster seeks retribution: "I vowed eternal hatred and vengeance to all mankind" (Shelley, 1993, p. 169); "revenge kept me alive; I dared not die and leave my adversary in being" (Shelley, 1993, p. 249) and "I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend. "Make me happy, and I shall again be virtuous" (Shelley, 1993, p. 114). When, in *Yaratılan*, İhsan kidnaps Ziya on his wedding night and forces him to return Esma back to life: "You will either rebuild the machine, or dig graves for both of you"[6] (Irmak, Episode 8, Track 10).

What is more, Irmak presents the meeting scene of the created and its creator in *Yaratılan* reminds the viewers of the dangers of human ambition in such an efficient

5 "Herkes bizi hatırlasın, hiç kimse bizi unutmasın. Ben önüme atılan kemiğe şükretmeye gelmedim. Babam gibi hem hekim olup hem de korkak olmaya gelmedim. İnsanın bir macerası olmalı bu hayatta. Eyvallah deyip ölmemeli, hatta insan ölmemeli" (Irmak, Episode 3, Track 20).

6 "Ya makinayı yeniden yaparsın, ya da ikinize birden mezar kazarsın".

way that he creates a dialogical relation with the original text: "Instead of protecting, preserving, re-teaching, you chose to consume and throw away"[7] (Irmak, Episode 8, Track 19). Both İhsan and the monster are fallen beings, or rather fallen Adams. They are the products of human ambition, science, and consumption during nineteenth-century industrialization. In the confrontation scene in *Frankenstein*, the monster outrages as follows:

> Remember that I am thy creature; I ought to be thy Adam, but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed. Everywhere I see bliss, from which I alone am irrevocably excluded…I remembered Adam's supplication to his Creator. But where was mine? He had abandoned me, and in the bitterness of my heart I cursed him. (Shelley, 1993, p. 156)

İhsan, similar to Shelley's monster, is indignant because Ziya has left him alone in the world: "You have satisfied your desire to discover, your pride, your hunger to be a creator. You didn't want a barren land like mine when there were hundreds of places to explore. I was left alone, lonely, lonely"[8] (Irmak, Episode 8, Track 20). To emphasize how the ambition of humankind destroys Nature and life created by God, the series once again encompasses the concept of consumerism and the consumption of the modern individual.

In brief, there are three striking differences between Shelley's novel and Irmak's series: while İhsan has the chance to have a family with Esma, the monster in *Frankenstein* is all alone throughout the end and Shelley's novel ends as Victor dies and the monster fades away on a snowy mountain, whereas the series ends as İhsan and Ziya die together on the mountain.

Conclusion

All in all, two centuries after its publication, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* abstains from the contextual relation with its adapted version for a Turkish audience. Çağan Irmak presents the devastating impacts of industrialization and science. Whether directly or indirectly, Shelley's motifs, such as the clash between science and religion, man's desire

7 "Korumak, kollamak, yeniden öğretmek yerine tüketip atıp gitmeyi tercih ettin".

8 "Keşfetme arzunu, kibrini, yaradan olma açlığını doyurdum. Keşfedilecek yüzlerce yer varken, benim gibi çorak bir toprağı istemedin. Tek başına, kimsesiz, yapayalnız kaldım".

for the unknown and nature and nurture, are skilfully modified and adapted to *Yaratılan*, which instigates the survival of its source content. Although they resonate through repetition, these versions take on a distinctive quality that makes them seem "new" and "Turkish". Based on this analysis, it would not be wrong to claim that while presenting a proper example of the "fidelity of adaptation," Irmak ingeniously conveyed Shelley's messages to the twenty-first century Turkish audience. Although created and produced for different cultures, İhsan and the monster are the fallen Adams of the 19th century because they are the products of science and human ambition to challenge God.

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"Revenge is never a straight Line:" Whitewashing Blackness, Blaxploitation and the Development of White Imagery in Tarantino's *Django Unchained*

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ABSTRACT

Despite its release dates back to 2012, Tarantino's *Django Unchained* remains one of the most visual and memorable cinematic representations of slavery in American cinema. The film's release inaugurated a long narrative cycle in Hollywood of bold portrayals of slavery on the big screen. However, Tarantino's revisionist depiction of chattel slavery has generated a debate that is still open about the trouble for a white filmmaker to "revise" one of the darkest pages of American history infusing it with outlandish humor. The essay undertakes an analysis of how, beneath *Django Unchained*'s apparent depiction of black empowerment, Tarantino constructs an interplay between slave heroism and revenge, developing a form of "blaxploitation" through "white" revenge fantasies. In so doing, Tarantino creates a cinematic circularity that departs from the Spaghetti Western genre, develops the image of a black hero, ultimately creating a cinematic circularity that culminates in an aesthetic representation of vengeance that reclaims the memory of slavery and uses African American cultural history as a cinematic tool to offer a white perspective on chattel slavery. As such, the ultimate aim of this contribution is to shed light on how Tarantino's whitewashes slave rebellion.

Keywords: Tarantino, *Django Unchained*, blaxploitation, race, revenge

Introduction

The release of *Django Unchained* (2012), written and directed by the oft-contested Quentin Tarantino, triggered a widespread debate about a white director's improper misuse of the memory of slavery. The sharp critiques from filmmakers, among whom Spike Lee, were clear: "American Slavery is not a Sergio Leone Spaghetti Western," and

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Tarantino's representation of the slave past was disrespectful to American history.[1] Despite all odds, among filmic depictions of slavery, *Django Unchained* is also remembered for being "Tarantino's highest movie-grossing to date" (Knauer, 2023, p. 104).[2] As known, Tarantino's cinema, which has proven to be contentious to the public and critics, has always been a convoluted spinning of quotations, intertextual references, and inventions that irretrievably changed the logics of cinema as Tarantino's films became popular for their humorous reversal of conventions. Yet, when fantasy intersects with history, as exemplified in *Django Unchained*, the portrayal of a sensitive subject such as slavery in an ironic and deeply personal manner, weaving together the Western genre with the historical context, becomes somewhat problematic. As Joi Carr has noted:

> When filmmakers create a film steeped in history, they do so knowing that negotiating spectators' complex attitudes related to particular events and time periods can be a daunting task. Yet, Oscar award-winning writer and director, Quentin Tarantino seems to have welcomed the challenge and strategically approached Django. He considered carefully his choice to use elements of historical realism while simultaneously subverting that reality with fantasy elements from the western genre for a greater purpose: one that involves critiquing black masculinity and classical Hollywood black cinematic stereotypes. Tarantino's success in this endeavor is up for close scrutiny. (Carr, 2016, p. 37)

Despite its release dates back to 2012, *Django Unchained* is not only regarded as one of Tarantino's best productions, but the film inaugurated a long narrative cycle in Hollywood cinema depicting the brutality of slavery, and its representation that, even today, seems not to rest. Without a doubt, *Django Unchained* is the most visual and successful depiction of slavery in cinematic history and popular culture after the success of the 1970s television miniseries, *Roots* (1977). Tarantino's film is replete with visual images that epitomize the visuality of America's slave past; the kneeling slave, slaves shackled together marching barefoot, the savage whip marks on the slave's back that Tarantino chooses as one of the

1 This is not the first time Spike Lee has lashed out at Tarantino. Upon the release of Jackie Brown, Lee condemned Tarantino for his misuse of the n Word, used as many as 38 times in the film by Tarantino.

2 In 2015, DC Comics published the graphic novel *Django/Zorro*. As Enrico Botta recently observed, although secondary within Tarantino's canon, it constitutes a significant of his output in that it connects the events of Django with those of *The Hateful Eight*. In the graphic novel, "a Mexican and an African American struggle together to dismantle forms of oppression of slavery, and, in the scene where Django disguises himself as Zorro, they merge and confuse to redefine the national paradigms of that American mythopoesis that Tarantino is recomposing also with *Django Unchained and The Hateful Eight*" (Botta, 2024, pp. 118-119).

first images in the opening sequence, are only some of the many photographic examples the American director uses to recall the visual history of slavery.

Additionally, Tarantino's fixation with black skin is a recurrent visual motif of the film; from the opening sequence shot with the close-up of the chains on the slaves' ankles, through the scars on Django's back, to the lacerated skin of Django's wife, Hildi. In a very recent essay, Serena Fusco has argued that if violence remains one of the most debated issues in Tarantino cinema, *Django Unchained* is arguably one of those films that intensifies the visibility of the body as a surface on which a mark and a signifier are imprinted— albeit painfully—and must be connected to a meaning. Indeed, the initial scene of *Django Unchained* depicts scars on the backs of slaves as they walk in a Chain Gang. In addition, as the story unfolds, we discover that after an escape attempt, Django and his wife are marked with the "r" for runaway on their faces (Fusco, 2024, pp. 26-27).[3]

For these reasons, despite an undisputed and evident difficulty, there is always a need to reconsider *Django Unchained* and constantly reread it from new perspectives. Nonetheless, the film is not only problematic because of its personal and original manipulation of the memory of chattel slavery—an uncovered wound in American history— but it is also equivocal because of its genre classification: it is rather difficult to say whether it is a Spaghetti Western, a slave narrative, or if it can be seen from a racial perspective. In this contribution, I aim to read the film through the lens of character development across Tarantino's a-historicist and fantastical lines, trying to understand how, albeit with certain perplexities, the director constructed an interplay between slave heroism and revenge developing a form of "blaxploitation" through a "white" revenge fantasy.

As recent criticism maintains, "*Django Unchained* was inspired by Blaxploitation films like *The Legend of N **** r Charley* (1972), starring Fred Williamson, that was, according to Eric Benson, the 'only slavery film before *Django Unchained* that told a story of Black-male empowerment' (2013), and *Mandingo* (1975), as well as the Spaghetti Westerns of Italian film director Sergio Corbucci, whose oeuvre includes *Django* (1966), starring Franco Nero, who has a cameo in Tarantino's film" (Knauer, 2023, p. 110). Thus, in the American film industry, the emergence of movies with an African American hero

3 The visibility of violence imprinted on the body is present in other Tarantino films such as *Inglorious Basterds* (2009) and *Kill Bill: Volume 1* (2003).

at its core was somewhat problematic, as before the 1960s, black filmmakers lacked cinematic approval and financial support.

Discussing the first representations of blackness in Hollywood cinema, film critics have recurrently explained how images of black characters in movies in the past "have offered preconceived identities that are easy for white folks to understand and accept, even though these identities created a deeper marginalization of African Americans" (Navarro, 2013, p. 1391). On the other hand, films tackling the black experience were quite difficult for white Americans to such an extent that films centered on black characters by African American filmmakers were downgraded as independent movies until, after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, this genre of cinema took its course as anti-mainstream products became to be known as "Blaxploitation films." Tarantino's textual allusions to this film genre are evident in *Django Unchained*; the empowerment of the black character and the construction of black masculinity, are two important features of blaxploitation productions.

Nonetheless, Django's extreme individualism, as we shall see, divorces the character from the traditional heroes of blaxploitation films. For this reason, according to Johannes Fehrle, "Tarantino's use and abuse of African American disenfranchisement both in history and on screen, puts *Django Unchained* in a position of Neo-Blaxploitation" (2013, p. 2). Hence, it is important to recall that classic mainstream Western films treated the figure of the cowboy from a colorblind perspective. Indeed, when the Western became popular worldwide, the African American presence was erased from the genre that did not feature black characters offering an image of an "all-white" West. If we consider that black actors began to appear in mainstream westerns only in the 1960s and 1970s, during the height of the blaxploitation era, Tarantino anti-color blind approach and update of the Blaxploitation tradition was certainly innovative.

That said, in the forthcoming analysis, I will undertake an examination of *Django Unchained*, illustrating how Tarantino draws from blaxploitation films to appropriate black history and interweave it into the Western genre. In my view, this culminates in a cinematic narrative of vengeance that reclaims the memory of slavery and utilizes African American cultural history as a cinematic tool to present a perspective on chattel slavery from a white standpoint. Although with *Django Unchained* Tarantino blends the African American question into the Western, the construction of the black hero turns into a whitewashing exploration of the slave past. The apparent unoriginality of

Tarantino's plot is the result of a careful meta-film operation, of strategic and skillful reuse of certain themes (among whom slavery, revenge, bounty hunters, and so on) and their translation from the glorious Western cinema (or 70s spaghetti Westerns). On closer examination, the plot is filled with archetypes typical of the Western genre: the main hero gets revenge, the maiden is rescued, and love is denied. Indeed, as recent criticism emphasized, "Tarantino invented the name of a genre for this film. He calls it a Southern, a Western set in the South. His goal was not to accurately portray slavery but rather to be anti-historical. Django, "a Black Terminator" is sent back to correct the cinematic wrongs of Hollywood past" (Knauer, 2023, p. 112).

Despite the director's audacious foray into the Spaghetti Western, *Django Unchained* is a vivid cinematic tableau of revenge, redemption, and the unflinching, though questionable, portrayal of America's past of chattel slavery. Yet, before proceeding, a premise needs to be made. Very little is needed to characterize a Western movie: a small town in the Old West, the duel usually of two characters facing each other, men riding horses on expansive landscapes. However, it should also be noted that although it portrays a great American myth, the Western genre is among the most revisionist. In general, the Western has been often considered as a mythical reworking of historical materials that make it particularly difficult to identify the liminal boundary between fiction and reality. Nevertheless, the novelty, in the case of *Django Unchained*, is the interest in representing slavery and the racial question as it unfolds through the Western setting.

From its earlier days, Hollywood has been consistently akin to addressing the question of slavery on the big screen. However, for the most part, the first films depicted enslavement in a manner that reflected society's view of the issue at the time; or rather, according to the vision that white society had or wanted to give through the motion picture. The first visual representations of the pre-Civil War moment, such as Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915)[4] and *Gone with the Wind* (1939), showed slavery as a rather "civilized" and somehow benign institution portraying blacks either as prone to criminality, as Griffith's myth of the black as rapist confirms; or as relatively happy and loyal servants, which is the case of *Gone with the Wind*, through figures such as the memorable "Mammy." Indeed, both films have perpetuated strong historical inaccuracies

4 *Django Unchained* has been often compared to Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915), from which, by the way, Tarantino took inspiration for *Django* in the parodic scene depicting the Ku Klux Klan.

that even today generate problems regarding the representation of race in these films.[5] Yet, decades after these early productions, as American society has unquestionably changed its approach to the racial question, portrayals of slavery in movies developed far more realistic, demonstrating Hollywood's increasing concern for representations that did not fail to ignore the brutality of the slave system. If the American motion picture industry has recently confirmed a growing interest in the depiction of America's slave past (as films such as *12 Years a slave* (2014), *Birth of a Nation* (2016), *Harriet* (2019), *The Underground Railroad* (2021), confirm), *Django Unchained* deserves a discourse of its own for Tarantino's highly unusual reinterpretation of American history.

Commenting on the historical quality of the film Tarantino said: "When slave narratives are done on film, they tend to be historical with a capital H, with an arms-length quality to them. I wanted to break that rock through that glass and shatter it for all times, and take you into it" (Tarantino 2012). Not surprisingly, recent criticism commented on the "a-historical quality" of Tarantino's film (Knauer x, 2023). According to Adilifu Nama, "Race-message movies," such is the case of *Django Unchained*, "express strong assimilationist impulses that end with lasting images of triumphant black achievement in the face of white racism" (Nama, 2015, p. 112). As such, *Django Unchained* compels inclusion in anti-slavery films and stands as a paradigmatic film for mythologizing slavery from a contemporary perspective, setting Tarantino's Western/black epic as a Blaxploitation movie.

To this end, Tarantino declared that his primary motivation for making the film "was to give black American males a Western hero, to give them a cool folkloric hero that could actually pay back blood for blood" (Tarantino in Vogel, 2018, p. 20). For Joseph Vogel, this statement is indeed perplexing as it takes for granted that "black men *needed* and *wanted* a cool 'Western' slave hero" (Vogel, 2018, p. 17). Overall, however, in *Django Unchained*, Tarantino offers the image of a reversed logic of blackness and slavery: slaves are empowered and the whites are destroyed. With a gripping narrative, the film offers a reversal of victims and perpetrators. Nevertheless, critics have also disapproved Tarantino's depiction of white men as evil, a sinfulness which is too oversimplified and diminishes the fact that blackness wins for the sake of a white rescuer (Dr. Schulz, as I will later discuss), who is responsible for the liberation of the black hero (Navarro, 2013, p. 1387).

5 In 2020, HBO Max removed *Gone with the Wind* from its catalog. The 1939 film, long celebrated as a pinnacle of American cinema, has drawn criticism for glorifying the pre-Civil War South while minimizing its history of racial injustices.

As the narrative unfolds, the viewer is exposed to a revisionist image of slavery in which a black slave is the agent of his future. If then, some film critics have praised Tarantino for his ability to propose a skillful and well-executed Hollywoodian retelling of African American history, others have criticized the premise of the film: a *white* director's appropriation of the black past. Indeed, the misuse of slave history by white authors and directors has always been a subject of controversy in the United States. It is worth mentioning a case similar to Tarantino's, that of white writer James Styron who, in *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (1967), decided to fictionalize the story of the famous rebellion headed by the black slave Nat Turner. Styron's goal, as with Tarantino, was to offer a white revisionist view by telling the story of a black hero from a white perspective. Yet, as Jelani Cobb maintains, in Tarantino's case, "There are risks implicit in doing this with a film about slavery that isn't nearly as significant in toying with the history of the West. The history of the West is settled in ways that are not the case for the history of the American South and slavery" (*New Yorker* 2013).

Whitewashing Blackness: Slavery Portrayal and Tarantino's White Emphasis

When analyzing *Django Unchained*, it is important to consider that Tarantino tried to portray an African American hero who ultimately assimilates "white" features. Alternative readings of the movie suggest how Tarantino's highly contrived film gestures offer "a new *white* construct of 'blackness,' for retributive catharsis, and reiteration of blaxploitation" (Carr, 2016, p. 42). From the very beginning, when Django (Jamie Foxx) frees himself from slave status and becomes a bounty hunter by joining Dr. Shultz (Christoph Waltz), Tarantino elaborates the journey of growth and realization of an outwardly black hero who on horseback—as he is portrayed for much of the film—encompasses the spirit of black empowerment and racial emancipation.

But if, as said, for white American directors, authors and artists, engaging with blackness has always been extremely perilous, Tarantino departs from the construction of the mythical hero or anti-hero, Django, to develop a revenge fantasy that although it offers an emancipated vision of the African American protagonist, retains traits of white revisionism. According to Marta Cafiso, "Setting the story and the journey of growth and fulfillment of the black hero Django in an antebellum South marked by the curse of slavery, Tarantino makes explicit his intent to redeem the African American element within a traditionally xenophobic mythopoetic representation" (Cafiso, 2018,

p. 122). In effect, Tarantino's construction of the black hero lies deep within the Nordic epic, and the myth of Wagner's Sigfried the director transports to the American South in 1858. However, as we soon understand, Django is neither of noble birth nor a man of Caucasian race, tall and with sinuous blond hair as Siegfried has always been portrayed instead. Unlike the paladin of the German epic, already endowed with all the physical characteristics of the classical/traditional hero (Cafiso, p. 123), Django is "whitened" by becoming the Sigfried of American slavery. To this end, Django is a whitewashed *black* Siegfried, who goes to slay the fierce dragon (slavery), to free his *black* Brunhilde (his wife Hildi).[6]

In this sense, if in the legend the traditional hero Siegfried is the exact opposite of Django, Tarantino's protagonist is a kind of anti-hero, or rather, a character who has been intentionally whitewashed. Scholars extensively suggested that, the Nordic epic can thus be thought of as a narrative device used to represent the evolution of the black protagonist from his condition of enslavement to that of an epic leading character ready to enter the myth. The comparison with Siegfried makes Django fully aware of being that black doomed to fight against his own dragon to save his beloved Broomhilda and finally recognize himself as a free man (Cafiso, p. 123).

While Tarantino chooses Django as his hero in the film, at the same time the director gives him many attributes of whiteness, beginning with the association with the Caucasian hero inscribed in the German tradition. Additionally, Dr. King Shultz's aristocratic flare—a character who is funny, cunning, refined, sentimental—instructs the black slave Django, who from the beginning of the film retains all the characteristics of an enslaved person. In the very first sequence, Django is in chains and on the body bears the marks of the whippings. However, Dr. Schultz teaches Django how to shoot, dress, and talk. In other words, he teaches him to behave like a white man. After the opening sequence, as the story proceeds, Django immediately acquires white privilege: he rides his horse and enjoys beer in a salon, arousing the outrage of those who are not used to seeing black people behaving like the whites. Indeed, as Django takes the first tentative steps toward his freedom path, Dr. Schultz seems to be figured as an enabling *white* savior (Dunham, 2016, p. 408). In an interpretative approach, Dr. Schultz plays a significant role in constructing Tarantino's black hero. Django's emancipation

6 For a through discussion of the presence of the German myth in Django Unchained see M. Cafiso. (2018). *Myth in Black: Revisionismo ed Epica in Django Unchained* [*Myth in Black: Epic and Revisionism in Django Unchained*], *Iperstoria* 11, 122-26.

from slavery cannot be considered separately from the role of this white character who, among the many white characters in the film, is distinctive for being the only positive white figure. As such, the white man and the African American slave—though with different ends—struggle together to strongly dismantle oppression and slavery, and "the characters merge and blur to redefine the national paradigms of that American mythopoesis that Tarantino develops in *Django Unchained*" (Botta, 2024, p. 122).

By subordinating the African American characters of *Django Unchained* to the white savior, the white representation of the black hero is reconfirmed by Tarantino's scene when Django is given freedom to choose how to dress and his choice of wearing fancy colorful clothes (a blue suit that marks Django's transformation from a lowly slave into a princely hero[7]), causes considerable scandal among white characters becoming one of the film's most ironic moments. In this moment, Django's outfit is one of the most stylist ruptures from traditional history. Following this narrative trajectory, Tarantino shows how despite his former condition, in the film the black hero appropriates amenities for whites only. Despite being a well-rounded or nearly so black character, Django is consistently granted white privilege. This reading implies how Tarantino offers a renewed masculinity placing the black hero against the traditional white Western hero, making him to behave like a white character. Django is, indeed, a fictional slave. As critics suggested, "He is the discursive embodiment of what Tarantino imagines the black male slave (at least the 'special' black male slave) to be" (Vogel, 2018, p. 23). For Harrington "Tarantino's black hero defiantly rebrands the traditionally *white* western protagonist,[8] disrupting a section of Hollywood history that not only excluded African Americans, but actively dehumanized them in subordinated roles" (Harrington, 2016, p. 84).

The second aspect that needs to be considered is the question of revenge and its accomplishment through the black hero as depicted according to the abovementioned parameters. The phrase on the film poster read: "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of vengeance." Echoing the *Declaration of Independence* ("Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness"), *Django Unchained*'s movie playbill already suggested how Tarantino's film is first and foremost a story of vengeance, an entirely American revenge. Serena Fusco argued that the theme of revenge seems so inherent in Tarantino's cinema that we are led to see it in every fold of the his films and as the driving force of the plot (Fusco,

7 Tarantino's choice of the blue suit is said to be an allusion to Thomas Gainsborough's 1779 painting "The Blue Boy," a full-length oil portrait of a wealthy merchant's son.

8 Emphasis mine.

2015, p. 71). In *Django*'s case, however, revenge entrenches with violence (as in the majority of Tarantino's works), and in this case the film illustrates a form of vengeful violence. In this case, Tarantino develops two types of violence: the first lies in the vicious representation of the slave system, which is realistic and terrifying as much as it is explicit, whereas the second is the revengeful violence retained by the black hero against the whites.

Additionally, if revenge has been the main focus of Tarantino's career (from *Pulp Fiction* to *Kill Bill*- just to mention two of the most evident examples), in *Django Unchained* revenge is only achievable on account of the white bounty hunter, Dr. King Schultz, who frees Django and initiates him into possible revenge. Although in the film, vengeance is fundamentally associated with the African American hero, it is the good white savior, King Schultz, who frees Django and allows the hero to achieve his dream of revenge against slavery. The narrative of Django and the portrayal of the black hero are not derived from the black character but from the actions of the white character, Schultz, who is the architect of the whole plan and provides the impetus for Django to enact his revenge. From the very first scene, Django is presented to us as the equal of all other slaves, and given his condition, there is nothing to suggest that he wants to rebel against his bondage: no yearning for revolt, no form of minimal rebellion, or movement toward a goal.

The figure of the white Dr. Schultz is decisive both for the narrative course of the film, he will be the one to determine the events that follow, and he initiates the construction and revenge project of the Tartinian hero. As such, upon closer inspection, *Django Unchained* features two parallel storylines: that of Dr. King Schultz, who uses Django to find the Brittle brothers, and that of Django who exploits the doctor's liberation to get revenge and reach his beloved wife. However, Schultz's plot is the most significant and it is the only one from which the narrative develops. After the opening sequence, Django becomes a creature of Dr. Schultz, as his attire confirms; we meet him covered in rags and find him shortly afterwards fully dressed in an utterly comic electric blue suit. On closer inspection one can notice how the protagonists are actually two: first Schultz as the factual driving force of the story, and second Django who becomes the true protagonist only in the final part of the film dedicated to his revenge. Through Tarantino's black and white protagonist duo revenge, Django's evolution toward heroism is conceivable thanks to the presence of Schultz and his teachings; it is the doctor who makes the black slave the undisputed symbol of the

redemption of the oppressed, just as Schultz's death will be functional to Django's ultimate character evolution. All such attributions suggest how, in effect, Tarantino's black hero is, quite evidently, a creation of the white character/bounty hunter. At its core, Tarantino's picture shows the progression toward black activism unleashed only through the intervention of a white savior.

In addition, Dr. Schultz is the only positive white character in the story, white but not American—as he is of German descent—and almost oblivious to the brutality of slavery, as Django recalls, "Naw, he just ain't use to seein' a man ripped apart by dogs, he's all... him bein' German an' all, I'm a little more use to American's then he is". The criticism Tarantino received from African American audiences also depends on this choice, *Django Unchained* is undoubtedly a film about African American heroism, but as it is constructed, the narrative seems to align itself with those movies where there is always a need for making the white savior the respectable protagonist. In *Django Unchained*, it is the white character who sets the mechanism of black violence in motion, and indeed as Stefano Rosso reminds us, Dr. King Schultz is the only positive and clever *white* character of the entire film (2013, p. 2). In *Django*'s case, the *deux ex machina* is the white bounty hunter then followed by a heroic black slave who sets the liberation machine in motion, but then the machine proceeds on its own, and Django gets control of his actions and destiny. The outcome of this emancipation and its success is also confirmed by the conclusion when Django is framed from behind as the plantation burns down, reconfirming the triumph of the black hero's final revenge plan.

The last aspect on which it is deemed important to dwell upon is Tarantino's conception of blackness through blaxploitation lens. As said, *Django Unchained* is a black revenge tale and a Spaghetti Western, set in the pre-Civil War slavery. Though at first glance, Django represents the emancipated African American hero rebelling against oppression, the ironic and stereotypical image the white director presents can be perceived as somewhat racist. Critics agreed on how in Tarantino's film,

> It is his [Tarantino's] exploitation of race, and particularly African American culture, however, that is a problem. It is problematic because it falls in line with a long tradition of white men profiting from exploiting black culture […] Despite his incredible gift to creatively connect these disparate strains of African American culture into a potentially progressive collage, it cannot be ignored that Tarantino is using this culture as a provocative tool, without

> any personal stake in its use, so that its primary purpose is titillation. (Harrington, 2016, p. 84)

While also through a sometimes exaggerated use of violence, Tarantino seems to take the slave issue seriously—at least in the representation of its brutality—even though at the same time racial prejudice in the film is entirely dominated by an overtly comic register. It is undeniable that the ironic scenes in the film are quite numerous, not only concerning the African-American question. One of these moments occurs with the attack by racist, hooded white horsemen forerunners of the Ku Klux Klan against the two protagonists: the attack fails miserably because of the impracticality of the hoods the attackers are supposed to wear on their heads as a trademark of their devastating action.[9] This scene, which provides some comic relief, is followed by numerous other controversies and Tarantino's racial choices. Clearly, then, Django is not the only the slave to whom Tarantino gives space. Upon arriving at the plantation of ruthless white landowner Calvin Candie (Leonardo Di Caprio), Django and Dr. Schultz run into Stephen (Samuel L. Jackson), a loyal and faithful house slave. As Tarantino introduces the character, it seems that Stephen is the memorable example of an Uncle Tom who seemingly has no qualms in betraying his slave master. However, beneath the slave's feeble mannerism lies the personality of the second antagonist of the story. The servant leader is a black man who despises blacks, feels second only to his master, and proves more ruthless than Candie using his loyalty as a weapon of perverse power. "Snowball" Stephen, as Django nicknames him, is black but more fearsome than his white master. He will eventually be the one to discover Django and Dr. Schulz's plan as he will eventually sit in Candie's armchair holding a glass of whiskey sharing his suspicion of Django almost as if for a moment there was a narrative reversal and Stephen was the owner of Candyland.

Nevertheless, Tarantino's choice of making Stephen the anti-black character further complicates the white director's perception and representation of race. Indeed, besides Django, Stephen has more screen time than any other character, which confirms his narrative importance. However, film critics felt compelled to ask: why if *Django Unchained* is a film about black emancipation and slave heroism, did Tarantino felt the need to give so much space to this black character as the most significant enemy of slave

9 Tarantino's story takes place in 1858, before the Civil War, at the height of the slave regime, while the KKK was born after the war, to "put former slaves now free, too free, back in their place" by terror. The ride of the hooded men is a parody of the famous "Here come our people" in Griffith's "The Birth of a Nation". A scene that in Griffith is ignobly heroic and here becomes comically and ignobly disastrous.

rebellion and as the character who more than his white landowner tries to put an end to Django's plan? For Adilifu Nama, "When Stephen and Django occupy the same cinematic frame, they symbolize, albeit reductively, an ongoing and strident ideological divide within black political discourse over whether accommodationism or militancy is the most effective approach toward gaining racial justice in America" (2018, p. 121). Another surprising aspect lies in Tarantino's insistence on black-on-black violence at the end of the film when Django kills Stephen after a gruesome bloodbath. Commenting on Tarantino's ambiguous racial choice, Vogel poses some easily supportable questions:

> Why, in Tarantino's mind, does black liberation demand interracial murder? Why is blackness presented as equally culpable for the institution of slavery? Why is Django, the film's hero, so consistently uninvested in black liberation or transformation? Why are there no humanizing or intimate conversations with fellow black slaves? Why no compassion for them? (2018, p. 24)

These questions seem entirely legitimate, especially when one considers that besides Tarantino's insistence on Django's black heroism and need for emancipation, in some passages of the film Django is quite complicit with the white order, as confirmed by the death scene of the black slave D'Artagnan. The slave's flesh is ripped by a series of dogs at Candie's request under the eyes of Django who demonstrates total disregard and cruelty for the man's life, as opposed to Dr. Schultz who, aiming to save D'Artagnan, wants to buy him to spare his life. Django looks at the scene with no apparent emotion, on the contrary, Dr. Schultz seems objectively proven by the horrific death of the black slave. Tarantino often shows how Django's emancipated superhero attitude is often single-minded, and his access to freedom is indeed individualized. In this sense, critics correctly maintained that "Django's rebellion cannot be considered a 'rebellion' in the social sense because it never includes other black people" (Nama, 2015, p. 24).

In his exploration of race representations in Tarantino's films, Nama further discloses how it is too reductive to consider the representations of African Americans in Tarantino's films merely as racist. A more challenging approach, to watching Tarantino's films, would be that of "deconstructing why and how his films resonate with establishing and emerging discourses concerning race in America" (Nama, 2015, p. 3). By looking closely at *Django Unchained* and its narrative trajectory, Nama cogently observes how

> Tarantino's *Django Unchained* makes black romantic love the focus of the film and fulfills the conventional cultural work of Hollywood films to affirm individualistic heroism. Consequently, the forbidden love story of an enslaved couple is played out against the epic horror of slavery in America (Nama, 2015, p. 125).

Conclusion

Despite the cowboy clichés that characterize the film's ending, *Django Unchained* deserves credit for its legacy to America's racial politics (Nama, 2015, p. 126)[10] and reverberates with contemporary cultural anxieties—just as it does today—on the matter of race. However, Tarantino's choice of making the African American protagonist exceptional in the film is a double-edged sword that generates a process of discrimination that considers all blacks to be inferior in most cases, as confirmed by the famous scene of Leonardo Di Caprio holding the skull of a former slave and becoming an expert in phrenology, demonstrating the innate inferiority of blacks to whites. On the basis of this evidence, Harrington repeatedly remarked how "Candie's *white* savior mentality diminishes African American cultural history, both on and off screen, to something manageable, specifically, something manageable by Tarantino." (Harrington, 2018, p. 86). As Nama further implies, "Rather than stabilizing whiteness, Tarantino's films home in on the mounting anxiety around black masculinity, interracial sexuality, and racialized violence in American society" (2015, p. 133). Tarantino's *Django Unchained* downplays aspects of slavery and systemic racism beyond the mere abolition of the system. As Jarrod Dunham explains, "The film's epistemology is replete with those myths that have become central to 'White America' limiting the institution of slavery to geographical and historical scope" (2016, p. 418), diminishing the psychological nature of blackness.

Read in this way, *Django Unchained* is deadly serious in representing black enslavement and slavery which, as Tarantino admitted with a certain insistence after being criticized for the film's overly violent scenes, he replied by saying: "I'm here to tell you, bad things happen in the movie, a lot worse shit actually happened during slavery." On the contrary, Tarantino creates an image of blackness that at times disrespects important racial concerns and whitewashes the figure of the black hero putting him in perspective with the white man as the agent of his freedom. As Joseph Vogel remarks, "What we see is

10 It is important to note that the film was released during a period of post-racial rhetoric following Obama's election to the White House in 2008.

Tarantino's 'dream' as *Django Unchained* is plagued from a lethal combination of arrogance and ignorance. His interest in the film, works and struggles, and also of black people is reduced from his enthusiasm for style, surfaces and spectacles" (2018, p. 26). Although *Django Unchained* remains a violently and visually important portrait of slavery in Hollywood films, Tarantino's mechanism is an unsophisticated reduction and an attempt to rewrite American history through what can be defined as a "colorblind fantasy."

However, more specifically, *Django Unchained* serves as a trenchant reminder of America's historical racial legacy and its connection to contemporary racial politics, a point emphasized by the anachronistic film's inclusion of rap music. Overall, however, much of Tarantino's choice of representing white-on-black, black-on-black and black-on-white violence, in the film comes from the context of *Django*'s release. The film was brought to cinemas at a moment in American history when the United States was coming to terms with cases of police brutality and racial tensions which would even increase shortly thereafter. In effect, *Django Unchained* is fundamentally premised on an hypothetical scenario of "what if," implying an alternate historical trajectory for the protagonist. Despite being rooted in a fictionalized representation, the narrative conveys the complexities of seeking retribution, echoing a famous quote from another Tarantino film: "Revenge is never a straight line."[11]

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11 One of Tarantino's most famous quotes from *Kill Bill: Volume 1*. (2003). Miramax Films.

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A Milestone in the History of Turkish Pop Music: Zeki Müren and Song Translation (1964)

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the previously unacknowledged importance of Zeki Müren's collaboration with Fecri Ebcioğlu in rewriting and performing Charles Aznavour's "La Mamma" [Mama] in Turkish in 1964 as "Annem". At that time, Müren was already a celebrated figure in Turkish art music, while Ebcioğlu had made a name for himself in the music industry through earlier releases, most notably "Bak Bir Varmış Bir Yokmuş" [Once Upon a Time], the inaugural song of Turkish pop music, translated from Bob Azzam's "C'est Ecrit Dans Le Ciel" [Written in Heaven]. This collaboration is a significant event in the realms of cultural history, translation history, and music history, yet it has been largely ignored by scholars and deserves closer examination. Müren's established fame in Turkish art music played a crucial role in the acceptance of this new genre by the Turkish audience (1), enhanced Ebcioğlu's own reputation (2), and reciprocally boosted Müren's popularity through the translation of a global pop hit (3). Utilizing the concept of *aranjman*, a song-translation practice unique to Turkey, the study asserts that Müren's rendition not only retains culture-specificity but also infuses it with their distinct style. This unique style is not merely a queer performance but is tied to Müren's stature as a performer of Turkish art music, composer, lyricist and radio programmer. All these aspects constitute the symbolic capital of Zeki Müren. The study aims to show that only by analyzing musical, verbal, and visual elements together can we fully understand the strategies employed and gain a comprehensive understanding of song translation.

Keywords: Zeki Müren, Aznavour, Song Translation, Sung Performance, Translation Studies

Introduction

Charles Aznavour's initial major international success came with the song "La Mamma". Released as a single by the French Armenian singer-songwriter in 1963, it achieved million-seller status, reaching the top spot in France and Spain, and was translated into numerous other languages including but not limited to English, Italian, Dutch, German, Spanish, Croatian and Arabic. It was also translated into Turkish by Fecri Ebcioğlu and was released as a vinyl titled "Annem" [My Mother] by Zeki Müren (1964). This song translation was indeed a notable collaboration between two influential figures in Turkish music history: Zeki Müren, a renowned Turkish art (and folk) music

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singer, and Fecri Ebcioğlu, a respected figure in pop song translation into Turkish. In fact, this release marked a significant yet overlooked development. While Müren had already established themselves as a prominent figure in Turkish music, Ebcioğlu's prior work in song translation had solidified his reputation in the music scene. However, the importance of their partnership in translating and performing "La Mamma" remains understated, especially within academic circles, despite its profound implications for cultural, translation, and music history. This article aims to shed light on the significance of this collaboration, examining its impact on Müren's individual popularity, Ebcioğlu's recognition, and the broader acceptance of the new genre by the Turkish public. The article expands our understanding of *aranjman* as a song-translational practice in Turkey: it argues that Müren performs the translated song not only in a way that preserves culture specificity, but also in a way that reflects Müren's individual style. This can best be demonstrated through holistic song translation analysis.

To have a deeper understanding of Zeki Müren's collaboration with Fecri Ebcioğlu in translating and performing "La Mamma" into Turkish, a multi-faceted approach will be employed. A thorough examination of archival materials, including but not limited to vinyl covers, liner notes, interviews, and historical records, will provide contextual background and insights into the socio-cultural milieu of the time. Additionally, qualitative content analysis will be conducted at the musical, verbal and visual levels of both the original and translated versions of the song to identify nuances in the translation and performance. This holistic methodology aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of the collaborative process and its impact on Turkish pop music and cultural history.

Fecri Ebcioğlu: an agent of change in the 1960s

Fecri Ebcioğlu can be defined as an *agent of change*, who, benefiting from Zeki Müren's *symbolic capital*, took another gradual step in establishing pop music with Turkish lyrics. In the song he not only selected but also translated for Zeki Müren to perform, he utilized a combination of *domesticating* and *foreignizing* strategies, entirely consistent with his fundamental aim: legitimizing Turkish pop music as a new genre. After all, it was Ebcioğlu who first uttered the following in the 1960s: "every country sang songs in their own language, why didn't we?" (Meriç, 2006, p. 206; Pesen, 2019, p. 88). It has already been proposed that the 1960s witnessed a culture-specific trend at the crossroads of translation and music in the Turkish context (Pesen, 2019, p. 85).

Building on this perspective, this study argues that Zeki Müren's rendition of a song translated by Ebcioğlu not only maintains cultural specificity in the lyrics but also infuses the song with Müren's distinctive style. This style goes beyond a "queer performance" (Güvendik, 2018, p. 42; Hawkins, 2018, p. 100). Instead, it reflects Müren's widespread popularity and expertise as a performer of local music, composer, lyricist and radio programmer (Aşan, 2003, p. 27; Gür, 1996, p. 41; Hiçyılmaz, 1997, p. 59; Sancar, 2021, p. 8). All these roles collectively constitute Zeki Müren's symbolic capital, and the present study intends to demonstrate this through a holistic analysis of song translation, without neglecting the musical and visual levels (Pesen, 2022, p. 17).

I aim to explore the concepts introduced in this paragraph further, drawing from insights offered by prominent figures in sociology and translation studies. Through this exploration, my goal is to contextualize the phenomenon of song translation within the dynamic landscape of the Turkish pop music scene during the 1960s. Utilizing Gideon Toury's notion of "agents of change," I intend to shed light on Fecri Ebcioğlu's role as an influential figure in Turkish pop music, emphasizing the pivotal role individuals play in shaping cultural practices and norms within society (Toury, 2002, p. 151). Adapting Toury's framework to Ebcioğlu's case, his efforts in introducing and establishing Western pop music with Turkish lyrics can be regarded as those of a "self-appointed" individual introducing "a new option" into the Turkish music scene as a repertoire producer. In the 1960s, Ebcioğlu emerged as a prominent figure driven by the imperative to establish a domestic pop music market, thereby becoming an influential "agent of change" in the Turkish music industry. He curated a selection of Western hits and oversaw their translation into Turkish (Dilmener, 2006, p. 43; Dorsay, 2003, p. 213; Meriç, 2006, p. 59; Solmaz, 1996, p. 27).

To acknowledge "Annem," the subject matter of this study, as part of a wider socio-cultural context, Bourdieu's concept of "symbolic capital" offers valuable insights into Ebcioğlu's utilization of Zeki Müren's existing prestige and influence to propel the evolution of Turkish pop music. In the case of Ebcioğlu, his strategic leveraging of Zeki Müren's "symbolic capital" exemplifies the agency of key figures in driving innovation and transformation within the Turkish music industry. In cultural production, two types of capital stand out: while cultural capital is associated with knowledge and competence, symbolic capital concerns celebrity related to such competence (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 7). In other words, the latter refers to the reputation and prestige associated with an individual (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 22). It is the recognition within a particular field of expertise. Zeki Müren's expertise spanned Turkish art music, radio programming, and acting, to

say the least, contributing to their significant symbolic capital. It was this symbolic capital that likely caught the attention of Fecri Ebcioğlu, prompting him to invite Müren to record one of his early song translations into Turkish in the early 1960s.

Moreover, at the micro level, for the case of "Annem," Ebcioğlu's approach to song translation can be analyzed with the help of Klaus Kaindl's framework of holistic song translation analysis, which emphasizes the multifaceted nature of musical translation. Kaindl maintains that the translation of music should be regarded as a complex phenomenon that is not only verbal but also musical, visual and, last but not least, socio-cultural (2005, p. 243). In other words, song translation is a multimodal activity that takes place at various levels, such as the verbal, musical and vocal modes that engage in functional connection with one another (Kaindl, 2020, p. 63). A detailed and holistic acknowledgement as well as analysis of these different levels altogether can shed light on the translational strategies applied, and move us beyond the view that reduces (song) translation into a merely verbal or linguistic activity. Adopting such a holistic attitude can help us see the fuller picture: Ebcioğlu's adoption of both domesticating and foreignizing strategies at different levels reflects an innovative approach to song translation at a time of genre formation, wherein fidelity at the musical level is balanced with creative rewriting at the verbal level. By leveraging Müren's symbolic capital, Ebcioğlu strategically positioned himself as a catalyst for innovation within the music industry in the early 1960s.

Furthermore, Ebcioğlu's utilization of different translation strategies across different levels can be attributed to the concepts of domestication and foreignization as elucidated by Lawrence Venuti. Venuti proposes that translators navigate a continuum between domestication, or making the text conform to the target culture's norms, and foreignization, which preserves elements of the source culture (1995, p. 20). The latter "evokes a sense of foreignness in the translation" (Venuti 1998, p. 242). In the context of Ebcioğlu's work, the combination of these strategies serves a dual purpose: sounding as familiar to the Turkish listenership as possible while also integrating Western pop elements. This juxtaposition of domesticating and foreignizing strategies reflects broader sociocultural dynamics within Turkish society. Ebcioğlu's efforts to legitimize Turkish pop music as a distinct genre mirror larger trends of cultural hybridity and globalization. As Turkish society became more influenced by globalization in the early 1960s, Ebcioğlu's translational practices in "Annem" (1964) serve as a microcosm of these complex negotiations between tradition and innovation.

In analyzing the song translation process, Ebcioğlu's translational strategies manifest themselves distinctly at different levels of musical expression. At the arrangement and instrumentation levels, foreignizing techniques are evident in the incorporation of Western musical elements, signaling a departure from traditional Turkish music conventions. Conversely, at the verbal and sung levels, domesticating strategies seem to have been employed to ensure linguistic and cultural coherence with the Turkish audience. Through this interdisciplinary exploration, we gain a deeper understanding of Ebcioğlu's pivotal role in shaping the trajectory of Turkish pop music. By synthesizing concepts from sociology and translation studies, we can contextualize Ebcioğlu's contributions within larger sociocultural frameworks, illuminating the complex interplay between music, identity, and globalization in Turkey in the 1960s.

During this period, pop music in Turkey was predominantly composed of covers, with original songs written in English being a rarity (Pesen, 2019, p. 81). The introduction of pop music with Turkish lyrics was met with skepticism, challenging the entrenched cultural norms. Ebcioğlu's groundbreaking initiative to rewrite foreign songs in Turkish marked a significant departure from performances and releases in foreign languages, setting the stage for the emergence of Turkish pop music as a distinct genre. Inspired by a French song, he spontaneously composed Turkish lyrics, giving birth to "Bak Bir Varmış Bir Yokmuş" [Once Upon a Time], commonly accepted as the inaugural song of Turkish pop music, released by Odeon in December 1961 (Dilmener, 2006, p. 43; Dorsay, 2003, p. 213; Meriç, 2006, p. 59; Pesen, 2024, p. 2; Solmaz, 1996, p. 27). Ebcioğlu's description of Adamo's initial performance of "Her Yerde Kar Var" [Snow Everywhere] provides insight into the challenges of singing a pop song in Turkish during the 1960s (Meriç, 2006, p. 209):

> Salvatore Adamo had a concert at the Atlas Movie Theatre. The presenter was Erkan Yolaç. I told them both not to tell anyone that I was the [rewriter] of the lyrics [in Turkish] lest I could be jeered at. Towards the end of the concert Adamo suddenly started singing «Her Yerde Kar Var, Kalbim Senin Bu Gece» [Everywhere's covered in snow, my heart belongs to you tonight]. There was not a single response from the audience. There was an eerie quiet. I felt totally humiliated. If I could have gotten lost in my jacket, believe me, I would have. It went on and on. Then, the song was over. Again, not a single sound. Then, after a couple of seconds, the audience

> burst into an enthusiastic applause. They were screaming, «play it again, play it again…» Adamo resang the song. As soon as it was over, I was carried onto the stage on shoulders. This time, we resang the song together. As you might know, that song of mine would soon be number one. After that day, the popularity of foreign songs decreased. The youth began showing great interest in songs with Turkish lyrics… (Pesen, 2019, p. 89; Pesen 2010, p. 74)

As the excerpt above reveals, despite initial resistance, Ebcioğlu persisted in his mission to popularize pop music with Turkish lyrics. He devised innovative strategies, such as inviting foreign artists like Salvatore Adamo to resing their songs in Turkish, although they had not spoken a single word of Turkish before. In the translation of "La Mamma" [Mama], Ebcioğlu utilized a different strategy: the endorsement of pop music with Turkish lyrics by one of the most renowned performers of an already established genre: Turkish Art Music. In what follows, I will compare the original song and the translation in terms of musical, verbal and visual aspects.

A holistic song translation analysis

Charles Aznavour was born on May 22, 1924, in Paris, France, to Armenian parents who had fled the Ottoman Empire during WWI (Aznavour, 2003, p. 10). Aznavour's career spanned several decades, leaving an indelible mark on the global music scene. Renowned for his powerful and emotive singing style, he captivated audiences with his performances in multiple languages, including French, English, Italian, and Spanish. Some of his most iconic songs, such as "Hier Encore" (1964), "La Bohème" (1966), and "She" (1974), have become classics. In addition to his musical achievements, Aznavour had a successful acting career, appearing in numerous films. His influence extended far beyond France, shaping the development of *the French chanson* and inspiring countless artists worldwide. Robert Gall, a French lyricist, played a pivotal role in Aznavour's career, collaborating with him on several projects. "La Mamma," [Mama] Aznavour's first major global hit, stands as a testament to their partnership. Released as a single in 1963, the song, composed by Aznavour with lyrics by Gall, resonated with audiences worldwide, becoming a million-seller and solidifying Aznavour's status as an international musical sensation. Its universal themes and emotional depth transcended language barriers, leading to translations in numerous languages (Murrells, 1984, p. 170).

Zeki Müren was renowned for their versatile musical talent, spanning across various genres including Turkish art music, Turkish folk music, and last but not least Turkish pop music, the first example of which they gave with "Annem". Their resonant baritone voice and emotionally charged performances solidified them position as one of Turkey's most cherished and influential musicians. While primarily recognized as a singer and performer, Müren also left their mark on the Turkish music scene as a lyricist, song translator, and composer. Beyond their musical endeavors, Müren enjoyed a prosperous career in Turkish cinema and television, gracing numerous films and TV shows with their acting prowess. Not only celebrated for their artistic prowess, Müren was also admired for their flamboyant and distinctive personal style. In an era when the challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community were even more daunting than they are today, Müren emerged as a symbol of hope and resilience for many. Their extravagant costumes and captivating stage presence further contributed to their iconic status. Even today, Müren remains a cultural icon in Turkey, with their contributions to Turkish music and entertainment continuing to be revered. Their songs remain popular and their influence definitely transcends generations. Under Fecri Ebcioğlu's guidance, Müren's symbolic capital contributed a great deal to the establishment of pop music with Turkish lyrics, and soon later, Müren also made a duet with Ajda Pekkan, the first star of pop music with Turkish lyrics. Also known as the "super star" of Turkish pop music, Pekkan is one of the singers with the highest *symbolic capital*, mostly famous for song translation performances such as "Her Yerde Kar Var" (translated by Fecri Ebcioğlu), "Kimler Geldi Kimler Geçti" and "Bambaşka Biri" (both translated by Fikret Şeneş). "İki Yabancı," the song Müren and Pekkan sung together in the early 1960s, was also translated into Turkish by Fecri Ebcioğlu, a significant fact that underscores how Ebcioğlu acted as an *agent of change* in establishing pop music with Turkish lyrics right from the start. By translating songs for these iconic artists and even bringing them together, Ebcioğlu helped pave the way for the widespread acceptance and popularity of pop music with Turkish lyrics, shaping the cultural landscape for generations to come.

I will commence the holistic comparative analysis with a comprehensive examination of the song's musical facets, encompassing instrumentation, voice and arrangement. Then, I will delve into a detailed analysis of the verbal aspects, focusing on the first two verses and the initial chorus due to space limitations. Finally, I will carry out an analysis on the visual level, commenting on the paratextual elements in the form of vinyl covers and liner notes.

The musical level

The source song opens with a solo nylon-string classical guitar playing an arpeggio in E minor. As Charles Aznavour sings the first "La Mamma," a second guitar joins in, responding to the singer's verbo-musical phrase with its own musical phrase. The instrumentation, characterized by two guitars, creates a sense of nostalgia and sadness, perfectly complementing Aznavour's vocal performance. Aznavour, known as one of the leading representatives of the chanson style in France during the 1950s and 1960s, captivates the listener with his baritone voice. His skillful transition between wordy lyrics in the first verse and prolonged vowels, such as "Laa" and "Mamaa," ending with vibratos, mesmerizes the audience. At the end of the word "Mama," Aznavour employs a melismatic technique, performing a descending scale on the phoneme "a," effectively underscoring the title and main theme of the song. Throughout the piece, the second guitar maintains its presence, subtly responding to the lyrics, while the string section joins in during the second verse, "On la réchauffe de baisers" [she is warmed with kisses] (at 00:51), adding depth to the arrangement. At 1:02, the second guitar reappears to respond to the lyrics "La Mamma," accompanied by the violins, creating a dynamic feel in the arrangement. The introduction of the church organ at the mention of "Saint Marie" and "Ave Maria" establishes a meaningful link between the music and lyrics, enhancing the religious undertones of the composition. During the chorus, beginning with "Y a tant d'amour," a string section accompanies Aznavour, responding with precision to each line. The same instrumentation and arrangement persist throughout the song, culminating in a grand finale with the addition of the brass section during the last words, "jamais tu ne me quitteras," amplifying the nostalgic and lyrical feel of the piece.

The target song also commences with a solo nylon-string classical guitar, echoing the arpeggio in E minor found in the source. However, there is a slight deviation: while the source guitar plays the arpeggio four times, the target guitar plays it twice before the singing begins. As Zeki Müren's voice enters with the first "Annem," a second guitar joins in, mirroring the response seen in the source. Although the reverb effect on the target guitar is less pronounced compared to the source, the musical phrase it produces in response remains identical. The presence of two guitars, coupled with their execution, contributes to the overall atmosphere of nostalgia and sadness, a characteristic shared with the source song. Müren's vocal performance is distinct, characterized by a thinner, but still baritone quality and clear pronunciation, reminiscent of highbrow Turkish

individuals. Unlike Aznavour's rapid delivery of wordy sections, Müren adopts a slower pace, infusing each word with the aura of Turkish art music, a genre they were renowned for upon the release of "Annem" in 1964. Despite these differences, both vocalists possess unique qualities, each contributing to the song's emotional depth in their own way. The introduction of the string section during the second verse echoes the arrangement of the source song, maintaining consistency in instrumentation. Müren's rendition of the chorus words "Anneciğim, annem" is marked by subtle vocal ornamentation, enhancing the song's sadness with a sobbing-like quality reminiscent of Turkish art music. Notably, Müren refrains from employing melisma, exercising their artistic liberty to imbue the translation with an original aspect. Although the target instrumentation and arrangement remain faithful to the source, one notable deviation is the replacement of the church organ with an accordion. This alteration results in the loss of the religious undertones present in the source composition, with implications for the interpretation of the lyrics, as discussed below. In the latter half of the song, Müren is left alone in the final words "Artık rahat uyu canım anam" [rest in peace now dear mama] accompanied only by a subtle guitar arpeggio. This departure from the source arrangement evokes a sense of loneliness and solitude, themes often explored in the repertoire of Turkish art music.

Fecri Ebcioğlu's translation for Zeki Müren's performance demonstrates a nuanced approach at multiple levels, including the musical, verbal, and visual dimensions. At the musical level, Müren's rendition is characterized by a high level of articulation and skillful vocal ornamentation, reminiscent of their performances in Turkish art music. This utilization of familiar musical techniques represents a "domesticating" strategy, creating a sense of cultural authenticity and resonance with Müren's established style. Furthermore, the choice of key, with both songs performed in E minor, highlights a deliberate effort to faithfully replicate the original composition. Despite the differences in duration between the original and translated versions, the consistency in key suggests a conscious decision to preserve the essence of the music while adapting it to Turkish lyrics. An intriguing example of translational innovation occurs during the entrance of the chorus at the 3:15 mark, where phonemic relyricizing is employed. This technique, reminiscent of the phonetic vowel qualities of the line "Ave Maria" as "Anneciğim Anam," underscores the overlapping of the musical and verbal levels, enhancing the poetic and emotive impact of the lyrics. On the arrangement and instrumentation front, Ebcioğlu collaborates with an orchestra made up of instruments used in Western classical music, maintaining a sense of continuity with the original compositions. This

adherence to the original instrumentation represents a "foreignizing" strategy, aimed at integrating Western pop elements seamlessly with Turkish lyrics. Such consistency aligns with Ebcioğlu's intention: establishing Turkish pop music as a distinct genre with international appeal.

The verbal level

The lyrics of "La Mamma" paint a poignant tableau of a gathering around the deathbed of a beloved mother. The song unfolds as family and friends from various walks of life come together upon hearing the imminent passing of "la mamma". The narrative captures the emotional intensity and universal experiences associated with a mother's impending departure. Amidst the sorrow, there is a celebration of the love, memories, and shared moments that define the relationship between a mother and her children. The lyrics beautifully depict the rituals of comforting and cherishing the fading moments, with references to religious elements, familial warmth, and the bittersweet blend of tears and smiles. "La Mamma" stands as a timeless ode to maternal love, embracing both the sorrow of parting and the enduring legacy of a mother's affection. The following is the first verse of the song:[1]

Ils sont venus	They have come
Ils sont tous là	They are all here
Dès qu'ils ont entendu ce cri	As soon as they heard this cry
Elle va mourir, la mamma	She's going to die, the mamma
Ils sont venus	They have come
Ils sont tous là	They are all here
Même ceux du sud de l'Italie	Even those from the south of Italy
Y a même Giorgio, le fils maudit	Even Giorgio, the cursed son,
Avec des présents plein les bras	With gifts in his arms
Tous les enfants jouent en silence	All the children play in silence
Autour du lit sur le carreau	Around the bed on the floor
Mais leurs jeux n'ont pas d'importance	But their games don't matter
C'est leurs derniers cadeaux a la mamma	It's their last gift to mama.

The lyrics describe a scene where people have gathered, including those from the south of Italy, they come from even that far since they love her, upon hearing a cry

1 Throughout the article, all informative lyrics translations from French into English on the right are my own.

indicating the imminent death of a woman referred to as "la mamma". Giorgio, the cursed son, is also present with gifts. Despite the children playing silently around the bed, their games seem insignificant in the face of the impending loss, and the gifts are seen as a final offering to "la mamma".

On la réchauffe de baisers	She is warmed with kisses
On lui remonte ses oreillers	They prop up her pillows
Elle va mourir, la mamma	She's going to die, the mamma
Sainte Marie pleine de grâces	Saint Mary full of grace
Dont la statue est sur la place	Whose statue is in the square
Bien sûr vous lui tendez les bras	Of course, you reach out to her
En lui chantant Ave Maria	Singing Ave Maria to her

The lyrics here describe a scene in which a woman, referred to as "la mamma," is comforted as she approaches death. She is surrounded by expressions of care, as people warm her with kisses and prop up her pillows. The mention of Saint Mary and the singing of "Ave Maria" suggest a spiritual or religious context, invoking prayers for comfort and solace as the woman faces the end of her life. The lyrics suggest that the family members are reaching out to Saint Mary for comfort and solace. The lines "Bien sûr vous lui tendez les bras" (Of course, you reach out to her) and "En lui chantant Ave Maria" (Singing Ave Maria to her) indicate that the gestures and prayers are directed towards Saint Mary. The reference to "Ave Maria," a traditional Catholic prayer dedicated to the Virgin Mary, further supports the idea that comfort and solace are sought from Saint Mary rather than the character called "La Mamma". The overlapping of the two mothers in the song as foil characters, Mother Mary and the passing Mamma, adds valency to the song. The family members reach out to Mother Mary praying Ave Maria, but they also reach to their own mother in fact, praying… This also turns the entire song into a prayer for La Mamma, for Virgin Mary and for all mothers in the world.

Ave Maria	Hail Mary
Y a tant d'amour, de souvenirs	There is so much love, so many memories
Autour de toi, toi, la mamma	Around you, you, the mamma
Y a tant de larmes et de sourires	There are so many tears and smiles
A travers toi, toi, la mamma	Through you, you, the mamma

The lyrics express love, memories, and emotions surrounding "la mamma" (the mother). There was always the presence of both tears and smiles, indicating a range of emotions experienced through her. The lines express a strong connection and sentimentality associated with "la mamma". The narrator expresses prayers and devotion to "la mamma" through the words "Ave Maria," which is a traditional Christian prayer, "Hail Mary" in English. The mention of love, memories, tears, and smiles suggests a deep emotional connection and a sense of reverence or affection towards "a mamma" in the singer's prayers. This part of the lyrics can also be considered a prayer for both La Mamma and Mother Mary, and for all mothers, who were all surrounded with love, pain, tears and smiles, from the labours of birth till death.

The Turkish version of the song expresses deep emotions about the loss of a mother. The lyrics convey a sense of longing, love, and grief for the departed mother. The singer reflects on the passing of time since the mother's departure, the memories left behind, and the impact on the family. There is a strong emotional connection portrayed, with the singer expressing the difficulty of living without the mother and the void left in their life. The lyrics also touch on the hope of a reunion in the afterlife and the everlasting love and respect for the departed mother. Overall, it is a heartfelt tribute to a beloved mother figure:[2]

Sen gideli geçti günler	Days have passed since you left
Seni arar evde gözler	Eyes at home search for you
Resmin hatıra kaldı annem	Your picture remains a memory, ma
Oğlun kızın büyüdüler	Your son and daughter have grown up
Annemiz nerde dediler	They asked, "Where is mama?"
Ama seni görmediler	But they didn't see you
Bırakmış gitmiş dediler	They've been told you had left
Ne olurdu bir kerecik	If only, just once,
Görseydik biz de seni	We could have seen you too
Tatsaydık anne denen sımsıcacık sevgini	Tasted the warm love called mother
Ah, annem	Oh, mama

In the first part of the lyrics, the singer reflects on the passage of time since the departure of someone dear. The singer mentions searching for the person in the house with their eyes, with only the memory of their image remaining. The lyrics convey a sense of

2 Throughout the article, all informative lyrics translations from Turkish into English on the right are my own.

longing and sadness as the children, both sons and daughters, have grown up in the absence of their mother. People around them inquire about the whereabouts of the mother, expressing concern and speculating that she has left. The singer expresses a deep desire for just one more opportunity to see and experience the warm and affectionate love of their mother. The phrase "Ah annem" at the end translates to "Oh, my mother," indicating a strong emotional connection and longing for the presence of the mother.

Uçtun içimden sen	You flew away from within me
Meleklere selam benden	Send my greetings to the angels
Şad olsun rahmet eden, annem	Blessed be the one who shows mercy, ma
Andıkça seni her an	Every moment I remember you
Kalbimde yanıyor kan	Blood in my heart is burning
Şikayet edemem çünkü	I can't complain because
Aldı seni yaradan	The Creator took you

The lyrics convey a sense of acceptance and acknowledgment of the mother's departure, sending positive wishes to her in the afterlife and recognizing the divine aspect of her passing. There is a mixture of grief, reverence, and understanding of the natural order of life and death.

Anneciğim, annem	Dear mother, my mother
Sevgi sana, rahmet sana	Love and mercy be upon you
Tek dileğim var yalnız sana	I have only one wish just for you
Al yanına, bas bağrına	Take me to your side and embrace me
Yaşanmıyor sensiz ana	Can't live without you mama

In the chorus, the singer addresses their mother affectionately, expressing love and extending wishes of mercy to her. The singer has a singular desire directed solely towards the mother. There is a plea to be taken to her side, to be embraced, and a recognition that life feels incomplete without her presence. The lyrics reflect a deep emotional connection and a longing for the comfort and warmth that the mother provided. In the last two lines, the singer even wishes to die to get closer to the mother, which aligns with the emotional themes commonly found in Turkish Art Music such as loss, longing, grief and nostalgia. Interestingly enough, Fecri Ebcioğlu's translation at the verbal level inspired Zeki Müren to compose *an original song* with the same

theme and title, "Annem" [Mama], centered around the experience of losing one's mother, released in 1968 by Grafson in the album *Zeki Müren Classics, Vol. 4*. Widely recognized by the refrain "Anne, anne, anneciğim" (mother, my dear mother), Müren's subsequent composition "Annem" (1968) became exceptionally popular in the realm of Turkish Art Music. To this day, it remains the foremost result when searching online for "Annem" by Zeki Müren.

The visual level

A holistic analysis of any song would be missing without examining the visual level. As a song released in the early 1960s, naturally, "La Mamma" did not have an official music video. Let alone Youtube, even TV was not in every home back then. Still, pop music, right from the moment it became a worldwide trend with Elvis Presley in the mid-1950s, relied heavily on its visual appeal to its potential listeners. In those years, this was mainly in the form of vinyl covers and liner notes. Fans could buy the artist's vinyl to play it at home on their gramophones. And when they bought the vinyl, they were faced with the artist's photographs that came with the cover and also additional information provided. These paratexts all added to the song's individual meaning, as well as the artist's image in general. This was also the case for the official vinyl cover of "La Mamma" (See Figure 1).



Figure 1. The vinyl cover (on the left) and the record cover (on the right) of "La Mamma" (Aznavour, 1963).

Consistent with the musical and verbal levels, Charles Aznavour's image on the cover is sad, symbolizing an individual who is about to lose their mother. It can even be further argued that his arms are clasped and Aznavour's eyes look down at his mother, who is in her deathbed, about the die. Aznavour seems to cherish the days that have

passed and is also rather worried about a future without her. On the record, his name, along with Robert Gall, can be seen, and also, Paul Mauriat and his orchestra, who accompany Aznavour on the record with their guitars, violins, the church organ and the brass section are featured. Unlike the musical and verbal levels above, however, there is no reference to the religious tone of the song on the vinyl cover. This is not the case for the target song (See Figure 2).

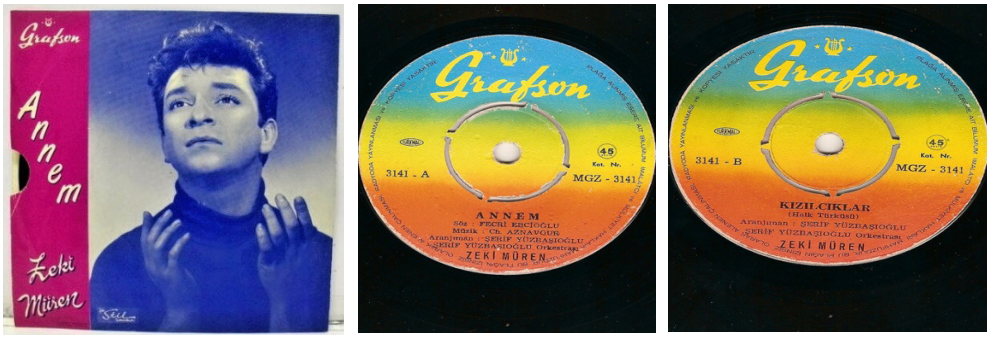


Figure 2. The vinyl cover (on the left) and the record covers of the A side (in the middle) and the B side (on the right) of "Annem" (Müren, 1964).

The vinyl cover of "Annem" features a somber Zeki Müren in a prayerful pose, evoking religious connotations. Müren's expression reflects the profound grief of losing a loved one, with eyes cast upward in a gesture of supplication or lamentation. The Turkish lyrics further emphasize the theme of loss, as Müren gazes skyward, perhaps seeking solace in spirituality. The credits on the record acknowledge Fecri Ebcioğlu as the lyricist, Charles Aznavour as the composer, and Şerif Yüzbaşıoğlu as the arranger and the maestro of the orchestra that accompanied Müren, highlighting the collaborative effort involved in translating the song at different levels. Moreover, the cover also signifies a convergence of tradition and modernity on the grounds that the inclusion of a Turkish label such as Grafson, established in the late 1950s, signals the emergence of a domestic music industry catering to Turkish pop music for the first time after releasing several Turkish Art Music vinyls by Zeki Müren. Moreover, the vinyl also attests to a balance of the juxtaposition of foreign and local elements: the B side, as is evident on the record cover, featured a popular Turkish Folk Song sung by Zeki Müren, titled "Kızılcıklar". This song selection is yet another reflection of the balanced foreignizing and domesticating strategies observed at the musical, verbal and visual levels. As the agent of change in Turkish pop music, Ebcioğlu carefully juxtaposes foreign and domestic elements at every level. In essence, Ebcioğlu's translational strategies, evident across multiple levels

of musical expression, serve to not only legitimize Turkish pop music but also contribute to its evolution as a dynamic and culturally resonant art form.

Conclusion

In conclusion, "Annem," the Turkish translation of Charles Aznavour's "La Mamma," represents a balance of domesticating and foreignizing strategies at various levels, which in a more general sense reflects both cultural and artistic shifts within the Turkish music scene of the 1960s. Through the replacement of Christian elements with spiritual motifs, the transformation of themes from the deathbed to the loss of a beloved mother, and the blending of Turkish Art Music with pop influences, Zeki Müren and Fecri Ebcioğlu produced a version that resonated deeply with Turkish audiences. This translation not only marked the beginning of a fruitful partnership between Müren and Ebcioğlu, but also played a pivotal role in the evolution of pop music with Turkish lyrics in the years to come. Acting as an agent of change, Ebcioğlu skillfully benefited from Zeki Müren's symbolic capital to make the public accept the idea of pop music with Turkish lyrics, and to that end, made a very clever song translation in the form of a balanced synthesis at the musical, verbal and visual levels. While Müren's vocal performance, the verbal content and the vinyl cover pointed to a domesticating strategy, the instrumentation and arrangement at the musical level displayed a foreignizing move. All of this is revealed through a holistic approach to song translation, which occurs not only at the verbal level but also at the musical and visual levels, all within a broader socio-cultural context. The subsequent collaboration between Müren and Ajda Pekkan, another iconic figure in Turkish pop, further solidified the genre's prominence and paved the way for future innovations in the Turkish music industry. Moreover, as stated above, "La Mamma" in Turkish served as a precursor to Müren's own composition "Annem, annem, anneciğim," which reflected themes of maternal love and loss. In this sense, from a broader perspective, the translation of "La Mamma" into Turkish, within the pop music genre, could potentially have had an influence on Turkish Art Music as well, especially in relation to similar thematic content. It suggests a dynamic relationship between different musical genres, an interesting point to consider in the broader context of cultural exchange and artistic evolution. All in all, serving as a milestone in the history of Turkish pop music, Fecri Ebcioğlu and Zeki Müren's song translation "Annem" exemplifies the dynamic interplay between tradition, innovation and creativity, shaping not only the repertoire of Turkish pop music but also the broader cultural history. Academia has been showing interest in the combination of translation studies and *aranjman* songs

since the early 2010s (Hava & Yıldırım, 2016; Kaleş, 2015; Okyayuz, 2016; Okyayuz & Kaya, 2021; Pesen, 2019; Pesen, 2010). I can only hope that this first study combining Zeki Müren and (song) translation studies will also resonate in a similar way in the near future.

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