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Loose Translations:
Postcolonial Literature and Shakespeare

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Loose Translations: Postcolonial Literature and Shakespeare

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B.A., New York University, 2006

Advisor: Deepika Bahri Ph.D.

An abstract of
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
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Abstract

Loose Translations: Postcolonial Literature and Shakespeare
By Rebecca Kumar

From Aimé Césaire's 1969 seminal Caribbean reworking of *The Tempest*, Une Tempête (1969), charged with the markedly homosocial politics of "Negritude", to more recent Bollywood film adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*, animated by campy song and dance routines, postcolonial authors have long engaged with gender crossing and non-normative sexuality as modes to critique the so-called colonial "Bard". These rewritings are what I call "loose translations" of Shakespeare – sexual implications of descriptor intended – because they foreground queer desire as a means to productively "loosen" "straight" and stable notions of national identity across different temporalities, histories, and geographies. And yet, literary critics have largely ignored the sexual dimension of these culturally hybrid works. My project highlights how this oversight is a trend in postcolonialism, rooted in a refusal of colonial pedagogies of Shakespeare that were used to construct differences between the sexually "civilized" West and those perverse and debauched "others". Ironically, in its effort to disavow what the West seemed to view as sexual deviancy, postcolonialism has actually reproduced colonially inflected erotophobias, rarely moving beyond heteronormative assumptions, even when queer desires, particularly the disciplining of them, remain integral to maintaining oppressive orders after Empire. My dissertation contends that any investigation into the ways in which world writers "write back" to Shakespeare must consider the representation of queerness in these translations – or it remains complicit in the continual subjection of bodies to colonial codes of sexual civility and dismisses contemporary modes of resistance against Eurocentric mores.

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When I think of the many people who have made this project possible, especially in the wake of my mother's recent passing, I find that Adrienne Rich's words are better than my own: "There must be those among whom we can sit down and weep and still be counted as warriors."

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This dissertation is about how we exist in the contradictory in-between spaces of identity. My migrant mother teaches me how to live and love in the liminal. This project is

because of her – she, who is steadfastly confident in my ideas, politics, and talents even when I am not. My mother, my single mother, my lonely mother, my lovely mother who, despite everything, wakes every morning to feed the birds. I refuse to put her in the past tense. For when I think I've lost her, I find her in the pages I write. This work, like all my work, is dedicated to her.

To the memory of my mother, Neeru Kumar

…She, she alone, was the universe
as she earned, like a galaxy, her right not to die,
defying the Merciful of the Universe,
Master of Disease, "in the circle of her traverse"
of drug-bound time. And where was the god of elephants,
plump with Fate, when tusk to tusk, the universe,
dyed green, became ivory? Then let the universe,
like Paradise, be considered a tomb. Mother,
they asked me, *So how's the writing*? I answered *My mother is my poem…* – Agha Shahid Ali, from "Lenox Hill"

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Introduction

Loose Translations

Sanjay Leela Bhansali's recent "masala" Bollywood translation of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet, Goliyon Ki Raasleela: Ram Leela* (*A Love Story of Bullets*) (2013), is illustrative of the liminal space between source and target that concerns all of the Shakespearean texts analyzed in this dissertation.[1] It represents what I see as a radical "in-betweenness" of time and space, unbound to temporally or geographically situated identity categories as they pertain to the intricate intersections of nation, gender, and desire. It is what I call a 'loose translation', sexual connotations of the descriptor intended, unfaithful to any politically 'straight' or stable reading of either Shakespeare or the postcolonial.

Like the other translations studied in the chapters that follow, *Ram Leela* is intensely interested in gender performance, particularly masculinity. As soon as the film begins, it quite literally announces the 'pissing contest' between the film's Guajarati Capulets and Montagues – the Saneras and the Rajadis – criminal clans who have been warring for nearly 500 years in the fictional Rajasthani village, Ranjaar, notorious for its

[1] For more on Bollywood genres see Tejaswini Ganti, *Bollywood: A Guide to Popular Hindi Cinema* (2004). Ganti writes: "A common terms used by the film industry, the India media, and audiences to describe many popular Hindi films is "masala." A Hindi word meaning a blend of spices, masala, when applied to films, refers to those than contain a potpourri of elements – music, romance, action, comedy, and drama – designed to appeal to the broadest range of audiences. However, not all Hindi films are masala films. Though it is a term used for a specific kind of film, It has become the become the basis for the most common stereotype held by Western commentators and viewers unfamiliar with the form: that Hindi cinema lacks genres of that multiple genres are combined within a single film. These perceptions reveal a misunderstanding of the concept of genre and are founded upon notions that genre categories specific to American or European cinema are somehow universal, timeless, and absolute" (139). *Maqbool*, a Hindi film translation of *Macbeth*, is the subject of chapter 3 of this dissertation. It is not "masala" film.

illegal sale of arms, tobacco, and pornographic films. It opens on present day to a young Rajadi boy urinating from his roof onto a group of Salera men congregating on the street below. With this act, the audience witnesses the first overtly aggressive shot fired in the film – and the first instance of a reoccurring trope that explicitly associates male genitals and loaded guns (see Fig.1). The Saleras pursue the boy, with the aim to kill him and his family. Glass bottles are thrown and bullets shower the marketplace. Meanwhile Ram, the film's moustache- clad masala hero – its Romeo figure – rides through the

Figure 1: Upon meeting Leela, Ram playfully shoots his water gun at her

other side of the village, reclined on a motorcycle. The tone of the film shifts as he initiates a visually stunning playful song-and-dance routine akin to that of a male peacock. He jumps off the bike, runs a fluttering hand through his hair, and repeatedly pivots and thrusts his pelvis, eroticizing his muscular abdomen. He blows a kiss and shimmies his bare-chest, singing "Watch!

Figure 2: Ram leads the peacock dance

Watch!" ("Dekho! Dekho!"). The spectacle is punctuated with male dancers sporting peacock feather headdresses – while Ram and his backup boys turn away from the camera to show-off their own "tail-feathers" like proud birds on display (see Fig. 2). Some of the dancing men even thrust their hips forward while holding guns between their legs. By strategically using the visual signifiers of guns and peacocks, *Ram Leela* registers the social, cultural, and political expression of maleness in Ranjaar.

Gender performance by and between men is not absent in the Shakespearean counterpart, however. *Romeo and Juliet* is most often associated with idealized, young, heterosexual love, but Romeo is primarily devoted to a rowdy crew of young men whose affairs and flirtations with women are performances of playboy bravado aimed at maintaining homosocial relationships. Jonathan Goldberg has highlighted the ways in which desire manifests itself in melodramatic performance in the play – as "a locus of all kinds of intensities and trascendentalities" – but is not directed at a singular, gender-fixed object as it is often read. Coupling in the play, he argues, follows a "series of substitutions" that "do not respect either the uniqueness of individuals or the boundaries of gender difference" ("Open" 303). For instance, at the opening of the play, Romeo is in

love not with Juliet, but with offstage and uninterested Rosaline, who his friends want him to replace with a "more responsive object" ("Open" 274). Juliet becomes this object; the "rose" that she claims "would smell as sweet" might be, Goldberg suggests, Juliet herself – "Rosaline renamed" ("Open" 275). Building on Goldberg's argument and engaging Eve Sedgwick's foundational work on the continuum between homosocial and homosexual bonds, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985), Carla Freccero points to the male bonds in the play, arguing that Romeo's closest companion, Mercutio, is one of the substitutions in the series. His death by Tybalt, she suggests in her companion essay to the play, "is replaced by, and foreshadows, the nexus of idealizing love and death realized more explicitly toward the end of the play by Romeo and Juliet" ("Romeo" 303). Thus, she concludes, the play invites a reading of it "as a romantic comedy gone awry, a story about a young man struggling to leave the homosocial pack whose bonds of blood (-sport) militate against the normative demands of adult heterosexual marriage" ("Romeo" 303). This struggle is apparent in Romeo's lovesickness over Rosaline; early, the play's emotional protagonist laments his attraction to the opposite sex, telling Benvolio, "In sadness, cousin, I do love a woman" (1.2.23).

In *Ram Leela* desire is strongly homosocial and is routed similarly via substitutions. Leela, the Juliet figure, is a replacement for "Bijal" – and also "Sejal" and "Kinjal"; Ram's brother sarcastically rhymes the names of random women. Moreover, these substitutions are likewise designed to maintain male bonds. Despite their peacock mating-dance, Ram's male friends are more often seen watching pornographic films together in a darkened room of the Rajadi video store than actually seducing women. In one key moment, as Ram tries to convince his boys to go to the Salera mansion for a Holi

celebration (Hindu spring festival of love and colors), he straddles a chair in front of the "dirty picture", literally substituting his body for the bodies on screen. Later in the film, when Ram is honeymooning with Leela after their secret wedding, his boys interrupt their romancing, separating the couple by distracting him and taking him out for a drunken night on the town. These bonds become aggressively misogynistic and violent when the Rajadi boys, determined to keep "Rambhai" – or "Ram brother" – to themselves, attempt to gang-rape Leela's sister-in-law, Rasleela, when she tries to have a mere conversation about uniting the then separated couple. The attempt illustrates the way in which Rasleela is, at once, punished for severing the bond and exploited in order to bring the all-male gang together.

And yet, in *Ram Leela*, masculinity – and the questioning of it –is not solely attached to men (making the attempted gang rape of Rasleela all the more a deliberate act aimed to consolidate powerful bonds between only men). The women in *Ram Leela* wield guns too – sometimes going off when those of the men do not. When Ram sees Leela for the first time in the film, he lifts his gun as if to shoot her – but instead of cowering, she lifts hers at him in response (see Fig. 3). When Ram shoots, his gun emits only an airy spray of water, visualizing Romeo's confession that Juliet threatens his masculinity (see Fig. 1). "O sweet Juliet," Romeo says in Shakespeare's play, "Thy beauty hath made me effeminate" (3.1.112-13). Ram's toy gun makes literal the way in which Leela's effeminizing beauty "softens" his "valor's steel" (3.1.14). Indeed, Ram surrenders to Leela and puts his hands up with a worried look on his face. Instead

Figure 3: Ram and Leela point their "guns" at one another

of firing at him, Leela lifts her hard, real, gun above her head and shoots a loud bullet into the sky, causing the crowd around her to erupt into celebratory dancing. She very sexily blows the smoke off the barrel. In the film, Leela's gun is, at all times, loaded. She is not coy about her desires, following Ram around the Holi celebration, suggestively tracing dark red vermillion along her neck and chest, erogenous zones. Per the Bollywood genre, a music score communicates a subtext and interior dialogue; "I've tasted blood," the background song goes, "By touching lips…This bloodlust has brought us together" ("Lahu munh lag gaya…Labon ke chhoone se…Bachke sab se lab ye rag se rag gaya").[2] Gender signification moves back and forth between the couple during this first meeting. The red vermillion is intended to look like blood, foreshadowing their deaths at the end of the film – but it also registers marriage. Married Hindu women decorate the part in their hair with vermillion to signify that they are wives. In the scene, Ram pretends to put it in his own hairline, performing a wife. Leela boldly kisses Ram in

[2] As Rachel Dwyer points out, Hindi film songs are "not for breaking up the narrative but for bringing together music, language and images to give a special depth and concentration to the imaginary, whether in the repetition of words in choruses, the outfits worn for the songs, the locations or the dancing and display of sexuality – all of which can be recalled later when just the humming of a tune evokes an imagined world". See *Bollywood's India: Hindi Cinema as a Guide to Contemporary India* (2014) pp. 34.

response, an onscreen sex act once banned in Indian cinema, let alone ever initiated by a woman. Leela is similarly forthright in Bhansali's translation of the balcony scene, when she pins Ram to her bed and teasingly emasculates him, commenting on his smooth, hairless, chest. (In another scene, she compares Ram's "butt" to a "garden"; she uses the English words). Her control of the scene is not unlike the film's Shakespearean counterpart. As Marjorie Garber argues, in Shakespeare's play Juliet "controls the balcony scene […] completely, declaring her own love rather waiting for Romeo's declaration" and continually calls the forbidden Montague back to her (*Shakespeare* 206). And like Juliet, Leela refuses her parent's preferred suitor, actively pursuing the object of her desire against the ideological forces of family, culture, and social law.

Leela, however, is not the only woman in the film who challenges stable gender signification. Leela's single mother, the head of the Saneras, is the terrifyingly overbearing and violent matriarch, Dhankor, to which everyone, including the preening men, defer. In one scene, recalling early Shakespearean revenge tragedy, she even cuts off Leela's ring finger, which has on it a wedding band symbolizing her daughter's treasonous marriage to Ram. Yet later in the film when Dhankor is injured in an assassination attempt, it is Leela who resolvedly takes her place as powerful matriarch of the Selera clan. Throughout the film, the Rajadis make fun of the Seleras for being run by women, joking, often crassly, that there are "no men" in the clan – but if ruthlessness is one of the definitions of masculinity for the Rajadis, they themselves are outdone when one of their own women, in a markedly anti-maternal gesture, gives up her toddler-aged son to the Suneras, risking his death, to induce a truce between the clans**.** This slippery gender crossing and trading illustrates Sedgwick's insistence on the implication of

women in triangulations of male homosocial desire; Sedgwick writes clearly from the outset of her study that homosociality "cannot be understood outside of its relation to women and the gender system as whole" (*Between* 1).

While the opening credits of the film claim that *Ram Leela* is "inspired by *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare" – and much of the Renaissance play is cleverly Indianized, even with some Sonnet- inspired rhyming Hindi – it remains unclear if Bhansali's interest in gender performance and male bonds is decidedly Shakespearean or the stuff of Bollywood convention. Indeed, all-male, campy, song-and-dance routines are expected in Indian film, particularly in mainstream, masala Bollywood blockbusters such as *Ram Leela*. In fact it is common to see men perform even more intimacy, sometimes prancing and dancing hand-in-hand. Such male closeness in India, onscreen as well as on the streets, is often regarded as cultural; it is considered normal and, therefore, decidedly non-erotic. Tourist information about India may claim that surprise or confusion over this handholding reveals both Western homophobia and Eurocentric notions of eroticism. However, the insistence that this male-male intimacy is purely straight is likewise phobic, betraying a refusal to acknowledge the possibility of same-sex desire's continuum – especially when this kind of closeness is culturally unacceptable between men and women. It may be that these public displays of affection illustrate how men may use other men as substitutes for the opposite sex that they are not allowed to casually touch or caress outside a bedroom. As the tourist blog StuffIndiansLike.com suggests:

If you are an Indian male visiting family in India, do not be alarmed if upon first meeting

> you after several years of absence your cousin…grabs your hand and holds it next to his thigh for a long period of time…This is the Indian custom of saying, "How have you been, brother? I'm not allowed to touch girls in my family's presence so this is as good as it gets." (StuffIndiansLike.com #170: Holding Hands, ellipses mine)

And yet the blog, set on explaining authentic Indian cultural mores, contradictorily thinks of intimacy via the stark European homosexual/heterosexual divide, insisting that this touching is "hetero".[3]

In addition to engaging this particular Indian male-male intimacy, *Ram Leela* engages another Bollywood convention, one that also speaks gender performance and male bonding: Hindu religious mythology.[4] *Ramlila* refers to the dramatic folk reenactment of the Hindu epic, *The Ramayana*, called "Ramlila" or "Ram's play", which takes place during the Hindu festival, Navatri. Like Shakespeare's plays, these reenactments have been traditionally performed by men only – as they followed religious restrictions regarding gender propriety and public performance. Moreover, audiences were likewise sex-segregated. Ramlilas perform the abduction of the goddess Sita by the demon villain Ravana. Sita's husband, the god Ram, is thus compelled travel to the island

[3] There are an array of tourist blogs on this subject, aimed at educating the Western traveler on how men holding hands in India "is not gay"; see StuffIndiansLike.com (http://www.stuffindianslike.com/2008/04/170-holding-hands.html), MojoTrotters.com (http://mojotrotters.com/2010/12/on-indian-men-holding-hands-in-public/), and Shalu Sharma Guide to India (http://www.shalusharma.com/men-holding-hands-is-not-gay-in-india) for examples. Also see Deepak Singh's recent essay on NPR.com "Learning The Hard Way Why You Shouldn't GetTooClose", an Indian perspective on space and touching between men in the United States: http://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2015/06/27/417415574/learning-the-hard-way-why-you-just-shouldnt-gettooclose.

[4] Despite *Ram Leela*'s religious disclaimer, mainstream visual culture in India has a long history of using Hindu religious mythology as its focus. Ganti outlines the ways in which the first Bollywood films were adaptations of Hindu mythology. Like the stage before, often men would play all the roles because it was deemed unacceptable for women to be on screen. When women performed, they were often sex workers. See *Bollywood: A Guide to Popular Hindi Cinema* (2004).

of Lanka to rescue his wife and defeat her captor. This journey to Lanka affords an opportunity to muse on and outline Hindu morals – falling along gendered lines. The epic ends with Ram questioning Sita's chastity during her time at the hands of another man. In order to test and prove her "purity" she is forced to walk through a fire, the argument being that if she emerges unburned, Ram knows that he wife has been chaste. This test is a shaming ordeal – and one that is a matter of life or death. In popular renditions, Sita is untouched by the fire's flames, she is nevertheless banished from Ram's kingdom. Although the trial and unfortunate result is problematically unfair, her chastity and obedience is celebrated. Ram and Sita's relationship is considered not one of pure duty; it is also a consensual love story. And Sita is often considered the 'good wife', on whom all Hindu women should model themselves.

These musings on the appropriate behavior and expectations of men and women, husbands and wives, continue into contemporary allusions to Ramlilas in Indian cinema. For instance, the gendered tradition of the Ramlila is critiqued for misogynistic co-opting of women's bodies and voices in the first installment of Deepa Mehta's filmic Elements Trilogy, *Fire* (1996), about two sisters-in-law living in a joint family home in New Delhi who become lovers. One scene in the film features a Ramlila, the moment in which Sita says she will walk through a fire. A man in drag performs Sita – and the scene's target audience is a group of men nodding their heads at the drag Sita's willingness to walk through the fire. *Fire* seems to argue that the man in drag does not transition to a woman's position, instead appropriating a stereotypical femininity in order to endorse misogynistic rescue and chastity narratives. These complex gender issues and performances that mark Ramlilas, both past and present, seem to be likewise translated

into Bhansali's film. These reenactments of the *Ramayana* are the namesake for Ram and Leela – and the film stages a metatheatrical Ramlila (play-within-a-play-within-a-film) to drive home its gendered resistance to traditional performances. As the film scrambles the Ramlila with 'the Bard's' famous love story, I wonder about how the male bonds and gender crossings represented in Bhansali's film might actually highlight and reinforce those in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* – rather than vice versa.

Indeed, it is difficult to locate an easy, fixed, whole original text for *Ram Leela*. Even if *Romeo and Juliet* is acknowledged as the primary source, the meaning and signification of Shakespeare's play itself is not singular. Bhansali's film borrows from a longer genealogy of plural *Romeo and Juliet*s in in Indian cinema – with pieces, lines, and scenes from the play fractured and remixed. For instance, *Aranyer Din Ratri* (1970), *Maro Charitra* (1978) (which has, itself, been remade more than three times), *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak* (1988), *1942: A Love Story* (1994), *Godfather* (1991), and *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (1998), all engage with *Romeo and Juliet*, but not necessary directly. The last, for example, provides a mediated allusion to Shakespeare's play via Baz Luhrmann's 1996 American film version, *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*. In *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* a young teacher lectures to her students about *Romeo and Juliet*, commenting on how it is an "eternal love story". She holds a book, but as she turns it around, she reveals that in her hands is not a copy of the play, but a press release for Luhrmann's film. *Ram Leela*, too, alludes to Lurhmann's gun slinging *Romeo + Juliet*, primarily through visual imagery that mirrors the '90s American counterpart. During the balcony scene, for example, Ram falls into a pool not unlike that of Lurhmann's in which Romeo and Juliet profess their love for one another. Moreover, Ram wears a turquoise flower patterned

shirt that echoes that worn by Lurhmann's Romeo. And Lurhmann's film is not the only non-Indian *Romeo and Juliet* intertext in the film; Ram and Leela share a filmic theme song that is reminiscent of that of Franco Zefirelli's 1968 Italian *Romeo and Juliet*. (And Shakespeare's play is indebted to it's own Italian source: Matteo Bandello's novella, translated into English verse as *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet* (1562) by Arthur Brooks and retold in prose in *Palace of Pleasure* (1567) by William Painter. In turn, Mandello's novella is also derivative, borrowing from a French version of the tale by Pierre Boaistuau.) In general, the forbidden love associated with Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* resonates with the main plots of many Indian films, with their focus on the tension between arranged marriages and love marriages. Richard Burt argues that this kind of "Shakespeare-play-within-the-film" gives us: "a diminished, fragmentary, even forgettable Shakespeare" (77). He suggests:

> A politics of lost significance rather than sly mimicry, subversive resignification, weakness rather than strength, fragmentation rather than contradiction, is thus built into Shakespeare's (dis)appearance in cinema. Both Shakespeare and postcolonials are marked in this medium as left-overs, obsolete, waste product, fringes, remains. (77)

In other words, Bhansali's translation of the "star cross'd lovers" associated with 'the Bard' does not represent a stable or singular version of either Shakespeare or Ramlilas.[5]

Thus, authorial authority effectively loosens as *Ram Leela* enacts the very broad signification of the term "translation," "bearing across" several varying temporal, geographical, and cultural contexts. This movement – non linear – between supposed

[5] This reading is influenced by Madhavi Menon's work on citing Shakespeare in Bollywood film, when she asks: "Why are we so obsessed with attributing Shakespeare to Shakespeare?" See *Unhistorical Shakespeare: Queer Theory in Shakespearean Literature and Film* (2008) pp.73

source and target invites the questions: can the desires, gender performances, and same-sex bonding at play in *Ram Leela* be definitively tied to either the desires represented in the British Renaissance text or the postcolonial text? And what might these desires, associated with Shakespeare, signify for contemporary understandings of cultural and national identity after British colonialism? This dissertation serves as a response to these inquiries into the temporal locations and political implications of desire in postcolonial translations of Shakespeare such as *Ram Leela*. [6]

It intends to intervene the field of global Shakespeare studies by foregrounding queer desire and gender crossing, which has largely been overlooked in considerations of contemporary translations of Shakespeare.[7] While "queering the Renaissance" remains an ongoing project, with its validity increasingly acknowledged, queering the postcolonial has generally been met with skepticism.[8] In his introduction to the anthology *Postcolonial, Queer: Theoretical Intersections* (2001) John C. Hawley outlines postcolonial theory's uneasy relationship with queerness, as it is often deemed "elitist" and "white" (2). Indeed Renaissance scholars of postcolonialism and race have elegantly parsed out and critiqued canonical representations of both European desires and Eurocentric stereotypes of normative and deviant sexualities – outlining how they contributed constructions of hierarchal racial, ethnic, and religious differences. However, I've noticed that as Shakespeare's texts become translated, moving from the early

[6] Carla Frecerro's *Queer/Early/Modern* (2006) and Kate Chedgzoy's *Shakespeare's Queer Children: Sexual Politics and Contemporary Culture* (1995) influence my readings of contemporary engagements with Shakespeare. Both books offer methodologies for thinking about representations of desire in translations of Shakespeare, both intended and not.

[7] For a recent overview of Postcolonial Shakespeare – particularly postcolonial work in the early modern period – see Jyotsna G. Singh and Gitanjali G. Shahani's essay "Postcolonial Shakespeare Revisited" in *Shakespeare* Vol. 6, No. 1, 2010.

[8] For a recent overview of the project of queering the Renaissance, see *Queer Renaissance Historiography: Backward Gaze* (2009) ed. Vin Nardizzi, Stephen Guy-Bray, and Will Stockton

modern context to the contemporary postcolonial context, written by 'world' writers, desire on the part of the native or (post)colonized subject is not studied with same level of intensity – even when those desires, particularly the disciplining of them, remain integral to maintaining social and political order after empire.[9]

Hawley points out, quoting Judith Butler, that queer theory aims to highlight how identity "is perfortmatively articulated as the effect of regulatory regimes – a constraint queer theory attempts to transgress, subvert, and disrupt" (1,3). As Eve Sedgwick has modeled in *Between Men*, queer theory examines desire, gender, and their regulation by political regimes – but beyond historically determined notions of rights-based identity and citizenship. She argues that queer theory must move along "two axes" (7). In addition to attending to "historically variable power asymmetries, such as class and race" Sedgwick insists on "an analysis of representation itself" (7). Madhavi Menon, too, advocates for an analysis of representation, against historically determined sexual identity categories or easily recognizable signifiers of embodied sexual difference (*Unhistorical* 22, *Shakesqueer* 2-3). Butler, Sedgwick, and Manon's queer methodologies do not seem incongruent with postcolonialism's theoretical resistance to regulatory power (colonialism), its focus on representation and its multifaceted "signifying practices" (to use Stuart Hall's famous phrase), or its challenge to historicism (advocating, instead, historiography). Nevertheless, Hawley suggests, postcolonial theory associates queer theory with traditional Western gay and lesbian discourses: its universalizing sexual categories, and its invitation to "come out", ontologically, as one of these categories (7). Between colonial sodomy laws that continue to regulate expressions of sexual desire in

[9] Or postcolonial theory is only attentive to recognizable markers of gay and lesbian identities, a point to which I return in my conclusion on Frank McGuiness.

postcolonies (which intersect with a longer history of Eurocentric attitudes that deemed any desire on the part of the native savage or deviant) and more contemporary neoliberal rights-based discourses espousing gay and lesbian identities, postcolonial theory with its central aim to deprivilege the West has largely been hesitant to think about "sexuality" on the part of the native or (post)colonized.

This association of sexuality studies (or sexuality itself) with the West is compounded, I think, when Shakespeare is invoked – for he is understood as white, male, British, and canonical. He is not native to postcolonial regions of the globe, those geographies that were and often remain sites of European territorial conquests and imperial control.[10] Indeed, Shakespeare's importation by the British into the colonies served to fortify colonial power, becoming texts on which to base civilizing missions, pushing notions of cultural and linguistic superiority at the expense of that of natives. In her seminal work *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (1989) Gauri Viswanathan argues, that the English literary text "functioned as the surrogate Englishman in his highest and most perfect state" (23). Following Viswanathan's study Poonam Trivedi, in her introduction to *India's Shakespeares* (2005), documents how Shakespeare's plays were deployed to further imperial governance in eighteenth and

[10] My definition of postcolonial is indebted to the work of Leela Gandhi who argues that the term can be seen "a theoretical resistance to the mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath" (4); see *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (1998). Ania Loomba has a similar definition: "colonialism can be defined as the conquest and control of other people's land and goods. But colonial in this sense is not merely the expansion of various European powers into Asia, Africa or the Americans from the sixteenth century onwards; It has been a recurrent a widespread feature of human history" (8). She sees as it separate from imperialism, which focuses more explicitly on capital. See *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (1998). I am also indebted to *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) in which Edward Said focuses on how literary studies is complicit with the colonial project as it effectively blurs the distinction between colonialism and imperialism. Similarly I am influenced by Deepika Bahri's discussion of the rise and developments of the field of postcolonial studies with regard to literature; see chapter 2, "A Practical Discipline" in Native Intelligence: Aesthetics, Politics, and Postcolonial Literature (2003).Finally what I call "Europe" or the "West" takes its definition from Dipesh Chakrabarty's book *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (2000).

nineteenth century India. She writes: "the setting up of European theatres in India went beyond the purely recreational purposes to reveal a promotional and propagandist function" (14). Similarly, in her study of Shakespeare's presence in Calcutta, Jynotna Singh has argued:

> the reproduction of Shakespeare's works occurred as part of a political strategy of exporting English culture…theatres were not only an important aspect of English social life in the growing colonial metropolis of Calcutta, but were also instruments of empire. Nourished by a steady stream of histrionic talent from London, and patronized by prominent colonial dignitaries, performances of plays by…Shakespeare kept alive the myth of English cultural refinement and superiority – a myth that was crucial to the rulers' political interests in India ("Different Shakespeares" 447, ellipses mine).

However, Indians themselves later became both Shakespearean actors and spectators and Singh highlights how "the Indian actor revealed the ambivalence of [British] cultural authority through a native strategy perhaps best described by Homi Bhabha as 'camouflage, mimicry, black skin/white masks'" ("Different Shakespeares" 446). She suggests "indigenous performances of the plays produced different, vernacular Shakespeares, mediated by the heterogeneous forces of race, language, and native cultures" ("Different Shakespeares" 446-7). And yet, the legacy of colonial associations with Shakespeare nevertheless remains. Singh concludes: "despite efforts to 'Indianize' Shakespearean performances, critical and pedagogical discourses in the Indian academy continue to be shaped by the myth of the universal bard – a myth that reveals and perpetuates a complicity between indigenous and imperial power structures in the

postcolonial era" (447). Ania Loomba has made a similar conclusion, pointing out "universal humanism put forward by institutionalized literary studies was useful (and continues to be useful) in the task of hegemonizing native elite culture" (*Gender* 21).

These pedagogies have had a profound impact on how formerly colonized subjects have come to negotiate the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, eroticism, intimacy, and coupling. In general, colonial pedagogies adhered to early modern notions of otherness – which were informed by the intersections of racial, gender, and sexual difference. Loomba writes that in the early modern period:

> …gender difference was…crucial to the development of race as a concept. Racial difference was imagined in terms of an inversion or distortion of 'normal' gender roles and sexual behavior – Jewish men were said to menstruate, Muslim men to be sodomites, Egyptian women to stand up while urinating, and witches and Amazons to be kin to cannibals. Patriarchal domination and gender inequality provided a model for establishing (and were themselves reinforced by) racial hierarchies and colonial domination. (*Shakespeare* 7, ellipses mine)

In the nineteenth century, these "inversions" were taught to and internalized by the very students othered by these stereotypes. And the teaching of Shakespeare continues to have an affect on the ways in which Indian students understand gender and sex. Loomba, has studied the direct effect of teaching *Othello* in India, where, in the 19th century she notes that "more students probably read *Othello* in the University of Delhi every year than in all British universities combined" ("Imperialism" 10). And she points out that, "Othello is described in terms of the characteristics popularly attributed to blacks during the sixteenth century: sexual potency, courage, pride, guilelessness, credulity, easily aroused

passion; these become central and persistent features of later colonial stereotyping as well" (*Gender* 52). The play has affected her own contemporary Indian female students; Loomba argues: "the much-vaulted theory of the spiritual chaos of Jacobean drama implicitly connected female disobedience with a degenerate social order, and thus contributed to silencing any notions of disobedience which actual women readers may harbor. In the Indian classroom, it commits another violence – that of *imposing universalized model*s of human relationships upon subaltern readers; paradoxically, *the points of intersection of their lives are carefully excluded*" (*Gender* 39, emphasis mine).

In the last several decades, Shakespeare's link to imperial strategies have been explicitly highlighted and resisted by an array of contemporary postcolonial writers and filmmakers who have "written back" to the linchpin of the colonial canon (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin). These postcolonial writings and films illustrate the correlation between Shakespeare's seemingly intrinsic 'universality'— or what Ben Jonson called his "for all time"-ness – with colonial expansion. With their "counter narratives," these writers translate and appropriate 'the Bard' in order to give voice to both marginalized characters in the plays and the native students of colonial pedagogy (Ramone 169-71). They aim to unfix Shakespeare's esteemed position in the colonial canon and global culture more generally. A host of literary scholars have explored how Shakespeare is, in the words of Thomas Cartelli, "repositioned" in these translations (1-32).[11] Christy Desmet describes this process in as one "in which post-colonial societies take over those aspects of imperial culture…that may be of use to them in articulating their own social

[11] See also the anthologies: *Post-Colonial Shakespeares* (1998) ed. Martin Orkin, *Foreign Shakespeare* (2004) ed. Dennis Kennedy, *Shakespeare and Cultural Traditions* (1994) ed. Roger Pringle, Tetsuo Kishi, and Stanley Wells, and *World-Wide Shakespeares: Local Appropriations in Film and Performance* (2005) ed. Sonia Massai. See also the journal, *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation.*

and cultural identities" (*Shakespeare* 19). In their introduction to *Native Shakespeares: Indigenous Appropriations on a Global Stage*, Craig Dionne and Parmita Kapadia summarize: "Shakespeare can be found at the heart of many of the most volatile nationalist and progressive debates about the nature of democratic government, the strictures of colonial and postcolonial identity, the construction of the nation-state, and the limits of Western liberalism" (2). Turning to *The Tempest*, they highlight key moments in the play cited by many scholars as a representative of the (post)colonial linguistic and cultural experience:

> Caliban's line, "You taught me language; and my profit on't/ Is, I know how to curse" is often quoted as expressing the inverse logic of postcolonial identity; but it is Caliban's adept insight into the dislocated politics of colonial literacy – "Remember/First to possess his books; for without them/He's but a sot" – that best summarizes the axiological strategy that resistance must assume in relation to the discursive nature of colonial authority and its residual hold on indigenous voices. Steal the books. Go to the source of Prospero's very power. And for those who live the effects of British colonialism, what better to steal than the very words, figures, and plots of the bard? (3)

Literary scholarship has taken these appropriations of Shakespeare seriously. Indeed, there are key counter narratives, such as Aimé Césaire's translation of *The Tempest, Une Tempête* (*A Tempest*), that are a touchstone in postcolonial studies, used as evidence of a "world literature" (instead of purely "English literature"). And what Gayatri Spivak calls "the Ariel/Caliban debate" continues to characterize the two kinds of relationships the (post)colonized has with their colonizer, based on the differing relationship the slaves –

Ariel and Caliban – have with their master, Prospero ("Three" 245). Shakespeare's association with colonialism and even the human have been significantly reconsidered by these scholarships.

However, a reconsideration of heterosexual assumptions remains markedly absent in these important reevaluations of the colonial canon – Jonathan Goldberg and Chantal Zabus's respective works on postcolonial translations of *The Tempest, Tempest in the Caribbean* (2003) and *Tempests after Shakespeare* (2002), notwithstanding. As I discuss at length in chapter one on Romesh Gunesekera's Sri Lankan translation of *The Tempest, Reef*, contemporary postcolonial translations of Shakespeare represent an array of complex desires – not just within the texts themselves, but also between Shakespeare and his appropriator. Yet engagements with non-normative or ideologically slippery desire are eschewed in many critical readings of these translations, as if attention to it would undermine anti-colonial politics.[12] For this scholarship always seems to be marked by some anxiety that the resistance is already too derivative of Western texts and Enlightenment discourses. Partha Chatterjee questions how far an anti-colonial politics can "succeed in maintaining a difference from a discourse that seeks to dominate it" (42). Cartelli has echoed this anxiety with regard to borrowing the Western 'bard' for anti-colonial ends: "Appropriation is not the one-way street some might like it to be; even self-constituted sponsors of Caliban bent upon acts of linguistic or cultural usurpation may be sucked into the vortex of the Shakespearean unconscious and made subject to a colonization of the mind" (17). It is likely that this possibility governs postcolonial

[12] For example, in his *Local Shakespeares: Proximations and Power* (2005) Martin Orkin beautifully writes about non-European and non-American renditions of Shakespeare in the first part of his book and discusses "encountering men in Shakespeare's late plays" in the second, giving attention to masculinity and gender crossing in *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*. However, he does not bring these two lines of thought together. In other words, his considerations of gender and desire do not extend to the postcolonial texts he features in his book.

study's reluctance to engage with native genders and desires that might resonate with the very colonial attitudes both reviled and exploited. However, in its effort to disavow what colonial ideologies understood as sexual inversion on the part of the native, or resist neoliberal gay and lesbian categories altogether, postcolonial theory has slipped into that "vortex", reproducing many of the same colonial erotophobias and heteronormative models of coupling.

However, the project of queering the Renaissance offers an approach to engaging with the West without giving it authorial primacy or uncontested colonial power. For the queer Renaissance work following Sedgwick's seminal reading of triangulated desire in the sonnets, "Swan in Love", is not invested in pedagogies of Shakespeare that deem him 'the Bard' or the purveyor of universal humanism. They resist the canonizers that make him the privileged signifier of the literary and the human, recognizing that the construction of the human, as a category, has been exclusionary – a main tenant of postcolonial studies. Those who have, historically, claimed to be human have deemed 'others' in need of civilizing, normalizing, disciplining, and punishment. Queering the Renaissance is not complicit in that project, celebrating, instead, what challenges it: the very desire deemed deviant. Moreover, it recognizes that Shakespeare lived a wrote during a time before the institutional division between homosexuality and heterosexuality – a Victorian identitarian distinction, dated at around 1800, that has had a lasting global impact on the ways in which same-sex desire has been regulated and policed. That Shakespeare died in 1616, nearly 200 years before the division, means that his works do not technically have any "homosexuals" in them in this chronological sense. Against literary critics who argue that inquiries into same-sex desire in the early modern period

are presentist and problematically anachronistic, queering the Renaissance insists that texts predating the modern regime of sexuality are actually sites through which to rethink how desire mediates constructions of human and non-human, self and other – difference in general, past *and present*.[13] Queer scholars of the Renaissance are also not invested in in further dividing sexualities into modern categories that can be easily identified, regulated, and policed.

Goldberg's *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* (1992), for example, takes the early modern term "sodometrie", which the Oxford English Dictionary describes as "obsolete", and ties it to more contemporary iterations of sodomy. He argues that the early modern word's "suggestiveness is not historically confined" (xv). It is a synonym for sodomy, but implies reviled difference more generally. Reading a passage from *The Anatomie of Abuses* (1583) Goldberg points out: "sodomy fastens [to] the false claims of other nations, dark races, the frozen east, the sultry south, the lower classes, and country lads" (xvi). It is any threat to the social order that structured early modern England, was imposed on the native inhabitants of "the New World", and continues to discipline deviance. Indeed, Goldberg brilliantly finds a rejoinder with 1990s U.S. foreign relations with Iraq's Saddam Hussein, whose name, homophonic with Sodom-y, was the bases for homophobic, Islamophobic, and masculinist nationalist jokes. For Goldberg, sodometrie/sodomy is what Michel Foucault called "utterly confused" before the advent of modernity and the modern regime of sexuality – and continues to mark contemporary negotiations of difference. Desire was

[13] These theorists seem to follow Michel Foucault when he writes, In *The History of Sexuality Volume 2*: "the term [sexuality] itself did not appear until the beginning of the nineteenth century, a fact that should be neither underestimated nor overinterpreted. It does point to something other than a simple recasting of vocabulary, but obviously it does not mark the sudden emergence of that to which 'sexuality' refers" (1).

then, as it is now, relational, defined and mobilized to structure and maintain power. Sodometrie/sodomy's threat can productively undermine order, Goldberg claims. And in his *Tempest in Caribbean*, Goldberg thinks about this possibility from the point of view of the colonized. Reading contemporary postcolonial translations of *The Tempest*, he proposes that postcolonial subjects may find "unheard-of resources in terms of denigration" by considering the "unthought possibility (from a colonialist's perspective) of embracing precisely what has been reviled" (Goldberg 5). Such an embrace, Goldberg suggests, is a refusal of the universal humanism of Enlightenment thinking that regards native peoples as less than human, backwards, and of need of a 'modern' civilizing education; it deprivileges Western norms.

Goldberg's work on sodometries illustrates how queer Renaissance work is attentive to eventful trends in histories of sexuality, but suggests that there is not a radical difference between past and present. It contends that the shiftiness of desire represented in Shakespeare's texts is not firmly relegated to a past before the modern sexual divide; even now, desire exceeds and often contradicts the modern identity categories that try to contain it. What's more, this contradiction works to challenge systems of domination. In *Unhistorical Shakespeare: Queer Theory in Shakespearean Literature and Film* (2008), Madhavi Menon has termed this past in the present and the present in the past, "homohistory". The term echoes the 'homo' in homosexuality to illustrate the sameness of past and present, as well as the ways in which desire and its categorization into sexual identities inform the way history is imagined. Homohistory maintains that the present is as unstable as the past – and there is a productive, nonlinear movement between the two. Menon's mascot for this movement is Shakespeare. She writes: "Shakespeare provides

the basis for homohistory by straddling chronological periods – he is the past-in-the-present – an old author generating new jobs. Shakespeare's multiplicity…militates against fixity, and exemplifies what it means to cross time and chronology, and history" – and I add, from a postcolonial viewpoint, geographical boundaries (5, ellipsis mine). The aim of homohistory, Menon makes clear, is not to "overthrow difference," but to "point to an incoherence that *resists final legibility*" (4, emphasis mine). Bhansali's *Ram Leela*, for instance, enacts the homohistory that she describes. In Menon's recasting, Shakespeare is celebrated not as 'the Bard', but as a figure that disrupts any notion of originary authorship. His texts – and their translations – actually challenge historicism, resisting the historical events and singular readings that are often imposed on them.

Queerness, then, in the words of Menon is not necessarily "a synonym for embodied homosexuality" as postcolonial theory seems to imagine it (*Shakesqueer* 2). Menon follows Lee Edelman when he argues that "queerness can never define an identity; it can only ever disturb one" (*No* 17). Thusly Menon argues, "Queerness is [both] bodily and that which challenges the limits of what we understand as the body" (*Shakesqueer* 7) What's more, it is entirely possible, Menon points out, to read "queer texts that have no gays in them" (*Shakesqueer* 4). As a result, queerness is detached from "its primary affiliation with the body and expands the reach of queerness beyond and through the body to a host of other possible and disturbing affiliations…For instance, a play on language might be as sexual as a kiss, or a tussle with authority can become as intense as sex…. [Queerness] cannot be confined to what we think of as same-sex sexuality" (*Shakesqueer* 4,7, ellipses mine).

Thus, like postcolonial theory, queering the Renaissance is not invested in the hierarchical sexual categories dictated by Western imperial regimes – before or after empire. And in line with postcolonialism and its close corollary, critical race theory, Goldberg and Manon's queer Renaissance work is not afraid to admit, "history is never fully over and never fully known" (Goldberg and Menon 1610). Indeed, Menon has celebrated postcolonialism for having a "temporal marker written into its very title," but it "depends on neither dates nor identities" ("Period" 231). "Far from being tied to the specific dates of independence of countries from the yoke of colonial rule," Menon points out, "postcolonialism focuses on systems of domination and resistance, no matter where and at what time they occur", it challenges "the imposition of fixed chronologies" ("Period" 231). Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin have outlined their critique of historicism in the introduction to their edited anthology *Post-colonial Shakespeares* (1998): "It is certainly true that we must not flatten the past by viewing it entirely through the lens of our own assumptions and imperatives. However, neither is it desirable, or even possible, entirely to unhook the past from the present…The relationship between societies separated in time is as complex as the one between societies that are spatially and culturally apart – in both cases 'difference' is a category that should neither be erased nor valorized" (6). Kim Hall takes the critique a step further, arguing that such a reading of history has racist implications; in her study *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (1995) she writes, "much of the seeming anxiety over the propriety of the use of the term 'race' in the Renaissance works to exclude an anti-racist politics. Dismissing the term 'race' altogether or imposing absolute historical

boundaries between early modern and contemporary constructions may allow us not to think about race either in Renaissance texts or in our classrooms" (255).[14]

Queer theory, Menon argues, would benefit by following the example of Renaissance scholars of colonialism and race when it comes to rethinking chronological difference. In turn, I argue that postcolonial theory could benefit from recognizing how the historicist impulse it critiques is undergirded by complicated desires that have a consequence for what is deemed 'normative' and what is not. Its inattention to desire in contemporary postcolonial literature is evidence of this oversight. Its aim to unsettle Western domination can be buttressed by recognizing the ways in which desire is pivotal to the construction of all kinds of differences – and that the desires of (post)colonial subjects have the potential to undo oppressive social and political orders. Thus, when brought together, queer and postcolonial theories can more comprehensively loosen and resist the Enlightenment-based imperative to fix culture, nation, bodies, and time into singular competing categories and histories.

HomoHybridity

The postcolonial translations of Shakespeare in this dissertation are, in the words of Homi Bhabha, "hybrid" works, arising from the interaction between indigenous and colonial culture. For Bhabha, hybridity occurs when the discourse of colonial authority cannot control meaning and finds itself open to the trace of the language of the other. He

[14] Hall begins her study with a caveat in response to accusations of anachronism. She writes: "Despite contemporary disagreement about the very existence of 'races' and therefore the viability of 'race' as a term in cultural or literary studies, I hold onto the idea of a language of race in the early modern period and eschew the scare quotes so popular in contemporary writings on race. The easy association of race with modern science ignores the fact that language itself creates difference within social organization and that race was then (as it is now) a societal construct that is fundamentally more about power and culture than about biological difference" (6).

writes in *The Location of Culture* (1994): "Hybridity is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that secure the 'pure' and original identity of authority.) Hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects" (159). Indeed, for Bhabha, the effect of colonial power is not "the noisy command of colonialist authority or silent repression of native traditions" but "the production of hybridization" that "enables a form of subversion", turning "the discursive conditions of dominance into the ground for intervention" (154).

Thus, for Bhabha, hybridity is more than the mere mixing of unlike things that the term suggests; it is an active challenge to conditions of domination – all conditions. For it deprives "the imposed imperialist culture, not only of the authority that it has for so long imposed politically, often through violence, *but even of its own claims to authenticity*" ("The Postcolonial" 57-8, emphasis mine). The postcolonial translations of Shakespeare in this dissertation, then, subvert both what is understood as colonial and postcolonial. Their engagement with Shakespeare is neither imperialistic nor nationalistic – resisting both programs that have aimed to contain desire and fix identity.

Bhabha extends his notion of hybridity, expounding on a "Third Space": "unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew" (*Location* 55). The postcolonial texts in this dissertation remind us that, to use Bhabha's words, "it is the 'inter' – the cutting edge of translation and renegotiation, the in-between space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture" (*Location* 56). They explore the

Third Space, eluding "the politics of polarity" and changing signs (*Location* 56). In this way the postcolonial translations of Shakespeare reveal an infidelity to *both source and target*. They reveal how, following Robert J.C. Young, hybridity becomes "a third term which can never in fact be third because, as monstrous inversion, a miscreated perversion of its progenitors, it exhausts the differences between them" (23).

Hybridity's "inversion", its "perversion" is very literally studied in this dissertation, which is invested in the gendered and sexual connotations of Young's descriptors. Young points out that "hybridity will always carry with it an implicit politics of heterosexuality" – the interaction between difference (25). Yet this implication slips. Writing with regard to racial mixing he highlights: "at one point, hybridity and homosexuality did coincide to become identified with each other, namely as forms of degeneration. The norm/deviation model of race as of sexuality meant that 'perversion' such as homosexuality became associated with degenerate products of miscegenation" (26). I suggest that the translations in this dissertation are 'homohybrid' texts that do not shy away from the deviance associated with both hybridity and homosexuality; they are doubly deviant. Their hybridity, of course, destabilizes 'the Bard' – pushing against colonial pedagogies and liberal humanist interpretations of his texts. But they also destabilize the postcolonial. Their deviance – from a staunch anti-colonial point of view – is their openly ambivalent relationship with Shakespeare. The term 'ambivalence' in postcolonial studies is most often associated with Bhabha's notion of colonial ambivalence, the failure of mimicry. However, the colonized also have ambivalent and conflicting desires, which result from the failure of seemingly unequivocal anti-colonial programs that can become their own calcified, exclusionary ideology. I argue that the

male authors of these postcolonial translations enact a complicated, homoerotic, and open embrace of Shakespeare – somewhat enacting what Young calls "the implicit homo-erotic practice" of the "imperial game" (26).[15] They do not explicitly "write back" to the colonial canon with a prescriptive anti-colonial program that, as I highlight in chapter one, are often masculinist and heterosexist, however unknowingly. These translations have rarely been read in terms of desire – yet all of them, like *Ram Leela*, represent strong homosocial bonds between men. The postcolonial translations I've chosen to unpack serve to highlight the prevalence of these bonds not Shakespearean translations and postcolonial literature more generally– and yet, as I will outline, postcolonial theory has routinely shied away from their erotic dimensions. I bring these homoerotic desires to the fore.

These translations and my attention to men, male performance, and male bonds do not foreclose femininity and women, however. I follow Eve Sedgwick in *Between Men* when she makes clear that: "the shapes of sexuality, and what counts as sexuality, both depend on and affect historical power relationships. A corollary is that in a society where men and women differ in their access to power, there will be important gender differences, as well, in the structure and constitution of sexuality" (2). The texts in this dissertation reveal that maleness is not stable – and that while women are conduits between men, they are nevertheless agents, able to challenge exclusionary and sexist homosociality. I also maintain that while homophobia and sexism are different phenomenon, their intersections cannot be denied; for femininity – expressions of femaleness – whether attached to men or women, is often reviled in both. I wonder about the extent to which women's experiences and accesses to power would shift as insidious

[15] See also Joseph Bristow's *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World* (1991)

forms of homophobia loosen. I maintain, with Sedgwick, that, "Our society could not cease to be homophobic and have its economic and political structures remain unchanged" (4).

"Not Like a Native Speaker"

I describe the texts in this dissertation as postcolonial 'translations' of Shakespeare – despite the fact that in several of my texts the linguistic transference is seemingly between the same language – English to English. Thus 'adaptation' may appear to better describe the movements between Shakespeare's works and these postcolonial texts because the mediums shift from one sign system to another – a Shakespeare play becomes novel in the first chapter, a short story in the second, a film in the third, and a contemporary play in the conclusion. Moreover, different characters, plots, and settings mediate the Shakespearean text. (I would suggest that the movement goes the reverse direction too.)[16] However, I prefer 'translation' precisely for its linguistic resonances.[17] The meanings of 'translation' have varied over time, but Roman Jakobson's delineation remains influential. He suggests that there are three language-oriented modes. They are 'endolinguistic' or 'intralingual' translation (referring to the rewording or a text within the same language like the English postcolonial works in this dissertation or modernized Shakespeare in English), 'interlingual' translation (the act of rewording between two languages), and intersemiotic translation (when a verbal system is converted into the signs of a nonverbal sign system). However the definition of 'translation' is not

[16] For more on the vocabulary of adaptation see Linda Hutcheon *A Theory of Adaptation* (2012) and Julie Sanders *Adaptation and Appropriation* (2005) (of Shakespeare specificall7 see pp. 46-62).
[17] For more on how translation theory can advance thinking about adaption (particularly film adaptation) see Lawrence Venuti "Adaptation, Translation, Critique" in the *Journal of Visual Culture* Vol 6(1) pp 25-43.

limited to these traditional options. Michael Neill argues that translation also entails "trading between cultures, between different ways of imagining the world, involving both diachronic shifts and delicate synchronic adjustments" (400). Indeed, more recently, translation scholarship has found it difficult to untangle the task of linguistic translation from the cultural transference that occurs as languages move from one to another. As a result, the term translation is often used as a metaphor for cultural interaction itself. [18]

And yet, while much as been made about this last idea, Gayatri Spivak forcefully argues in her essay "The Politics of Translation" that, "if you are interested in talking about the other, and/or in making a claim to be the other, it is crucial to learn other languages," pointing to the differences between the metaphor of translation and interlinguistic translation itself ("379).[19] For, it goes without saying that colonial expansion contributed to the annihilation of native languages – and English remains the global language of publishing and elite literacy. It has been a hegemonic force that works to displace others and otherness. It has worked to eradicate one culture (or nation) in the name of another.

Spivak's point resonates with an early modern context, one that has had a lasting impression on Western representations of the other. Margreta De Grazia has beautifully outlined the anxiety over losing language and, therefore, national identity as represented in Shakespeare's texts, foregrounding Thomas Mowbray's banishment in *Richard II*, in particular his lament: "The language I have learnt these forty years, my native English,

[18] For more on the relationship between translation and (post)colonial contact, see Susan Bassnett and Harish Travedi's introduction to their edited anthology *Post-Colonial Translation: Theory and Practice* (1999).

[19] For a detailed outline and analysis of the differences between cultural translation, post-colonial writing at translation, and literary interlinguistic translation, see Maria Tymocsko "Post-colonial writing and literary translation" in *Post-Colonial Translation: Theory and Practice* (1999) ed. Susan Bassnett and Harish Travedi.

now I must forgo" (1.3.153-4). De Grazia argues that while "the English of Shakespeare's plays was hardly the universal language it would one day become…on the stage of Shakespeare's Globe…English was spoken worldwide. Whether the plays take place in the ancient world of Ephesus, Rome, and Egypt or in the modern world of Venice, Vienna, and Elsinore, the common tongue is English (49, ellipses mine). Shakespeare's stage catered to its primarily English-speaking writer(s), actors, and audience. But as Mowbray's anxiety over the loss of English reveals, the transhistorical and worldwide English on Shakespeare's stage may also illustrate a proto-colonial view of linguistic and cultural English expansion. Today films in English, particularly produced in the United States, continue in this trajectory – using different languages primarily to represent otherness. Yet, these very well funded mainstream films enjoy a global audience comprised of those very 'others'. Therefore, my project does not dispute Spivak's point and, in fact, fully supports her argument. Both my study of *Ram Lila* here and my third chapter on Vishal Bhardwaj's Hindi film translation of *Macbeth*, *Maqbool*, works toward that aim (although Spivak might remind me that Hindi is likewise a dominant language that contributes to the eradication tribal languages and dialects in India.)

However, I maintain that it is equally important to remember, as these postcolonial English texts do, that English is not one – it is plural. Its intralinguistic dimension is ripe for hybridizing work – as my readers will see played out in my second chapter on Salman Rushdie's short story "Chekov and Zulu" a *Star Trek* inflected translation of *Coriolanus*. In other words I argue that the postcolonial translations in this

dissertation are written in an "other language" that likewise needs to be, in the words of Spivak, "learned". [20]

Rey Chow, in *Not Like a Native Speaker: On Language as a Postcolonial Experience* (2014), offers a lens through which to read monoligualism. She draws attention to the ways in which the "native" speaker is imagined as a repository of fabricated linguistic origins and unities. She writes:

> The colonized's encounter with the colonizing language…has typically been represented in postcolonial studies in negative terms, as the severance of an original connection (the mother tongue) and as the deprivation of linguistic autonomy, spontaneity, and integrity. Inevitably perhaps, this overwhelming sense of a negative imprint has likewise shaped by intuitive reactions to the subject, though not without ambivalence. To that end, let me make a counterintuitive proposal: notwithstanding the shock, humiliation, rage and melancholy involved, the colonized's encounter with the colonizer's language offers a privileged vantage point from which to view the postcolonial situation, for precisely the reason that this language has been imposed from without. (14)

By embracing instead of countering that "negative imprint" – allowing it to be a generative position – Chow suggests that we might recast a native language as, borrowing Jacques Derrida's terms, a "prosthetic" or add-on rather than an stable origin (33). In his autobiographical account of his relationship to the French language, *Monolingualism of the Other, or the Prosthesis of Origin* (1996), Derrida challenges the notion of an

[20] My reading is influenced by Jonathan Goldberg's essay "English" in which he outlines the dilemmas and complexities of teaching English in the face of canon-driven anthologies. See "English" (2004) in *EHL* Vol. 71, No. 2.

originary, "native" language. He does not, despite spending his childhood and adolescence in a French colony, claim a more orginary language. He writes:

> I am monolingual. My monoligualism dwells, and I call it my dwelling; in feels like one to me, and I remain in it inhabit it. It inhabits me. The monolingualism in which I draw my very breath is, for me, my element. Not a natural element, not the transparency of the ether, but an absolute habitat. It is impassable, *indisputable*. I cannot challenge it except by testifying to its omnipresence in me. It would have preceded me. It is me. For this monolingualism is me. (1 original emphasis,)

He repeats what he calls a "performative contradiction" throughout his memoir: "I only have one language; it is not mine" (2,1). Yet reminds his readers: "I have never spoken a 'foreign language; "When I said that they only language I speak is not mine, I did not say it was foreign to me" (5, original emphasis). His experience with language, he seems to suggests, enacts deconstruction – livable theory. He pushes against the poles of a "native" and a "foreign" language, a polarity that governs discourses around colonialism's linguistic dominance. Chow glosses this idea:

> Derrida argues that otherness as such must be recognized as the unpredictable that resides within language or that constitutes language itself. Language as something that no one, not even the master and colonizer can possess; language as what inherently undoes any attempt at appropriation and property ownership; language as a type of translation involving only target but no originary languages: these reflections compose what for Derrida is the more profound sense "the monolingualism of the other". (*No*t 29)

And yet, Derrida also makes a strange, Universalist, over-general, and perhaps too-contradictory claim. Early in his book he argues that: "All culture is originally colonial" and "Every culture institutes itself through the unilateral imposition of some 'politics' of language" (39). Chow highlights that "Derrida's argument is not exactly helpful regarding the ongoing inequities among languages as they are lived on the ground…These inequities are caused, for instance, by the dominance of English and French in formerly colonized lands, where such dominance continues to this day to exercise functions of mental subordination, social stratification, and cultural stigmatization" (*Not* 32, ellipses mine). Instead of dismissing him outright, though, Chow challenges Derrida with his own logic. She suggests:

> Reading as Derrida himself has taught us to read, might we not insist on going further by deconstructing (the positing of) this "originary colonial" condition?... That is to say, might we not treat this condition of coloniality as a prosthetic add-on rather than, in line with Derrida's suggestion, as the authentic origin, as the original? "A culture never has a single origin," Derrida writes in his reflections on the identity of Europe (in the early 1990s). *Does not this mean that there must be some other origins to a culture besides coloniality?* What would coloniality look like if and when it is recast as a prosthesis rather than assumed as essentially originary – especially in terms of language politics and practices? (Not 33, ellipsis mine, original emphasis and parenthesis)

As this dissertation reads postcolonial translations of Shakespeare – their use of English and the English colonial canon – it sees both nativism and coloniality as prosthetics. To answer Chow's question, coloniality as prosthesis looks like these translations showcased

here. In line with Walter Benjamin's understanding of translation in his essay "The Task of the Translator" (1923), my response to Chow suggests that, "A translation, instead of resembling the meaning of the original, must…[make] *both* the original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language, just as fragments are part of a vessel" (emphasis mine).

A Defense of Infidelity

In addition to the linguistic connotation of the term 'translation', I co-opt the term to challenge the metaphorics of fidelity that mediate the task. For translation is conventionally thought of in terms of fidelity – and an ideal translation is faithful to the original. Philip E. Lewis summarizes that in "the conventional view" the translator is expected to "produce a version of the original that reads well or sounds right in the target language, but also to understand and interpret the original masterfully so as to *reproduce its messages faithfully*" (Lewis 260, emphasis mine). By implication, an unfaithful translation is dismissed as a failure. The repudiation of infidelity suggests that fidelity is the only viable relationship a translation can have with the original, foreclosing the artistic and political possibilities made available by unfaithful translation. This project, by reinterpreting the task of translation from a postcolonial and queer position, shifts the focus of translation from fidelity to infidelity. 'Unfaithful' or 'failed' translations, as I will demonstrate, challenge the privileged position of fidelity and therefore the various hierarchal relationships created between original and translation**.** I argue that the metaphors of 'infidelity' and 'failure' mark the relationship that postcolonial texts have with Shakespeare, and, by extension, the (post)colonial experience.

The term ‘translation’ commonly connotes the communication of the meaning of a source language text by means of a target language. However, it also signifies transference – of one person, place, culture, or condition to another. It suggests, as well, a general transformation, change, or mutability. And in each situation, the task of translation is narrated by linear progression; the original is first, the translation, second. A translation is therefore in a hierarchical relationship with the original whereby the translation is always thought of as secondary, a reproduction, a copy.

Feminist critics, such as Sherry Simon and Lori Chamberlain, argue that the metaphors that describe the task of translation are framed in hierarchical binaries – *original* and *translation*, *production* and *reproduction* – that comply with normative gender positions. The original, characterized by being an ostensibly primary production is coded masculine while the translation, thought of as derivative and therefore characterized by its reproduction, is coded feminine. Both translations and women are subordinate in their respective hierarchies. Similarly, translators are not considered authors in their own right; Simon explains, “translators are handmaidens to authors, women inferior to men” (1).[21] And what’s more, the masculine author of the original is not subject to the terms of fidelity because “in the original” Chamberlain argues, “is what is natural, truthful, and lawful”; the feminized translation, as a copy of the original, is “artificial, false, and treasonous” (307). The translation is, in a sense, married to the original, its faithful wife. This analogy to wedlock is even more striking when the feminized translation is imagined as a “domesticated” version of the original.

[21] Jonathan Goldberg writes beautifully about how women translators in the Renaissance used the task of translation to move outside the restriction of domesticity and affirmed female sexuality for a range of desires. See his book *Desiring Women Writing: English Renaissance Examples* (1997)

While a translation is to be faithful to the original, in most cases, is not to be a literal translation, however. It is to rather, in the words of Lewis, "read well" and "sound right" in the target; it should conform to standard target language usage. In other words, it is to be transparent. The target's transparency is traditionally imagined as being at odds with fidelity on account of the idea that a translation that is overly attentive to the target cannot possibly be faithful to the original. The translation, however, is expected to be faithful to all the linguistic possibilities of the target – its grammar, syntax, and figures of speech. Transparency is thus its own version of fidelity – faithful to the idiom of the target language.

This fidelity between translator and target, as Lori Chamberlain points out, is likewise gendered. In this case, the translator is married to the target. The target is the feminized 'mother tongue', the translator is her faithful and protective husband, and the translation is their child. Chamberlain explains: "The translator, as father, must be true to the mother/language in order to produce legitimate offspring; if he attempts to sire children otherwise, he will produce bastards" (309). [22] Thus, the relationship between translator and target is one that mirrors a heteronormative family structure that aims to reproduce the valorized 'mother tongue'/target by way of the "legitimate" translation/child. Any adultery will produce a "bastard" translation that does not adequately reflect the target. However, concern over "bastard" translations is a concern over the purity of the 'mother tongue' and therefore the paternity of the text. Thus "'legitimacy' has little to do with motherhood and more to do with the institutional

[22] Chamberlain critiques Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher who asked: "Who would not like to permit his mother tongue to stand forth everywhere in the most universally appealing beauty each genre is capable of? Who would not rather sire children who are their parents' pure effigy, and not bastards?...Who would suffer being accused, like those parents who abandon their children to acrobats, of bending his mother tongue to foreign and unnatural dislocations instead of skillfully exercising it in its own natural gymnastics " (quoted in Chamberlain 309, original ellipsis).

acknowledgement of fatherhood," Chamberlain argues, "The question 'Who is the real father of the text?' seems to motivate these concerns about the fidelity of translation" (309).

This sort of fidelity to the target has, historically, justified the depredation of other languages and texts with the aim to reproduce the superior 'mother tongue'. It moved colonial education systems to, in 1831, make English the official language of instruction in Ireland and, in India, inspired TB Macaulay's "Minute on Indian Education" (1835) which declares that "the dialects commonly spoken among the natives of India, contain neither literary nor scientific information, and are, moreover, so poor and rude that, until they are enriched from some other quarter, it will not be easy to *translate* any valuable work into them" (emphasis mine). The Minute concludes that, "English is better worth knowing than Sanscrit or Arabic". British colonialism depreciated the original native languages as English became the target for the colonies. Thus Sanskrit and Arabic texts were translated into English and very few English texts were translated into original, native languages. The "valuable work" that Macaulay desires to "translate" to the Indian population is, of course, colonial ideology. Colonialism linked linguistic translation to cultural translation with the hope that the colonized could be translated through the English language – made to be a copy, a reproduction of the colonial culture.[23] For Tejaswini Niranjana, translation is the overarching metaphor for the unequal power relationship that informs the condition of colonized; she argues that (post)colonial subjects are always "living in translation" (46).

[23] In *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha writes about failed mimicry, that the colonizers actually maintained power because they did not want natives to accede to the colonizer's position. The natives were, in his words, "not white, not quite" (121-131)

Thus, Lori Chamberlain concludes that, "the meaning of the word 'fidelity' in the context of translation changes according to the purpose translation is seen to serve in a larger political context" (311). In all contexts, though, the metaphorics of fidelity that describe translation reveal an anxiety about authority, authorship and, therefore, stable identity. Like all identity forming processes, translation is gendered and sexualized. In each context outlined above, the translation is necessarily secondary – metaphorized as a woman and/or a child, informing the image of the colony – to maintain a hierarchical power relationship. [24]

However, these hierarchies are only upheld if adultery does not take place during the translation. The translation is always situated between the original and the target – and must have, therefore, a relationship with *both*. A translation is always committing infidelity and these hierarchical structures inevitably fail. Indeed Philip E. Lewis concludes, "failure – incompletion, distortion, infidelity – that is the inescapable lot of the translator" (261).[25] The task of translation necessitates at least two partners; infidelity – failure to be monogamous – is inevitable.

Thus if the original and target are respectively made "law", translation, by way of its unavoidable infidelity to the source and target, risks transgressing the law. Similarly, translation's infidelity runs the risk of producing "bastard" children that will not reflect the linguistic significations and structures of the parental language. Hence, fidelity might

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[24] For more about the way in which the colony was feminized and infantilized, see Ania Loomba *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (1998) pp 128-144 , Jyotsna Singh *Colonial Narratives/ Cultural Dialogues: 'Discoveries' of India in the Language of Colonialism* (1996) and Anne McClintock *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (1995)

[25] Lewis argues for "abusive translation" as a way to reconcile with translation's inevitable failure – one where a translation illustrates the ways in which the original and the target resist each other. As a translation is already figured as a woman, "abuse" seems to be a disturbing metaphor. Domestic violence further problematizes the already hierarchical binaries between original, target, and translation.

be imagined as a powerful construction used in an attempt preserve the law, legitimacy, and authority that is always threatened by the act of translation.

It is no surprise then that translation is framed by gendered metaphors that are bound by relationships that recall marriage and the heteronormative family structure. Marriage is a privileged relationship that presupposes fidelity and legitimate procreation – and is, most importantly, sanctified and rewarded by the state because it is designed to preserve the law. As Michael Warner points out in *The Trouble with Normal* (1999) "no other form of intimacy or sexuality has the power to couple with the state" (103). Warner heatedly argues that marriage is an institution that is designed to police and discipline relationships that lie outside of it; he writes that marriage gives "validation, legitimacy, and recognition" to some relations, while "invalidating, delegitimating, or stigmatizing other relations, needs, and desires" – whose participants include but of course are not limited to "adulterers, prostitutes, divorcees, the promiscuous, single people, unwed parents, those below the age of consent" (89, 99).[26] I argue, then, that translation's infidelity, promiscuity, and adultery – its unwed coupling – might be imagined as queer. Its failure is also a failure of the heteronormative gender positions on which the myth of faithful translation depends. Indeed translation as a form of writing is, like queer relationships, "stigmatized" because, in words of, Lawrence Venuti, "it occasions revelations that question the authority of dominant cultural values and institutions" (Venuti 1). That is to say, translations, like queerness, are contingent and relational to an authorial norm.

[26] Here Warner seems to echo "Friendship as a Way of Life" in which Foucault writes: "homosexuality threatens people as a 'way of life' rather than as a way of having sex" (310), thus suggesting that same-sex relations are viewed as being 'queer', as threatening societal and political norms and conventions.

The word 'queer,' itself has resonances with translation, its movements. As Eve Sedgwick outlines in *Tendencies* (1993), 'queer' "means *across* – it comes from the Indo-European root –*twerkw*, which also yields the German *quer* (transverse), Latin *torquere* (to twist), English *athwart*." Moreover, she writes, "queer is a continuing moment, movement, motive…The immemorial current that *queer* represents is…relational and strange" (xii, original emphasis, ellipses mine). The movements across, highlighted by Sedgwick, are not straight, forwardly progressing movements; rather, "transverse," "twist," and "athwart" are characterized by oblique, oppositional, back and forth and crisscrossing actions. For example, the word 'athwart' signifies, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, an "opposition to the proper or expected course; crosswise, perversely awry". Likewise failed translation thwarts and perverts the expected course, the linear and sexist temporality of translation that situates translation in its secondary position. Its failure – its infidelity – challenges the primacy and reproduction of the authorial original and/or target.[27]

Queer theory is invested in such failure – the failure of heteronormativity and the seemingly stable hierarchical identity categories on which it is established. *In The Queer Art of Failure* (2011), Judith Halberstam explains that failure is:

> a way of refusing to acquiesce to dominant logics of power and discipline and as a form of critique. As a practice, failure recognizes that alternatives are embedded already in the dominant and that power is never total or consistently indeed failure can exploit the unpredictability of ideology and its indeterminate qualities…. The queer art of failure turns on the impossible, the improbable, the unlikely, and the

[27] For more on queer temporality, see *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (2005) in which Judith Halberstam argues that, "Queer uses of time and space develop, at least in part, in opposition to the institutions of family, heterosexuality, and reproduction" (1)

> unremarkable. It quietly loses, and in losing it imagines other goals for life, for love, for art, and for being. (88)

Following Halberstam, I argue that failed translation one that does not uphold its marriage to the original or to the target; it lies somewhere in between. When a translation fails, the mutually constituting gendered categories of original and translation, author and translator, and produced and reproduced are made indistinct as translation 'moves across', blurring one category into another; when these categories are no longer stable, they can no longer easily maintain law, legitimacy, and authority – opening a plethora of political and artistic possibilities that can neither be dubbed easily Shakespearean or postcolonial.

An Overview of the Chapters

Chapter one – "'Do you love me master?' The Erotics and Politics of Servitude in Romesh Gunesekera's *Reef*" – studies Romesh Gunesekera's translation of *The Tempest* (1610) into his bildungsroman *Reef* (1994), told from the point of view of an Ariel figure named Triton who lives with and loves his master, the Prospero figure Mister Salgado, through the violent civil war in Sri Lanka. I argue that Gunesekera engages with a figuration of Ariel against the dominant anti-colonial attitudes that have tended to champion Caliban over Ariel as a symbol of resistance in what is now popularly known in academic discourses as the "Ariel/Caliban debate". In *Reef*, Gunesekera does not snub Ariel's less antagonistic relationship with Prospero. Instead, through Triton, I argue that he deeply explores the ways in which the experience of subordination can be

accompanied by a complex, even contradictory, ambivalence toward mastery. In the chapter I highlight multiple Shakespearean and early modern contexts in Gunesekera's novel, focusing on Triton's homoerotic enactment of Ariel. I showcase the ways in which Ariel's "love" is political, an act of agency – and outlines how it might be used to critique Frantz Fanon's erotophobically based notion of colonial "inferiority complex". My aim in this opening chapter is to investigate the ways in which this "love" associated with Ariel signals the limits of the mainstay model of resistance – which, in its effort to disavow what was viewed as sexual perversion or pathology, has actually reproduced similar colonially inflected erotophobias. Moreover, I highlight how Caliban likewise loved his master before Prospero accused him of attempted rape. Ultimately I consider how Gunesekera's translation of Ariel's "love" and submission might challenge and nuance the masculinist and homophobic Ariel/Caliban" debate; I suggest that there might be unthought-of resistance in Ariel's homoerotic submission.

Chapter two – "'Rather say, I play the man I am': Role Play and Fantasy in Salman Rushdie's 'Chekov and Zulu'" – expands on a passing reference to a performance of *Coriolanus* in Salman Rushdie's *Star Trek* inflected short story, "Chekov and Zulu" (1994) about the events of the Punjab Crisis. While allusions to Shakespeare's works are pervasive in Rushdie's novels and short stories, providing intertextual commentary for postcolonial topics such as decolonization, nation formation, and migration, they are often overlooked. Such is the case with this fleeting Shakespearean citation. Critics have given attention to the story's extraordinary appropriation of the popular American science fiction television series to feature Indian, not white, men as the show's main heroes. These readings highlight the lack of people of color in the genre of

sci-fi, yet they dismiss the fact that Shakespeare is actually an integral component of *Star Trek* culture. Indeed, many episodes have reworked plays and others are titled after lines within the plays, and I suggest that Rushdie cleverly engages with these Shakespearean dimensions of the show. Thus, my chapter argues that "Chekov and Zulu" is written as a *Star Trek* rendition of *Coriolanus* – Shakespeare's play about state demands, of a hero made enemy, and the homoeroticism of military company. Based on archival research – studying the three drafts of the story housed in Emory University's Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Books Library – I have determined that the citation is deliberate, therefore providing an important subtext for its representation of the anti-Sikh sentiments that characterized India in the mid-1980s. In particular, engaging with queer readings of the play, I argue that Rushdie borrows the complex intimacies and desires from *Coriolanus* in order to comment on the intersections of nationhood, masculinity, and sexuality during this tumultuous time in India's postcolonial history. I aver that in addition to Indian-izing *Star Trek*, Rushdie's story gestures toward a male bond that is representative of the ways in which homoeroticism both undergirds and threatens the nation.

Chapter three – " 'How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me': Vishal Bhardwaj's *Maqbool* and the Domestication of Lady Macbeth'" – is interested in the 'domestication' of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* into Vishal Bhardwaj's Hindi film, *Maqbool* (2004). In this version of Shakespeare's 'Scottish Play', the Lady Macbeth figure, Nimmi, becomes pregnant – in contrast to her counterpart's anti-maternal temerity. As the chapter outlines, feminist critics have traditionally read Lady Macbeth's standout lines that call on the play's spirits to "unsex" her as her attempt to gain masculine authority in her homosocial setting. However, with *Maqbool*, Bhardwaj suggests that

female bodies and femininity have powerful agency within homosocial organization – and that maternity need not always be in the service of reproductive futurism. Nimmi's ultra-femme body – which becomes visibly pregnant near the end of the film – actually gains agency from its circumscription in the male dominated criminal underworld of Mumbai that serves as the film's setting. As I argue, against the project of Indian nationalism in Hindi cinema – its trope of the mother assigned to reproduce the nation – Nimmi is an outlaw. Although she performs the domesticity assigned to her body and gender, she is actually an unmarried mistress and the paternity of her child remains unknown, challenging the future of her gang's empire. Attending to the genealogy of the mother figure in Hindi cinema I maintain that Nimmi is an outlier and her pregnancy does not heteronormalize Lady Macbeth. Instead, I argue that the film gestures toward a notion of maternity without reproductive futurity. Like translation itself, maternity and biological reproduction does not yield mimetic reproduction of an original. Thus by understanding maternal agency in terms of unfaithful translation – repeating in difference – I hope to gender Lee Edelman's polemic *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (2004) and engage with antiessentilism and antirelationality without displacing the body. Indeed, rather than repudiating translational domestication, I suggest that that this concerns might be embraced as a way to resist reproductive futurity.

The bulk of my dissertation focuses on textual productions associated with South Asia and risks conflating the region and its diaspora with 'the postcolonial'. My conclusion, however, gestures toward another history and geography, one that was integral to constructions of English identity in the early modern period: Ireland. I offer a brief reading of Frank McGuinness's play, *Mutabilitie* (1997), which dramatizes

Spenser's last days in his castle in Kilcolman and stages a meeting between the poet and Shakespeare. McGuinness blends the fictional lives of these canonical and colonial figures with that of Irish history and mythology. I locate and analyze the Shakespearean and Spenserian intertexts in it, highlighting the way in which Ireland as a nation, and the Irish as a race, have been written and represented in the period – and rewritten and translated by McGuinness. I also place *Mutabilitie* within recent historical debates about how to historicize Ireland's relationship to England and the British Empire. I argue that *Mutabilitie* deliberately aims to critique historical revisionism, which is invested in fact-based history. It also, I suggest, aims to critique the revivalist Irish stage, which has largely shied away from dramatizing queer desire. Because it does not fit either historical or cultural program and because it represents a blurring of English and Irish national identities, *Mutabilitie* has been rejected by both national stages and deemed a theatrical failure. However, I argue that there is the political potential to undo stagnant and oppressive national identities in, what I see, as the play's particularly "queer failure".

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In his essay "In Good Faith," Salman Rushdie writes: "Throughout human history, the apostles of purity, those who have claimed to possess a total explanation, have wrought havoc on mere mixed-up human beings. Like many millions of people, I am a bastard child of history. Perhaps we all are, black, brown, and white, leaking into one another" (394). The translational failures in these texts are representative this leakage, the way in which the way in which we all move out and in-between identities.

Chapter 1

"Do you love me, master?": The Erotics and Politics of Servitude in Romesh Gunesekera's *Reef*

> The task of the translator is to facilitate love between the original and its shadow, a love that permits fraying, holds the agency of the translator and the demands of her imagined or actual audience at bay.
> – Gayatri Spivak, "The Politics of Translation"

> Why not simply try to touch the other, feel the other, discover each other?
> – Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

Reconsidering Ariel

Ariel, the ostensibly more amenable slave to Prospero in William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1610), has generally been understood by Renaissance critics as unoffending

– a representation of the magician's more virtuous "ethereal self", an innocuously playful "personification of the imagination", and an "asexual boy", an over-eager actor or cloyingly deferential page (Garber 852-854, Orgel 27). Postcolonial critics and thinkers, reading the play as a colonial allegory, have largely followed this interpretation, dismissing the airy spirit as complicit in the colonial project – as symbolic of the "bourgeois" colonized or even more disparagingly, as possessing "Uncle Tom patience" (Said 214, Césaire 26).[28] This de-eroticized and de-politicized understanding of Ariel defines him in opposition to his foil, Caliban, the "material" "earthly monster", the "libidinous man" who, allegedly, attempts to rape Prospero's daughter, Miranda, in order to, he sarcastically claims, establish his paternal lineage on his island – the other slave who goes on to curse his colonial masters with their "language" instead of heeding their commands (Garber 853, Orgel 27-28, Vaughan and Vaughan 15). In the words of Kim Hall: "Caliban functions as a 'thing of darkness' against which a European social order is tested and proved". In other words, as Ania Loomba has proposed, pointing out that racialized "darkness" refers to more than simply skin color, the "explicitly social-Darwinist, racist and imperialist productions" of the play have indicated that "Caliban's *political* colour is clearly *black*" (Gender 142-43, original emphasis). That anti-colonial attitudes have tended to champion Caliban over Ariel as a symbol of resistance – in what is now popularly known in academic discourses as the "Ariel/Caliban debate" – has become nearly axiomatic.[29] However, Colombo-born Romesh Gunesekera fails to

[28] As this chapter elucidates in the second section, José Enrique Rodó's essay *Ariel* does champion Ariel as symbol for Latin America in 1900 when facing the impending expansion of the United States who is cast as Caliban. However, after Roberto Fernández Retamar's recasting in the 1960s, few anticolonial critics or thinkers have identified with the airy spirit. Perhaps this is because Rodó's essay borrows more from Ernest Renan's political play, "Caliban" (1888), than that of Shakespeare.

[29] For surveys and general studies of appropriations of *The Tempest* that study and celebrate Caliban: see Barbara Bowen "Writing Caliban: Anticolonial Appropriations of *The Tempest*" (1993), Michael Dobson

reproduce this interpretation. In his translation of *The Tempest*, his bildungsroman, *Reef* (1994), he does not snub Ariel's less antagonistic relationship with Prospero. Instead, through his Ariel figure, Triton, a young domestic servant living through the Sri Lankan civil war with his master, the successful marine scientist Mister Salgado, Gunesekera deeply explores the ways in which the experience of subordination can be accompanied by a complex, even contradictory, ambivalence toward mastery.

For in *The Tempest*, Ariel is enslaved and pleads for his "liberty", reminding Prospero, early in the play, that he has been promised freedom in return for his "worthy service". He argues that despite his "toil" and "pains", he has "told…no lies," "made no mistakes," and "served without grudge or grumblings" (1.2.287-97). Yet while his very deliberate performance – his groveling salutations and his ingratiating obedience, answering to Prospero's "best pleasure" – aims for self-interested liberation, it nevertheless slips into a complicated intimacy (1.2.224-28). Indeed, although Prospero refers to Ariel as his "slave," calling him a "malignant thing" upon the reminder of his promise, he more often addresses him with possessive terms of endearment throughout the play, calling him "my quaint Ariel", "fine Ariel," "my delicate Ariel" "my bird" "my dainty Ariel" and a "chick" in return for the spirit's unquestioning service (1.2.308, 4.1.53, 4.1.206, 5.1.105, 5.1.377).[30] These pet names are made all the more prurient given

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"'Remember/First to possess his books': The Appropriation of *The Tempest*, 1700-1800" (1991), Rob Nixon's "Caribbean and African Appropriations of *The Tempest*" (1987), Lemuel A. Johnson *Shakespeare in Africa (and Other Venues): Import and the Appropriation of Culture* (1998) and Alden T. and Virginia Mason Vaughn *Shakespeare's Caliban: A Cultural History* (1993). For a very general introduction to the ways in which *The Tempest* is a paradigm for postcolonial readings of canonical works, see Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin *The Empire Strikes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (1989). I discuss this celebration of Caliban at length in the third section of this chapter on the "Ariel/Caliban Debate".

[30] Caliban is more often cited as the "thing" of the play; Prospero famously says of Caliban in Act 5, "this thing of darkness, I acknowledge mine" (5.1.330-1). As a thing, too, Ariel calls into question the polarizing differences between the slaves.

the terms of the promise, which Prospero exploits to tease and punish Ariel. He entices him in order to induce desired behavior, bargaining his freedom by way of a glorified rescue narrative, reminding his slave that he freed him from his painful imprisonment in "a cloven pine" where the witch Sycorax confined him for "a dozen years". At the same time, he threatens a similar, perhaps worse, future if Ariel does not comply: pegging him into the "knotty entrails" of an "oak" for another "twelve winters" (1.2.327-51). The promise, however, seems to have a rather clear loophole: Ariel is unchained, free enough to traverse environmental elements, "Be't to fly/To swim, to dive into the fire, to ride/On the curled clouds" (1.2.225-26). Melissa E. Sanchez has argued that Ariel's service, "betrays his desire to escape Prospero, for he proposes to go just about anywhere that his 'great master' is not" (59). Yet, he only leaves to do Prospero's bidding; he never seems to fly away with the attempt to permanently escape his master.

As a result of this contract, of all the characters in Prospero's orbit, Ariel seems to be the closest to the magician – even more so than Miranda. Ariel is not only privy to his revenge plot, its key facilitator, but also allied with it; for he even makes Prospero aware of drunken Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban's planned coup. By the end of the play, Prospero comes to accept the spirit's counsel, agreeing that his "affection would" likewise "become tender" if he beheld his sorrowful tempest tossed "prisoners" – even if he does so competitively, to assert his enlightened "nobler reason," "to be kindlier moved" than his inhuman slave who is "but air"(5.16-24). Ariel is so close to his master that when Prospero laments the spirit's impending freedom, admitting that he "shall miss" Ariel, it is unclear if he will only miss the slave's work – for his forced service is entwined with affinity. These ambivalent feelings between master and slave become

startling clear when Ariel's reoccurring concern over the quality of his service – "Was't well done? " – slips into a different, unprompted, question – "Do you love me master?" – revealing, perhaps, a mutual fondness that exceeds the terms of Prospero's promise (5.1.291, 4.1.52).

It is this slippery Shakespearean iteration of "love", of servant for master, that Gunesekera translates into *Reef*. As I will highlight, young Triton gains pleasure from pleasing Mister Salgado, cooking foods his master relishes – and his service is thrillingly erotic. He also competes with the novel's Caliban figure, Joseph, for Mister Salgado's attention and praise. His relationship with his master is so intimate that when the civil war on the island country becomes life-threateningly violent, rather than joining the growing communist movement, Triton leaves with his master to England where they live together as refugees. This chapter argues that *Reef* invites a reconsideration of Ariel and his relationship with Prospero, the political implications of this "love" – beyond complicity. It is a love that challenges its complete distinction from erotic drive-based desire. Following Lauren Berlant in *Desire/Love* (2012), this "love" is an outcome of fantasy, a "way to move through the uneven field of ambivalent attachments", yet it nevertheless "produces paradox" – it "destabilizes people, putting them in plots beyond their control", "it reorganizes worlds" (69-70 ,13-14). [31] It is a version of love that is particularly salient in Shakespeare's texts – unfixed and irrational.

Moreover, against the binary that governs the Ariel/Caliban debate, I also use Gunesekera's novel to highlight the instances in which Caliban acts like Ariel – especially in the early days when Prospero "made much" of him and when he likewise "loved" his master (1.2.397-402). As I will argue, through the relationships between

[31] I discuss fantasy at length in chapter two of this dissertation with regard to *Star Trek* and slash fiction.

Mister Salgado, Triton, and Joseph, *Reef* draws attention to an all-male triangulation of desire in *The Tempest* – one that complicates the more championed liberal model in the debate: the colonized in direct, unequivocal conflict with the master.

The first section of this chapter highlights multiple Shakespearean and early modern contexts in Gunesekera's novel, focusing on Triton's homoerotic enactment of Ariel. It showcases the ways in which Ariel's "love" is political, an act of agency – and outlines how it might be used to critique Frantz Fanon's erotophobically based notion of colonial "inferiority complex". In the second and final section, I consider how Gunesekera's translation of Ariel's "love" and submission might challenge and nuance "the Ariel/Caliban" debate. [32]

Such a proposition – that the subordinated wants to elicit "love" from his master because he harbors desires for him – is no doubt precarious for a politics of liberation. For this "love" can appear as wholesale obedience, an affirmation of power hierarchies that have structured colonialism and slavery. It can appear as an iteration of internalized inferiority complex – that works in the service of normalizing these systems. What's more, the erotic registers of this proposition justified the disciplining strategies used to maintained power stratification; as a host of scholars have documented, violent civilizing missions often based in Christian dogma were used to tame the so-deemed primitive and debauched desires of native and black bodies – while these constructions of sexuality

[32] By engaging with a host of literary disciplines that cross historical and national boundaries, I do not intend to conflate the experiences of subordinated groups of people – but rather but to chart transhistorical and transnational overlaps that might put pressure on the mainstay politics that have been derived from the play. As I outline later in the chapter, *The Tempest* has resonated with multiple histories and nationalisms across space and time. It has, therefore, invited a global allegorical reading with which I hope to comprehensively engage.

were exploited by the masters themselves by way of brutal rape and assault.[33] In my effort to explore the implications of this "love", I do not at all disregard these realities. Rather, my aim is to investigate the ways in which this proposition can also signal the limits of the mainstay model of resistance – which, in its effort to disavow what was viewed as sexual perversion or pathology, has actually reproduced similar colonially inflected erotophobias. The result has done more than violently exclude the citizenship of postcolonial bodies that exhibit such desires – such of those that desire their same sex, policed by colonial anti-sodomy laws and homophobic attitudes long after independence. It has done more, too, than exclude membership to more local identity-based communities or groups within the nation. I argue that it has actually foreclosed both modes of negotiating the relationship between self and the other in the colonial context – as well as modes of resistance within anti-colonial discourses. For as the Ariel/Caliban debate makes clear with its dismissal of it, this "love" – nevertheless expressed by both Ariel and Caliban toward Prospero – is really that which cannot speak its name.

"Food was the ultimate seducer" or Masochism in the Kitchen

[33] See Angela Davis *Women, Race, and Class* (1983) and bell hooks *Ain't I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (1981) for a foundational overview and analysis of constructions of female slave sexuality as inherently promiscuous and lascivious. See Vincent Woodard's last book *The Delectable Negro: Human Consumption and Homoeroticism within U.S. Slave Culture* (2014) for a brilliant discussion of the interplays of desire, starvation, and consumption between slaveholders and slaves – and an outline of the threat of black masculinity. As Robert Reid-Pharr has pointed out – citing the work of Orlando Patterson, Henry Louis Gates, and Paul Gilroy – these constructions were garnered from the perception that "modern (slave) culture" is "inchoate, irrational nonsubject, as the chaos that both defines and threatens the border of logic, individuality, basic subjectivity. In that schema, all blacks become interchangeable, creating among the population a sort of continual restlessness, a terror" (103). For constructions of imperial desires more broadly, see Anne McClintock *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality* (1995) in which location of sex in the global market is analyzed – including the gendering of nationalism, natives, and landscapes. For a comprehensive overview of the ways in which the Middle East has been associated with "deviant" sexuality see Joseph Allen Boone *The Homoerotics of Orientalism* (2014).

During empire and after, the island of what is now known as Sri Lanka, like that of *The Tempest*'s setting, has been a site for contests of control by various powers and peoples. In Shakespeare's play, Prospero commands the island, but Caliban openly protests the magician's rule by claiming maternal inheritance; he declares early: "this island's mine by Sycorax my mother," highlighting Prospero's usurpation. Yet according to Prospero's backstory, even before the Algerian witch was banished to the island, there lived Ariel, who was forced to become the unwitting "servant" to the then newcomers (1.2.316-46). And Ariel could very well be kin to the many invisible yet personified "sounds", "airs", "noises", and "voices" whose disembodied residency on the island seems to be ongoing; Caliban recounts them to Stephano: "The isle is full of noises/Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not./Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments/Will hum about mine ears, and sometimes voices…will make me sleep…" (3.2.148-56). Even the survivors of Prospero's tempest discuss how they would rule if their island were in their respective hands. In his imaginary utopian "commonwealth" Gonzalo famously echoes Michel Montaigne's critique of European notions of civility, his exaltation of noble savagery, "De Caniballes"; Gonzalo wistfully says there would be "no kind of traffic", "no name of magistrate", "no occupation" – and "all" his people would be "idle" "innocent and pure" (2.1.162-71, 2.1.175-81). While idyllic, Gonzalo would nevertheless be "king" of an island that is not originally his, and his vision, like that of Montaigne, is paternal in its romanticization (2.1.160,172). Meanwhile, Antonio plots the murder of Gonzalo, seeking to crown Sebastian king of Milan. With all other Milanese heirs deceased or married abroad (Claribel) Sebastian is next in line to rule; his coronation would take place on the island, which both men, at this

point in the play, suspect is even more "uninhabited" than Shakespeare's setting indicates; in other words, he would reign on the island too, with Antonio ostensibly his only subject. On another side of the island, Trinculo and Stephano demonstrate imperial and colonial minds. Coming across Caliban, Trinculo sees potential for profit – in Europe, what he sees as a "strange fish" would be a valuable imported spectacle, likened to a "dead Indian" that incredulous English voyeurs would "lay out ten to see" (2.2.18-42). When Stephano meets the "monster", he inebriates him wine, promises to destroy Prospero and take the island to become Caliban's "new master". In *The Tempest* the island and its inhabitants, old and new, are repeatedly up for exploitation and eradication – constant change.

Sri Lanka has been the site of a similar melee. In Shakespeare's play Gunesekera finds resonances with the island's own histories of conquest – ancient, colonial, and contemporary. The novel inflects these histories with the island's deep connection to the ocean, its reliance on water for myth making, sustenance, trade, and infrastructure. The novel's epigraph – "Of his bones are coral made" – uses Shakespeare to pay homage to the sea. This line, from Ariel's famous song, is a misleading response to lost Ferdinand's desperate query into the whereabouts of his father, but it also refers to water's transformational capabilities, its ability to facilitate metamorphoses. As Dan Brayton points out in *Shakespeare's Ocean* (2012) Shakespeare in fact:

> thought globally about the material and biophysical circumstances of human life. He did so in large part as a result of the transformation of the sixteenth-century imago mundi to include a vast body of salt water that offered an immense and protean reservoir for reflecting on human life. Astride the border of the natural

> and the supernatural, Shakespeare's ocean is both 'rich and strange,' baffling for its immensity and mutability, yet boundless in its potential to renew art and life. Shakespeare continually depicts human life as a process implicated in what he called "Neptune's Empire" (4).

The novel's epigraph garners these Shakespearean ideas and speaks to the Ariel figure's positionality as he comes of age in this setting. In ecocritical readings of the novel, Melanie A. Murray suggests that "A coral colony – organisms consisting of numerous animals in bodily union – becomes a metaphor in this novel for the people of Sri Lanka" while Malcolm Sen argues that *Reef* "evokes the correlation between environmental degradation and political violence" (Murray 98, Sen 481). In other words, Triton – whose very namesake is the Greek messenger of the sea – is impacted by and implicated in the island's continual political and environmental sea change. [34]

In *Reef,* Mister Salgado outlines these changes during the parties he throws, while conversing with his guests. Triton remembers being regaled by his master while catering and serving Thanksgiving: "…The rest of the world was part of us. It was all once one place: Gondwanaland," the marine biologist explained, recounting a mythic era that Shakespeare, borrowing from Ovid, might have described, as "The Golden Age" – "The great land-mass in the age of innocence" (94, 2.1186). However, Mister Salgado explained the earth soon became "corrupted" and the "sea flooded in" and the "land was divided" (94). He said, "we were left with this spoiled paradise of *yahhkas* – demons – and the history of mankind spoken on stone (94, original italics). Nevertheless, he argued, the country remains intimately connected with water: "it is a symbol of regeneration

[34] See also Monique Allaewart *Ariel's Ecology* (2013). Allaewart's discussions of Ariel's song as it reflects agency and change have been integral to this chapter.

reflecting the time when all evil, all the dissonance of birth, was swept away in divine rain leaving the gods to spawn a new world" (94). "That was the real flood," he added, "Noah's is just an echo" (94). He went on to describe the tanks, the ancient reservoirs created by in 200 BC by the Anuradhapura and the Polonnaruwa cities. "Huge areas were put under water through a hydraulic system that required our *yakkha* engineers to measure a half-inch change of water level in a two-mile stretch of water," he explained. "Real precision. Enough to match the Egyptian pyramid makers…All for water: the source of our life, and death" (95, ellipsis mine).

Then, Triton recalls, once again "spellbound" by his master, Mister Salgado outlined the colonial period:

> His words conjured up adventurers from India north and south, the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British, each with their flotillas of disturbed hope and manic wanderlust. They had come full of the promise of cinnamon, pepper, clove, and found a refuge in this jungle of demons and vast quiet waters. (95)

Indeed, many European boats docked the island's coastlines, with aims of imperial and religious expansion. The Portuguese arrived in 1505, quickly gaining control over the coastal areas. Dutch explorers followed a century later – with the Dutch-Portuguese War resulting in the victory of the island's European newcomers. It was not until the eighteenth century, following the Napoleonic Wars, that whole of the island would fall into European hands. The British East India Company was particularly attracted to the island's native cinnamon as a material commodity for trade – and the British Empire kept the country under its rule until 1948. [35]

[35] For a more detailed account of the defeat of the Jaffna Kingdom and the Sri Vikrama Rajasinha by the Portuguese and the British respectively, see Patrick Peebles *The History of Sri Lanka*. Greenwood Press,

If Mister Salgado's history lesson seems exotically romantic it is probably because unlike other South Asian colonies, as Clifford Holt points out, "on the eve of independence, Sri Lanka did not experience the types of political and communal violence that India or Burma endured. Independence came peacefully…In the initial years of its independence, at least until the mid-1950s, a spirit of inclusion, if not political tolerance, seems to have characterized much of the public political life" (3, ellipsis mine). Gunesekera echoed this sentiment in a 2002 piece for *The Guardian*, "My Commonwealth," putting his thoughts the terms of *The Tempest* (as well as Hobbes's *Leviathan*):

> Ceylon, as it was then, had been a model colony and gained independence in 1948 with relative ease in arrangements which many radicals saw as a form of new dependence on imperial markets, foreign aid and imposed institutions. Quite the opposite of Gonzalo's utopia, which my father liked to quote from The Tempest ("I'the commonwealth I would be contraries/Execute all things…"). Republic status and a new constitution, packed with explosives, wasn't grasped until 1972. Even then Sri Lanka elected to remain within the Commonwealth. I did hear arguments about that. "How can it be an association of the free and the equal, if a monarch is the head?" "The monarch is not the head, only the symbol of the head."

As his piece seems to suggest, Gunesekera views the contemporary contest of power on the island, the violent result of the new Sinhalese-favored constitution, as postlapsarian. And Mister Salgado ends his Thanksgiving Day mini-lecture with *Paradise Lost* inflected

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2006 (pp 41-84). For informative essays regarding Sri Lanka's colonial period see: *The Sri Lanka Reader: History, Culture, Politics* Ed. John Clifford Holt. Duke University Press, 2011 (pp 131-294).

commentary on the civil war over "Buddha's special haven" (95). Sri Lanka "was also known as the Garden of Eden," he pointed out, "It panders to anyone's chauvinism, you know: Sinhala, Tamil, aboriginal. Choose a religion, pick your fantasy. History is flexible" (95).

The island, in other words, has passed through many hands – as its many names illustrate. Holt highlights:

> To Ptolemy and the Mediterranean world, it was the gem- bearing island known as Taprobane. In Mayayana Buddhist Sanskrit literature…it was known as Simhaladvipa ("the island of the Sinhalas"). For the Theravada Buddhist monks of Mahavihara monastery [of Anuradhapura]…it was Dhammadipa ("the island of Buddhist teaching"). To Tamils throughout history, it has been known as Eelam. For the Sinhala people it has always been Lanka. For the Arabs, the island was Serendib…For the Portuguese it was Ceilao. It was known to the British colonial world as Ceylon, which remained its official name until the Sinhala dominated government formally changed it to Sri Lanka in 1972. The island's changing name indicates that its geographical location has proven historically congenial to the intersection of many different cultures for over more than two and a half millennia. (1)

While Holt acknowledges the intersection of eras and histories, his description does not adequately capture how Sri Lanka's past overlaps with its present – how its colonial history informs the recent wars over national identity and culture. Peter Peebles, however, has argued that the British invasions have shaped Sri Lanka to the present. In

particular, colonial based identification and categorization of people in the South Asian region linger. He writes:

> [The British] considered the Sinhalese, Tamils, Burghers, "Moors," and others to be distinct "races," and governed each separately. Each race was divided into ranked subcategories…As they did in India, the British viewed the structure they created as a "caste system" among the Sinhalese and Tamils. It was to them not only a rigid system but one that had been fixed in time. (48)

These categories, notably Sinhalese and Tamil, remain – and for both groups, ethnicity still functions like race, identity based on bloodlines and heredity. For each argues that they are the rightful inheritors and occupants of the island. For example, Sinhalese historian K.M. de Silva avers that the Sinhalese lived in Sri Lanka for over twenty-five hundred years and the Tamils for only approximately fifteen hundred years. Moreover, though the Sinhalese originally come from India, they have created their own unique culture and language. Thus they argue that since Tamils have ties with millions of others in South India, they are in the minority even if they are the majority population in Sri Lanka. Tamils are also Hindu, while the Sinhalese are Buddhist – they are natural enemies, they aver. Moreover, the Sinhalese side argues that colonial powers have historically favored Tamils – a Sinhala favored government levels the field. On the other hand, the Tamil nationalist position is articulated by A. Jeyaratnam Wilson who posits that the Tamils were always a distinctive race with their own traditional kingdom in the north of the country; they were not interlopers, but arrived and settled on the island even before the Sinhalese. They are not a minority, but a proper nation that even colonial settlers recognized. Indeed, he argues, the Dutch and Portuguese ruled Tamils and

Sinhalese separately. It was the British that tried to rule them together. Jeyaratnam says that once Sri Lanka became independent, the Tamils agreed to live peacefully with the Sinhalese; however they were the targets of discrimination. They had no choice but to not only defend their culture, but to protect the lives of other Tamils. Therefore, they took up arms for the sake of a state for themselves, Eelam. The violent guerrilla group, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), is the result of this warfare that had made Tamils a disenfranchised minority. As the staunch positions of these two historians makes evident, the conflict is based on fundamental difference.[36]

However, in *Reef* Gunesekera focuses on the impossibility of separately situating histories and maintaining strict identities. He, of course, does not deny the differing historical power plays on the island or the respective cultural distinctions between its people; rather, he shows how these historical changes and constructed distinctions are not as fixed as nationalistic discourses insist they are. As I've argued in this dissertation's introduction, what I call the presentness of Shakespeare in his English novel is symbolic of the ways in which empire remains contemporary. The Prospero, Ariel and Caliban figures of the novel – Mister Salgado, Triton, and Joseph, respectively – are particularly representative of this impossibility of fixity; for while the outlines of these Shakespearean characters are evident, Gunesekera's characters do not strictly adhere to mainstay allegorical and archetypal readings of them. They trade positions – and even occupy more than one. Not actually European, Mister Salgado acts like Prospero, but is an Ariel figure himself, elitist, formally educated and preoccupied with ecological preservation, studying the vast deterioration of reef colonies off the coasts with little regard for the war or those impoverished coastal dwellers who have been driven to destroy their

[36] For close readings of either side of the debate see Qadri Ismail *Abiding by Sri Lanka* (2005).

environment, working in the concrete industry to stay economically afloat (Deckard 166). Triton most readily recalls Ariel, but he also recalls a young Caliban, affected by Prospero's language – but he takes on Miranda's position too, in a harrowing moment in the text when Joseph, meant to be the novel's Caliban figure, drunkenly wears Mister Salgado's cologne and performs a violent Prospero. By triangulating the Shakespearean political schema, *Reef* illustrates how amidst contests of control, Sri Lankans can often occupy the liminal spaces between historical periods and identities, experiencing ambivalent desires and strange agencies.

The novel begins with the aptly titled chapter, "The Breach", when Triton is residing in England. It has been more than twenty years since he's lived in Sri Lanka, after leaving the island with Mister Salgado. When the novel opens, Mister Salgado has returned to Sri Lanka, but Triton has chosen to remain in his new home to run a restaurant. His memories of "a bay fronted house six thousand miles away" are triggered when, at a gas station on a cold night, "someone's face peeped from behind a reinforced service window" "almost a reflection of [his] own" (12, 11). He seems another version of himself, a double. The young service attendant turns out to be Sri Lankan too, but a recent Tamil refugee. Although hailing from the same country, the two men only converse in English – Triton's proficiency fluent and the young refugee's broken. In this small interaction, Gunesekera references the important linguistic dimension of the ethnic conflict; the 1956 Sinhala Official Language Act also known as "Sinhala Only" replaced English with Sinhala as the country's official language, depriving Tamils their right to deal with and work for government institutions in their language. These cultural and ethnic identity categories, he shows, have traveled off the island, impacting these fellow

Sri Lankan men. Triton is very clearly in a more privileged position; a worker no longer, he owns his restaurant "without Ranjan Salgado standing by [his] side" (190). Yet he very obviously feels some kinship with this refugee. And, as the novel progresses in backstory, recounting a series of breaches and ruptures in his identity, it's clear that this seemingly privileged Sinhalese position is fraught with contradiction.

While he is part of the majority Sinhalese population, he comes from a poor laboring background. He begins living and working for Mister Salgado at the age of 11 – after the death of his mother, the rejection of his abusive father, and the help of his maternal uncle who "promised to arrange a new life" for him but only because he thought his late sister would have wanted him to (17). The civil war had not yet formally begun – "it was 1962: the year of the bungled coup," when the country's elite Christians tried and failed to topple the Buddhist government – and Triton's main focus was to serve and please Ranjan Salgado, thought of by Triton's old uncle as simply "a boy whom history had favoured – a product of modern feudalism" (16). Thus while Triton might be part of the majority race, benefitting from "Sinhala Only" policies, the implication is that his family had not been "favoured" in the same way as Mister Salgado. Triton's position follows Qadri Ismail's sympathetic and nuanced study of both sides of the conflict, *Abiding by Sri Lanka: On Peace, Place, and Postcoloniality* (2005), that uses the war in Sri Lanka as a point of departure to rethink democracy, redefining the concept of the minority perspective, not in terms of numerical insignificance, but as a conceptual space. *Reef* highlights how the Sinhalese might be thought of as "an injured majority" that, within the community, has those who are continuing to experience the remnants of a colonial history of political and social subjugation (Ismail 62). Triton serves a

representation of this injured position. Not unlike young Caliban, a pupil to Prospero, entranced by his master's language, and initially ignorant to his initiation into a dominant discourse that would subjugate him, Triton immediately clung to Mister Salgado's every word. "I had never heard language so gently spoken," he recalled, "My uncle's speech in comparison, was a strangulation of the spirit." He remembers, "Ever after, when Mister Salgado spoke, I would be captivated. I could lose myself in his voice; this happened not only on that first day, but frequently over many years" (17). And almost instantly, too, in a reversal of Prospero's terms of endearment for Ariel, Triton began referring to his master in possessive terms – "my Mister Salgado" – illustrating admiration and affection, an active claim.

Indeed, Triton garners an unsettling political agency in this domestic and subservient role– not as a formal student or apprentice in tutelage, but as an eager servant. Triton recalls: "All over the globe revolutions erupted, dominoes tottered and guerilla war came of age; the world's first woman prime minister – Mrs. Bandaranaike – lost her spectacular premiership on our small island, and I learned the art of good housekeeping" (55). As more opposition mounted against Prime Minister Bandaranaike's Sinhalese favoring policies – this time by the country's Tamil population – Triton concerned himself with perfecting his cooking, studying cookbooks and household magazines such as *Life* and *Reader's Digest*. For as a contest of control waged outside the home, one, on a much more local scale, was waging inside – between Triton and the other servant Joseph. "I felt … that Mister Salgado could do better with just me by his side," he admits, "Joseph was not the man for him" (38-9, ellipsis mine). Triton aimed to take control of the domestic space; and after the dismissal of Joseph, he rose in ranks

from general household help to central cook, impressing his master. As a result, like Ariel, Triton develops an intimacy with Mister Salgado, gently controlling his master's pleasures while experiencing his own.

Triton recalls how his esteem for Mister Salgado was intertwined with sexual arousal – when his master affirmed and praised his service, his cooking. For instance, when Miss Nili, the first and only woman to ever visit Mister Salgado, came to the house for afternoon tea, she so relished the love-cake served to her that Triton recalls that she became "uninhibited," making "a lowing sound between bites" and inquired, stammering: "where did you get this, this cake?" (74). Triton remembers how his master responded – "'Triton made it,' my Mister Salgado said" – and confesses his titillation:

> *Triton made it*. It was the one phrase he would say with my name again and again like a refrain through those months, giving me such happiness. *Triton made it*. Clear, pure and unstinting. His voice at those moments would be a channel cut from heaven to earth right through the petrified morass of all our lives, releasing a blessing like water springing from a river-head, from a god's head. It was bliss. My coming of age.
>
> 'Your Cook?'
>
> *Your life, your everything*. I wanted to sing pinned up on the rafters, heaven between my legs. (75, original emphasis)

Triton's service, his subordinate position, is pleasurable – even religious – for him. Indeed, the class dynamic, the domestic servant and master relationship, has erotic registers. In this case, the love cake he prepares to impress Nili and please his master

almost recalls Donne's "flea" – "three lives in" one cake "spare" (Donne). As Anita Mannur points out in *Culinary Fictions: Food in South Asian Diasporic Culture* (2009):

> Salgado and Nili's flirtation is routed through the exchange of love cake, but Triton also
>
> > participates in this wooing game…[W]hile Triton plays a part in helping Salgado woo Nili by baking love cake, the act of sharing cake cannot be understood solely in terms of desire between Salgado and Nili. Rather, Triton emerges as a vital actor in this love triangle. He cares less whether Nili enjoys the cake. What matters is how Salgado speaks about him. Triton's joy is heightened by Salgado's praise, climaxing at the moment he imagines Salgado proclaiming Triton to be his "everything" (65 ellipsis mine).

Mannur highlights yet another triangulation in Gunesekera's novel – that between Triton, Mister Salgado, and Nili. As Mannur suggests, Nili is seemingly inserted into the narrative to break the bond between Triton and Mister Salgado. However, she argues, Nili's presence "cannot be read as an affirmation of compulsory heterosexuality. [While Triton] derives satisfaction from seeing Nili's appreciation for his food, he is equally attuned to how the reticent Salgado seems invigorated by Nili's appetite…Triton and Salgado's relationship queers the text insofar as Triton's ability to effect gustatory pleasure in Nili –ironically – nourishes and nurtures his relationship with Salgado" (66, ellipsis mine). Nili does not seem to have a direct Shakespearean counterpart; she does not recall *The Tempest*'s female characters, onstage Miranda or off-stage Sycorax. Yet she remains part of the play's homosocial economy; Nili – her appetite and appreciation

of Triton's food – becomes a triangulated conduit between the men, Triton and Mister Salgado.

Nili is also used to emphasize the relationship between these men. Halfway through the novel, Nili detects her exclusion from the men's bonding. "'Your Mister Salgado never seems to eat,'" she says, "'What is it about this house that makes it so hard for you men to eat?'"

Triton narrates how he responded with silence:

> I smiled but said nothing. It had nothing to do with the house. It was the way we lived. Even though I wished he would eat with the others and give me a chance, I knew exactly how he felt. He needed his privacy to feel comfortable…There was no security in eating in the company of a lot of people; attention always got divided. Only the intimate could eat together and be happy. It was like making love. It revealed too much. Food was the ultimate seducer. But I could not tell that to Miss Nili. I had not even thought it through at the time. I was a virgin. (108, ellipses mine)

Tor Triton eating is an activity deemed intensely personal and sexual and Mister Saglado's consumption is either insularly masturbatory – or in Triton's presence. Thus Mannur points out that while Triton does not genitally consummate his desire "the seductive potential of food suggests that Triton can route his desire for Salgado in non-physical terms, transgressing traditional borders between persons of different class statuses within the same household. Eating together becomes a partial substitute for sexual gratification…[giving] voice to a desire that can escape detection, even by Nili" (66-7). In fact, Triton understands his position as cook – however virginal – as integral to

sex. He admits to thinking about all the "lovers" living on his block "thrusting and rocking the lane, house by house, in a unison they were blissfully unaware of; deliriously murmuring, or thinking about dinner or breakfast – or even their cook – while they made a kind of love to last the night" (110)

In addition to thinking about sex differently – routing desire through literal consumption and consummation – *Reef* also reflects the ways in which the struggles for power in Shakespeare's text are driven by libidinal economies, specifically that between colonizer and colonized, master and slave. In this case, *Reef* highlights the desire of the subordinate for the dominant. Serving Mister Salgado, cooking for him, does not breed resentment in Triton; it does not incite resistance. For Triton it is, instead, his affective response is the extreme opposite. This is perhaps why most critical readings of Gunesekera's text have shied away from considering Triton's queer desire at all.

This oversight of Triton's desire is strikingly apparent in K.T. Sunitha's comparison of *Reef* to Shyam Selvadurai's coming-of-age, coming-out novel *Funny Boy* (1994) about a young Tamil boy named Arjie. [37] The likenesses of the books are clear. Both, Sunitha highlights, provide narratives of young Sri Lankan boys living amidst bloody political turmoil; both detail immigration away from the violence. Both too, as my attention to desire in *Reef* makes apparent, provide narratives of boyhood homoeroticism. However, Sunitha reserves any considerations of desire for solely Selvadurai's book. Perhaps this is the case because it includes more visible markers of sexual identity and the recognizable narrative of coming-out: the family's frustration with Arjie's cross dressing and playing with girls, Arjie's first sexual encounter at an all boys school where he is sent to "become a man" – but instead acquires a boyfriend he must leave behind

[37] See K.T. Sunitha "Coral, Quarrel, and Chaos," *Literary Half-Yearly* 39.1 (1998): 98-108

when immigrates to Canada to escape the civil war (14-17, 210). Sandwiched between these narratives is a vignette titled "Small Choices" in which Arjie admires Jegan, the older son of his father's friend. It is the first time he seems to exhibit same-sex desire, taking note of the ways I which Jegan's "thighs pressed against his trousers" (177). Arjie's eroticized gaze of Jegan mirrors that of Triton toward Mister Salgado. Both boys admire and are aroused by older men – yet the latter's are not easily identified as homosexual. Indeed, *Funny Boy* is also singled out in Gayatri Gopinath's study of South Asian queer diasporas *Impossible Desires* (2005) while *Reef* is given no mention – though it was published the same year as Selvadurai's novel. Sunitha's oversight may have to do with her privileging the body as the only site for articulating desire or eroticism – or it may have to do with the fact that his desire has uncomfortable implications.

In my research, *Culinary Fictions* is the only criticism on *Reef* that has engaged with Triton's desire – and Mannur does not outline the political implications of this desire beyond briefly alluding to a transgression in class. What of the transgression of the mainstay model of colonial resistance associated with Caliban? Indeed, like much criticism on the novel, the Shakespearean intertext is not even mentioned. For when Triton's desire for Mister Salgado is put into the context of the Ariel/Caliban debate, it falls on the side of the "love" associated with Ariel, too closely resembling the kind of voluntary submission that Frantz Fanon would call an "inferiority complex," a psychoanalytical condition that postcolonial critics since the publication of his fiery and empowering *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) have taken great pains to resist. And the

homoerotic valences of Triton's affection for his master only serve to confirm an internalized inferiority, a self-phobia.

For Fanon, any admiration of a master – represented as white and Western – stems from this "inferiority complex" "created by the death and burial of…local cultural originality" and the "adoption of the mother country's cultural standards" (8-9, ellipsis mine). He argues that this death begins with the interpellation: "Look, a Negro!" which, as Amber Jamilla Musser in succinctly puts it in *Sensational Flesh: Race, Power, and Masochism* (2014), "disrupts the narrator's sense of himself as a sovereign subject, a subject who could possess mastery over the world…which is to say that he has no agency and is controlled by other people's images of him" (82, 90, ellipsis mine). And Fanon points out that these images are eroticized and sexualized: "for the majority of white men the Negro represents the sexual instinct (in its raw state). The negro is the incarnation of a genital potency beyond all moralities and prohibition"; the black man, a castrated penis, performs the role of the "phobogenic object" of white fantasy (126-27, 117).

As Fanon attempts to both excavate and "destroy" the sources of the black man's inferiority complex, he highlights how these sexual definitions of "the Negro" "rest on the level of the imagined," "on that of a paralogism" – and outlines the ways in which white men and women construct them in order to traffic in them. In Fanon's study, racism is closely accompanied by – indeed nearly synonymous with – what he describes as "perversions", usually marked by "passive" positioning; "the Negrophobic woman is fact nothing but a putative sexual partner – just as the Negrophobic man is a repressed homosexual," he maintains (5, 121). Thusly, in chapter 6 of *Black Skin, White Masks,* he focuses on these phobias, which, he argues, are really desires. He recasts Freudian

scenario of a child being beaten into that of the white woman dreaming of being raped by a black man – and argues that the white man has similar fantasies. Fanon makes these claims through a peripheral engagement with *The Tempest*. "Who is this black man in Fanon if not Caliban? This white man and this white woman if not Prospero and Miranda?" Jonathan Goldberg argues in his *Tempest in the Caribbean* (2004) (20). Although Fanon strongly refutes Dominique Octave Mannoni's notion of the inherent "dependency complex" of the colonized in *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization* (1950), as Goldberg points out, he nevertheless gives credit to the French psychoanalyst's notion of the "Prospero complex", citing his definition of it: "the sum of those unconscious neurotic tendencies that delineate at the same time the 'picture' of the paternalist colonial and the portrait of the 'the racialist whose daughter has suffered an [imaginary] attempted rape at the hands of an inferior being'" (80, Fanon's brackets). Fanon goes on: "Toward Caliban, Prospero assumes an attitude well known to the Americans in the United States. Are they not forever saying that the niggers are just waiting for the chance to jump on white women?" (80). By highlighting this racist "Prospero complex" Fanon continues to focus on the "perverse" desires of colonizers, thus discounting Prospero's rape accusation, exonerating Caliban from the charge of depraved would-be rapist – and necessarily overlooks Ariel, his signification, altogether.

Indeed, Fanon's focus in mostly on the affects and desires trenchant in white "hate complexes" (141). Arguing that white men and women perform an erotic "passivity by the recognition of the superiority of the black in terms of sexual capacity" Fanon diagnoses them as "masochistic" – white men "who go to 'houses' in order to be beaten by Negroes" or who are "passive homosexuals who insist on black partners" and white

women who harbor said rape fantasies (137-38). Although Negrophobic whites have, of course, "a sadistic aggression toward the black man", according to Fanon, it is the white subjects, nevertheless, that possess masochist desires. According to him, their sadism is "followed by a guilt complex because of the sanction against such behavior by the democratic culture of the country in question. This aggression is then tolerated by the Negro: whence masochism" (137). Strangely, for Fanon, the subject of masochism on the part of "the Negro", man or woman – the bodies literally and necessarily denied control in the colonial context – is never broached. Although he admits that his articulation "does not contain the elements of classic masochism", he explains it away by arguing: "it is the only way in which to explain the masochistic behavior of the white man" (137). Masochism, then, is firmly reserved for the colonizer – perhaps because any consideration of what he deems pathological sexual behavior on the part of the colonized would undermine his larger anti-colonial argument, which aims to resist colonial theories of race and sexuality, turning the table to highlight the white man's perversion and passivity. Implicitly, in this formula, if the colonized – man or woman – actually desires to abdicate control to the colonizer, it is part and parcel of the inferiority complex imposed on native bodies.

For more generally it seems that any study of desire in Fanon's book is reserved for the colonizer. Although Fanon argues, following psychoanalysis, that "considerable importance must be given to sexual phenomena" when studying the colonial context, as Musser highlights, "nowhere" in *Black Skin, White Masks* does Fanon "describe sexual desire on the part of the Negro" (123,93). Indeed he outright dismisses the sexuality of black women commenting, with some flippancy, "I know nothing about her" (138).

Furthermore, Musser argues that, "Fanon evinces a certain discomfort with attributing sexuality to black men…because he views sexuality as the province of whiteness" (93). Even "when he speaks of desire for the white woman" on the part of the black man, Musser argues, "it is about recognition rather than sexuality" (93). In Fanon's words: "I wish to be acknowledged not as black but as white. Now – and this is a form of recognition that Hegel had not envisaged – who but a white woman can do this for me? By loving me she proves that I am worthy of white love. I am loved like a white man. I am a white man" (45). What's more any desire for the white man (indeed any man) is actually not about desire either – as he makes evident in his now famous footnote in which he both recognizes and disavows queer black bodies:

> I had no opportunity to establish the overt presence of homosexuality in Martinique. This must be viewed as the result of the absence of the Oedipus complex in the Antilles. The schema of homosexuality is well enough known. We should not overlook, however, the existence of what are there "men dressed like women" or "godmothers." Generally, they wear shirts and skirts. But I am convinced that they lead normal sex lives. They can take a punch like any "he-man" and they are not impervious to the allures of women – fish and vegetable merchants. In Europe, on the other hand, I have known several Martinicans who became homosexuals, always passive. But this was no means a neurotic homosexuality: For them it was a means to a livelihood, as pimping is for others. (180)

Further securing homosexuality to whiteness, Fanon treats same-sex desire culturally, coding it as foreign: European. He does not consider if the local cross-dressing

"godmothers" accede to femininity (again dismissing women of color) convinced instead that they have "normal sex lives" – the definition of "normal" assigns heterosexuality (taken by "the allures of women") and masculinity (taking "a punch like any 'he-man') to men, even if they "dress like women". For the Martinican, homosexuality is not indigenous; it is acquired abroad. As Diana Fuss summarizes in her reading of the now infamous footnote: "[F]or white men homosexuality is a pathological condition; for black men it is 'a means' to livelihood,' a by-product of colonialism in which black men from the colonies are forced into homosexual prostitution in the metropole in order to survive economically" (32). Heterosexual desire for the white woman is about recognition; homosexual desire is about making money.

What remains brilliant about Fanon's work is his insistence that regimes of power cannot be disassociated from desire, sexuality, and eroticism; political notions of the self and sovereignty are thrown into crisis as the result of libidinal economies. However, while sexuality may always be a racialized phenomenon, for Fanon it remains, problematically, only white. More specifically, white "hate complexes" amount to homosexuality. Lee Edelman highlights the danger of Fanon's equation:

homophobia allows a certain figural logical to the pseudo-algebraic 'proof' that asserts:

> where it is 'given' that white racism equals castration and 'given' that homosexuality equals castration, then it is proper to conclude that white racism equals (or expresses through displacement) homosexuality and, by the same token, in a reversal of devastating import for lesbians and gay men of color, homosexuality equals white racism" (55)

In other words, for lesbians and gay men of color, homosexuality amounts to self-phobia. Thus, in his attempt to counter the racist and colonial sexual constructions imposed on black bodies, colonialism's systemic othering, Fanon encourages an erotophobia of black bodies by black bodies.

Diana Fuss, however, suggests, a powerful recovery of a different meaning in Fanon's dismissal of homosexuality in the Antilles. "If by 'homosexuality,'" she argues, "one understands the culturally specific social formations of same-sex desire as they are articulated in the West, then indeed homosexuality is foreign to the Antilles" (33). Heterosexuality, homosexuality, and bisexuality, in other words, are not universal formations or categories and "are wholly inadequate to describe the many different consolidations, permutations, and transformations of what the West has come to understand, itself in myriad and contradictory fashion under the sign 'sexuality'" (33). Fuss's suggestion is particularly important for highlighting how versions of these categories have, historically, not only been imposed on native bodies with "primitive" desires, as already said, but even used to map regions and categorize races by sexual proclivity – as, she points out, Richard Burton and Havelock Ellis have (35). Thus by rejecting the idea that homosexuality is indigenous to his home, Fanon may also, Fuss argues, reject this colonial naming, identifying. Moreover this dismissal seems to dovetail with Fanon's challenge to the universality of the Oedipus complex and in Fuss's words, "the ideological role Oedipus plays *as a limit* in the enculturating sweep of colonial expansionism" (33).

While Fuss's critique is seminal in showcasing the Eurocentrism of "healthy" models of development – as well as illustrating how colonialism impedes on this

development – Fanon nevertheless reproduces Freud, in particular his troublingly masculinist discussions of femininity and same-sex desire. Stuart Hall has pointed that:

> There may well be cultures where [the Oedipus complex] can be shown to take another form or even not exist at all (although, far from freeing us from some Eurocentric tyranny, this usually throws us back to an essentialist biological notion of how sexual difference is constituted). But I am afraid the Caribbean is the least promising scenario in which to try to prove the absence of the Oedipal drama. With its son-fixated mothers and mother-fixated sons, its complex paternities common to all slave societies of 'real' black father and 'symbolic' white ones, along with its deeply troubled, assertively heterosexual and often homophobic black masculinities, the Caribbean 'lives out' the loss of social power by substituting an aggressively phallo-centered 'black manhood'. The absence of women and the mother in Fanon's text leads one to wonder whether, figuratively, he didn't replace the triadic structure of the Oedipal scenario with the binary coupling of the master/slave trope. (30)

Hall's consideration of Fanon draws attention to the potential paranoia of anticolonial thinking that, in its desperate insistence that what has been deemed inferior has not been internalized, recreates the same identifying practices of that Fuss describes as "colonial" (20). For, even she argues, "Fanon does not think beyond the presuppositions of colonial discourse to examine how colonial domination itself works partially through the social institutionalization of misogyny and homophobia" (Fuss 36). Decades after Fanon, neither have many postcolonial states; his coding of homosexuality as white and European has become a mainstay in politics after independence, understanding same-sex

desire – particular sex acts – as a Western import. Thus, the homophobia of nativist nationalism does not seem to productively challenge the colonial impulse to identify sexualities, but, rather, engages with its demand to police and exploit them. As Kobena Mercer has argued, critiquing the legacy of Fanon's homophobia, "the questions of sexuality have come to mark the interior limits of decolonisation, where the utopian project of liberation has come to grief" (116). In the case of Sri Lanka – and most former British colonies in South Asia – anti-sodomy laws still exist.

This lingering homophobia in anticolonial and nationalist discourses is made all the more apparent in light of the end of *Black Skin, White Masks*, when Fanon offers a strange, even contradictory, homoerotic prescription for resistance and liberation that has gone largely unheeded – in fact, nearly dismissed by Homi Bhabha as "banal as it is beatific" (*Black* xxxii). Fanon concludes his study: "Inferiority? Superiority? Why not the quite simply attempt to touch the other, to feel the other, to explain the other to myself ?" (181). The homoerotic implications of his desire to "touch" and "feel" the other seem even lost on Fanon who confesses, only a few pages earlier, that he has never been able to "without revulsion, hear a man say of another man: 'He is so sensual!'"; he even declares "I do not know what the sensuality of man is" (156). Yet he does not meditate on his ultimate desire "to discover and to love man, wherever he may be" – or consider his vision of a "majestic" monument on the top of which is "a white man and black man *hand in hand*" – with regard to his own personal homophobia (180, 173 original emphasis).

I read Fanon's closing thoughts as a rejoinder to the "problem" introduced in chapter two of his book: "to ascertain to what extent authentic love will remain

unattainable before one has purged oneself of that feeling of inferiority" (180, 28). An intimacy – without the colonial categories of superior and inferior – seems to be what he means by "authentic love". It also seems to be an intimacy without the feelings of "shame and self-contempt" following the naming, "fixing", of the black man: "Why, it's a negro!" Yet Gunesekera's Ariel figure, Triton, might come to represent the possibility of a "love" within structural inferiority and within shame. In the attempt to excise shame or cast it elsewhere, the colonial impulse to project it onto the other is recreated – as Fanon's casting of desire and sexuality as white and European makes clear. Following Eve Sedgwick, in *Touching Feeling* (2003), Fanon's contradictory erotophobias illustrate how "the forms taken by shame are not distinct 'toxic' parts of a group or individual identity that can be excised; they are instead integral to and residual in the processes by which identity itself is formed" (63). Yet, "they are available for the work of metamorphosis, reframing, refiguration, *trans*figuration, affective and symbolic loading and deformation, but perhaps all too potent for the work of deontological closure" (63, original italics). In other words, the feelings of inferiority that Fanon is eager to purge, the "masochism" that he insists is only white, may actually be sites through which to access a kind of love rich in disruptive ambivalences.

This proposition in no way a romanticizes systems of structural domination. Rather it holds in tension complicity and resistance; it productively challenges both the location of agency and notions of absolute sovereignty. In a subtle way it follows the ideas, desires, and politics of Gary Fisher, the African American poet whose work notoriously outlines volitional racial humiliation and submission. Fisher admits in one of his diary entries: "So I want to be a slave, a sex slave beneath another man's (a white

man or a big man, preferably a big white man) power. Someone more aware of the game (and the reality of it) than myself. I want to relinquish responsibility and at the same give up all power. I want to, in effect, give in to a system that wants to (has to) oppress me" (Fisher 187). Robert Reid-Pharr has argued that the "shock" of Fisher – his graphic masochism – is productive for rethinking the erotics of systemized racial oppression, that between master and slave. Unlike Hegel's dialectic and Fanon's critique of it – that it underestimates the white master's dominance over black slaves – Fisher "refuses the easy distinction between master and slave, insisting instead that there is no possibility for the expression of a (liberated) black identity in the absence of white masters" (Reid-Pharr 140). He likewise draws attention to, "the intimate connections between both those practices that exclude the black, kill him, as it were, and those that would resurrect him" (Reid-Pharr 140). Moreover, Reid-Pharr argues "what shocks is that Fisher says, without flinching…that the black is always an active and potent agent within" the erotics of slavery, deforming "some of the most cherished idiom of Black American vernacular tradition" and "cherished models of human subjectivity" more generally (139).

Admittedly, Triton is not a colonial slave to a violent white master in the exact context studied by Fanon. Nor does he articulate, in the same way, the graphic desires of that of Fisher. However, if, following, Musser, masochism is broadly defined as the contractual "desire to abdicate control in exchange for sensation" Triton's surrender to Mister Salgado dominance is masochistic. And he therefore leaves open a space for understanding masochism on the part of the colonized in a way that Fanon did not. Triton's Ariel-esque love uncomfortably gestures toward inextricability of colonizer and colonized, master and slave – and a version of agency within this connectedness. It

illustrates an ironic resistance to the shattering domination of systems of colonialism and slavery; in other words, by voluntarily submitting and taking pleasure in the process, Triton, however partially, refuses imposed subjugation, imposed inferiority.

For the other version of resistance, overt Marxist protest, did not seem to offer pleasure to Triton. When communist protestors reminded Triton of his subordinate position, encouraging him to think of overt resistance to the dominant capitalist regimes, to think how, in the words of Mister Salgado's assistant on the coast, Wijetunga, "we will be able to live for ourselves" Triton preferred to stay and serve his Mister Salgado. Wijetunga tells young Triton that the country "need to be cleansed, *radically*" and asks him of he's heard of the "Five Lessons," "simplified lessons that explained the crisis of capitalism, the history of social movements and the future shape of a revolution"; he asked Triton, "You know what happened in Cuba?" (121). As the next section outlines, while Cuba experienced an anti-imperial revolution that postcolonial Third Worldists celebrated, it was based in a reading of Caliban that excluded both women and men deemed feminine. Moreover, Castro's regime famously interned thousands of the country's gay men and boys in work camps, many suffering from rape and mutilation (Quiroga).[38] It was the kind of revolution that had no place for Triton. While Triton did not know this, he sensed that he preferred to stay with his master and thus only innocently replied: "But I'm only a cook" (121).

"And then I loved thee": All Male Triangles and the 'Ariel/Caliban Debate'

[38] A recent article in *The Guardian* reports that many war prisoners were anally raped during the ethnic war in 2009. This practice very possibly has deeper roots, dating back to the beginning of war. See Paul Farrell "Sri Lanka Tamils subjected to horrific abuse after 2009 civil war, says report" (2014)

Modeled on the differing interactions that Ariel and Caliban have with Prospero "the Ariel/Caliban debate" has become a contemporary catchphrase for the negotiation of two highly influential modes of anti-colonial resistance. While explicitly political engagements with Shakespeare's late play have been longstanding, the debate was articulated as such and argued most energetically in the Latin American context in the early 1970s when Cuban intellectual Roberto Fernández Retamar countered Uruguayan writer José Enrique Rodó's seminal, turn of the century anti-U.S. essay *Ariel* (1900) with his own, "Caliban: Notes towards a Discussion of Culture in Our America" (1971). Rodó, writing in the wake of The Spanish American War, fearing cultural de-Latinization, borrowed Ernest Renan's Shakespearean schema to indict the United States' neocolonial expansion. He cast the new, supposedly democratic, superpower as monstrous and crass Caliban and Latin America as ethereal and patient Ariel whose allegiance to Prospero, an embodiment Europe's high art and Enlightenment ideals, will eventually "set him free" (31, 59-60, 98).[39] Retamar, emboldened by the Cuban Revolution, which marked a steadfast refusal of U.S. control, argued that, "the identification of Caliban with the United States…popularized by Rodó, was certainly a mistake" (19). He agreed, however, that while Rodó "erred in his symbols" "he was able to point with clarity to the greatest enemy of our culture in his time – and in ours" (25). Tracing the Shakespearean schema from Renan and Rodó to Dominique-Octave

[39] He cites Ernest Renan's *Caliban* (1878) a political engagement with Shakespeare's play in which Caliban embodies all that is wrong with democracy. Rodó writes: "Conquered a thousand times over by the indomitable rebellion of Caliban, in habited by victorious barbarism, asphyxiated in the smoke of battles, his transparent wings strained by contact with the 'eternal dungill of Job,' Ariel rebounds, immortal; Ariel recovers his youth and beauty and responds with agility to Prospero's call, to the call of those who love him and invoke him in reality. At times his beneficent empire reaches even those who deny him and ignore him. He often directs the blind forces of evil and barbarism so that, like others, they will contribute to the work of good. Ariel will through human history, humming, as in Shakespeare's drama, his melodious song to animate those who labor and those who struggle" (99)

Mannoni and Frantz Fanon, Retamar recast it, understanding Prospero not as benevolent European savant, but brutal U.S. and European colonizer, against whom Latin America as Caliban should aggressively resist. "Our symbol then is not Ariel, as Rodó thought, but rather Caliban," Retamar put forth in his essay; "There is something we, the *mestizo* inhabitants of these same isles where Caliban lived, see with particular clarity: Prospero invaded the islands, killed our ancestors, enslaved Caliban, and taught him his language to make himself understood" (24). Identifying with Caliban's famous lines to Prospero – "You taught me language, and my profit on't/Is, I know how to curse" – words that have come to be synonymous with the linguistic and cultural condition of postcolonial subjects who are literate and even prolific in European languages, Retamar suggested that his America is not like Ariel, who may be colonized, but who both the play and Rodó suggest is already inducted into the colonial culture – "the intellectual" whose liberation, it is agreed, is dependent on his service to the colonizer. He averred: "There is no real Ariel-Caliban polarity: both are slaves in the hands of Prospero, the foreign magician. But Caliban is the rude and unconquerable master of the island" whose very name is an anagram of cannibal (28).

To buttress the Caliban side of the debate, Retamar pointed to Caribbean writers – Barbadian George Lamming and Edward Braithwaite writing in English, and Martinican Aimé Césaire writing in French – who all took up Caliban "with pride" in their respective works in the same year, 1969 (23).[40] Indeed Retamar's essay arguably popularized Césaire's rewriting of the play, *Une Têmpete, A Tempest,* in which Caliban, represented as "a black slave" associates himself with Malcolm X and describes Ariel, represented as

[40] Retamar accused Lamming, however, of rearticulating what Mannoni calls dependency complex (21). Goldberg argues, however, that Lamming's ambivalence actually echoes Frantz Fanon's refusal of Mannoni's thesis (*Tempest* 19).

"a mulatto," as sycophantic, as aforementioned, a "sucking up" "Uncle Tom" (Césaire 4, 26). Thus, this duel model lingers with an overwhelming celebration of Caliban over Ariel in intellectual and literary circles.[41] Moreover, both the model and the attraction to Caliban extend beyond the Caribbean's shores to allegorize the postcolonial or oppressed position more generally. As the array of scholarship and literature on Caliban makes clear, in the last 150 years Prospero's "thing of darkness" has represented, in addition to people of the Caribbean, Australian aboriginals, American Indians, South Americans, West Indians, Indians, Africans, the Irish – and as this chapter considers, Sri Lankans (5.1.330, Vaughan and Vaughan 144-46). Indeed, Edward Said concludes his *Culture and Imperialism* by invoking the debate in general terms and siding, too, with a version of Caliban who "sees his own history as an aspect of the history of all subjugated men and women, and comprehends the complex truth of his historical situation" (214). He asks:

> How does a culture seeking to become independent of imperialism imagine its own past? One choice is to do it as Ariel does, that is, as a willing servant of Prospero; Ariel does what he is told obligingly, and when he gains his freedom, he returns to his native element, a sort of bourgeois native untroubled by his collaboration with Prospero. A second choice is to do it like Caliban, aware of and accepting his mongrel past but not
>
> disabled (214)

Yet as significant as this debate has been – giving a globally recognizable narrative to (post)colonial experiences by ensuring *The Tempest* is read as a colonial document in addition to its early categorization as Romance, pastoral, or 'the last play,' providing a

[41] As Goldberg points out, the debate between Rodo and Retamar is well known particularly to academics in part because the latter published "Caliban" in English in the Massachusetts Review in 1971 and then again, "Revisited" in 1989.

model by which to challenge the canon and its identity-making significations – it has reduced the complexities between colonizer and colonized into a too-simple, exclusionary formulation .[42]

The debate certainly mobilizes the radical potential in Caliban's curses and garners empowering agency from appropriating what the colonizer has reviled, namely the "defamation" of New World inhabitants, 'cannibal' (Retamar 11). However, it nevertheless adheres to a formulation based in the Western canon at the expense of, Gayatri Spivak points out, "any specific consideration of the civilizations of the Maya, the Aztecs, and the Incas, or the smaller nations of what is now called Latin America" (245). Drawing from seminal essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" she warns against forgetting that Caliban "is a name in a play, an inaccessible blankness circumscribed by an interpretable text" arguing that "the stagings of Caliban work alongside the narrativization of history" (245). In other words, as former colonial subjects aim to "unlearn" the "so-called privilege as Ariel" by embracing the figure of Caliban, they may do so in the "name" of a constructed and exclusionary identity, even when the source text itself is resistant to such a move (245).

Following Spivak's point, *both Ariel* and "Caliban" rather forthrightly dismiss sustained and critical considerations of gender and sexuality – Sycorax and Miranda are markedly absent in their engagement with Shakespeare's text and, by extension, women in general are excluded from these cultural programs. And despite the fact that Ariel, as an "airy spirit", is ambiguously sexed and gendered – and evokes, as Stephen Orgel

[42] In her reading of the allegorical dimension of *The Tempest,* Madhavi Menon points out that allegory, in general, "sets up the promise of an answer but remains always at the level of the question; this is what makes it a 'perpetual metaphor.' Even as an ontological understanding of allegory centres on the notion of twin strands that can be separated to show the plain truth of the one and the pure fictionality of the other, a rhetorical understanding of allegory complicates its own explication…The allegorical process…is an inevitable and unending one, and no one allegory can claim to be the whole truth" (156)

points out, a Renaissance "boy actor who plays female roles every time Prospero assigns him a part: sea nymph, harpy, Ceres" – the debate dismissing these slippages, understanding him as unquestioningly male, if "beautiful" ("Introduction" 27, Rodó 99).[43] In *Ariel*, Rodó does not cite a single Latin American text nor a single woman, instead turning to a host of European male Enlightenment philosophers that he suggests Latin American should heed in order to resist the United States. When he does imagine that Latin America could be figured as a woman, she is another Shakespearean symbol, Titania from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1596) – read as an extension of Caliban who Rodó argues is "the play's symbol of brutal sensuality" (31). For Rodó argues, "in the act of kissing the ass's head, [she] would serve excellently as the emblem of a Liberty who bestows her love upon the mediocre" (62). "Never," he says, "no matter how regenerative the conquest, could we suffer a worse fate!" (62). Rodó compares Latin America's potential union with the United States to Titania's humiliation after lovingly caressing the "amiable cheeks" of Bottom's ass-head, when Oberon's spell is broken – "O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now," she says when the spell is broken (4.1.2, 4.1.44-5). Rodó's repudiation of Titania recalls Richard Rambuss's discussion of this' "principally female" "anal desire" in his essay "Shakespeare's Ass Play" on a *Midsummer Night's Dream*; "it redounds to Titania's degradation," he argues, suggesting that, "anality is the play's chief strategy of shaming" (240). Following the implications of the play, Rodó uses Titania's homoerotic sex acts to shame those who do not resist U.S. expansion. Thusly what Rodó sees as misdirected political desires are coded as specifically feminine and homoerotic, excluding women and all those with anal desire –

[43] See Stephen Orgel's catalogue of theatrical depictions of Ariel from female fairy to "macho" male in the introduction to the Oxford World Classics edition of *The Tempest (*66-84).

even when his cultural program, in its lionization of the spirit's deference to his master, actually espouses those female parts Prospero assigns to Ariel. Moreover, like most readings of the spirit, his delibidinized prescription does not openly ponder on the erotic implications of Prospero's terms of endearment for Ariel.

These misogynistic and homophobic sentiments are disturbingly echoed in Retamar's supposedly more radical, revolutionary cultural program. While *Caliban* cites a host of Caribbean writers, the essay largely excludes women and erases femininity. What's more, it also, as Goldberg points out "deplores femininity in men" (*Tempest* 8). Following Cuban poet Ricardo Ortiz's critique of the revolution for its homophobia, Goldberg argues, also, that for Retamar, "those who wish to be penetrated by U.S. or European culture are definitionally non-revolutionary artists who put themselves in the female derivative position…Such a cultural position is also a homosexual stance in a cultural milieu that defines 'the homosexual' as a man who takes it up the ass" (8).[44] This is particularly hypocritical given, as José Quiroga highlights in *Tropics of Desire* (2000), both Cuban feminists and homosexuals were early advocates of the revolution (124-44). Thus as Retamar challenges Rodó's political and cultural legacy by reanimating late-nineteeth-century Cuban intellectual José Martí's concept of "our America," the solidarity of *mestizaje* conditions – wide-ranging historical experiences including slavery, native resistance, and indentured servitude – in "Caliban" "our *mestizo* America" becomes exclusionary. In his manifesto Retamar eschews Rodó as well as other Europeanizers – who signify, Goldberg points out, "cultural emasculation" – yet contradictorily embraces Shakespeare and his character Caliban whose name is a

[44] Ricardo L. Ortiz, "Revolution's Other Histories: The Sexual, Cultural, and Critical Legacies of Roberto Fernández Retamar's 'Caliban'" in *Social Text* 58 (Spring 1999)

European imposition (9). Moreover, he does not consider the sexual implications of his anti-colonial hero. He makes no mention of Caliban's alleged rape of Miranda, nor does he read the homosocial-homoerotic continuum governs that Caliban's colonial relationships with Prospero and subsequently, Trinculo. Caliban's subordinate position as slave, colonial student, and spectacular commodity has erotic registers – that is articulated by a sycophantic "love" for his master(s), not unlike that of Ariel.

Caliban is, as Goldberg argues in his essay "Under the Covers with Caliban" (2007), a "sodomite". Reading the moment in *The Tempest* when Stephano comes across the four-legged figure and thinks it's "some monster of the isle" – only to find that it is, actually, "strange bedfellows" Trinculo and Caliban, together, under a gabardine Goldberg argues (2.2.65-66, 2.240-41)[45]:

> Yet the monstrosity here (the term is used over and over again in the scene), while initially registered by Trinculo in terms of the animal/human nature of Caliban and by Stephano in terms of the Mandevillian man of Ind, lies in what Stephano finally sees, Trinculo and Caliban making the beast with two backs…Stephano euphemizes the situation when he regards the four-legged creature before him as doubly mouthed, though he marks one mouth as forward and the other as backward. The exchange of mouth and anus here fits nicely with a figure whose name respells 'cannibal' and the colonialist tradition that regarded New World inhabitants as cannibals and sodomites. (299, ellipsis mine)

Caliban's romp under the covers with Trinculo, the "new master" – who the "most poor, credulous monster," kneeling, promises to show "every fertile inch o' th' island" and for

[45] In his essay Goldberg also reads Trinculo's emergence as an "excremental vision of birth" – Stephano asks "How cam'st thou to be the siege of this mooncalf? Can he vent Trinculos?" – and links it to Sycorax's witchy male birth of Caliban (299).

whom he vows to "pluck" "berries" – calls for a reassessment of his relationship with the old master, Prospero, who Caliban claimed he "loved" in a similar fashion (2.2.154-192,1.2.402). Caliban recounts his initial relationship with Prospero and Miranda:

> …When thou cam'st first
> Thou strok'st me and made much of me, wouldst
> Give me
> Water with berries in 't, and teach me how
> To name the bigger light and how the less,
> That burn by day and night. And then I loved thee,
> And showed thee all the qualities o' th' isle,
> The fresh springs, brine pits, barren place and
> fertile
> (1.2.397-403)

Thus Caliban has already enacted the drunken and affectionate promises he makes to Trinculo. What is seemingly absent in descriptions of the first master-slave relationship, however, is an account of any time Prospero may have spent under the covers with Caliban. While it might not be explicitly noted, it may also be that erotic exchanges between Prospero and Caliban go without saying? For when juxtaposed with Caliban's initial meeting of Trinculo, I wonder about the extent of Prospero's 'stroking' of this New World sodomite when he first arrived on the island – erotic acts that are not dangerously sodomitic, that do not challenge the normative colonial economy, but are, rather, in the service of them (1.2.398).

Indeed Caliban is understood as a threat precisely when he reroutes his "love" for his master, extending his desires to Miranda –which results in Prospero's accusation that attempted to "violate" her "honor" (1.2.417-418). In other words, I wonder if the irrevocable severing of that "love" between colonizer and colonized might be because Caliban's desire for Miranda breaches the homosocial/homoerotic economy that enslaves him – an economy that holds in place, too, Prospero's patriarchal policing and fears of miscegenation, those misogynistic anxieties that reduce Miranda to property barring her from pursing her own desires. This is not at all, of course, to suggest that heterosexual desire generally threatens colonial economy; indeed Miranda is to be given to Ferdinand – a marriage with another European royal. And until that union, which will ostensibly contain her desires, Prospero makes Ferdinand responsible for Miranda and her virginity, an obvious, non-threatening, homosocial alliance – both a "gift" and an "acquisition/Worthily purchased" (4.1.14-15). Rather it is the easy movement of a desire not based in the trafficking of men or women as property or commodity, not based on pure, proper, and legitimate bloodlines, that renders Caliban a sodomite. For while it may seem that Caliban's unapologetic response to Prospero's accusation – "O ho, O ho!" he scoffs, "Wouldn't had been done!/ Thou didst prevent me. I had peopled else/ This isle with Calibans" – echoes Prospero's ideology, likewise reducing Miranda to her procreative potential to reproduce the paternal line, it may actually be that it is a curse to compound his master's fear (1.2.419-421). For Caliban, a few lines later, declares that his profit for acquiring Prospero's "language" is to "curse". His unapologetic response, then, could be an articulation of his colonial education, threating Prospero with his own belief that thinks a sexual relationship as a property relationship.

Considering the rape accusation, George Lamming suggests that it is Prospero who wants to sleep with Miranda – that Prospero "has projected onto Caliban his own desire and then painted it black as the desire of the other" (Goldberg *Tempest* 21-22). Reading Lamming Goldberg argues this about Caliban:

> The island is his, but his in a form of belonging that is not the possessiveness and proprietariness of Prospero. Rather this belonging is an originary state before ownership, a state that would make all its inhabitants bastards. In this way, the political gesture that Caliban wrests from the rape accusation resonates beyond even the notion of gathering an army behind him. It is, in a word, that "love" that Caliban says he felt at first and the *Prospero* has violated. In some other world, some other time, Miranda and Caliban "could be together in a way that Miranda and her father could not…" (23 italics and ellipsis mine).

Goldberg points out that, in Lamming's reading, both an incestuous and male-male relationship lies beneath the rape accusation.

As these complex crisscrossing desires in the text make evident, Retamar does not make much of Caliban and Trinculo's time under the gabardine nor does he consider what kind of Caliban might have had with Prospero before he began to curse him. Retamar overlooks the ambivalent desires that would lead the colonized to "love" his colonizer. And by not acknowledging the homoerotic economy at work – and Caliban's place within it – Retamar unquestioningly and uncritically nominates a misogynist would-be rapist as anti-colonial hero. And so the cultural program Retamar (and his forebears) outline, is one that naturalizes "a homosocial/homophobic brotherhood always defended against its own homoerotics" (Goldberg *Tempest* 12).

Thus the Ariel/Caliban debate offers an androcentric and masculinist reading of both *The Tempest* and the postcolonial experience. Moreover, as it leaves out the women in Shakespeare's play it does not consider the extent and intensity of the relationship between the men as a result. This narrow reading has permeated both anti-colonial discourses and criticism of the play. For while a number of critics have complicated the static formulation of the Ariel/Caliban debate by gendering it, inquiring into the positions of women, particularly Sycorax and Miranda, as Goldberg argues, these "interventions have rarely moved beyond heteronormative assumptions" (3). Indeed relatively less has been made of the significance of the triangulated male-male-male relationship between Prospero, Ariel, and Caliban in both the play and in its subsequent iterations in postcolonial discourses such as the Ariel/Caliban debate. Goldberg's seminal book includes perhaps the most sustained study of the complex erotics and cross-gendering between these male figures – and that of Miranda and Sycorax – to date.[46] Yet following Hemi Chari, the play and the debate makes evident that ways in which "colonialism is predominantly a male project between and of men"; therefore heteronormative assumptions, however critical of colonial power apparatuses, offer a limited and reductive representation of (post)colonial experiences (Chari 279).

Gunesekera's *Reef*, however, makes this complicated, predominantly male project clear – extending it into the postcolonial and nuancing the debate. The translation of Caliban – the other poor servant Joseph – very explicitly illustrates the erotic

[46] In *Tempest in the Caribbean* Jonathan Goldberg reads George Lamming's identification with *both* Caliban and Prospero as *mestizaje* : "a largely all-male enterprise" "figured through an impossible act of sexual intercourse, two fathers, Caliban and Prospero produce a son" (18). Goldberg also cites Vera Kutzinski who argues that "Retamar's cultural *mestizaje*, which legitimates him as an Hispanic-American intellectual and as a first-person narrator, is born not from heterosexual violence but from the homoerotic embrace of Caliban and Ariel across their respective race and class differences". See "The Cult of Caliban: Collaboration and Revisionism in Contemporary Caribbean Narrative," in *A History of Literature in the Caribbean*, ed A. James Arnold, vol. 3, 285-302.

triangulation of power positions. From the outset, Joseph bullies and competes with young Triton; they both vie for Mister Salgado's attention. Joseph had acquired the position, according to Triton, by manipulating a government job and then being paid off by local party workers (19). Triton is sympathetic to his fellow servant's difficult background, commenting that "Joseph had developed a taste for numbness, I think, smoking cigarette butts and draining dregs of beer and liquor…It was his frustration, knowing there was no future for the likes of him in the kind of service he dreamed of, that turned him into a monster" (51). Yet he ultimately says that "he had been more with moral equivalent of a sweet tooth – no temptation was too small" and admits that he "despised him for this defect: I felt he sullied Mister Sagado's house" (19). Triton remembers Joseph using frightening imagery, tonally registering colonial fears of the 'other':

> What I disliked most about Joseph was the power he had over me, the power to make me feel powerless. He was not a big man but he had a long rectangular head shaped like a devil-mask. His face was heavy and his lower law jutted out, making his head look detached from his body. A sullen heart compressed the muscles beneath the skin of his face in a permanent grimace. He had big hands that would appear out of nowhere. And as I was always trying to avoid him and never looked up at him, the sight of his hands suddenly on a doorknob or reaching for a cloth was terrifying. The hands, like the head, always seemed disembodied. I expected to find them around my throat one day. The nails were in good shape though; he took good care of his nails. I know don't know where he learned to

> look after them, but maybe he too learned something from our Mister Salgado (36).

What is extraordinary about this passage is the recasting of power in the seemingly stable Prospero-Caliban-Ariel triad. It is not his master Mister Salgado who makes Triton feel afraid, but, rather, his fellow servant, Joseph, who renders him "powerless"; there is little communist solidarity between them. This feeling has as much to do with Joseph's treatment of him as his own revulsion of his body – disembodied body parts, hard-lined head and jaw; he was a small, but scary man. This difference is especially pronounced when juxtaposed with Mister Salgado's body and Triton's desirous gaze of it. Triton remembers when he first brought his master tea: "Mister Salgado was in bed…The over-sheet was crumpled up on a side, and his sarong lay sloughed off his slim hips. His banyan revealed a few strands of black hair on narrow boyish chest…He was tall, and when he was lying down he seemed to go on forever...he had high insteps…They looked like the feet of a woman" (22-3, ellipsis mine). The distribution of power between these two men – of different class backgrounds – has clear gendered and sexualized dimensions. Mister Salgado is not only non-threatening in his boyish, womanly stature, but because Triton is clearly attracted to him. Joseph, on the other hand, disgusts him. His portraits of these two men muddy the Shakespearean schema, producing complex overlaps of *The Tempest*'s cast. Salgado's womanly boyishness recalls Ariel – even if he remains like Prospero master of his estate, obsessed with memory, and, at times, even paternally shepherding young Triton. And Joseph is not wholly repulsive – his nice nails, which Triton attributes to Mister Salgado, shows the master's imprint on him. Triton in the middle of these two men seems to be, in additional to Ariel, Miranda – scared of

Joseph and reliant on Prospero, a potential target of both of their power and desire. As Miranda, Triton registers the incestuous relationship between parent and child to which Lamming referred as well as the rape accusation lodged at Caliban.

Gunesekera effectively blurs any stable archetypal schema and insists on its all-male cross-gendering when a drunk Joseph attempts to rape Triton in Mister Salgado's bed, a scene ripe with terrifyingly ambivalent desires and agencies:

> Joseph was by the mirror. He face was pallid; he red eyes bulged. He had unbuttoned his shirt and was rubbing Mister Salgado's cologne on his chest. Talcum power had settled on the tabletop. He looked up and saw me across the room, reflected in the mirror. He hissed something under his breath and turned quickly around. He came towards me locking me with his gaze. I couldn't move. I swallowed but my mouth was dry. I couldn't get anything to move from inside. Joseph had his mouth open and his tongue thickened between his teeth. I could see the spittle on his lips bubbling. He lunged forward and grabbed me. I lashed out with my hand. If I could hit his jaw his tongue would fall out but his arms were like steel belts around me. He pushed me down on the big soft bed. He was on top of me, twice my size, squeezing the life out me and the breath out of my chest. His fist digging in between my legs and punching a hole in me. The more I struggled, the stronger he became. I bit his arm, and he nearly broke my back. In the end I gave up and died. I let the life out of my body, and he froze. Then with one hand he undid his sarong and pulled at his dribbling warped prick. He looked down at it, and I slipped out from under him down on to the floor. He rolled over still holding himself. He was breathing hard; his body was pumping. I found a

> shoe under the bed and flung it at him. I wanted to scream but I couldn't. I had no voice. I jumped up and ran out of the house. (46)

I quote this harrowing passage in its entirety to fully showcase the many shifting power positions taking place. Their political implications are endless. More than simply compounding Joseph's Calibanesque grotesqueness, this scene also illustrates Triton's sublimated erotic desires for Mister Salgado. As Joseph slathers his chest with Mr. Salgado's cologne the attempted rape appears as the horribly violent return of the repressed, an inversion of the idealized male bond of Triton's fantasy. Joseph, in his performance of Mister Salgado, has actually acceded to the role of master – or the "homosexual" rapist as Fanon would have it. Like that of Caliban with Prospero and Trinculo, this may reveal something about Joseph's relationship with his master; like the accusation lodged at Caliban, this may be the articulation of someone else's desires rather entirely his own.

Yet this scene also reveals something about Triton and his Arielesque submission. He says of Joseph, who is becoming increasingly aroused by his apparent powerlessness, "the more I struggled, the stronger he became. I bit his arm, and he nearly broke my back" (46). Ironically, when Triton "gave up" and "died", Joseph "froze" opening a space for Triton to escape – as if, following Fisher's masochistic politics, Triton's direct resistance kept Joseph's power in place. This representation of attempted male rape is not representative of all; oftentimes escape, as Fanon describes when rearticulating Hegel's master/slave dialectic, is not possible. And indeed, from this rape attempt Triton is not left unscathed. He had "no voice" in the end – he didn't even have the words tell Mister Salgado about Joseph; "I wanted to tell him exactly what I had seen and what had

happened," he remembers, "But the words were impossible to get out" (49). But, I maintain, while impressing on him, changing him, he refuses to let his trauma-induced speechlessness become totalizing. Rather he claims it is his decision not to say anything, to manipulate the narrative and his desires; "it would have spoiled everything," he says of confessing to Mister Salgado what happened, "We would have had Joseph between us forever. It was not what I wanted" (49). Of course Joseph would always be there; the moment cannot be excised. Rather its significance is metamorphosed in a narrative in which Triton has control and allows him to do more than simply cope. Likewise, Triton's "death" in the moment Joseph attempts to rape him need not be read as non-agency – it was an active response to a violent power imposed on him.

Against the polarizing and exclusionary Ariel/Caliban Debate for which dominance is conflated with agency, and heteronormativity seems a prerequisite for resistance, *Reef* illustrates how homoerotic servitude can be politically transformative. After all, Triton's Arielesque "love" for Mister Salgado actually removes him from the war over identity, from Sri Lanka altogether; and so he transforms into something politically different, other – more plural as an emigrant some place else – "something rich and strange".

Chapter 2

"Rather say, I play the man I am": Role Play and Fantasy in Salman Rushdie's "Chekov and Zulu"

> There is a world elsewhere.
> -- *Coriolanus*
>
> The word 'translation' comes etymologically, from the Latin for 'bearing across'. Having been borne across the world, we are translated men. It is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling obstinately to the notion that something can also be gained.
>
> -- Salman Rushdie, "Imaginary Homelands"

"Protean" Desires

In his Richard Ellmann Lectures, given at Emory University in 2004, Salman Rushdie attributed what he dubbed the "protean in literature" to William Shakespeare. Likening the Bard to the god of sea change, who could foretell the future, but changed his

shape to avoid doing so, Rushdie argued that Shakespeare's works showcase how "life is not one thing, but many. Not singular, but multiform. Not constant, but infinitely mutable".[47] For Rushdie "the protean" in literature refers to un-fixity and plurality – in both content and form. Indeed in his lecture he argued that Shakespeare's "gift" was his "shape shifting" "freedom of form" that "collapses genres without sacrificing truth." "Shakespeare" Rushdie said, "had known all that had been, was now, and what lay in store" and "used his metamorphic art to lay it bare." Rushdie celebrated Shakespeare in his lecture – yet he made clear that his appreciation is not uncritical Bardolatry. Rushdie turns to Shakespeare for the playwright's imaginative irreverence. Rushdie, in other words, understands Shakespeare not as stagnant originator, but rather as nimble translator, moving unfaithfully and playfully between stock plots, genres, and temporalities – reordering and rewriting.

Rushdie often uses the concept of translation not only as a catchphrase for various modes of rewriting, but also a metaphor for movement across any boundary; as this chapter's epigraph indicates, he takes the etymology literally. For Rushdie, translation occurs off the page, as people negotiate all forms of cultural contact. [48] In other words, people can be translated too. As a writer – one that is also acutely aware of the dominance of the Western, particularly English, canon in the literary world – linguistic and cultural translation go hand-in-hand for Rushdie. And in his Ellmann Lectures, Rushdie admitted that he himself has been translated by Shakespeare – and vice versa. He said: "Shakespeare. No writer can escape the fellow. I have a brass doorknocker in the

[47] Rushdie also refers to Virgil's Proteus who recounts the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice Aristaeus.
[48] For how Rushdie uses translation as a metaphor for migration and cultural contact see: Jaina C. Sanga *Salman Rushdie's postcolonial metaphors: migration, translation, hybridity, blasphemy and globalization* (2001)

shape of Shakespeare's bust on my study door, so that everyday when I go into work I can knock on my door and tell myself to come in and know that I'm not entering my domain, but his." This literal process of translation – the bearing across from one domain to another – indicates that Shakespeare affects Rushdie, and Rushdie, Shakespeare.[49] Evidence can be found not only in the signature characteristics of Rushdie's writing – the way his own work, often described as "postmodern," is likewise "protean", resisting singular narratives and voices, obsessed with metamorphosis and change – but also in the ubiquitous rewritings of Shakespeare in his novels and short stories. In her comprehensive survey of Shakespeare in Rushdie's work, "Shakespeare in Rushdie/Shakespearean Rushdie," Geetha Ganapathy-Doré points out that in his novels, short stories, and essays, "rewriting occurs piecemeal and is inflected in various modes – quotation, allusion, parody, recasting of characters, irradiation of metaphors – not to mention the intertwining of supratexual topics such as the history of colonial encounters" (11). She concludes: "Willful and confusing intertexuality is encoded in Rushdie's writing" (11). Nearly all of Rushdie's work alludes to Shakespeare – but elusively. Ganapathy-Doré also points out that there is hardly ever a complete rewriting of one entire play in one novel or short story as is the case with many other postcolonial writers (11). As a result Shakespeare provides meaningful subtexts in Rushdie's work –but his status as the authoritative and original Bard is fractured and undone. Rushdie's rewritings therefore come from what Homi Bhabha calls "that Third Space" "which is unrepresentable in itself" but "constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that

[49] These processes recalls Jorge Luis Borges's short story/critical meditation "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote" which raises questions about the nature of authorship, appropriation, and interpretation

ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew" (55). [50]

Often in Rushdie's work "the same signs" can become nearly unrecognizable. Indeed rewritings of Shakespeare in Rushdie's work are often so covert that they go unnoticed, being seamlessly integrated into the many-layered fabric of his own "protean" narratives. While attention to Shakespearean elements has been given to the story "Yorick" from Rushdie's collection *East/West* because its clear allusion to *Hamlet*, the other Shakespearean story in the collection, "Chekov and Zulu," is rarely read as such. [51] It is not often thought of as a translation of Shakespeare's tragedy about state demands, *Coriolanus*, though the play is explicitly cited in the story (160).[52] Instead, "Chekov and Zulu" is more readily noted for its extraordinary appropriation of the American science fiction television series, *Star Trek* (1966-9), for postcolonial purposes. [53] As critics have pointed out, in "Chekov and Zulu," Rushdie rewrites the *Star Trek* script, giving airtime to marginal voices in the genre of Science Fiction. White men have dominated *Star Trek*'s cast; however, Rushdie's protagonists are not white men, but, rather, Indian men. And they fashion themselves not on the lead characters Captain Kirk and First Officer

[50] For more on how Rushdie uses Shakespeare to create "hybrid texts" see Santiago Rodríguez Guerrero-Strachan and Ana Sáez Hidalgo "The Fooler Fooled:Salman Rushdie's Hybrid Revision of William Shakespeare's Hamlet through 'Yorick'"

[51] See Adelaine La Guardia Nogueira: "Shakespeare's Hamlet, Salman Rushdie's 'Yorick,' and the Dilemmas of Tradition" and Santiago Rodríguez Guerrero-Strachan and Ana Sáez Hidalgo: "The Fooler Fooled: Salman Rushdie's Hybrid Revision of William Shakespeare's Hamlet through 'Yorick'"

[52] In her informative and exhaustive catalogue of allusions to Shakespeare in Rushdie's work, "Rushdie in Shakespeare/ Shakespearian Rushdie," Geetha Ganapatha-Doré does make note of the citation of *Coriolanus* in "Chekov and Zulu". She notes that it informs the homoerotics between Chekov and Zulu, but she does not elucidate further: "This passing mention of Shakespeare 's play is perhaps a deictic pointer to the semi-homosexual bonds existing between the former Board School mates from Dehra Doon which parallel those between Coriolanus and Aufidius" – clearly de-eroticizing the relationship (13)

[53] The *Star Trek* to which Rushdie refers in his story and to which I refer in this chapter is now often called *Star Trek: The Original Series* in order to distinguish it from the subsequent motion pictures and television series. Throughout this chapter, unless otherwise noted, I am referring to the original series, which ran in the United States from 1966-69.

Spock, but on the junior lieutenants, navigator Chekov and helmsman Sulu. In the story, former colonial center, London, is exoticised as a foreign planet that must be explored and infiltrated. In addition, the story blends the futuristic language of *Star Trek* with Urdu punctuated English. "Zulu" is a mispronunciation of helmsmen Sulu's name, for example. Yet it is also a gesture toward the Bantu ethnic group of South Africa – perhaps a counterpoint to the Afrikaans etymology of the word "Trek." For critics such as David Damrosch, Rushdie's quintessentially "hybrid" story is a paradigmatic example of what has come to be known as "world literature."

However, these astute interpretations do not fully exhaust implications of the *Star Trek* intertext that is so integral to Rushdie's unique "participatory" fan fiction (Jenkins). For as any avid fan of *Star Trek* knows, the series itself engages with the "protean," borrowing heavily from Shakespeare's works – indeed their ubiquity in the series may contribute to its status as a cultural phenomenon.[54] Episodes rework Shakespeare's plays, while others are named after lines within the plays. [55] Shakespeare is frequently cited as Captain Kirk's favorite writer, and prominent real-life Shakespearean thespians have

[54] For more on how Shakespeare is an authoritative cultural and political icon in *Star Trek*, see John S. Pendergast, "A Nation of Hamlets: Shakespeare and Cultural Politics" in *Extrapolation* Vol. 36, No.1. (1995)

[55] Such as "Catspaw," (*Macbeth*), "Requiem for Methuselah" (*The Tempest*) and "Elaan of Troyius" (*The Taming of the Shrew*) and "The Conscience of the King" (*Hamlet*), "Dagger of the Mind" (Macbeth), "All Our Yesterdays" (likewise *Macbeth*) and "By Any Other Name" (*Romeo and Juliet*). Later episodes in other series also borrow from Shakespeare's plays, such as "Once More Unto The Breach" (*Henry V*) of *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. Similarly, the *Star Trek* films allude to Shakespeare; *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* (1991) is perhaps the most noted as in once scene – dinner between the crew of the *Enterprise* and the Klingons – Shakespeare is debated. Chancellor Gorkon famously says: "You have not experienced Shakespeare until you have read him in the original Klingon." The Chancellor's line was the impetus for "The Tragedy of Khamlet, Son of the Empror of Qo'noS," which was a project to translate Hamlet into Klingon. The "original Klingon" version is adapted to reflect the play's history as originating from the Klingon source. The Klingon Language Institute (KLI) printed and published a limited hardback version in 1996 entitled: *Hamlet Prince of Denmark: The Restored Klingon Version*.

played roles in both the series and in the films.[56] Even the *Enterprise*'s mission statement is Shakespearean, echoes Miranda's outburst in the final act of *The Tempest*; "O Brave new world," sounds much like "strange new worlds."[57] And the substitution of "brave" with "strange" may be an intentional misquotation by the series; the word "strange" is uttered twenty-five times in *The Tempest* (5.1.183-4). The shift from the singular "world" to "worlds" may highlight the theme of exploration beyond Earth – the futuristic, space-aged reshaping of the early modern project of travel and discovery.[58] *Star Trek* illustrates a neo-Age of Exploration, with many of the conflicts that arise during the interplanetary expeditions of the *Enterprise* allegorizing U.S. foreign relations at the end of the 1960s and adhering to liberal-humanist ideologies.[59] Shakespeare, as well as his time, is an indispensable part of *Star Trek* culture.[60] Thus the citation of *Coriolanus* in "Chekov and Zulu" actually authenticates the recreated *Trek* tropology in Rushdie's story and cannot be dismissed.

More importantly, though, as in an actual episode of *Star Trek*, Shakespeare's play provides the subtext for the story's setting, plotline, and fan-based companionship between the male protagonists, an Indian diplomat, Hindu Chekov, and a security officer,

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[56] For instance, Christopher Plummer, playing Chang of the Klingons, is actually part of a debate on Shakespeare in the film *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* (1991), and Patrick Stuart is Jean Luc-Picard.

[57] For more on *The Tempest* in *Star Trek*, see Harriet Hawkins "From King Lear to King Kong and Back: Shakespeare and Popular Modern Genres" in *Bad Shakespeare: revaluations of the Shakespeare canon* (1988) pg. 45.

[58] Moreover, "Miranda-class" starships were in service in the late 23rd Century in subsequent films and "The Next Generation" and "Deep Space Nine" series. Many critics have pointed out that Kirk and Spock may be read Prospero and his non-human servant Ariel.

[59] For the implications of *Star Trek* as a Cold War allegory with colonial and imperial undertones see Mark Houlahan "Cosmic Hamlets? Contesting Shakespeare in Federation Space" *Extrapolation*, Vol. 36, No. 1. For an episode that exemplifies these colonial undertones, and showcases the ways in which Kirk wants 'uncivilized' aliens to conform to Federation values see, "This Side of Paradise". For more on how Star Trek is an allegory for U.S. foreign relations see Laura Sweeney *The Origins of The Star Trek Phenomenon: Gene Roddenberry, the Original Series, and Science Fiction Fandom in the 1960s* and watch "Private Little War," an allegory of the U.S.'s involvement in the Vietnam War.

[60] *Extrapolation* has an entire volume dedicated to Shakespeare in *Star Trek*. Vol. 36, No.1, 1995.

Sikh Zulu, who are assigned to infiltrate the "Khalistan-wallah" Sikh separatists in the London area during the height of what is now referred to as the 'Punjab Crisis' (151). The nature of this friendship, informed by the citation of *Coriolanus*, has remained curiously unanalyzed in both postcolonial and queer studies. However, this chapter builds on postcolonial interpretations of the story by considering the ways in which Rushdie borrows the intimacies and desires from Shakespeare's strongly homosocial play. I highlight the ways in which, in "Chekov and Zulu," Rushdie employs an intertextual double-translation– that of both *Star Trek and Coriolanus*. By doing so, the story draws attention to the ways in which modes of governance – whether earthly or interplanetary – mediate male camaraderie and erotic desire. In the story, Chekov and Zulu exhibit a desire for each other analogous to that of Shakespearean military rivals Volscian Aufidius and Roman Coriolanus respectively, as well as that between the men aboard the markedly androcentric "bridge of the flagship of the United Federation of Planets" (161).

As veritable *Star Trek* fan fiction – what Henry Jenkins has famously dubbed "textual poaching"– Rushdie cleverly translates the series' preoccupation with Shakespeare (5). As loose translations of Aufidius and Coriolanus, Chekov and Zulu play-out the effects of divided political loyalties on state-sanctioned homosocial intimacy when their friendship comes to a tragic end. By radically leveling the events of the Punjab Crisis with *Coriolanus* and *Star Trek*, Rushdie's story illustrates how different forms of state-based governance – whether in Shakespeare's early-Rome (arguably an allegory for the Midland corn riots of 1607), [61] India (the postcolonial nation state),

[61] The Midland corn riots, the Enclosure Acts dispossessing farmers of their lands, and the conflicts over mixed forms of government, are understood as having been translated into the Roman terms of food riots, patrician and plebian class conflicts, and the establishment of the Roman Tribunate. See Elyssa Y. Cheng

Khalistan (the fantasy of an independent Sikh "homeland") or even within *Star Trek*'s United Federation of Planets (a futuristic new order modeled on the United Nations) – facilitate erotic desire between men, yet refuse to acknowledge it as such. These governances, instead, police and shame individual bodies that expose their structures. In other words, the quietness of the *Coriolanus* intertext in Rushdie' story illustrates how the construction of statehood itself is complicit in the phenomenon of "the open secret" – what Eve Sedgwick, reading D.A. Miller, understands as the structures of knowing and not knowing, (heterosexuality's willful ignorance) of the experience and possibility of homosexual identity. [62]

Yet as Madhavi Menon has argued, *Coriolanus* is also a play that "repeatedly impedes identity formation" (158). As in *Coriolanus*, in Rushdie's story oscillating political loyalties seem to, in turn, oscillate desires, particularly between men – resisting any fixed identifications with either nationalism or sexuality. As a result, Rushdie's story is unfaithful to the mainstay interpretation of the play, a proto- liberal view that reads the eponymous hero as aspiring toward an absolute degree of autonomy. Through his Coriolanus figure, Sikh Zulu, Rushdie suggests an alternative reading of the play; Zulu, like his Shakespearean counterpart desires a protean existence, one that challenges notions of stable or fixed selfhood. As I will argue, he desires undoing his identity, especially that which is conferred by the state – not autonomy.

Thus as "Chekov and Zulu" illustrates the state's oppressive and repressive demands on sexuality, I suggest that the story nevertheless recovers a more radical notion of desire – one that is not tied to easily categorizable identity. Rushdie's story conjoins

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"Moral Economy and the Politics of Food Riots in *Coriolanus*" in *Concentric: Literary and Cultural Studies 36.2* (Sept 2010) and Annabel Paterson *Shakespeare and the Popular Voice* (1991)

[62] I discuss the "open secret" at length in my introduction.

Coriolanus's defiant 'banishment' of Rome in favor of "a world elsewhere" with *Star Trek*'s fantastical declaration that there are "strange new worlds" "where no man has gone before." Thus, his story gestures toward the ways in which otherworldly places and desires can be treasonously imagined in spite of the state's willful denial of homoerotism. For while Chekov and Zulu's mutual 'trekkie' fantasy is code talk for Indian politics – the *Enterprise* is renamed "the good ship Hindustan", for example – it is also a kind of cant for their special relationship (151). As Foucault suggests in his interview, "Friendship as a Way of Life," two men often "face each other without terms or convenient words, with nothing to assure them about the meaning of the movement that carries them toward each other. They have to invent, from A to Z, a relationship that is still formless, which is friendship: that is to say, the sum of everything through which they can give other pleasure (136). That is, it is precisely through their own *Star Trek* fan script, developed when they were teenagers, that Chekov and Zulu are able to perform their desire for one another, role-playing alternate and plural identities.

Such an imagined erotic relationship between male characters in *Star Trek* recalls, in multiple ways, the Science Fiction subgenre, "slash" fiction, in which fans of the series rewrite the male bonds in the series as "sexual fantasies" (Russ). They primarily rewrite the relationship between the focal characters, Captain Kirk and Mister Spock; this slash writing is indicated by their initials, separated by the punctuation mark: S/K. Feminist Science Fiction critic Joanna Russ draws attention to the homosocial desire between the captain and first officer aboard the *Enterprise*, arguing that "the TV series made the Kirk-Spock friendship a matter of real respect and real love, in contrast with Kirk's absolutely

pro forma affairs with various women" (84). She outlines the general premise of slash fiction as such:

> Not only are the two characters (Kirk and Spock) lovers (or in the process of becoming so; many of these are "first time" stories), they are usually bonded telepathically in what amounts to a life-long monogamous marriage, which is literally impossible for either party to dissolve. Sometimes the union of minds lasts only until death (often the death of one bondmate precipitates that of the other) but often it is assumed to last after it (81)

As I will point out in this chapter, both "Chekov and Zulu" and *Coriolanus,* rather remarkably, follow this slash fiction premise. The men in both *Star Trek* and Shakespeare's play are wed to each other until death. Rushdie's slash fiction expands the subgenre to include the supporting the characters; Chekov and Sulu have similar "*pro forma*" relationships with women, privileging their relationship above all. While Coriolanus and Aufidius are rivals for the most of the play, they fantasize about each other, and prefer the company of men to that of women. In Rushdie's story Chekov is not married at all while Zulu's wife is left in the dark about the men's mission as well as the extent of their relationship. In the story it is the relationship between Chekov and Zulu that is most pronounced.

Engaging with the "protean in literature," Rushdie highlights the relationship between *Star Trek* and Shakespeare, intertwining the Science Fiction phenomenon with *Coriolanus*. The result is what I describe as postcolonial slash fiction – "Chekov and Zulu" might be thought of as C/V. Indeed, the story ends not with the political loyalties

that divided Chekov and Zulu, but with the fantasy that brought them together. In his pre-death reverie that concludes the story – to which I will return in comparison to Aufidius's dream – Chekov and his lifelong companion Zulu succumb to the Klingons, dying together aboard the *Enterprise*, forever hand in hand.

"Soldiers and husbandmen like the Romans of old"

The citation of *Coriolanus* in "Chekov and Zulu" is far from arbitrary.[63] Rushdie has four drafts of the story, housed in Emory University's Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Books Library (MARBL). In all three drafts, the narrative leading up to the citation remains the same. Chekov and Zulu 'explore' London together, going on several sight-seeing dates to tourist destinations that Chekov ambivalently describes as "remnants of greatness" that leave "a residue of distress" – as the eminence British Empire has been at the expense of its former Indian colony, the new nation of which Chekov is a representative (155). Chekov gets "interculturally hot under the collar" while lunching on bench together in the Embankment Gardens, boating on the Serpentine as "mighty Zulu" rowed while Chekov reclined "boatered and champagned on striped cushions," playing squash "in a private court in St. John's Wood," after which they discuss their intelligence strategy in the locker room, explicitly in the nude (155-157). In one draft, presumably the initial one, Rushdie concludes these string of dates, the last of which marks the last time that they see each other as a couple, by writing that "Chekov and Zulu on a day off in

[63] In addition to *Coriolanus* the story includes a meditation on science fiction writer, J.R.R. Tolkien – his *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. There are references as well to spy novelists, Len Deighton and John Le Carré (162-3, 167). The works, I think, serve to highlight the relationship between the two men of Rushdie's story. That is, the worlds of these writers are characteristically androcentric. In addition to these references, both David Damrosch and John Cullen Gruesser have compared Chekov and Zulu's positions as intelligence agents to modern versions of Haree Babu, invoking the "Great Game" in Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*.

London attended a Trekkie convention at Earls Court exhibition centre" (8). In the final published version of the story, this detail is omitted and replaced with "Chekov asked Zulu to drive him up to Stratford for a performance of *Coriolanus*" (155).

With this intended citation, Rushdie translates *Coriolanus* into the height of the "Punjab Crisis" of the 1980s – when, following the attack on the Golden Temple Gurdwara in Amritsar, known as Operation Blue Star, and the subsequent assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her own Sikh bodyguards, the Indian Congress party sanctioned 'Woodrose,' yet another military operation in which all the prominent members of the largest Sikh political party the Akali Dal were arrested and the All India Sikh Students Federation banned. [64] In addition, Operation Woodrose rounded up thousands of suspected Sikh separatists, including innocent civilians many of whom were refused access to lawyers, held in detention, tortured, or killed by police, government officials, and elected civilians. And the government did little to quell what has become known as "the 1984 Sikh massacre," violent anti-Sikh riots, organized by the Congress Party and conducted by Indian citizens, in response to the assassination of Prime Minister Gandhi by her own Sikh bodyguards.[65] Suspicion of Sikh men as insurgents, both in India and abroad in England and Canada remained until the early 1990s. Moreover, no torturer or Congress Party organizer has gone to trial for these violations. In Rushdie's story the events of the Crisis are coded in *Star Trek* terms. Sikh insurgent separatists who promoted a movement for the sovereign Sikh state, Khalistan, are coded as the series'

[64] Rushdie's account is not the only one that sees Shakespearean resonances with the Crisis. In the June 4 1988 edition of *Economic and Political Weekly*, Bhabani Sen Gupta quoting *Macbeth* and titling her piece "The Dagger of the Mind" argued that: "Later rather than sooner the nation will realise that the 'dagger of the mind' will find no solution to the Punjab crisis".

[65] For a detailed account of these events see Khushwant Singh's seminal *A History of the Sikhs Volume 2*:1839-1988, chapters 20-24 (2005). See also, Ram Narayan Kumar, Amrik Singh, Ashok Agrawaal, and Jaskaran Kaur *Reduced to Ashes: The Insurgency and Human Rights in Punjab* (1999)

antagonists, Klingons, an extraterrestrial humanoid warrior species, while Indian Congress is coded as Star Fleet, the military service maintained by the Federation.[66] The citation of *Coriolanus* gives narrative shape to the code; it allegorizes the ways in which Chekov and Zulu, as representations of non-Sikh and Sikh Indian officials respectively, are implicated in and impacted by India's anti-Sikh Operations.

The story, told in fragmented order, begins on "4th November, 1984" in the violent aftermath of the assassination of Indira Gandhi. With the implementation of Woodrose, India's Congress Party– recalling Brutus and Sicinius of the Shakespearean counterpart – had instigated public suspicion compounding dissent and rioting (2.3,3.3). Rushdie suggests that like Rome's citizens toward its war hero Coriolanus, India's "voices" were irrationally and violently critical of their own historical military heroes, Sikh men. "Your voices! For your voices I have fought," Coriolanus says to a general, disembodied Roman audience, recounting, but not displaying, his battle wounds as he asks for their approbation:

> Watch'd for your voices; for your voices bear
> Of wounds two dozen odd. Battles thrice six
> I have seen and heard of; for your voices have
> done many things, some less, some more.
> (2.3.134-41)

Similarly, Sikh men, historically comprising India's military, have, for centuries, fought and defended the region, and therefore seemingly earned the "approbation" of new

[66] Rushdie may also be covertly alluding to the character Khan Noonien Singh in the episode "Space Seed" (and the subsequent fan film *The Wrath of Khan*). Khan is a subject of past Eugenics experimentation, a genetically engineered superman – appropriately, he is of Sikh descent.

India's "voices" (2.3.157).[67] Yet, the treatment of Sikhs during the Punjab Crisis confirmed how both Indian officials and the Indian public seemed to disregard the community's history of service.[68] The community felt ignored and alienated after the Independence and Partition of India when their state, language, and religion were increasingly being dismissed in favor of nationalistic secular unity. As Rushdie points out in his essay "The Assassination of Indira Gandhi" "the troubles in Punjab" could have been avoided if the Punjabi State's "legitimate grievances received the kind of sympathetic hearing [by the Central government] that they have been denied for years" (42). Rather, their grievances were not only dismissed but, as Bluestar and Woodrose illustrate, understood as threat to a unified national identity. Once valorized as India's "martial race" and praised as exemplary postcolonial laborers, perceptions of Sikh men radically shifted during these bloody years when they were defined as enemies of the state (Oberoi 1994). [69] Therefore the sarcastic oscillation of the word "for" in Coriolanus's lines, from a preposition connoting duty to an accusatory coordinating conjunction, is likewise translated into the Sikh case. That is, Coriolanus recognizes very early in the play that the challenges of self-authorship in the face of state demands. The "voices" are participatory; they "have done many things" and also "bear" wounds." Coriolanus does not define national demands, therefore he has little control over his reception and his title. The Roman people, and the tribune to which they are beholden,

[67] Sikhs resisted early British expansion. And while Sikhs were co-opted to fight in the British Army under colonialism, they also comprised nearly sixty-percent of Indian Liberation Army.
[68] While Indira insisted that she keep her Sikh bodyguards, her party nevertheless murdered many innocent Sikhs during Operation Bluestar.
[69] See also Joseph Sramek *Gender, Morality, and Race in Company India, 1765-1858* pages 147-149

are complicit in constructing a hero or an enemy. As D.J. Gordon has argued, glory, fame, praise and honor are all conferred by means of public voice.[70]

Like the Roman military in Shakespeare's play, Sikh men had been military servants to the state, beholden to the expectations and demands of its government and citizenry, British or Indian. Indeed, in 1834 Bombay diplomatic official Alexander Burnes directly compared Sikh men with ancient Romans, stating that they were "either soldiers or husbandmen like the Romans of old" (Sramek 147). Indira Gandhi, herself, paid lip service to the manly and moral 'virtues' that came to characterize Sikhs: "The Sikhs are a virile people…. In the long and glorious age of national independence, the Sikhs made a shining contribution. Let not a miniscule minority among the Sikhs be allowed to trample under foot the *civilised norms for which Sikhism is well known*, and to tarnish the image of *a brave and patriotic* community" (304-305, emphasis mine). In Rushdie's story, neither Chekov nor Zulu give commands; rather, as servicemen, they carry them out. Chekov explains that he and his friend are "not the leaders" "but the ultimate professional servants." "'Course laid in!' 'Hailing frequencies open!' 'Warp factor three!' What would that strutting Captain have ben without his top-level staffers?," asks Chekov, "'Likewise with the good ship Hindustan'" (151). Fashioning themselves on the *Enterprise*'s navigator and helmsmen, Chekov and Zulu "do not lead, but…enable" (151, ellipsis mine). A Sikh security officer, such as Zulu, would feel pressures to take this position particularly seriously given the history of his community and the tenants of traditional Sikhism. Indeed Chekov tells Zulu's wife early in the story: "The Sikh community has always been thought loyal to the nation…Backbone of the

[70] "Name and Fame in Coriolanus," in *Papers Mainly Shakespeare*, ed. G.I. Duthie (London: Oliver & Boyd, 1964(40-57)

Army, to say nothing of the Delhi taxi service. Super-citizens, one might say, seemingly wedded to the national idea" (152).

Despite this loyalty, all Sikh men were rendered suspected terrorists, especially after the assassination of Indira Gandhi by her own Sikh bodyguards. Chekov goes on, with the aim of misleading Zulu's wife so not compromise her husband's undercover infiltration into a "Klingon cell":

> But such ideas are being questioned now, you must admit; there are those who would point to the comb, bangle, dagger et cetera as signs of the enemy within…take Zulu. The ticklish thing is, he's not on any official business we know of…There is a view forming back at HQ that he may have been associated with the gang. Who have in all probability long-established links with the community over here. (152, ellipsis mine) [71]

Zulu, as a Sikh security official, is therefore the story's Coriolanus figure – at once a loyal hero and, in the words of Shakespeare's Brutus, "enemy to the people and his country" (147-8). And like Coriolanus's "wounds," the Sikh articles of faith – commonly known "the Five Ks" [72] – donned by Zulu and other traditional "amritdhari" men, became symbols of battle, markers that confirmed or contested national loyalty. In addition to the Five Ks, the turban is singled-out as particularly Sikh and militaristic; it is iconographic, a staple in even colonial portraiture, depicted always with a sword as well. Indeed, visible Sikh identity is imprinted on the male Sikh body by the presence of the turban. However, Brian Keith Axel argues that the reduction of Sikh male bodies to these articles

[71] Khushwant Singh notes that "the only concrete evidence of available so far of foreign involvement in terrorism and propagating the demand for Khalistan are the activities of individual Sikhs and Sikh organizations in England, Canada and the United States" (409). Brian Keith Axel notes that the largest concentration of Sikhs outside of India is in England (3)

[72] The Five Ks are: Kesh (uncut hair), a Kangha (small wooden comb), a Kara (steel or iron bracelet), a Kacchera (peace of undergarment) and a Kirpan (short dagger).

of faith is an objectification and fragmentation of the body that provides the basis "for processes of identification" of Sikh men as insurgents during the Punjab Crisis (130). He writes:

> this body fragment is reconstituted by nationalist pedagogy as the a priori signifier of a act of contravention characterized by a particular extraterritorial and antinational desire (this, needless to say, despite the many, and often conflicting 'meanings' that Sikhs attribute to the religious practices and political affiliations of the amritdhari) (133)

"Kesh," or uncut hair, signified by the turban, became a prominent indicator of such antinational desire (Oberoi 17). It is no wonder that in Rushdie's story Sikhs are coded as *Star Trek*'s extraterrestrial enemy, warrior Klingons, characterized by their long unshorn hair and beards as well. [73] Klingons always sought to undo the tenants espoused by the Federation.

The turban also provides the basis for "a process of identification" that violently polices gender ambiguity and sexual deviance – even while enacting ambiguity and deviance. As the Sikh turban functions like the eponymous hero's wounds with regard to national loyalty, it likewise functions as a visible fetish– having significant implications for gender and desire, particularly as it pertains to institutional constructs of masculinity. Coriolanus's (withheld) wounds illustrate the ways in which the ideologies and institutions of the state and bound up with "manly virtue". Coppélia Kahn argues that the wound in Shakespeare's Roman works:

> attests to a (feminine) vulnerability but at the same time, serves as a cultural marker of manly virtue; like a fetish, it both declares and disavows the feminine.

[73] Particularly in the later series and films.

> The kind of manly virtue that it signifies is socially determined, by various ideologies and institutions (the family, the military state, the republic, the empire) that have the power to naturalize it. Poised, as it were, between "warriors" (men locked in agonistic structures of rivalry), and "women," the wound in these texts is always a site of anxiety and indeterminacy. (18)

In a play preoccupied with the body, particularly what goes in and out of the body, orifices are charged sites – mediating, and making ambiguous, notions of gender, sex, and nation. Jason Edwards points out that that in *Coriolanus*, Shakespeare refers to the mouth and nose nearly fifty times and to open wounds nearly forty times. He highlights that these orifices are "the sources of bad odor, wounding, suffering, infection, infantilization, and emasculation which, in turn, stand as the play's tragic models for sociability" (84-5). In the first act, Coriolanus conflates the citizens' mouths with "scabs " – and Edwards argues that, later, while the people demand to see his wounds, they "also fear that if Coriolanus shows them his mouth-like wounds and tells them of his deeds, they will be forced to put their 'tongues into those wounds, and speak for them', an image that…suggests…the distasteful character of kissing, rimming, and cunnilingus" (85 ellipses mine); the wounds therefore not only have visible registers, but oral and tactile registers as well. Lisa Lowe has argued that by refusing to show his wounds, Coriolanus "rebels against the Roman patriarchal city and its system of conferring civic manhood and attributing gender through the naming of wounds" (94). And James Kuzner convincingly suggests that Coriolanus resists "acceding to a process of social exchange that leads to the public fabrication and recognition of separable identities," namely "a respected Roman citizen" (100). The wounds therefore have multiple, often

contradictory, significations for identity formations and modes of knowing – many of which are defined not by the wounded but by nationalist and military pedagogy.

The turban may not easily recall a flesh wound; its cloth reads more readily as an inorganic material appendage to the body. However in her essay "The Turban is Not a Hat" Jasbir Puar points out that the wearer often thinks of it as an extension of his body. She highlights that the turban is less appendage and more assemblage; the turban "shoots through and past bodily boundaries… thinking of the turbaned man as assemblage cuts through such easy delineations of body and thing, an assemblage that fuses, but also scrambles into chaotic combinations, turban into body, cloth into hair, skin, oil pores, destabilizing the presumed organicity of the body" (65-6 ellipsis mine). Like a wound, then, the turban is actually permeable, open – vulnerable. It resists notions of bounded selfhood. And not only does the turban challenge the parameters and limits of the body, it challenges, also, the parameters and limits of temporality and legibility. Puar argues that ritual of "selecting, tying, binding, pinning, folding, winding" the cloth operates differently in its relation to temporal limits. She points out that "each turban is unique; repetition is never the same," concluding that "the temporal life of turbans should not be defined primarily through longevity but rather through repetition, pacing, fluctuation…that always hold open the chance of disruption" (65). These details reflect onto Coriolanus's wounds; the limits of bodily materiality and linear temporality are also thrown into crisis as skin and tissue regenerate. Additionally, the turban has not only visible, but also tactile registers – asserting ontological rather than epistemological knowing, and depriviliging seeing and hearing as central sensorial functions (67). Puar's conclusion recalls the way in which Coriolanus's wounds resist fixed signification – and

also elicits the need to demand to see and define what's withheld; the turban, she concludes, "in all its multiple singularities has become a perverse fetish object – a point of fixation –…a strange attractor through which the density of anxiety accrues and accumulates" (66 ellipsis mine).

Indeed despite its multiple significations, like Coriolanus's wounds, the turban is subject to military and nationalistic discourses that are often based on the fiction of stable categories of gender. As I have repeatedly argued, with the citation of *Coriolanus*, Rushdie allegorizes Sikh men as early Roman men. The analogy is apropos not only with regard to the political dimension of the play and the story, but also because their militant religion as well as their overwhelming composition of the Indian army have positioned Sikh male bodies on the continuum of hyper masculine homosociality – with the turban as its sign. As critics have pointed out, Sikhism, in both the colonial and postcolonial contexts, is too often synonymous with Sikh men as the religion's militancy characterized by stereotypical "manly virtue" – as opposed to, for instance, what colonial codes of masculinity, most notably defined by T.B. Macaulay, described as "effeminate" Hindu Bengali men.[74] In addition to a sign of military discipline and obedience, colonial codes also found in the turban and Five Ks a trace of Orientalist notions savagery, wildness, and aggression (Puar, "Turban" 65). Gurharpal Singh and Darsham Singh Tatla have pointed out, "underlying such powerful representations of masculinity are serious ambiguities about sexuality – the patterns of male bonding, historically the easy tolerance of homosexuality and bisexuality in rural Punjab, and the nurturing of sisterhood. Certainly the colonial state sought to reinforce hyper-masculinity" through stereotypes (182).

[74] For more on colonial codes of masculinity in India see Mrinalini Sinha *Colonial Masculinity: The 'manly Englishman' and the 'effeminate Bengali" in the Late Nineteenth Century* (1995).

Yet, discourses of post-independence Sikh separatism, represented by religious leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, are likewise masculinist and androcentric. In his speeches, he equates Sikhism with manhood, rendering non-traditional Sikhs, women: "If you find the beard too heavy, pray to God stating…'we do not like this Sikhism and manhood. Have mercy on us. Make us into women" (qtd. in Mann). Bhindranwale's speeches victimized both men and women of the Sikh community. Yet, in an attempt to excise feeling of shame he exalts muscular defense, exhorting Sikh men in particular to wear the turban and uncut beard and to take up arms to protect their faith against Indian nationalism and Hindu militancy. Sikh women, on the other hand, were reduced to conflicting symbols with their bodily reproductive functions the focus; their endangerment signaled an end to Sikhism (Mann). Indeed, Nikky Singh has argued that between these colonialist and fundamentalist discourses, the position of women in general is "narrowly circumscribed in Sikh society" (254). In turn, while women's bodies were critical to the separatist movement, they were, in general, not as readily read as suspected terrorists by Indian officials.[75] In general, even though Sikh women, too, don the Five Ks, including the kirpan, a short dagger, their gender ambiguity goes largely unacknowledged my dominant discourses; their masculinity seems, at the very least superficially, less vulnerable than Sikh men's potential femininity. After all, while donning a turban is an option for Sikh women, it remains, for the large part, rare.[76]

[75] This is not to suggest that Sikh women were not tortured. However, as Axel argues, amritdhari men were by far the primary objects of anti-Sikh backlash. If women were targeted, they were the relatives of militants and such torture, to use Axel's words, "heterosexualized forms of address and rape". Hate crimes against Sikhs in the diaspora – particularly in the United States after the September 11 Attacks – have also made the community's men the main target.

[76] This is no way to suggest that Sikh women's masculinity is not threatening. More work needs to be done on this important potential. Harnaam Kaur and Balpreet Kaur challenge the gender appropriate-ness of beards and turbans; both sport the articles of faith. See: < http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/02/17/sikh-woman-harnaam-kaur-embraces-facial-hair-taunts-

Therefore, the Sikh turban has come to signify masculinity, yet at the same time, like Coriolanus's wounds, houses "feminine vulnerability," to use Kahn's terms. From both the Sikh separatist point of view and from the Indian nationalist point of view, not wearing the turban negated masculinity. From the point of view of the torturers, the long hair in particular signified femininity – at once declared and disavowed. It is no wonder that during anti-Sikh riots and raids the first act was to cast off detainee's turban, exposing and pulling the victim's hair.

It is precisely long hair that feminizes Zulu's character in Rushdie's text. Upon their reunion, Chekov comments on Zulu's hair; "'I see you've become a hairy fairy,'" he says, noting that Zulu's transformation from a beardless eighteen-year-old schoolboy to a grown, traditional Sikh, a "sardar". Chekov's taunting rhyme others Zulu, singling out his appearance, his "Kesh", his uncut hair and beard. It goes without says that a fairy, the fantastical non-human mythical, is a popular homophobic slur for gay men**,** implying effeminacy**.** Similarly, when the two men are showering together, after Zulu beat Chekov in a session of squash, Chekov watched as "Zulu stood proudly naked, thick-cocked, tossing his fine head of long black hair, caressing and combing it with womanly sensuality" (158). As Puar points out, a "sardar" removes his turban as an offering of his word; in this locker room scene, the men discuss infiltration tactics with Zulu's uncovered body on display. In the scene, Rushdie highlights the erotics of politics as well as Zulu's double gender – putting hair on Coriolanus's own "Amazonian chin" (2.2.107, Goldberg 185). Similarly, upon their 'break-up,' after the successful infiltration, Chekov kisses a "newly bathed, "smartly dressed," and "sheepish[ly]" smiling Zulu on both

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suicidal-video-pictures_n_4801741.html> and < http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/09/25/balpreet-kaur-sikh-woman-proudly-sports-facial-hair-faith_n_1913355.html >

cheeks, noting that "Zulu's bristly beard pricked his lips" (167). Chekov's gaze in the locker room, which indicates both a desire to be with Zulu as well as to be like Zulu, echoes the strange competition between Aufidius and the eponymous hero in *Coriolanus.* It also – as well as Zulu's beard against Chekov's cheek – recalls the descriptions of "male beauty" in slash fan fiction; "not masculinity" Joanna Russ clarifies, "but the passive, acted-upon glories of male flesh" (90).

Chekov's gaze also highlights the signification of virility in the Sikh context – especially in comparison to his post-match fatigue. Embodying the characterization of Coriolanus as well as stereotypes of Sikh men, Zulu admits he is man of "action, not words" (158). Rushdie writes that as Chekov watched Zulu brushing his hair, he "panted heavily with a towel round his softening waist, reluctant to expose his exhaustion-shriveled purple penis to view" (158). This description not only ages Chekov, but in contrast with Zulu's virile "thick cock," emasculates him. This detail, too, speaks to historical backdrop of the story. During the anti-Sikh riots and raids, after the turban was cast off, the torturer would handle the genitals and anus. They would electrically shock genitals to painfully sterilize their victims and they would also insert chili peppers and other objects into the anus to violate and humiliate their victims (Axel 133-36). Axel argues that torture in "the modern-state is a private scene of perverse intimacy, seduction, and eroticism, constituting not the power relation of sovereign to law but the state's anxiety and desire" (136). While Axel attends to "sexuality" arguing, rightly, that "the tortured male *amritdhari* body that has also become a sexualized sign of sovereignty's limit " and admits that "the ambivalent character of torture reveals a continual slippage of categories…in the act of inscribing the nation of its object" he does not make much more

of the complex desires at play between the male torturers and their male victims – and how they contradict nationalistic definitions of gender and desire (137, 139 ellipsis mine). These tortures are ostensibly for the preservation of the state, yet their erotics and intimacies makes evident the ways in which nationalism with its aim of fixed identity, ironically, facilitates the slippages of the gender and sex categories on which any sovereign state depends. Indeed, torture by way anal violation recalls Volumnia's imploring words to her son, telling Coriolanus that his alliance with the Volsces risks "tearing /His country's bowels out" – a rejoinder to Menenius's fable of the belly that highlights the failure of distribution and serves as a reminder of the state's waste (5.3.121). As in *Coriolanus*, the suspected enemy is not alone doing the tearing; although Sikh men come to signify both national and sexual deviancy, the misogyny and homophobia of the acts of torture are likewise motivated by complex and sadistic (same-sex) desires. The state, itself, emerges as aggressively homosocial.

Analyzing of the position of Sikhs who were (and remain) suspected terrorists in the United States following the September 11 Attacks, in *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (2007) Puar argues that "(s)exual deviancy is linked to the process of discerning, othering, and quarantining terrorist bodies, but these racially and sexually perverse figures also labor in the service of disciplining and normalizing subjects […] away from these bodies, in other words, signaling and enforcing the mandatory terms of patriotism" (38). She highlights the ways in which, in the U.S., Sikhs often espouse American patriotism and qualities of the "model minority" to dispel accusations of terrorism, therefore trading one reductionist definition of identity (the

terrorist threat to citizenship) for another (the patriotic model citizen). [77] Rushdie's story illustrates the way in which these "mandatory terms of patriotism" that are attached to Sikh bodies have a much longer history; it begins with the religion's inception, travels through its early diaspora in the 19th and early 20th century, and comes to a head on the subcontinent during the Punjab Crisis.[78] Like these other moments in Sikh history, in the story, in order to subdue suspicion, the Indian state demands evidence of Zulu's loyalty, when it forces him to carry out Woodrose abroad and dangerously spy his own community. As Axel points out, the fact that Sikh men came to be regarded as national enemies was "a difficult problem because many Sikh men held powerful positions in the central government and the military" (124). Therefore Zulu is not trusted in the story. In his memorandum to "HQ," addressed to "'JTK'(James T. Kirk)" Chekov writes: "*To send a Federation employee of Klingon origin unarmed into a Klingon cell to spy is the crudest form of loyalty test. The operative in question has never shown ideological deviation of any sort and deserves better, even the present climate of mayhem and hysteria*" (159 original italics). That separatist Sikhs are coded as Klingons in Rushdie's story does not just refer to their long hair and martial background, but to their, take-no-prisoner governance. That is to say, Sikh separatists were likewise violent; in addition to peaceful marches and summits, before Blue Star and the assassination, separatists exploded car bombs as acts of resistance and visibility. In the face of the government and civilian surveillance and paranoia of Woodrose, many separatists took up arms and

[77] These experiences seem to resonate in other diasporic locations, particularly in Britain and Canada, illustrating the impact of the Punjab Crisis on Sikhs around the globe. See also Gurharpal Singh and Darsham Singh Tatla *Sikhs in Britain: The Making of Community* (2006) and Gurcharn S. Basran and B. Singh Bolaria *The Sikhs in Canada: Migration, Race, Class, and Gender* (2003)

[78] Sikhs were seen as terrorists in the U.S. and in Canada in the early twentieth century – and separatist groups threatened British colonial rule in the 19th century. See Nayan Shah *Stranger Intimacies: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and the Law in the North American West* (2012) and Hugh Johnston *The Voyage of the Komagata Maru: The Sikh Challenge to Canada's Colour Bar* (1989)

torture tactics to safeguard their religion and revolution from deserters of the cause or potential spies. Zulu, therefore, is stuck between two violent, highly identitarian nationalisms. Chekov's plea to protect his companion from torture, however, falls on deaf ears. "*It is not for you to define the national interest*," JTK replies to Chekov (160, original italics).

Obviously it is not for Zulu to define national interests either; he angrily summarizes his position by alluding to JRR Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*: "'It's about a war to the finish […] And while this great war is being fought there is part of the world, the Shire, in which nobody know it's going on. The hobbits who live there work and squabble and make merry and they have no fucking clue about the forces that threaten them, and those that save their tiny skins'"(162). Chekov takes the brunt of his anger, but Zulu's sentiments apply to all of India's "hobbits" – echoing Coriolanus's admonishment of Rome's citizens. Zulu's analogy to Tolkien's Middle-earth legendarium[79] recalls *Coriolanus* once more, when the eponymous hero says to Volumnia before leaving Rome, "I shall be loved when I am lacked" and compares himself to "a lonely dragon that his fen/Makes feared and talked of more than seen" who "Will or exceed the common or be caught/With cautelous baits and practice (4.1.19-36). Like Coriolanus, Zulu, a "lonely dragon," is ambivalent about his national identity and therefore his allegiance. He ultimately "banishes" his state, refusing any nationalistic project, resisting the identities conferred on him by both the Indian state and the fantasy of Khalistan. He renders himself a "dull actor" who has forgotten his "part" – Zulu aboard "the good ship Hindustan" – ultimately leading to his 'break-up' with Chekov and the Indian government he refuses to quit.

[79] Smaug in *The Hobbit* (1937)

Coriolanus/Aufidius, Chekov/Zulu

As in *Coriolanus*, in Rushdie's story, it is women that comprise the web for the actions taken by men, affecting their homosocial bonds. Indeed, the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who her citizens called "Amma," or "Mother India" is the event mobilized by the Congress Party to create the unabated hysteria and paranoia that led to Chekov and Zulu's mission. Indira Gandhi is the Volumnia figure in Rushdie's story – the overbearing and manipulative maternal force of Shakespeare's play. Like Volumnia, she conflated maternal modes of caregiving with securing the state. As India's "Mother," Gandhi demanded loyalty from her 'children,' India's citizens who seemed to forgive her political and social atrocities such as Operation Blue Star – and before, the five year Emergency during which she and her son ran a forced mass sterilization campaign. Men were manipulated into receiving vasectomies, which were often unhygienic, leading to infection and amputation of the genitals and other limbs.[80] Her image as mother was so powerful that given the mayhem after her assassination, she seemed to run Operation Woodrose from the grave. The day before she was assassinated she famously said, "If I die today, every drop of my blood will invigorate the nation"—words that were plastered on the cover of *Time Magazine* in November 1984. Her position as both mother and military operations leader recalls Volumnia's at once maternal and martial words to Virgilia, when she compares suckling an infant with bloodshed for the state – preferring the latter:

…The breasts of Hecuba,

When she did suckle Hector, looked not lovelier

[80] Rushdie writes about this at length in *Midnight's Children* (1980)

Than Hector's forehead when it spit forth blood

At Grecian sword, contemning.

(1.3.42-6)

While Indian citizens shed their blood for their martyred "Mother India" during the anti-Sikh Riots, Gandhi's own blood, her son, Rajiv Gandhi, "was sworn in as India's Prime Minister within forty minutes of the announcement, on All-India Radio and the television network Doordashan, of his mother's assassination" ("Dynasty" 47). Rushdie recounts the seemingly brainwashed cult that celebrated her and the rest of what he describes in his essay as the "monarchic" Gandhi "Dynasty" despite her political atrocities. He notes her elaborate funeral in the story; "'Hard to believe it. Indraji!'" Chekov exclaims, "Words fail one. She was our mother" (152). Chekov, Zulu, and Zulu's wife, who had on her wall "a framed photograph of Indira Gandhi, with a garland hung around it," all loyally and obediently regarded the Prime Minister as their "mother". Therefore it is implied that Zulu, as a Sikh man, felt even more obligated to illustrate his loyalty and his patriotism; tonally, Zulu position recalls Coriolanus as he attempts to return to Rome after his mother's insistence on her knees (5.3).

As in *Coriolanus*, in "Chekov and Zulu" the demands of the state – articulated by violently absolutist yet mercurial "voices" or torturous mobs and a martial and overbearing mother or "Amma"– create and break relationships between men. It is clear, therefore, that in his translation of *Coriolanus* into the Punjab Crisis, Rushdie does not divorce the politics of the play from its intimacies; as in the Shakespearean counterpart, the state mediates desire. By juxtaposing the Punjab Crisis with *Coriolanus*, the state emerges as inherently homosocial, with women as conduits between men, recalling

Sedgwick's important observations on the structure of the "erotic triangle". Rushdie's story illustrates that in the case of India, it is Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and in the case of the alternative to India, Khalistan, it is victimized Sikh women.

Harveen Sachdeva Mann has criticized Rushdie for marginalizing and stereotyping Sikh women in his story – at the same she has accused science fiction for its androcentrism. She argues that "Chekov and Zulu":

> …rehearses the masculinism underlying Sikh fundamentalist discourse, as well as the western science fiction genre which frames it (even as it subverts some of the generic conventions of the latter). [It] it a story focused on (inter)national political intrigue and male fraternity, which also accords only peripheral roles to women, fashioning them as appendages of the men. Zulu's wife, who bears him seven sons, is the type of the unsuspecting, unquestioning, loyal Indian wife, whose function it is to keep house and procreate. And Chekov who is unmarried, desires a wife only because she would be a suitable acquisition for him in the diplomatic world (10, ellipsis mine).

Mann's critique aims to draws attention to the ways in which stories like Rushdie's – that have a primarily male cast – overshadow Sikh women's voices by problematically adhering to stereotypes. I maintain that is critical to showcase women's voices in fiction that takes Sikh issues as it content – and to critique work that consolidates stereotypes about gender division in the community. My overview of the way in which colonial, national, and fundamentalist discourses have reified notions of Sikh masculinity indicates that much more work needs to be done on the feminine and women's bodies in Sikh studies. However my discussions of the ambiguities of the turban and practices of torture,

stemming from my consideration of the *Coriolanus* intertext, illustrate the ways in which issues of gender and sexuality in relation to masculinity and effeminization are often obscured – by both Western and postcolonial feminisms. As Puar argues "the plight of the male turban wearer problematizes decades of feminist inquiry that locates women as the bearers and transmitters of authentic culture" (*Terrorist* 182). She also points out that the turbaned body's "historical attachments to hypermasculinity, perverse hetereosexuality (and at times pedophilia and homosexuality), and warrior militancy rendered [Sikh men] neither within the bounds of respectable queer subjecthood nor worthy of a queer intervention that would stage a reclamation of sexual-racial perversity, suggesting that it is a body *almost too perverse to be read queer*" (169, original italics). In other words, the male turbaned Sikh body actually resists these historical and stereotypical attachments. Moreover, like Volumnia and Virgilia, the women in Rushdie's text – Indira Gandhi and Mrs. Zulu – are not passive conduits to homosocial bonding between men; they have profound agency. As I've pointed out, Indira Gandhi facilitates a police-able national identity; Mrs. Zulu remains skeptical of her husband's childish *Star Trek* fandom and, at the same time, bears seven sons that will ostensibly be part of the martial Sikh faith.[81]

As I have tried to articulate, desire and attraction betray political and social significations; desire intersects with a variety of issues regarding identity and belonging that challenge stable identity categories that include but are not limited to gender, sex, and nation. "Protean" desire in Rushdie's story does not bespeak personal preference or merely rehearse ideology; it sheds light on how social power, hierarchy, and affiliation

[81] See Tarnjit Kaur, "Children's Identity Formation in the Sikh Diaspora: An Exploration of Sikh Mother's Roles"

are organized as well as undone. In other words, that women are not the focus of "Chekov and Zulu" seems not an oversight by Rushdie, but, rather, precisely the point.

Mann, moreover, does not consider that the Rushdie's representation of both the men and women in the story is deliberately campy and exaggerated, recalling the performances in *Star Trek.*[82] Indeed the whole story enacts the tone of *Star Trek.* In his Ellman Lectures Rushdie admitted that he's had a "long and flirtatious interest in Science Fiction" – the recreation of *Star Trek* in his work speaks to his sentiments. The absurd and caricature-esque quality of Rushdie's characters – and their homosocial relations – is purposeful[83]; the men's performance of the television show is an articulation of their desire. While Science Fiction, as a genre, may very often rehearse androcentrism and normative sexualities,[84] it just as often showcases alternative and contradictory desires that complicate heterosexual/homosexual male/female binaries (Pearson et al). As I highlighted in this chapter's introduction, *Star Trek*'s participatory slash fan fiction rewrites the *Star Trek* script, recasting the series' main male characters in a variety of erotic plots and alternative positions, that operate on literal and metaphoric levels, and include, but are not limited to, same-sex, interspecies, and multi-partner encounters (Russ 84-7).[85] As argue in this chapter, Rushdie's fan fiction is no exception. Moreover, Mann may be surprised to learn most K/S is written for and by women (Russ 91-7, Penley 125-

[82] My usage of the word camp is informed by Susan Sontag's essay "Notes on Camp"
[83] In his essay "Human, All Too Inhuman" James Wood has criticized this style, dubbing it part of genre he calls "Hysterical Realism" that tells readers "how the world works rather than how somebody felt about something" pointing to Don Dellilo, Thomas Pynchon, Salman Rushdie, and Zadie Smith as its authors. I would argue that hysteria is full of feeling and consciousness, and affect is not missing from Rushdie's story – or *Star Trek* which might be described as hysterically real as well.
[84] For the ways in which Star Trek appropriates Shakespeare to sexist and androcentric ends see, Mary Bulh Dutta "'Very Bad Poetry, Captain': Shakespeare in Star Trek". For the ways in which the show marginalizes women more generally see Anne Cranny Francis "Sexuality and Sex-Role Stereotyping in 'Star Trek'".
[85] See also *Kirk/Spock Fanfiction Archive*: http://ksarchive.com/

8). Rushdie may be male bodied, but as translator – of Shakespeare and *Star Trek* – he is in feminized position.

Following the *Star Trek* intertext, Rushdie's story illustrates how physical apartness contributes to homosocial structures as well. David Greven points out that:

> Loss –figured as loneliness – is one of *Trek*'s main themes, and one of the most consistent ways in which the monomyth thematizes this loneliness is by depicting the Captain of each series as essentially unmarriageable […] The Captains' loneliness complements the Trekkian theme of exploration […] Though it has certainly repeatedly come under fire for its associations with colonization and imperialism, this theme directly relates to the program's radical treatment of desire. The series represents isolation, apartness, and loneliness as ineluctable aspects of exploration (10 ellipsis mine)

Rushdie reroutes the ships of exploration and investigation; Chekov and Zulu travel not from the center to the periphery, but vice versa. However, it is exploration nonetheless – and likewise characterized by apartness and distance. Greven highlights how these physical divides challenge marriageability – yet as K/S illustrates, it also promotes other forms of coupling and intimacy, redefining notions of marriage itself. Ultimately, Mann ignores what the bound up intertexts *Star Trek* and *Coriolanus* allude to: how women and women's bodies are conduits not only to "fraternity," but to an intimacy and eroticism between the men.

As Mann highlights, while Zulu is married, he and his wife do not read as partners; Zulu's wife is excluded from a world that occupies most of her husband's time. She is exasperated with his *Star Trek* fanaticism and his work – his relationship with

Chekov (149-153, 165-66). Similarly Chekov is not married to a woman– and what's more, he does not see heterosexual marriage as a form of intimacy but as merely supplemental to his career. He tells Zulu that he is "on the wife market" because "bachelordom…after a certain point" is "an obstacle on the career path" (161). Later in the story, when he has a dinner party he laments not having a "lady wife" to "act as hostess" (163). However, at the dinner it becomes clear that he *is* wed – to Zulu. "Over brandy," Chekov thinks of his absent companion and how they came to be duo; he says "speaking loudly" rising "to his feet":

> 'The funny thing about this blasted nickname of mine…is that back then we never saw one episode of the TV series. No TV to see it on, you see. The thing was just a legend wafting way from the US and UK to our lovely hill-station of Dehra Doon.
>
> After a while we a got a couple of cheap paperback novelisations and passed them around as if they were naughty books like *Lady C* or some such. Lots of us tried the names on for size but only two of them stuck; probably because they seemed to go together, and the two us got on pretty well, even though he was younger. A lovely boy. So just like Laurel and Hardy we were Chekov and Zulu.' (165)

As if Zulu's memory, lovingly recounted, did not render the men's intimacy self evident, a third party confirms it; "'Love and Marriage,'" remarks "The septuagenarian Very Big Businessman's improbably young and attractive wife" as she tries to remember the words to the popular Frank Sinatra song. "'Beg Pardon?'" Chekov asks and she clarifies "'*You* know…Go together like is it milk and porridge. Or a car and garage, that's right. I love

old songs. La-la-la-something-brother, you can't have fun without I think it's your mother'" (165). The woman's silly malapropisms diminish the seriousness of Chekov and Zulu's "marriage," reflecting the ways in which same-sex desire and queer affect are delegitimized or relegated to safer seemingly non-erotic categories like the homosocial or the "bromance." Yet it also humorously imagines other pairings that are not in the lyrics; and, indeed, Chekov and Zulu's relationship, may not have had as much fun without their "mother" – Prime Minister Indira Gandhi – who is also complicit in bringing their relationship to its end.[86] Despite the woman's seemingly distracted lyrical transposition, the erotic charge of Chekov's memory remains. What else were he and Zulu doing under the covers while reading *Star Trek* "novelisations" like D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, deemed obscene by the law?[87] Or were those "novelisations," themselves, exotic and erotic – "wafting" transnational fantasies transposed? Whatever the case, their readings left a lasting impression, leading to a longtime "marriage."

Between his desire for a wife-beard and his desire for Zulu, Chekov, like his Shakespearean counterpart Aufidius, seems to prefer the company of men. Unlike Chekov, Aufidius may be married – yet like Chekov, he prefers a man to a woman. When Aufidius has Coriolanus at his mercy, he admits that he wants to "twine" his "arms around that body" – and he declares:

> …Know thou first,
>
> I loved the maid I married; never man
>
> Sighed truer breath. But that I see thee here,

[86] Jonathan Goldberg has argued that "Aufidius and Volumnia are versions of each other" making Aufidius Coriolanus's mother too (183). While there does not seem to be any birthing scenes in Rushdie's story, Zulu's name does indicate multiple origins.

[87] D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1932) was censored upon publication and went to trial for obscenity upon its unabridged reprinting in 1959

Thou noble thing, more dances my rapt heart

Then when I first wedded my mistress saw

Bestride my threshold (4.5.127-31)

Like the woman in Rushdie's story who serves as a witness to the men's intimacy, the third servingman in the play comments, "our general himself makes a mistress of him" upon their embrace – lines that, as Jonathan Goldberg points out, "are perfectly ambivalent about whether it is Coriolanus or Aufidius who is in the so-called female position" (4.5.214-15, Goldberg 184). As I have highlighted, the play illustrates the ways in which gender is not intrinsic, stable or easily categorized. When Aufidius sees Coriolanus, his marriage to his wife comes to mind – yet is triangulated and trumped by another, one that resists binary identity categories of gender and sex, and identities attached to national and familial loyalty.

Chekov and Zulu's identities are also in flux, challenging and redefining the parameters of marriage. While Zulu calls his wife his "only love," he does so when he desperately needs to relay the critical message to Chekov to "Beam" him "up" and out of the "Klingon cell." Indeed, as he turns his back on India and Khalistan's nationalistic projects, he invites Chekov to a "world elsewhere" when he asks him to resign alongside him (3.3.165). When Chekov questions Zulu's motivations for quitting – accusing him of turning his back on his "old chums" and him – the men cease contact (169). Yet, Chekov continues to dream of Zulu long after their 'break-up'. And upon his death – caught in the blast of the Sri Lankan Tamil Tiger separatist suicide bombing that assassinated Rajiv Gandhi in 1989 – he thinks of his companion. His final dream stitches together the nation

and same-sex intimacy in a no-win, "worst-case scenario" reverie (171).[88] Rushdie writes that:

> The scene around him vanished, dissolving into a pool of light, and was replaced by the bridge of the Starship *Enterprise*. All the leading figures were in their appointed places. Zulu sat beside Chekov at the front…On the main screen they could see the Klingon Bird of Prey uncloaking, preparing to strike…Chekov took Zulu's hand and held it firmly, victoriously, as the speeding balls of deadly light approached. (171, ellipsis mine)

In the Shakespearean counterpart, too, Aufidius dreams of Coriolanus:

> …I have nightly since
> Dreamt of encounters 'twixt thyself and me;
> We have been down together in my sleep,
> Unbuckling helms, fisting each other's throat,
> And waked half dead with nothing

It is evident that these dream scenes only tenuously echo each other – Rushdie's is not nearly as explicit. Indeed, there are several disjunctions in two sets of men – in particular, the extent and intensity of their rivalry. Chekov, who I read as the Aufidius figure in Rushdie's story, is not a direct rival as his Shakespearean counterpart. Volcian Aufidius and Roman Coriolanus begin as longtime martial rivals and, because of divided loyalties,

[88] In *Star Trek* culture, the Kobayashi Maru is a Starfleet training exercise designed to test the character of cadets in the command track at the Academy. The test's name is occasionally used among Star Trek fans to describe a no-win or "worst case scenario". It has homophonic resonances with the Komagata Maru, a Japanese steamship that, in 1914, sailed from Hong Kong to Yokohama to Vancouver carrying 376 passengers from Punjab. Of them, 24 were admitted into Canada, while the rest were forced to return to India. The passengers consisted of 340 Sikhs, 24 Muslims, and 12 Hindus, all British subjects. This incident has come to exemplify 20th exclusion laws in Canada and the US designed to keep out immigrants of Asian origin. Rushdie may be making an unwritten connection between the series and this moment of Sikh exclusion.

come together as brief allies. On the other hand, Chekov and Zulu begin as longtime Indian allies and, because of the state, end as ideological rivals when Zulu exits – a thought that troubles Zulu early in the story, leading Chekov to declare that they are "blood brothers" (157). Indeed, like all the translations of Shakespeare that I read in this dissertation, Rushdie's translation of *Coriolanus* is deliberately unfaithful – a loose translation. However, I maintain that, while they are markedly different in action, legibility, and even tone the relationships between both sets of men suggest that fantasy – imaginative dream worlds – is the space to be, in Foucault's words, "'naked' among men" (136). Yet, both scenes, too, illustrate how the state is complicit in the dream – with both ending with deaths that extend into the real institutional world. Chekov takes Zulu's hand as they face the killer "Klingons" while Coriolanus and Aufidius unbuckle their "helms," removing their militia gear in order to "fist" before waking "half dead with nothing" – these intimacies and erotics are, indeed, the "worst case scenario" for a state that at once provokes and shames these affective intensities. So Coriolanus and Chekov die – even though the latter seems to advocate for the national prescription, suggesting that even within the framework of law, same-sex desire is "the worst case scenario." As Foucault points out "institutional codes can't validate these relations with multiple intensities, variable colors, imperceptible movements and changing forms. These relations short-circuit [them] and introduce love where there's supposed to be only law, rule or habit" (167).

While I do not mean to equate Chekov with Aufidius and Zulu with Coriolanus, to not notice their likeness, is to dismiss desire in the story. Attending to desire, as I've attempted to illustrate, resists the reification of national identity, an integral site of

inquiry for postcolonial studies. Jonathan Goldberg opens his seminal essay, "The Anus in Coriolanus" with Kenneth Burke's note that people will "dodge" the "tonal suggestion" of the name of the hero "by altering the traditional pronunciation (making the *a* broad instead of long)" (177). That is, even if people acknowledge the homosocial structures in the play, they eschew the play's anality – and all its multiple significations including shame and elimination, as well as pleasure (however sadistic) and, even, production – in order to preserve it as a "civilized document and a cite for liberal politics" (179). I argue that it is precisely the play's anality that speaks to the tortures of the Punjab Crisis – removal of the turban, genital mutilation, and anal violation – that serve as the backdrop of Rushdie's story. Not entirely on the surface of the story, this history – which remains circumscribed in mainstream accounts and government documents – requires a close rearview. Indeed, I would argue that this is one of Rushdie's most opaque pieces, written almost entirely in Urdu-inflected *Star Trek* code with no didactic explanation of the Crisis. Yet the story makes clear that, quite literary, Zulu's 'ass in on the line'. When the men are the in locker-room, Chekov and Zulu plan their strategy – what will be Zulu's "three month" infiltration, performing separatist (165). Chekov tells Zulu that he must pass as a separatist: "'…we will have to blacken your name… It has to look like a maverick stunt. If anything goes wrong, deniability is essential. Even your wife must not suspect the truth'". To which Zulu replies, "'Is the transporter ready?'" Chekov, thinking his companion is not being serious says, "'Come on, yaar, don't arse around.'" Zulu reminds him: "'Respectfully, Mister Chekov, sir, it's my arse'" (159).

This intense political history is tucked into the *Star Trek* code that keeps their espionage unknown to outsiders – the same tropological code that articulates the desire

between the two men. In addition to the political backdrop of torture, the homoerotics between the men also do not register immediately; it is more tonally suggestive. Thus I argue to not to attend to the story's tonal suggestion is, in fact, a choice taken, one informed by what can only be described as the same discriminatory erotophobia and homophobia that motivates people to pronounce Coriolanus with a broad *a*. Moreover, it is a choice that dismisses the possibility to undo police-able identity categories. As I continue to posit in this dissertation, the point of desire is that it is not ever fully legible – in operates in the in-betweeness of categories.

Foucault shifts studies of sex and sexuality away from legible and categorizable identity to ask, "'What relations, through homosexuality, can be established, invented, multiplied and modulated?' The problem is not to discover in oneself the truth of one's sex, but, rather, to use one's sexuality henceforth to arrive at a multiplicity of relationships" (135). He argues that that homosexuality is "not a form of desire," but something "desirable" – always becoming and never being. Thus my reading of Rushdie's work, intentionally resists readings of legible or stereotypical markers of sexual identity, such as those attached to Aires the "preening Anglophile dandy" in *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995) whose dandyism Hemi Chari argues "deflects the significance of his struggle to confront both colonial and neocolonial masculinist tendencies in postcolonial India" and "becomes a comic caricature" (198, 289). Thus Chari concludes:

> the use of sexuality as an identity easily erupts into a parody that is denied and choked of any cultural representation or of multivarious coterminous possibility. The disjunctive norms of alternative sexuality are caught within the dichotomy of East/West, colonizer/colonized, homosexual/heterosexual, female/male" yet "the

> portrayal of Aire's gay subtext… authorizes homosexuality solely as a specter reinforcing the existing colonial structure." (297, ellipsis mine)

The disjunction between sexual identity and desire becomes clear when the anality of the novel is considered in comparison to legible, colonially structured dandy; affirming mongrel and "bastard" significations the novel's protagonist, the "Moor", understands himself as "smelly shit" or waste (104). Therefore, in this chapter, I wanted to attend to the significations of "protean" desires in Rushdie's work – desires that overlap early and late modernities, resisting identity but nevertheless illustrating the continuum of the homosociality of the nation over space and time. And indeed, male coupling without easily legible sexual identity dominates Rushdie's work, over a broad range of spatial and temporal settings, taking nationalism and belonging as its central themes – Saleem and Shiva in *Midnight's Children* (1980), Saladin Chamcha and Gabreel Farishta *in The Satanic Verses* (1988) , Ormus Cama and Rai Merchant in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999), and Junior and Senior in "In the South" (2009).

Perhaps one of the most glaring differences between Shakespeare's text and that of Rushdie is that Rushdie's Coriolanus, Zulu, lives. The story indicates that, "Zulu settled in Bombay and as the demand for private-sector protection increased in that cash-rich boom-town, so his Zulu Shield and Zulu Spear companies prospered and grew. He had three more children, all boys, and remains happily married to this day" (169). Considering Coriolanus's declaration that "there is a world elsewhere" James Kuzner has pointed out that that play's hero "is usually read as the character most attracted to the wish for [bounded] selfhood", seeking "an unreasonable, even absolute, degree of autonomy"; Kuzner summarizes that "the 'world elsewhere' he seeks is on in which he

would be absolutely sovereign, a world either without others or…with his unanswering and unanswerable power over them" (85, 87, ellipsis mine). Kuzner cites conservative and liberal critics, psychoanalytic and Marxist critics, who read Coriolanus this way. Indeed, even Madhavi Menon in her essay about the ways in which *Coriolanus* resists identity formation argues that "though the entire play is suffused with a queerness that never settles into a mould we might call identity, the tragedy of Coriolanus is that he cannot accept the absence of his self; indeed he finds it undesirable" (164). However, Kuzner reads the eponymous hero otherwise; he argues that Coriolanus deliberately seeks to undo the self. Kuzner writes, "for Coriolanus, war does not consolidate ideas of individual and group identity; instead it suspends them" (98). He points out that Coriolanus, "fights for Rome, yet he largely fails to attach his behavior to shoring up individual and national identity" (98). He maintains that:

> Coriolanus who bears a historical likeness to Goldberg's sodomite and a theoretical likeness to Leo Bersani's gay outlaw – points the way to a life that is openly vulnerable but also liveable, to a Sodom whose residents would renounce the constructs of discrete social identity and bodily integrity alike, a place in which subjects would perish but life would not…Like Bersani's gay outlaws, Coriolanus unworks the social…[Sodomites], as Goldberg points out, were frequently identified as heretics, spies, and traitors. (85, ellipsis)

It may be seductive to read Zulu's escape into "private-sector protection" and his marriage to his wife as a display of absolute autonomy, bounded selfhood, and individualism. However, I maintain, following Kuzner, like Coriolanus, he is still not the autonomous author of himself – and does not seek this position. He may be a "traditional

Sikh" but he does not accede to colonialist, nationalist, or fundamentalist identities, embodying instead the multiple significations of Sikh male body, the 5 Ks, and the turban. While he collects names for Chekov to complete his mission, Zulu ultimately banishes the national project that is necessarily absolutist and exclusionary. When Chekov begs him not to resign, Rushdie writes that "Zulu was already too far away" to listen (169). His identity remains multifold and plural as Rushdie connects the mispronunciation of his nickname to another notorious anti-colonial warrior tribe – the South African Zulus. Like Coriolanus, in the end, Zulu "forbade all names" – but he does so by bearing them all at once, with all their contradictory significations (5.1.13). Rushdie illustrates that cultural and historical specificities need not reify and calcify identity or "bounded selfhood" – they can actually, attending to queer theory, further undo them. And Rushdie's story makes clear that such an existence between names is more than livable – it can be productive. Mrs. Zulu chides Chekov about the mispronunciation of her husband's nickname: "'Even the stupid name you could never get right. It was with an S. 'Sulu.' So-so many episodes I have been made to see, you think I don't know?'" (153). Chekov, however, embraces the mispronunciation: "'But Zulu is a better name for what some might allege to be a wild man…'For a suspected savage. For a putative traitor'" (153, ellipsis mine). The archive shows that Zulu's 'real' name, articulated by Mrs. Zulu, is Inayat; however, in the published version this name does not appear. The story thus endorses erotic role-play and fantasy – as a means to challenge the absolutism of nationalism. It endorses the men's *Star Trek* inflected marriage – and the ever-shifting, protean significations of Zulu's (Coriolanus's) name.

Chapter 3

"How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me": Vishal Bhardwaj's *Maqbool* and the Domestication of Lady Macbeth

I repeat in difference. These singular women who are mothers in many different ways, teach that reproductive heteronormativity is simply one case among many – like a stopped clock giving the correct time twice a day, rather than a norm that we persistently legitimize by reversal.
-- Gayatri Spivak, "If Only"

To the memory of my mother

Sexing Lady Macbeth

When Nimmi, the Lady Macbeth figure in *Maqbool* (2003), Vishal Bhardwaj's Bollywood film translation of William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1606), misses her period, wakes to morning sickness, and ecstatically announces her pregnancy to her husband,

placing his open hand on her stomach to celebrate what grows inside, she betrays the sex-changing, gender-crossing desires of her early modern counterpart (see Fig.1).[89] For unlike Bhardwaj's Nimmi, Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth explicitly calls on the supernatural elements of the text to "unsex" her, imploring:

> …Come, you spirits
> That tend to mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
> And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
> Of direst cruelty. Make thick my blood.
> Stop up the' access and passage to remorse
> That no compunctious visitings of nature
> Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
> Th'effect and it. Come to my woman's breasts
> And take my milk for gall… (1.5.47-55)

As Lady Macbeth affectively prepares herself for the impending murder of King Duncan, she figures her transformation into remorselessness as a sex change. Her request for the spirits to "make thick" her "blood" so to "stop up" her "visitings of nature" conflates feelings of attrition with menstruation; the end to her reproductive capacities, her cyclical bleeding, signifies, to her, an end to any feelings of remorse. The "milk" of her "woman's breasts" has unwanted affective registers as well; to trade the stuff of maternal nurturing for hateful bile signifies, to her, a radical refusal of caregiving. And when her reluctant husband, whose "nature" she describes as "too full o' th' milk of human kindness/To

[89] Akira Kurosawa's film translation of *Macbeth*, *Throne of Blood*,also features a pregnant Lady Macbeth figure. In interviews, Bhardwaj has cited *Throne of Blood* as an influence on his own cinematic translation. Also, pregnancy was already broached in a previous Indian production of *Macbeth*, Maranayakana Drishtanta by H.S. Shiva Prakash; see Poonam Trivedi "'It is the Bloody Business which Informs Thus…': Local Politics and Performative Praxis, *Macbeth* in India"

catch the nearest way" argues that he "dare do all that may become a man," she challenges what makes him a "man"; in addition to sex, Lady Macbeth openly refuses gender as well, resisting both maternity and mothering in order to metaphorize her unyielding wherewithal and her own murderous temerity (1.5.16-17, 1.7.51-52). She asks her dithering husband "What beast was't/then,/That made you break this enterprise to me?" And argues:

> …I have given suck, and know
> How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me.
> I would, while it was smiling in my face,
> Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums
> And dashed the brains out, had I sworn as you
> Have done to this. (1.7.62-66)

Lady Macbeth not only admits that she has nursed, but that she has experienced "how tender 'tis to love" the milking infant – yet, upon seeing its undiscerning toothless smile, would smash its delicate head. This violent and terrifyingly calculated infanticide, that would oppose the affective feelings of "love" for the baby, serves to once more signify Lady Macbeth's transition – one that she entreats her impressionable husband to imitate.

It goes without saying that this detailed fantasy is so horrific precisely because it reverses a seemingly universal social consensus regarding maternity and mothering. Paired with Lady Macbeth's imagined unsexed body, this hypothetical infanticide has invited critical meditations on the significations of the body, sex, and gender in Shakespeare's play about ambition, madness, and the uncanny – a play about things, in the words of the Old Man, "unnatural,/Even like the deed is done" (2.4.13-14). Critics

have traditionally read Lady Macbeth's standout lines as attempts to gain agency by seizing masculine authority – even when, at the time, mothering and maternity were not attached solely to women's bodies.[90] As Dympna Callaghan points out, such sex and gender criticism posits "a patriarchal recuperation of an already constituted category of femininity"; she argues that *Macbeth* is "instrumental in the cultural production of femininity rather than its repudiation" (357).[91] However, readings of sex and gender difference in the play – as duel, binary and oppositional – is nevertheless tempting; for as I've highlighted, Lady Macbeth does associate unwanted affect with the female body and femininity – and poses a challenge to Macbeth's almost humorous insistence that he is man by figuratively draining them both of milk. Even Janet Adelman, who argues for female authority in the play – suggesting that *Macbeth* is a "representation of primitive fears about male identity and autonomy itself, about those looming female presences who threaten to control one's actions and one's mind, to constitute one's very self" highlighting Macbeth's inability to escape the maternal matrix when he asks "What's he/That was not born of woman?" – suggests that Lady Macbeth's figurative unsexing pushes the play toward an all-male universe effectively solving "the problem of masculinity" in the play "by eliminating the female" (131, 5.7.2-3,146).

Stephanie Chamberlain attempts to think through binary definitions of gender, suggesting that Lady Macbeth's invocation of the spirits to "unsex" her actually troubles

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[90] Joan Larsen Klein, reading Lady Macbeth's invocation, maintains that, "as long as she lives, Lady Macbeth is never unsexed in the only way she wanted to be unsexed – able to act with the cruelty she ignorantly and perversely identified with male strength" (250). Analyzing Lady Macbeth's infanticide fantasy, Mark Thorton Burnett argues that Shakespeare's play explores "the attempts of a woman to realize herself by using the dominant discourses of patriarchy as she lacks an effectively powerful counter-language" (2). For a literary review of such criticism see Stephanie Chamberlain "Fanaticizing Infanticide: Lady Macbeth and the Murdering Mother in Early Modern England" (2005).

[91] For more on the way in which femininity – and motherhood – began to be tied solely to women's bodies see Karen Newman *Fashioning Femininity and English Renaissance Drama* (1991)

stable sex and gender categories, making them ambiguous rather than dichotomously defined – linking her character to the soothsaying Weird Sisters who boil the "finger of birth-strangled babe," who "should be women" but sport "beards," and who she reads as "at once both masculine and feminine, deconstructing…fixed categories" (4.1.30, 1.3.47-49, 80). Yet while Chamberlain concludes that "Lady Macbeth ultimately refuses masculine authority" explaining that "what she craves instead is an alternative gender identity," she argues that Lady Macbeth's desires "to slip free of emotional… constraints governing women" – thus suggesting that emotion necessarily consolidates feminine gender identity, when, as recent theories of affect have illustrated, it also has the disruptive potential to undo it (80). [92]

Most recently, Heather Love has offered an extremely fresh reading of Lady Macbeth's sex and gender ambiguities in her companion essay to the play.[93] She associates Lady Macbeth with the figure that Lee Edelman describes as "the *sinthom*osexual" who figures a radical refusal to the social and political order by resisting "reproductive futurity" – "the association between sexual reproduction, narrative and historical futurity, and social meaning" emblemized by the figure the Child; the

[92] For more on "queer affect" see the work of Ann Cvetkovich as well as Eve Sedgwick *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*, Lauren Berlant *Cruel Optimism*, Mel Chen Animacies: *Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*, Sara Ahmed *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004), *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (2009) – to name a few recent studies on the ways in which affect and emotion can actually undo identitarian categories including sex and gender.

[93] In her companion essay, Love foregrounds an analysis of temporality. Before discussing Lady Macbeth's refusal of maternity Love suggests that the soon-to-be-queen is associated with the *sinthom*osexual who "annuls the temporality of desire" by figuring "the unrestricted availability of jouissance"; she argues that when Lady Macbeth recounts the Weird Sisters' prophesy and feels "the future in the instant," she articulates a notion of ambition "not as a desire in the traditional sense – a longing for an outcome located in the future – but as a constant enjoyment of the future in and as the present" (202). This temporal collapsing deviates from the time of the family and the time the couple, which Love argues, define time itself.

*sinthom*osexual, therefore, is "on the side *not* fighting for the children" (203 original emphasis). Love attempts to recover "the queerness of motherhood" in the play by cleverly comparing Lady Macbeth's infanticide fantasy to Adrienne Rich's articulations of "maternal ambivalence" in her theoretical memoir *Of Woman Born,* arguing that "despite the heavy policing of that line" between "mothering and anti-mothering" "it can be quite difficult to tell at any given moment who is fighting for the children and who is dashing their brains out" (204-205). While Love does not specifically outline the resonances between Shakespeare's text and *Of Woman Born*, Rich's account certainly speaks to Lady Macbeth's experiences of mothering – however unsexed she may be. That is, Rich's account echoes Lady Macbeth's confession that she knows "how tender tis to love" a suckling baby – yet it also confesses that the seemingly unending crying of an infant or a toddler in the middle of the night "murders sleep," causing its mother to feel as if she'll "sleep no more," rendering her an unhinged sleepwalker (Rich 21, 1.7.63, 2.2.47-48, 5.1.1-84). Love quotes Rich's frustrations: "I remember being uprooted from an already meager sleep to answer a childish nightmare…I remember going back to sleep starkly awake, brittle with anger…because of my weariness I would rage at those children for no reason they could understand" (Rich 21, ellipses mine). Yet because Rich's ambivalence – however conflicted and contradictory – does not go as far to imagine infanticide, it is ultimately Lady Macbeth's refusals of maternity that, for Love, puts her firmly "on the side of those *not* fighting for the children" (207, 203 original emphasis). Indeed, in line with the other critics cited here, Love also argues that Lady Macbeth's unsexing pushes the play toward the all-male economy its already inclined; she suggests that "the Macbeths are virilized in part through Lady Macbeth's fantasies

about the pleasures she and her husband might share as two men, acting together" (204). The *sinthom*osexual thus seems unambiguously male– a point that Edelman himself admits in a footnote. He points out:

> The overwhelming prevalence of male *sinthom*osexuals in cultural representation reflects, no doubt, a gender bias that continues to view women as "naturally" bound more closely to sociality, reproduction, and domesticating emotion. Even in representations of women who fail to embrace these "natural" attributes and thus find themselves assimilated to the sort of fatality the *sinthom*osexual embodies, such refusals are themselves most often "explained" by reference to the intense fixation of their emotional attachments…female characters, for instance, are determined by socially legible desires – typically in the form of obsessive "love" – rather than by the refusal of sociality or desire (165 note 10, ellipses mine).

Edelman maintains that "the *sinthom*osexual has no privileged relation to any sex or sexuality" – yet admits that: "valuable as the exploration of gender differences would be" it would "dissipate the force of my larger argument against reproductive futurism" (166 note 11). Thus while Edelman argues that the resistance to reproductive futurism lies in the rejection of liberal discourse and an embrace of negative stereotypes assigned to queerness, he maintains that "obsessive 'love'", "sociality, reproduction, and domesticating emotion"– stereotypical traits ascribed to female "nature" – if embraced by women, can only be in the service of a future of the same (4, 166 note 10).[94]

[94] Interestingly, Edelman names Katherine from *Taming of the Shrew* as a "noteworthy counterexample" to "female characters…determined by socially legible desires – typically in the form of obsessive 'love' – rather than by the refusal of sociality and desire" (165 not 10. He does not mention Lady Macbeth.

Thus all the readings of *Macbeth* I've summarized above, however varying in their approach to sex and gender, seem to suggest that Lady Macbeth refuses female sex and feminine gender in order to have agency within her strongly homosocial setting. They also all suggest that such refusals of maternity and mothering must, perforce, resist reproductive futurism. However, with *Maqbool*, Vishal Bhardwaj suggests otherwise. His translation borrows not Lady Macbeth's reversal of maternity and mothering, but her confession of maternal intimacy: that she knows "how tender 'tis to love the babe that milks" her (1.7.62-63). By doing so, his translation of Shakespeare's text suggests that female bodies and femininity have powerful agency within homosocial organization – and that maternity need not always be in the service of reproductive futurism. In his translation, Nimmi does not articulate her counterpart's desire to become "unsex"ed. Instead, her ultra-femme body – which becomes visibly pregnant near the end of the film – actually gains agency from its circumscription in the male dominated criminal underworld of Mumbai that serves as the film's setting (see Fig. 2). While Lady Macbeth's character signals unsexing and ungendering, Nimmi's character signals, almost mordantly, stereotypes attached

Fig.1. Nimmi (Lady Macbeth) ecstatically announces her pregnancy

to the female body and its gendered significations. Nimmi is shown performing the domesticity assigned to her body and gender, acting the dutiful wife and mother (see Fig 2). However, she only approximates these roles, never fully acceding to them for she is actually an unmarried mistress and courtesan – thus embodying other highly gendered positions as well, demonstrating a perverse relationality with the men around her and a markedly feminine intersubjectivity. Thus like her Shakespearean counterpart, Nimmi is ambitious – successfully transmitting her murderous desires to her partner so he usurps the most powerful rank and station – yet unlike Lady Macbeth, she does so in her explicitly sexed body, challenging and complicating the feminist and queer readings of her character that I outlined above (see Fig.4). In this chapter, I maintain that Nimmi's pregnancy does not heteronormalize Lady Macbeth. Theories

Fig.2. Nimmi performing her domestic role, serving food.

of antiessentialism and antirelationality have inadvertently displaced the body – thus, while the terrain is slippery, I seek to reexamine what role maternal agency plays in this text without wholly reducing Nimmi to biological production, thinking the maternal

function beyond reinforcing binaries and essentialism.[95] I do so by considering translation – what she and Bhardwaj, together, rewrite. [96] As I will argue, their translations illustrate just how maternity does not signify, a priori, reproductive futurism – thus exposing the too frequent matrophobic and misogynistic erasures of sexual difference in queer theory, particularly those in Edelman's polemic against the figure of the child. [97]

Nimmi's maternal agency, its ability to challenge reproductive futurism, becomes strikingly clear when put in the specific cultural context of Hindi cinema and its canon.[98] For a mother "on the side of those *not* fighting for the children" – one who is celebrated by nationalist ideology for her filicide – permeates mainstream Hindi cinema and, by

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[95] As I attempt to give attention to the body within the queer theories I espouse in my dissertation, I nevertheless keep in mind Judith Butler's reminder in the opening of *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (1993): "Consider first that sexual difference is often invoked as an issue of material differences. Sexual difference, however, is never simply a function of material differences which are not in some way both marked and formed by discursive practices. Further, to claim that sexual differences are indissociable from discursive demarcations is not the same as claiming that discourse causes sexual difference" (xi). I also keep in mind Lynne Huffer's reading of an antiessentialist Irigaray, beginning with *Maternal Pasts, Feminist Futures: Nostalgia, Ethics, and the Question of Difference* (1998) in which she argues discussing the death of the mother in Western philosophy: "We cannot repeat *that* murderous past by disguising it as freedom and projecting it onto the future. Rejecting the violence of that mythology means moving from a nostalgic culture of mother-love to a liberatory love between sister-women" (69, original emphasis.)

[96] My understanding of the maternal body and the development of what I am calling 'maternal agency' is indebted to Julia Kristeva – even I as I heed Lynne Huffer's reading of the semiotic as individualistic and imperialistic (*Materna*l, 76). I am nevertheless drawn to "Stabat Mater" (1985) in which Kristeva developed her notion of a "subject-in-process" arguing that the maternal body operates between nature and culture, between biology and sociality. For her, neither mother nor fetus is a unified subject. Thus, following Kristeva, I deliberately do not put Nimmi in conversation with Freud's phallic mother or Zizek's maternal superego as both concepts provide reductive etiologies regarding a development and desire while privileging certain modes of maleness and power – penis envy and the phallus. (For a reading of the play that puts Freud's work on *Macbeth* in conversation with Maqbool – reconsidering Macbeth's "fruitless crown" and "barren scepter" monologue – see William C. Ferleman "What if Lady Macbeth were Pregnant?: Amativeness, Procreation, and Future Dynasty in *Maqbool,*" 2009). I am also indebted to Elisa Marder's notion of the maternal function, which is different than that of Kristeva's notion. Marder argues, "the maternal function implicitly haunts the figure of work itself. As the originary matrix for all other reproductive acts, the maternal body tends to become associated and confused with other forms of cultural labor that are defined (at least in part) by their reproductive capabilities" (3). In my case the cultural labor is translation.

[97] For more on feminism's matrophobia – as particularly "white" see Lynn O'Brien D. Hallstein *White Feminists and Contemporary Maternity: Purging Matrophobia* (2010)

[98] What I am calling Hindi cinema refers to mainstream, Mumbai produced films even if the film incorporates other languages like *Maqbool* with its Urdu. For a detailed discussion on language and dialect in Hindi cinema see Tejaswini Ganti *Bollywood: A Guidebook to Popular Hindi Cinema* (2004)

extension, the Indian imaginary (see Fig. 2).[99] The all-time box office hit that still guarantees full houses today, *Mother India* (1957), features Radha, a poor peasant woman who, after her husband leaves her alone with her children, defends her self-respect and virtuous womanhood against famine, flood, and the lecherous money lender, Sukhilal. As time goes on her son Ramu grows up to be "good" – supportive, obedient and quickly married; however, her favorite, Birju grows up to be "bad" – becoming an outlaw when he, embittered by his traumatic childhood, resists Sukhilal's oppression. When the law-abiding villagers do not join Birju's resistance, the "bad" son grows even more frustrated and begins eve-teasing the unmarried women of the village, especially Sikhilal's daughter. His behavior is viewed as a threat to the community's honor, so the villagers start a deadly fire in which Birju and Radha almost perish. When Birju takes revenge, killing Sukhilal and kidnapping his daughter on her wedding day, Radha takes

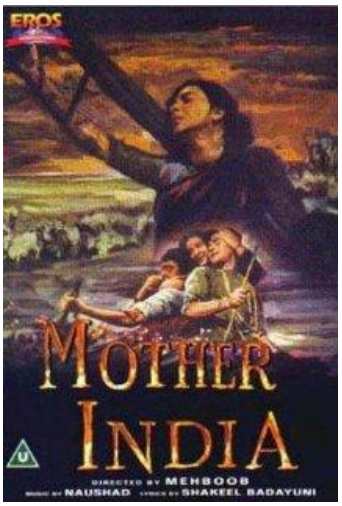

Fig. 3. Mother India movie poster

the matters of the social order into her own hands and kills her outlaw child. *Mother India* thus demonstrates the way in which the social order can resist the child –

[99] For more detailed readings of Mother India, see Nalani Natarajan "Women, Nation and Narration in Midnight's Children" (1994), Vijay Mishra *Bollywood Cinema: Temples of Desire* (2002), and Jyotika Virdi *The Cinematic Imagination: Indian Popular Films and Social History* (2003)

effectively making maternity responsible for an undesired future, forcing a mother's hand when mimetic reproduction fails. That is, the social order is invested in a particular child – not the "bad" son. Susan Straub highlights an early modern resonance to Radha's filicide. Reading Lady Macbeth's infanticide fantasy, she argues that, "this horrible picture of motherhood is not unique to Shakespeare or to the period" pointing out that many early modern mothers killed "out of a sense of duty as mothers" thus defining themselves "not against the social order, but completely within it" (333, 335). That is, these murderous mothers see in their children slippages in a secured reproductive futurity.[100]

Rosie Thomas suggests that Radha's sense of duty in *Mother India* may be a corrective to sensationalized Western stereotypes of the Indian woman's plight ("Sanctity" 13). For *Mother India* is also the title of the notorious 1927 book by American historian Katherine Mayo which purports to reveal the abuse suffered by Indian women by Indian men such as sexual abuse, child brides, abandoned widows, unsanitary childbirth, and rampant venereal disease. It was a best seller in the West.[101] While Mayo's book has come to be understood as a treatise for opposing Indian independence, crude propaganda for British rule, it continues to contribute to stereotypes of the plight of the Indian woman. Thomas argues that though the film's allusion to the title of Mayo's book is probably incidental, the fact that the film so "neatly inverts the terms of the book" in its "construction and use of female sexuality is a feature of central significance with wider ramifications" for the way in which sex and gender identity is

[100] For more on the way in which the figure of the child actually resists reproductive futurity see Katherine Bond Stockton *The Queer Child: or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century* (2009).
[101] For more on Mayo's book and its impact on British and Indian identity see Mrinalini Sinha *Specters of Mother India: The Global Restructuring of an Empire* (2006).

implicated in discourses of the nation (13). Karen Gabriel points out that "the history of coloniality has amended the relationship to the maternal body: the post-colonial nation is already the violated body" (344). Thus in an attempt to redefine and take control of the maternal origins of identity, the filmmakers of *Mother India* produced a special brochure – in English – for the film's Western audience, purporting to explain Indian traditional beliefs around womanhood. It asserted that the film is ultimately about women's chastity, specifically its sanctity – arguing that Radha/Mother India, with her admirably controlled sexuality, is an exemplary Indian mother and wife (19). Reversing the images in Mayo's book, the film and the brochure secured a lasting counter-stereotype of Indian womanhood that continues to police the boundaries of both acceptable maternity and mothering and the place of women in the nation; significantly, these stereotypes are imbibed with particular readings of womanhood in Hindu mythology, a point I will return to in the next section. Thus *Mother India* – which remains associated with the optimistic nationalism of the post-Independence decade– illustrates the way in which Hindi cinema contributes to constructions of national identity. This chapter is concerned with the way it constitutes and reconstitutes categories pertaining to women's bodies. As Thomas argues, even today, in "liberalized India" the far from the fervor of the post-independence decade, any mother on screen nostalgically "points up a metaphor that is never far from the surface in Indian discourses on both femininity and nationalism: mother as motherland, Mother India, Mother Earth" ("Melodrama" 167, Ganti 33-52).

As I will argue, Bhardwaj's translation of Lady Macbeth localizes her, putting her in the domestic positions of wife and mother on the Indian screen – but does not let her accede to those positions entirely. As mistress and bearer of a bastard child, this overly

sexualized, overly feminized Lady Macbeth, who is not of a royal court, but of a markedly Muslim criminal organization, poses a threat to Indian womanhood – and by extension images of Indian national identity – in a way that an unsexed Lady Macbeth probably would not. That is, her maternal

Fig.4. Full shot of Nimmi, nearly full term

agency is what fuels the threat to the social organization of the film – as well as the social order more generally. Bhardwaj has her enact what Marjorie Garber argues is the play's obsession "with taboo, with things that should not be heard and things that should not be seen, boundaries that should not be crossed – but are" – in this particular Indian context (121). When thought within the specific genealogy of mainstream Hindi film and its portrayals of mothers, Nimmi's seemingly "natural" femininity is transgressive. For her reproduction does not serve the nation. Nimmi illustrates that maternity actually has queering potential. Thus, this chapter argues that Bhardwaj's domestication of *Macbeth* gestures toward a way to think about both maternity and mothering without reproductive futurity. Indeed, as I will illustrate, *Maqbool* serves as reminder of the destructive potential of maternal agency to challenge the social order interfering with patrilineal transmission, scrambling the family structure, turning the sacred profane, challenging

national identity thus showing the way in which the future is always insecure and always in question.

Radical Domestication

Domestication and foreignization are strategies in translation regarding the degree to which translators make a source text conform to the target culture. In *The Scandals of Translation*, Lawrence Venuti argues that domestication "scandalizes" the source text; he suggests: "translation is often regarded with suspicion because it inevitably domesticates foreign texts, inscribing them with linguistic and cultural values that are intelligible to specific domestic constituencies" (67). Thus not only is fidelity impossible in the process of translation, but assimilation – to varying degrees – cannot be avoided. He thus understands that the dichotomy between domestication and foreignization has a bearing on identity formation. He argues that the process of domestic inscription:

> operates at every stage in the production, circulation, and reception of the translation. It is initiated by the very choice of a foreign text to translate, always at an exclusion of other foreign texts and literatures, which answers to particular domestic interests. It continues most for forcefully in the development of a translation strategy that rewrites the foreign text in domestic dialects and discourses, always a choice of certain domestic values to the exclusion of others … By far the most consequential of these effects – and hence the greatest potential source of scandal – is the formation of cultural identities (67).

Thus, according to Venuti, the consequence of domestication strategy is the erasure of the cultural values of the source; he describes domestication as "an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language culture values, bringing the reader back home" (*Invisibility* 20). Ultimately he views foreignization as the ethical choice for translators to make – so that the dominant target does not assimilate the differences of the source culture and, rather, registers "the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad" (*Invisibility* 20).

Venuti's argument really pertains to English and Anglo-American culture as he suggests that "foreignizing translation in English can be a form of resistance against…cultural narcissism and imperialism" (*Invisibility* 20). That is, in his discussion of domestication Venuti does not consider that the source may already be more dominant than the target, even hegemonic, before the translation process begins – a point he addresses when he espouses "minoritizing translation" (10-15). That is to say, when placed within the interplay between the local and the global, domestication might be thought of as the process by which the local inscribes the global[102] – to make it legible to a local audience, of course, but also to deliberately scandalize the global, offering a new way of reading dominant texts and hegemonic discourses. In the words of Walter D. Mignolo "attempts to recast 'universal history' evince the nostalgic dream of imperial control of the past" (x). Bhardwaj's radical domestication of Shakespeare, his recasting, evinces the nostalgic dream of imperial control in India – while it also, I will argue, evinces the nostalgia of the post-independence decade of India. And it does so, primarily, through the domestication of *Macbeth*'s treatment of gender.

[102] For more on the interplay between the global and the local see Arjun Appadurai *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (1996)

While other terms of translation have been used to describe the way in which *Maqbool* localizes *Macbeth* – such as 'indigenization' and 'nativization' –I hold on to domestication for the term's gender connotations linking the feminine with the home.[103] Indeed I admit that my reading of domestication echoes the aim of minoritizing translation to "never acquire the majority" so the "minority becomes everybody" (*Scandal* 11). Yet following this chapter's focus on the possibilities of maternal agency, I insist on troubling the significations of the gendered metaphorics of translation. Against Venuti's argument that a "good translation" has a small "domestic remainder," I want to amplify the remainder and champion the negative connotations of domesticity. If translation is reproduction – often metaphorized as feminine – the domestication of the source illustrates a deliberate disruption of mimesis. This chapter, then, embraces the strategy of domestication as a form of maternal agency – to unmake through the processes of reproduction. [104]

With *Maqbool* Bhardwaj deliberately domesticates the Scotland of Shakespeare's early modern stage – transforming it into the contemporary, the criminal underworld of Mumbai. Following in the long history of Shakespeare adaptation established by the tradition of Parsi theatre in Bombay, Bhardwaj retains the main characters of *Macbeth* as well as the main action and plot points (Trivedi "Introduction"). The King Duncan figure is Jahangir Khan, the criminal organization's don, referred to as Abba-ji or respected father. Malcolm is translated into Abba-ji's daughter, Sameera. The shadowy presence of Macdonwald is embodied in gang's main rival, Mughal. Macduff is Boti, who is allied

[103] For more on indigenization see Suddhaseel Sen "Indigenizing *Macbeth*: Vishal Bhardwaj's Maqbool" (2009)
[104] This process might also be thought of as provincializing Europe, to use Dipesh Chakrabarty's formulation. See *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (2000)

with Mughal. The Weird Sisters are a pair of conniving and comic policemen/astrologers, Inspector Pandit and Inspector Purohit, whose bawdy but nevertheless telling lines also recall The Porter. Banquo and Fleance are Kaka and his son Guddu, respectively. The gangland setting is metatheatrical; Bollywood is widely known as a hotbed for criminal activity. It also makes clear that murder is part of the trade; the film suggests that Abba-ji killed the former don and took his place. Maqbool's murder of Abba-ji is part of the process of ascension in that underworld. Bhardwaj's domestication – which inscribes *Macbeth* into the local – therefore aids in the film's legibility. Indeed, the film adheres to many of the conventions of the recent gang-mafia genre in Bollywood such as *Once Upton a Time in Mumbai* (2010), *Kaminey: The Scoundrels* (2009), *Sarkar* (2005), *Dayavan* (1998), and *Vaastav* (1999) that feature fallen women and the rise of a gang underling to the position of don. However when the film strays from Shakespeare's plot and Bollywood convention – with its treatment of women – it becomes evident that the film's domestication of *Macbeth* is more than mere aesthetic localization. For its domestication of sex and gender actually unmakes both the Shakespearean source and the Bollywood target.

In addition to impregnating Lady Macbeth, *Maqbool* complicates sex and gender by transforming *Macbeth*'s witches – its Weird Sisters – into policemen (see Fig 5). *Maqbool* opens with the tip of Inspector Pundit's finger on the foggy window of a rain-soaked van, tracing a horoscope grid that forecasts the future of Mumbai**,** reading to see if Maqbool is destined to reign over it (see Fig. 5). As Pundit and his partner, Inspector Purohit, curse and laugh in throaty

Fig. 5. Maqbool's Weird Sisters

voices, they torture a member of Abba-ji's rival gang. Thus the beginning of the film, like the beginning of *Macbeth*, "strikes a keynote of values reversed, treachery and violence"— "but one localized in the dynamics and lingo of Mumbai's underworld" (Trivedi 2009).

No longer gender ambiguous, in Bhardwaj's translation, neither policeman really embodies the feminine implications of a witch – a word actually used to describe Nimmi, a point I will return to presently. Yet both nevertheless occupy a liminal space – that of corruption, which is humorously recognizable to the film's Indian audience who will see them as "the scapegoat cops of every Bollywood film", moving between the criminal underworld and the world of the law (Trivedi 2009).[105] Thus Inspectors Pandit and Purohit are not arbiters of the state. Rather they are arbiters of a more cosmic sense of justice, using astrology to predict a future that cannot be wholly policed or governed by either the statutes of law or the organization of crime. They compulsively trace grids – on dirty cars, in a *thali* of sweets, on the shore of a

[105] Janet Adalman finds the witches humorous as well (136).

Fig.6. Mumbai's horoscope

beach – illustrating that the cosmos is in the every day. As policemen and astrologers it seems that they are interested in a justice that cannot be outlined or explained by social logic; they predict the future only in order to map their philosophical mantra – "*shakti ka santulan*" – that metaphorizes the balance of power in the universe with elemental balance: "let water and fire unite". Thus as in *Macbeth*, knowing the future does not change it. Indeed, other than predict Maqbool's ascension to the head of the gang, they do not predict or suggest much more much

Fig.7. Maqbool's last horoscope

Fig.8. Maqbool bullies Inspector Purohit

more. For instance, in *Maqbool* there is no suggested denial of maternal origin or maternal agency – as there is in Shakespeare's play, when the Weird Sisters tell Macbeth that "none of woman born" will harm him (4.1.91-92). Like his Shakespearean counterpart, Maqbool seeks out the soothsayers to learn his fate, but these Sisters simply repeat their mantra, telling him that the ocean has come to his door; he tries to bully them

into consolidating his power, but they mystically suggest that there much water, the ocean has come to his door, and he will drown (see Fig 7-8). In his translation of Shakespeare's Weird Sisters into clairvoyant cops, Bhardwaj seems to explicitly politicize them, tying the supernatural world directly to the governed world – illustrating that they are not so different.[106]

Bhardwaj juxtaposes this cosmic sense of justice – an arbitrary balance of power not based in the rules of law or morality– with Nimmi's lawless and amoral maternal agency. Against the policemen's philosophy, Nimmi anxiously wants to "feel the future in an instant," and drives the film toward the destruction of Abba-ji's gang. (1.5.65-66). In *Maqbool* it seems that the sexual difference between Nimmi and the policemen marks their disconnection. In other words, by transforming the Weird Sisters into these male-bodied policemen, *Maqbool* makes clear who the real witch is. Indeed Lady Macbeth is often read in tandem with the Weird Sisters – in addition to sharing gender ambiguity, they both incite Macbeth's ambition. Coppélia Kahn notes that, "Shakespeare establishes the connection between Lady Macbeth and the witches by having her invoke the spirit of evil and ask her to fill her with their spirits" (177).[107] Therefore I suggest that Bhardwaj assimilates the witches into Nimmi; their witchcraft is translated into her. While their gender is made ambiguous by their "beards," as Dympna Callaghan avers, "in *Macbeth* the kingdom of darkness is unequivocally female, unequivocally matriarchal" arguing that "witchcraft" in the period is "a privileged nexus of desire, power, and an 'other

[106] This domestication localizes the uncanny elements of the play too, as many Indians – Hindu or not – regularly turn to astrology to predict their every day lives. Indeed it is rumored that Nehru had an astrologer evaluate whether or not the British proposed date for India's independence –August 13, 1947 – was auspicious; the horoscope concluded it was not and thus India had its independence the following day on August 14, 1947.

[107] For more about the ways in which the witches and Lady Macbeth are linked see Karen Newman *Fashioning Femininity and English Renaissance Drama* (1991)

place' of cultural consciousness, the crucial component of the Renaissance fantasy of 'woman'" (358-59,355). Nimmi takes on the witches' female signification as well as their catalytic agency to incite Maqbool and ruin Abba-ji. Thus, following the murder of her father, Sameera attempts to strangle pregnant Nimmi and calls her, appropriately, "*Chudail! Chudail!*" – *Witch! Witch*! (see Fig. 10). [108]

Callaghan argues that in the early modern period "the unauthorized power witches were regarded as possessing" could "kill, maim, and generally undermine the fabric of society" (357). As an embodiment of both Lady Macbeth and the witches, Nimmi seems to possess a similar unauthorized power in the context of Indian cinema and Indian politics. While Maqbool does not

readily invite an allegorical reading of the nation in its plot and action, the constellation of recasted characters nevertheless resonates with *Mother India*, falling along its genealogical lines, which also include such canonical films as *Deewar* (1975), *Amar Akbar Anthony* (1977) and *Karan Arjun* (1995) and recently, a drug mafia movie *Agneepath* (2012). Karen Gabriel outlines the key features of the mother archetype in Hindi cinema: "her single status, the absent father, the conflicted son and the transmission of the wound from mother to son" (356). As a mistress, Nimmi necessarily occupies a "single status". And when the film begins, as partner to Jahangir, whose nickname, Abba-ji, literally means father, Nimmi is a mother figure to Maqbool, her "conflicted" son (see Fig. 9). Indeed as Nimmi attempts to incite ambition in Maqbool, suggesting that he murder Abba-ji, he protests angrily, "*muje baap ke wo!*" – *he is my*

[108]For extremely interesting documentation on witch hunting in India during British Colonialism see Aparna Mahanta "Race and Gender in Patriarchal and Colonial Discourse: The case of the 'Foul Witch Sycorax' in The Context of Modern Witch Hunting in India."

father! However, by transmitting her "wound" to Maqbool – her impending replacement by a younger courtesan – Nimmi successfully incites his ambition, rendering the father absent and consummating the Oedipal desire that that was always there.[109] And when the paternity of the baby becomes unclear, and pregnant Nimmi descends into sleepless madness, claiming the baby inside of her is crying for its murdered father, Maqbool echoes his initial protest to Nimmi;

Fig.9. Nimmi and Abba-ji as Maqbool's parents

slapping her and grabbing her face, he insists "*iska baap zinda bhi ! yaha mere hai!*" – *its father is alive, the baby is mine!* (see Fig. 11). Thus as *Maqbool* plays out the key features outlined by Gabriel, Nimmi subverts the archetype of the mother – revealing a maternal agency that threatens the social order, the "social fabric," instead of seamlessly reproducing it.

Rosie Thomas points out that the archetype of the mother in mainstream Indian cinema is often opposed to the figure of the villain. Dichotomously defined, the mother embodies and signifies moral values of goodness while the villain embodies and signifies evil ("Melodrama" 166). She argues that the interplay between mother and villain is

[109] Janet Adalman suggests that Lady Macbeth is a mother figure to Macbeth. See *Suffocating Mothers* (1992) 135-138

underpinned by two key figures of Hindu mythology – Sita and Raavana of the *Ramayana*. Evil and licentious Raavana abducts Sita, the good and dutiful wife to the god Rama, and throughout the epic's events, her fidelity and chastity is challenged, culminating with the notorious test of her loyalty; when she walks through a fire to emerge untouched by the flames, she illustrates that she has not transgressed her

Fig.10. Sameera calls Nimmi a "witch" ("*Chudail*")

Fig.11. Maqbool insists he's the father

duties as wife to Rama. Early Indian cinema was often based on Hindu epics such as the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* in order to localize the new medium that came to India from France in the late nineteenth century – and it remains popular today, particularly in serialized format (Ganti 6,10). Thus it has established stock characters, tropes, and archetypes on screen. For instance, Radha's namesake in *Mother India* is an incarnation of Sita, a goddess popularly known as the consort to the god Krishna in the *Mahabharata*; the name of Radha's son, Birju, is another name for Krishna. Symbolically she is both mother and consort to her son. Thomas argues that the mother in Hindi cinema "must be placed, in narrative terms, largely outside the realms of sexual desire – and, of course, it is inconceivable that the mother-son relationship overtly acknowledges any sexual tinge, despite what appears to read as frankly Oedipal imagery in a fantasy mode" ("Melodrama" 167).

The figure of the mother in contemporary mainstream Indian cinema retains these moral and religious registers – even if, as Anustap Basu points out Bollywood's contemporary modern settings are far from feudal – and especially if the leading lady, despite the film's contemporary and "modern" backdrop, is relegated to the domestic sphere, the home, as Nimmi is in *Maqbool* (144-152). Indeed, despite her status as a mistress, Nimmi is circumscribed within the respectable sphere of the domestic space – even if her gang-lord lover operates in crime, funding the biggest Bollywood blockbusters. In one telling scene, Kaka suggests that Nimmi act in a new Bollywood film; Abba-ji does not like the idea, shooting him a menacing look that leaves him stammering and, finally, silenced. Tejaswini Ganti points out that in the early days of Hindi cinema, acting, singing, and dancing were associated with too-public world of prostitutes and courtesans. Within Hindu and Muslim communities, women represent the family or community status, associated with limiting women's movement outside the home. Even prostitutes were unwilling to work in film because it would their occupation even more public. As Abba-ji's look illustrates, such stigma still continues, policing the limits of female respectability.

Yet outside of the world the film – Nimmi's is nevertheless a female body circulated on the Bollywood screen for public consumption. And her character effectively deconstructs Bollywood's mother archetype; despite Abba-ji's attempt to control her sexuality, she operates inside the realm of sexual desire, whereby Oedipal imagery becomes literal. Thus she is not opposed to the villain figure because, while also being a wife-figure and mother-figure, she is a villain herself – even more so than the gun-toting men around her. For she an outlaw among outlaws. She only plays the dutiful

wife to Abba-ji – for more like Ravaana than Sita, she abducts Maqbool, forcing him to test his fidelity and loyalty to Abba-ji – yet her capture demonstrates a markedly feminine agency. In the ultimate seduction scene, she follows Maqbool

Fig. 12. Nimmi points the gun at Maqbool

to rocky cliffs overlooking the ocean's inlet. Clad in a crimson *salwar kameez*, she steals his gun from behind. When he turns around, he finds Nimmi pointing it at his head, giving him a smirk. "*Vapas do*," *Give it to me*, he commands, wide-eyed, nervous, and annoyed and reaches out his hand for the gun. "*Bolo: vapus do, mere jaan*" *Say: give it me, my love*, she corrects, flirtatiously telling him to repeat after her, emphasizing "*mere jaan*" – forcing him to declare his love for her at gunpoint. When he says nothing, she shoots the gun past his head, making clear that this desire is a matter of life or death (see fig. 12). "*Bolo,*" *Say it*, she quietly commands until he has called her his "*jaan*". After she returns the gun to her, he slaps her – only for her to smile coyly, walk toward him, and rest her head on his chest. The extraordinary camera work in the scene showcases explicit feminine agency; shot from beneath, the angle disrupts the phallic imagery of the gun, putting emphasis on the vaginal positioning of Nimmi's arms, labial red, both hands on

the grip, trigger ready, her bangles clinking. The image begs the question, "Are the Lips a Grave?" – Lynne Huffer's feminist formulation of Leo Bersani's seminal inquiry.

Scrambling the family structure and the religious plots on which its based, Nimmi repeatedly challenges the markedly Hindu Indian mother archetype not only because she is Muslim – a point I address in the next section – but because she too easily mixes the sacred with the profane. Like Macbeth's witches, she threatens a so-thought divine order. *Macbeth*'s engagement with witchcraft and sorcery speaks to James I of England's interest in the subject – in particular, his book *Daemonologie* (1597) and his personal involvement in the North Berwick witch trials in East Lothian, Scotland when he was James VI. He openly believed in a connection between treason and witchcraft, executing any women he suspected.[110] His anxiety over these "witches" stemmed from his belief in patriarchal Divine Right – witches were associated with motherhood and matriarchy and, as Selma R. Williams points out, William Perkins's *Discourse on the Damned Art of Witchcraft* (1608) made popular that a demonic pact that made a witch more powerful than a monarch (111). The dynastic motherhood inherent in witchcraft was seen as threatening to the metaphysics of Divine Right, the authority of the father and the head as James would have it.[111] Bhardwaj translates the witches' opposition to godly rule and the father into Nimmi. Insisting that she walk barefoot instead of driving to the *dargah*, or

[110] For more on how the new king endeavored to reinforce patriarchy by way of witch hunts, see Stevie Davies, *The Feminine Reclaimed: The Idea of Woman in Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton* (1986) 28, 169.

[111] Jonathan Goldberg has written about the *Masque of Queens* (1609) in which Perseus is a "male-mother" – interestingly, a "Zeus-like part King James had claimed for himself." See "Fatherly Authority: The Politics of Stuart Family Images" (1986). For how James understood himself to be the "father of the nation" see *James I and the Politics of Literature* (1983). Jonathan Goldberg has also written about how Caliban's mother, Sycorax, may be male in "Under the Covers with Caliban" and Stephen Orgel has written about Prospero's birthing fantasies in "Prospero's Wife" (1984).

Fig.13. Maqbool washes Nimmi's feet

Sufi tomb, Nimmi is able to get Maqbool alone, as her chaperone while Abba-ji drives. The first song of the film "Ru-ba-ru" ("We are face to face"), performed by thirteen *qawaals* dressed in white, accompanies their procession during which Nimmi ostensibly hurts her foot, manipulating Maqbool to touch and care for her as he washes her wound (see Fig 13). Ganti points out that music and song in Hindi cinema, far from superfluous, "define and propel plot development" (80). One of the main functions of songs is to display emotion and desire in a different, oftentimes more affective, register (80-81). For instance, during Sameera's *sangeet*, or pre-wedding celebration, Nimmi sings "Jhin min Jhini," a song about clandestine love and scheming, during which she admits that she is both "foul and fair," "the innocent flower" and the "serpent under't" (1.5.76-77) (see Fig. 14). While the wedding party dances along, only the film's audience is privy to the song's cheeky subtext. Unlike other song- and-dance numbers in more conventional pop Bollywood, often termed "masala" Bollywood, the music and song in *Maqbool* strikes a more realistic chord; the songs are not campy, the dancing is not choreographed – it

Fig. 14. Nimmi at Sameera's *sangeet*

does not alleviate tension but actually serves to further darken the plot.[112] Similarly, the song accompanying religious procession to the *dargah* is a site through which to establish the erotic flirtations between Nimmi and Maqbool as well as their potential rivals for the throne, Sameera and Guddu. When Abba-ji finally arrives, to find that Nimmi has hurt her foot, he irreverently bends down and kisses it in front of the religious congregation. Nimmi thus reorganizes the affect produced by hypnotic chanting of the *qawaals*; what is sacred becomes erotically profane. Nimmi mixes the sacred and profane, again, when she tries to convince Maqbool to murder

Fig.15. Gun-play foreplay

Fig.16. Boundaries are finally crossed

Fig.17. Nimmi performs *namaz*

Abba-ji. After their gun-play foreplay on the cliffs, and following their salty sex scene that metaphorizes the desolation of erotic and familial boundaries with a gauzy mosquito net, Nimmi sits at the foot of their bed and invokes, not Shakespeare's supernatural

[112] For more on how *Maqbool* subverts Bollywood conventions see Rosa M. Marcia-Pariago "The Ambiguities of Bollywood Conventions and the Reading of Transnationalism in Vishal Bhardwaj's *Maqbool*" (2014). For a review of the heated debates surrounded Bombay's escapist or realist qualities see Shakuntala Banaji. *Reading Bollywood: The Young Audience and Hindi Film* (2006)

spirits, but Allah, to give Maqbool the courage to murder Abba-ji, performing *namaz* in a white *hijab* (see Figs. 15-17). Thus the sacred becomes a site through which Nimmi can mobilize profane aims. For her, it does not restrictively structure her desires, as it does in with the archetypical counterpart; Nimmi appropriates its connotations for her own use.[113]

In addition to unmaking the archetype of the mother in Bollywood, the recasting of Lady Macbeth as domestic mistress rather than a wife seemingly gives her ambitious social-climbing a more vulnerable dimension. It is easy to read Nimmi's murder plot as a means to stay relevant in the social order even if not the dominant social order, to not be replaced by another mistress or courtesan. However, Nimmi's seduction of Maqbool is not only about her own social and economic stability. It is also about desire. During Sameera's wedding celebrations, Nimmi once again blends sacred with profane, wearing the sacrificial garland reserved for slaughtered goats around her neck as she tells Maqbool: *It's time you sacrificed me too.* Maqbool tries to silence her but Nimmi continues: *Jahangir has a new mistress. How can I face going home? Everyone knows I'm Jahangir's mistress. He looks disgusting when he's naked*. Nimmi tells him that he must choose between two deaths– Abba-ji's or her own – thus orchestrating her release and rewriting her future. Nimmi admits that she fears for her social standing and that her love for Maqbool is contingent on the murder – recalling Lady Macbeth's manipulation "From this time/ Such I account thy love" (1.7. 42-43). However, by telling Maqbool that Abba-ji *looks disgusting when he's nake*d – "*nagna ghrnita*" – Nimmi admits that erotic attraction is factor in her murder scheme. And as with any Bollywood film

[113] The third and final song of the film "Rone Do" ("Let me cry") is atmospheric, played when Nimmi and Maqbool trade the same gun back and forth, foreplay before the have sex.

mohabbat or "love" must be a factor that propels the action. According to Stephen Alter's definition, Nimmi crime is also that of "love thief". She is "a character who steals another's heart", "a criminal whose only crime is passion.

For [her], seduction is form of burglary, a surreptitious game in which [she] uses charm and guile to gain entry into a [man's] guarded affections" (Alter 11-12). This category is primarily

Fig. 18. Nimmi tries to remove blood from the walls

Fig.19. Nimmi insists that their love was pure

used for men –and Nimmi, as murder conspirator is actually a criminal; however, while the film challenges commercial Bollywood genre conventions, it nevertheless suggests that she steals Maqbool's heart as she steals away the phallic economy from the play and the film. In her iteration of Lady Macbeth's lines "Out, damned spot, out, I say!...What need we fear/who knows it, when on can call our power/account? Yet who would have though the old man/ to have had so much blood in him?," madness- stricken, postpartum Nimmi, tries to wash the "bloody" walls of Abba-ji assassination while clutching her stomach, anguished by its emptiness (5.1.37-42). As she dies, overwhelmed by hallucinations and confabulations, she makes Maqbool repeat after her once more – recalling his recitation of "*mere jaan*" at gunpoint. She insists "*hamara ishq pak tha"* – *our love is pure* – and puts her hand to his face, waiting for his confirmation: *"Bolo: paka tha*" – *Say it: it is pure*. As she repeats "paka tha" – *pure* – over and over, the couple is

reflected in a mirror – doubling their images, suggesting the significations of their relationship are not fixed or properly real (see Figs.18-19).[114] Thus, like all desire, Nimmi's is not stable or clear – it is not, as Edelman would read such a woman's "obsessive love," so readily "socially legible" (166 note 10). Indeed, it is precisely Nimmi's frenetic and contradictory desire that makes her maternal agency threatening. Her death is a strange one. After Nimmi gives birth in the hospital, Maqbool, fearing for her life, brings her back to the gang compound. She dies in Maqbool's arms soon after, in the fetal position, ostensibly from madness. Unlike Lady Macbeth's suicide, Nimmi's death is given no explanation – as if it does not need one, as if after giving birth, her mothering is too unimaginable to be realized. Instead, the child is placed in Sameera's arms (see Fig.22). Unlike *Macbeth*, in which all the women die, in *Maqbool* women carry the throne.

Fig. 20. Nimmi's baby in Sameera's arms

However, the child, as Edelman understands it, is returned to the social order in which Nimmi, the "witch," is necessarily absent.[115]

"Bleed, bleed, poor country!"

[114] Marjorie Garber discusses the uncanny and doubling in Macbeth in *Shakespeare's Ghost Writers* (2010).
[115] Unlike *Macbeth*, that, at its end has no women left; Lady Macbeth commits suicide while Lady Macduff is murdered.

In Shakespeare's *Ghost Writers: Literature as Uncanny Causality*, Garber, reading the relationship Macbeth to his stage history, recounts the ways in which the thematic border crossing in Shakespeare's uncanny, unlucky, "Scottish play" extends beyond the walls of the theatre (118-122). She points out that "people have been injured or killed, and productions seriously disrupted. The play is not only thought to be unlucky – on the face of things it actually has been unlucky" for "the play itself is transgressive, and insists upon the posing of pertinent thought-troubling questions" and "refuses to remain contained within the safe boundaries of fiction" (120, 122, 165). In the context of Shakespeare in Indian theatre, the play has extended to real-world politics. Trivedi has outlined the way in which Indian theatre has engaged with Garber's sentiments, translating the play's insistence on "thought-troubling questions" into commentary on postcolonial oppressions ("bloody business" 48-49).[116].

Thus it seems impossible to read *Maqbool*, without considering its representation of its predominantly Muslim cast in light of events of the year prior to its release. For 2002 witnessed widespread religious riots in Gujarat during which numerous Muslims and Hindus were killed. Known as the Gujarat *pogrom*, the three day inter-communal violence in the western state began what became a more large scale dissent – including rape, children being burned alive, and widespread looting; mass violence events from those months include the Naroda Patiya massacre, the Gulbarg Society massacre and several incidents in Vadodara city. Some say that the rioting was triggered by the burning

[116] In *India's Shakespeare: Translation, Interpretation, and Performance* (2005), Trivedi points out that India has a long history with *Macbeth*; the play alludes to the Tripoli en route to Aleppo – a voyage taken by Ralph Fitch who has the first eye witness account my an Englishman. In "'It is the bloody business which informs us thus…' Local Politics and Performative Praxis, Macbeth in India" (2005), she points out that Macbeth has been the most popular tragedy after Othello. In that essay she discusses H.S. Shiva Prakash's *Maranayakana Drishtanta* and Kokendra Arabam's *Stage of Blood* – two plays that politicize *Macbeth*.

of a train in Godrha in February of that year, which was responsible for the deaths of 58 Hindu pilgrims returning of Ayodhya. Official figures indicate that the riots resulted in 790 Muslim and 254 Hindu fatalities, but other sources estimate that up to 2,000 Muslims died during those months. Chief Minister at the time, Narendra Modi of the conservative Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, now Prime Minister of India, has been accused of sparking and condoning the violence – which has come to be read as form of ethnic cleansing. Of course, *Maqool* also has to be understood in the global context of the September 11 attacks on the Twin Towers in New York City as well, since which the image of Muslims has been even more severely damaged.

As Ganti has pointed out, the Bombay film industry has, up until the recent decade, been amenable to the marginalized Muslim community in India. She points out: "The final impact of Partition was that the Bombay film industry became one of the few sites in India where Muslims are not marginal, but actually enjoy some prominence and success" (23). Ira Bhaskar and Richard Allen have studied the role Mughal rulers fulfilled in Bollywood movies during the anticolonial period. And Rosa M. García Periago has highlighted that after independence Muslims were shown as symbols of tolerance. Yet the presence of Muslims and Muslim culture in Bollywood has been on the decline since the riots and 9/11. Maidul Islam has traced the wane, arguing that there has been an underrepresentation of Muslim characters despite the number of Muslims in film production – and if Muslim are represented, they are seen as violent as evidenced by the number movies in which Muslims are terrorists. Moreover, there has been a lack of images of Muslims promoting secularism.

Maqbool, thus, seems to deliberately put an ostracized minority front-and-center on the Indian screen. The names, dress, religious ceremonies, and language, Urdu, of the film showcases Muslim culture (García-Periago 73-76). However, as Rosa M. García-Periago argues "Maqbool's use of such extreme clichés calls attention to itself and begs certain questions about the authenticity of the gesture: Is this camp? Or is the irony used to skirt the ethical question itself?" (76). She argues that in the film "Islam is usually deployed in a degrading and negative way" especially in comparison to the four Hindu characters in the film (76-77). The policemen as well as Kaka and Guddu are depicted as less violent and more passive in the film. García-Periago argues that "Pandit and Purohit go beyond the spirit of Shakespeare's witches since they do not just advance the action, but their *maneuvers* are also crucial for the film's final resolution – as if they were Hindu minor deities. The fact that they exercise the ultimate power purportedly measures the extent of Hindu power in present-day India" (77 original italics). Kaka is the good father and devoted friend and servant. His son, Guddu, is depicted as unable to commit murder, shaking at the possibility; instead unlike Nimmi, he is more the classic Bollywood lover, a legitimate, marriageable love as Sameera's future husband (García-Periago 77-78). In contrast, García-Periago argues that Muslims are depicted as cold, calculated, and bloodthirsty – as Abba-ji's character is associated with real-life well-known Muslim criminals and terrorists (77, Mason).

Bhardwaj's film does not shy away from stereotype; indeed, its camp seems to embrace many negative significations of Islam. By doing so, he interrupts popular, 'official' history to showcase the absence of Muslim characters on the Indian screen, linking Shakespeare's global characters to India's extremely local ones. Following

Garber's interpretation of the play, he leaves open the "thought-troubling question" of Islam in India. And as Indian cinema, a major site through which national identity is formed, continues to villainize Muslims, it becomes clear in the words of Gabriel, that the "Hinduisation into the iconography of the… mother visibilises the otherwise tacit assumption of India as Hindu" (357). If Bhardwaj's portrayal has Islamophobic undertones, as García-Periago argues, in this chapter I've argued that it serves to illustrate the way in which Nimmi is a mother, but not Mother India – a much-needed interruption the repeating image cinematic archetypes of maternity.

Facing Nimmi

All the texts I consider in my dissertation represent, in varying capacities, male homosociality. In my other chapters I attend to the ways in which postcolonial authors borrow male same-sex desire, erotics, and intimacies from Shakespeare's plays in order to critique the identity politics, particularly that of nation formation as it relates to both colonial and post-independence governance. This chapter refocused my lens to give attention to a woman within a homosocial organization. I was interested in how Lady Macbeth's translated body affects and even undermines male economies – even if they remain, for the most part, intact. By reading Bhardwaj's translation of Lady Macbeth, I also hoped to constructively challenge queer theories, especially that of the antirelational and antisocial turn – theories that I actually defend, build-on, and espouse in this dissertation. For in addition to his oversight of sexual difference, Lee Edelman has been criticized for his sweeping dismissal of other significations of difference – such as, but not limited to, racial, ethnic, historical, cultural, national specificities –

even when their considerations are vital to critiquing normative hegemonic discourses, to allowing for opening of what Foucault calls "heterotopias". Foucault argues that heterotopic spaces have "the curious property of being in relation with all" other "sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invent the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect. These spaces, as it were, which are linked with all the others" also "contradict all the other sites. [117] That is, rationality actually has the potential to contradict, unmake, and undo futures. Despite this potential Edelman argues that what he calls "'the fascism of the baby's face'"

> subjects us to its sovereign authority as the figure of politics itself (of politics, that is, in its radical form as reproductive futurism), whatever the face of a particular politics gives that baby to wear – Aryan or multicultural , that of the…Reich or of an ever expanding horizon of democratic inclusivity. Which is not to say that the difference of those political programs makes no difference, but rather that both, *as political programs,* are programmed to reify difference and thus to secure in the future, the order of the same. (151 original italics)

In his attempt to refute politics, Edelman unabashedly dismisses what might make a difference when considering a "multicultural" "face" – even when it might point to another way to oppose the subject of humanistic and liberal thinking, what he calls "the engine of reproductive futurism" (821). That is, there remains a way to think of "an ethics of the other" without the political programs, the identity discourses, of multiculturalism

[117] For more on how rewriting opens new heterotopian spaces, see Lynne Huffer's analysis of Sarah Maitland's rewriting of Biblical story of Hagar, Sarah, and Abraham, "Triptych" in *Are the Lips a Grave?: A Queer Feminist on the Ethics of Sex* (2013)

and diversity.[118] As José Muñoz puts it: "It has been clear to many of us, for a while now, that the antirelational in queer studies was the gay white man's last stand" (825). My reading Bhardwaj's translation of Lady Macbeth takes seriously Munoz's criticism by attempting to write Nimmi into Edelman's polemic against the child – performing the perhaps not so impossible task of putting relationality in conversation with its denouncement. While Nimmi's maternal agency is directed toward a future, it is not utopian. It gestures toward a time and place that sits between Shakespeare and Bollywood, never acceding to either the early or late modern – a heterotopic space – that is less determined by mimetic reproduction and more affected by rewriting.

[118] Lynne Huffer beautifully recuperates an ethics of the other for Foucault in *Are the Lips a Grave? A Queer Feminist on the Ethics of Sex* (2013).

Conclusion

"What is[h] my nation?": Queer Failure and The (Dis)location of Irish Identity in Frank McGuiness's *Mutabilitie*

> It is not the literal past, the 'facts' of history, that shape us, but images of the past embodied in language.
>
> – Brian Friel, *Translations*

The bulk of this dissertation has focused on queer, postcolonial translations of William Shakespeare from and about South Asia and its diaspora. My aim with this focused lens was to perform a sustained engagement with the specificities of one postcolonial region and set of representative queer experiences and desires – all while highlighting how histories are not separately situated and geographies are not wholly bounded. By considering these South Asian translations of Shakespeare comparatively and contrapuntally I hoped to model a method of reading that is both rigorously attentive to historical, geographical, and experiential particularities, but not limited to them. Indeed, my intention has been to excavate the disruptive spaces in between identities that are associated with South Asia in the region and abroad, and across multiple, non-linear temporalities. I wanted to think broadly about the intersections of sexuality, gender, and

nationhood as they are translated into several different contexts, drawing connections between time and space, without resorting to universalizing generalizations. I aimed to show how these translations, with their attention to queer desire, productively throw wholesale identitarian categories into crisis. I hope that my readings have illustrated the ways in which these selected South Asian texts productively resist notions of *both* an original and colonial Shakespeare that is synonymous with Eurocentric humanism and a translated postcolonial that is invested in the project of exclusionary identity formation. By reading these texts as unfaithful and loose translations to a stable notion of either Shakespeare or the postcolonial, my aim has been to interrupt any strictly prescriptive political or cultural program that can be tied to a single identity.

In this conclusion, I sketch how my reading lens can be expanded to consider other shores; for colonial contact has yielded radical and disruptive queer desires in other places, evident in their own unfaithful translations of "the Bard". I turn to Frank McGuinness's play, *Mutabilitie* (1997) to highlight how the (post)colonial experience in Ireland is marked by a series of translational and epistemological failures that resist secure and stable national identity for both colonized and colonizer. The first section of this chapter locates and analyzes the Shakespearean and Spenserian intertexts for McGuinness's play. It highlights the way in which Ireland as a nation, and the Irish as a race, have been written and represented in the period – and rewritten and translated by McGuinness. The second section places *Mutabilitie* within recent historical debates about how to historicize Ireland's relationship to England and the British Empire. I argue that *Mutabilitie* deliberately aims to critique historical revisionism, which is invested in fact-based history. It also, I argue, aims to critique the revivalist Irish stage, which has largely

shied away from dramatizing queer desire. Because it does not fit either historical or cultural program and because it represents a blurring of English and Irish national identities, *Mutabilitie* has been rejected by both national stages and deemed a theatrical failure. However, I argue that there is the political potential to undo stagnant and oppressive national identities in, what I see, as the play's particularly "queer failure".

"What is[h] my nation?"

"What is my nation?" asks not Irish Captain Macmorris in Shakespeare's *Henry V* (1599), but English "Edmund" in Frank McGuiness's play *Mutabilitie* (51). McGuinness's recasting is striking because this famous query into national identity is synonymous with Shakespeare's only Irish character and one of the first "Stage Irish" portrayals – not a canonical and colonial English figure like Edmund Spenser. In fact, the line in Shakespeare's play is "What *ish* my nation?", the accent signaling Macmorris's markedly Irish speech, a linguistic difference, against the backdrop of a war ostensibly over national unity (3.2.119). Moreover, written in 1599, when Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, pursued a military campaign against the Irish rebel Hugh O'Neill the second Earl of Tyrone, *Henry V*'s 100 Years War against France has allegorical resonances with the series of Irish rebellions against England, the Nine Years' War. Although Irish-English relations appear to be generally absent from of much of Shakespeare's work, *Henry V* illustrates in no uncertain terms that that it was at the fore of English consciousness – particularly in the face of a potential Irish and Spanish alliance. Indeed, the Chorus in Act 5 has hopes for an anonymous "general" who "in

good time" may come from "Ireland…bringing rebellion broached on his sword" (5.1.33-34). It is likely that this general is Devereux.

Such covert allusions to Ireland and the Irish are trickled throughout Shakespeare's oeuvre.[119] For instance in *The Comedy of Errors* (1593) Ireland is lampooned in base sexual terms. Dromio of Syracuse provides a geographical blazon of Nell, comparing her forehead to France, her chin to England, her breath to Spain, her nose to America, her nether parts to the Netherlands, and "her buttocks" to Ireland which, Dromio claims, he "found it out by the bogs" (3.2.115-16). Andrew Hadfield has linked this representation of Ireland to *The Image of Irelande with a Discoverie of Woodkarne* (1581) in which John Derricke connects the Irish with dirt "as an inversion of the clean and proper established order, specifically with the anus" (47). Hadfield highlights that one of the accompanying woodcuts in *The Image* represents figures publicly defecating at a feast and tells of the "Irish eagles" who prefer life in "the Deuills Arse", the desolate bogs, to that at court (47).

In Shakespeare's Histories, the base Irish, even if not named, are represented as a threat to English identity. Patricia Cahill, in her book *Unto the Breach: Martial Formations, Historical Trauma, and the Early Modern Stage* (2008), highlights how the Irish are coded in terms of racial degeneration. She explains:

> early modern modes of 'racial' thinking – that is, tendencies to link peoples with specific cultural practices, qualities of mind, and physical features – were developing in England in the late sixteenth century, more or less at the same time as Elizabethans were beginning to articulate a discourse of nationality identity.

[119] See Andrew Hadfield "'Hitherto she ne're could fancy him': Shakespeare's 'British' Plays and the Exclusion of Ireland" in *Shakespeare and Ireland: History, Politics, Culture* (1997) ed. Mark Thornton Burnett and Ramona Wray

> Such racial thinking was extraordinarily unstable and certainly far more labile than modern understandings commensurate with of skin color would suggest. Thus, notions of race were bound up with theories of climate and humoralism […] they intersected with religious difference […] they negotiated ideas about lineage and dynasty, the 'stock' – both familial and nation – from which one descended. (107)

Reading Derricke, Cahill outlines how the "woodkarne" "works as a principle of racial meaning, a sign that condenses the differences among the inhabitants of Ireland's northern province into a single, knowable, contemptible type" (110). In her brilliant close reading of *Edward III*, she argues that " Elizabethan writers declared that, under Edward, England had very nearly lost its hold on Ireland, and they interpreted this political turmoil in racialized terms: Edward's reign was said to mark the beginning of the end of pure Englishness in Ireland" (114). The "New English", English colonizers, and English soldiers were all susceptible to Irish contamination by, what Derricke describes as, the "dangerous snares" of "nymph"-like Irish women whose "wild" sexuality threatens to both de-gender their masculinity and bear impure English-Irish offspring (Cahill 115-117). Thus, Cahill avers, "the language of race" in early modern accounts of Irish difference, "cannot easily be separated from the language of reproduction" (110-111). She concludes that *Edward III* represents how the war in Ireland was, using Foucault's theorization, biopolitical, motivated by fears of miscegenation that result in both racial and sexual degeneration.

Both the "butt" of dirty jokes and repository for a host of fearful differences, Ireland signified a reversal of civil norms, a space and race radically queer in the eyes of

the English. Thus, while Macmorris is supposed to be a captain in King Henry's army, his question speaks to the general question of Ireland at the turn of the seventeenth century, as England violently subjugated and colonized that supposedly absolutely other "nation".

It is striking that McGuinness translates this significance onto Spenser, especially because Spenser was passionately complicit in this colonial project. A New English planter himself, who acquired official posts and lands in the Munster Plantation, Spenser spent most of his adult life in Ireland. From 1580, when he entered the service of Lord Grey, he made Ireland his permanent home. He resided in a castle at Kilcolman until it burned in 1598 during the Tyrone uprising. However as Lisa Jardine points out, his serious involvement with Ireland began before his arrival with Grey (61).[120] Spenser is cited in the Calendar of State Papers as carrying confidential correspondence between William Pelham, the recently appointed Lord Justice of Ireland, and Walsingham in 1579/80 (Jardine 61). Moreover, she highlights that after Spenser's death, his family returned to Ireland; his second wife, Elizabeth Boyle, was kinswoman to Sir Richard Boyle, first Earl of Cork (Jardine 61).

Like that of Derricke, Spenser's own colonial pamphlet, *The View on the Present State of Ireland* (1596), a dialogue between two Englishmen, Irenius and Eudoxus, meticulously outlines common stereotypes about the Irish. However, it was censored when it was written, and left unpublished until 1633 – perhaps because Spenser's solution to the Irish problem lay in its biopolitical ends: starvation, total subjection, and even genocide (*A View* 96-102). The pamphlet catalogues the Irish's evil customs and

[120] See Lisa Jardine "Encountering Ireland: Gabriel Harvey, Edmund Spenser, and English colonial ventures" in Representing Ireland: Literature and the origins of conflict, 1543-1660 (1993) ed. Brendan Bradshaw, Andrew Hadfield, and Willy Maley

condemn their social and familial organization, their bards, their hair and dress, their language and speech, and their religion – and thus justify their subjugation. From this detailed catalogue, it seems that Spenser felt no confusion over what he believed to be the differences between the English and Irish; indeed the English and the Irish are held in a seemingly stark binary opposition. As Michael Neill summarizes:

> It was the Irish 'wilderness' that bounded the English garden; Irish 'barbarity' that defined English civility; Irish papistry and 'superstition' that warranted English religion; it was English 'lawlessness' that demonstrated the superiority of English law and Irish wandering that defined the settled and centered nature of English society. (341)

This depiction of Irish difference and English superiority was not limited to *A View*. Spenser's poetic work is also saturated with images and allusions to Ireland's wilderness and its wild people. For example, Book V of the *Faerie Queene* (1590) has regularly been thought to be an allegory of the Irish wars in the wild landscape. [121] Most notably shape-shifting Malengin in Canto 9 is a representation of the English image of the Irish, with their uniform glibs and mantles, and their acute knowledge of the woody landscape in which they could craftily disappear and reappear. In a series of mutations Malengin becomes a fox, a bush, and a snake before being beaten by Talus, who recalls a host of celebrated English military commanders (perhaps shaping Shakespeare's representation of Devereux).

[121] See Sheila T. Cavanagh "Elizabethan Views of Ireland" in *Representing Ireland: Literature and the Origins of Conflic*t, 154-1660 ed. Brendan Bradshaw, Andrew Hadfield, and Willy Maley. See also Andrew Murphy *But the Irish Sea Betwixt Us: Ireland, Colonialism, and Renaissance Literature* (1999)

However, a closer read indicates that Spenser's resolve about the differences between the English and the Irish is actually shakier than it may appear. Like Derricke, Spenser expresses a fear of racial degeneration, of becoming or being like the Irish:

> EUDOXUS. You have very well run through such customs as the Irish have derived from the first old nations which inhabited the land; namely, the Scythians, the Spaniards, the Gauls, and the Britons. It now remaineth that you take in hand the customs of the old English which are amongst the Irish; of which I do not think that you shall have much cause to find fault with, considering that by the English most of the old bad Irish customs were abolished, and more civil fashions brought in their stead.
>
> IRENIUS. You think otherwise, Eudoxus, than I do. For the chiefest abuses which are now in that realm are grown from the English, and some of them are now much more lawless and licentious than the very wild Irish. So that as much care as was by them had to reform the Irish, so and much more must now be used to reform them. So much time doth alter the manners of men.
>
> EUDOX. That seemeth very strange which you say, that men should so much degenerate from their first natures as to grow wild. (67-68)

And Spenser's pamphlet is representative of the prevailing idea outlined by Patricia Cahill, that degeneration is linked to gendered reproductive processes; Spenser blames Irish nurses and mothers – their breast milk – for contaminated offspring (*A View* 70-73.)

This anxiety over degeneration finds its rejoinder in the poetry. While Book V of the *Faerie Queene* allegorizes the success of the English over the Irish, as Andrew Murphy points out in *But the Irish Sea Betwixt Us: Ireland, Colonialism, and*

Renaissance Literature (1999), Book V's Proem provides a frame that betrays paranoia about uncontrollable and catastrophic degeneracy. Murphy points out that the Proem "dwells broodingly on images of a world (indeed a entire cosmos) falling evermore away from its appointed orbit" (81). Spenser concludes:

> […]
>
> Me seemes the world is runne quite out of square,
>
> From the first point of his appointed sourse,
>
> And being once amisse growe daily wourse and wourse
>
> (V Proem 1)

The brutal force of Talus, it seems, is necessary to return to some originary and pure state of order.

This narrative of degeneration from an idyllic source marks the Irish landscape, too, in the posthumously published *Two Cantos of Mutabilitie* (1609) – which draws heavily from Ovid's *Metamorphosis* and which resonates with the title of McGuinness's play. In the Mutabilitie Cantos, Spenser constructs an Ovidian myth of origins to allegorize the necessity of Elizabethan plantations to restore order Ireland. He criticizes the "ill fitting" Irish "file" who sings "of hilles & woods, mongst warres & Knightes" and calls upon the Roman Goddesses "Clio" and "Calliope" to help him counter with the file's song. It id as if they are in competition over the way in which Ireland is narrativized. Spenser's take on the war in Ireland is a written poetic and pastoral allegory of the Roman Gods, who used to frequent "those faire forrests" when "IRELAND flourished in fame/Of wealths and goodness, far above the rest/Of all that beare the *British* Islands name" (VI, 54-38). Degeneration begins, however, when Diana departs

the country after being seen naked by Faunus. Spenser writes that she left a "haplesse curse" and "to this day" "Wolves and "Thieves abound:/ Which too-too true that lands in-dwellers since have found" (VI, 55). Christopher Highley in *Shakespeare, Spenser, and the Crisis in Ireland* (1997), has highlighted how the episode might allegorize Spenser's "crisis of confidence in the queen" to find a solution to the out-of-hand Irish problem (131). As fleeing Diana, Queen Elizabeth, represents "a failure of the royal will in Ireland" (Highley 131-33).

Spenser's paranoia and his anxiety illustrate how, "in the English mind, Ireland constituted not merely a defining limit but a dangerously porous boundary" (Neill 341). As an expatriate, writing and living in Ireland, it seems that Spenser felt this blurring of identitarian boundaries even more acutely than the general English population. The pull to assimilate into Irish culture, like the Old English he criticizes, must have been strong. Indeed there seems to be evidence for his ambiguous feelings; most notably in *Colin Clout's Come Home Again* (1595) in which Spenser strangely suggests that it is Ireland, not England, that is his home.

And it is *Colin Clout's Come Home Again* that seems to serve as the point of departure for McGuinness's Mutabilitie. The poem is addressed from Spenser's castle, his "home", in Kilcolman – which also serves as one of the primary settings in the play. In a tongue-in-cheek textual metamorphosis of his own, McGuinness rewrites Spenser's last days in Kilcolman and animates the poet's conflicting relationship with not only Ireland, but with the colonial project. In fact, in the play Edmund had been composing the *Faerie Queene*, reading bits of it to the Irish servants in his house in an attempt to civilize them, but now, following the outcome of the Munster wars, suffers from a bought of

writer's block as he argues with his wife, "Elizabeth", who everyday insists that they return to England (McGuinness 8-11). At one point in the play, Edmund even suggests that Queen Elizabeth should marry an Irishman to "conceive a peace" – still using a woman's reproductive process for political means, but foregoing the fears of degeneration that I highlighted are in both *A View* and the *Faerie Queene*. (McGuinness 50). In other words, Edmund is having trouble allegorizing his queen and writing his nation (McGuinness 6-7). Thus, his question – "What is my nation?" – illustrates colonial anxieties about constructing and maintaining a national identity. His query illustrates how colonizer and colonized can be rendered unidentifiable by colonial contact, even to themselves.

Indeed, Edmund is not the only canonical English figure who does not know where he belongs. Spenser, in fact, poses the question of national identity to "William" (Shakespeare), who is, for most of the play, struck with delirium, after falling into a river and catching fever. He does not know whether he in Irish or English and can only mumbles random lines from his Sonnets and plays. When he comes to, we learn he has abandoned writing too, seeking out Spenser in Ireland for a job in the "civil service" (McGuinness 50).

And it is not just the distinctly English poets that can no longer compose. In McGuinness's play, Spenser's Irish file in the *Two Cantos of Mutabilitie* abandons the traditional métier. Instead, McGuinness's "File" is dedicated to spying on Edmund, collecting intelligence for a disposed Irish king, mad King Sweney and his queen, the warrior Queene Maeve. The File has a vision that a man from the "river" will come save them and believes it to be William. This sentiment is McGuinness's own as he admits

that for 12 years he tried to pin down Shakespeare, making the Bard productive for an Irish cause. He writes: "There is so little to go on when you try to decipher the life of William Shakespeare. But we can say with some certainty that he was not an Irishman. Mind you, I don't know for sure if he was an Englishman either" ("Forward" xi). So he studied the plays with the hope that he would "come face to face with a Catholic dissident, marvelously subverting the insecurities of Protestant England" ("Forward" xi). However, McGuinness could not make Shakespeare into what he wanted; "He's a bolter", McGuinness argues, changing "character and colour," "his entrance always an exit" ("Forward" xii). The File in *Mutabilitie* is likewise ambivalent – both hopeful and resentful of Shakespeare:

> File: You are Catholic in honest service to a Protestant nation that shall keep the true faith through your fire, your theatre. It is a holy place of great, good magic –
>
> William: These theatres are rough.
>
> […]
>
> File: Through that rough grace you have come to me to be saved for Ireland, for England […] Tell our story, our suffering to the people of England […] Through you there will be peace between these nations. (56-60)

William, however, does not even entertain the idea, telling the File: "I do not wish to understand you" (59). Spenser's narrative in the *Two Cantos of Mutabilitie*, McGuinness gives voice to that file, who, like McGuinness himself, must compete with the canonical and colonial representations of Ireland such as that of Spenser and Shakespeare. As they part ways at the end of the play, the File tells William: "I fear you" and he replies, "I fear you" (94).

Anne Fogarty highlights how *Mutabilitie* "examines the embattled role of literature in the colonial culture […] Spenser, Shakespeare, and the File appear to be paralyzed by the social rifts they experience. All three are beset by a vocational crisis or blockage and have become artists in abeyance," adding "the bewilderment of the mad king Sweney acts as a further cipher for the diminished powers of the writer or poet in this fractious and war-torn world" (Fogarty 108). This narrative paralysis forecloses the construction of distinct or stable national identity. For as Homi Bhabha points out, a nation is narrativized or written; he writes, "the cultural construction of nationness" is "a form of social and textual affiliation" (201). He explains:

> The linear equivalence of event and idea that historicism proposes, most commonly signifies a people, a nation, or a national culture as an empirical sociological category or a holistic cultural entity. However, the narrative and psychological force that nationness brings to bear on cultural production and political projection is the effect of the ambivalence of the 'nation' as a narrative strategy. As an apparatus of symbolic power, it produces a continual slippage of categories, like sexuality, class affiliation, territorial paranoia, or 'cultural difference' in the act of writing the nation. (Bhabha 201)

Unable to write (in the case of Spenser and Shakespeare) or sing (in the case of the file), England and Ireland are nations in abeyance. It is thus this ambivalence and these slippages that give McGuinness's *Mutabilitie* its title.

Neither Revision nor Revival: *Mutabilitie*'s Bad Reviews

Released just a year before Belfast's Good Friday Agreement which ended the Troubles, the several decade long ethno-national conflict in Northern Ireland between Protestant unionists and Catholic nationalists, *Mutabilitie* has a clear stake in dramatizing the question of Ireland – what it is and who its people are in relation to Englishness – both in the early modern period and after empire. As Anne Fogarty highlights:

> The sectarian divisions and cultural divides of the early modern era still marked Northern Ireland in the twentieth century, and the legacy of hostility and of a continuing record of injustice and the oppression led to the eruption of the Troubles in the 1970s. McGuinness thus in fastening on the interval from 1583 to 1606 in plays revisits a period that was a crucible for modern Ireland with its undertow of violence and its religious, cultural, and political divisions. (102)[122]

Ireland, "the site" as Neill summarizes, "of England's first true war of colonial conquest" was "a proving ground for methods of 'plantation' that would later be applied in Virginia and elsewhere" and "a forcing house for the enabling discourses of racial and cultural difference on which successful colonization would depend" (342). However the country's relationship to the British Empire has been openly and energetically debated between revisionists and nationalists – and even, more generally, postcolonialists. This debate serves as an important subtext for *Mutabilitie*.

As Deepika Bahri elegantly summarizes in *Native Intelligence: Aesthetics, Politics, and Postcolonial Literature* (2003), unlike India, which has come to be regarded as "that colony par excellence," Ireland challenges the parameter of what is considered generally "postcolonial" with critics arguing that "it's the wrong place for it, they're the

[122] See Anne Fogarty "Brushing History Against the Grain: The Renaissance Plays of Frank McGuinness" in *Irish University Review*, 40 (1): 101-113.

wrong color, the timing is all wrong, and they had or have the wrong politics" (58). Bahri highlights how Ireland's geographical proximity to England (its closeness) and the seemingly absent markers of racial difference (its people's ostensible whiteness) have been grounds on which to differentiate it from other histories linked with the expansion of the British Empire outside of Europe (59). She points out that critics also foreground the Irish middle class's participation in the administration of imperial systems and how Irish officers and soldiers comprised England's defenses make it complicit in British systems of domination (even if, as Bahri points out, "the colonial empire conscripted native armies throughout its dominions for its business in other parts of the world.") (64). And finally, she outlines how critics argue that Ireland cannot be considered squarely "Third World" as the "Celtic Tiger" of the late 1990s brought strong economic success to the country, while other formerly colonized regions still struggled to have a recognizable global face worthy of foreign investment (69-70). These factors, Bahri highlights, guide the elision of Ireland in the category of the postcolonial (63).

This debate regarding Ireland's relationship to the British Empire and its postcolonial status is most salient in the Irish revisionism exemplified by the work of Roy Foster in *The Irish Story: Telling Tales and Making it Up in Ireland* (2002). Like the Famine revisionists that came before him, Foster rails against nationalist readings of Ireland's past, accusing it of conflating myth with reality and propagating a "commodified" "theme park history," a shorthand and singular narrative of Ireland that focuses in its independence from Britain which, he suggests, is blamed for all of Ireland's woes (26-30). In his book, Foster highlights that "the Irish have become used to history meaning something more than war and the conduct of public affairs," and laments that

this history "with its stress on the personal and unmediated, include complacent anti-empiricism and aggressive sentimentalism, often reinforcing one another" (37, xv). According to Christine Kinealy early Irish revisionism's responses to The Famine sought to nuance nationalism She points out that the recent iteration of anti-nationalist revisionism stems from the intensification of the Irish Republican Army's campaigns -- a point Foster contests, insisting that that revisionism is not influenced by present day politics (Kinealy 6-7, Foster 28). And to be sure, the issue with recent Irish revisionism is not its critique of shorthand history or the violent and exclusionary nationalism that marks The Troubles, but, rather, the issue is its concurrent neutralizing of a critical attitude of British rule in Ireland. It tends to be opposed to the kind of affects and desires that have been produced by colonial contact, accusing complex feelings that have arisen from colonial oppression of self-pitying victimization – which becomes contained in passionate nationalism. As he puts it "here we are…victims and world leaders all at once" (xiii). Foster hopes to sanitize Irish history's politicized sentimentalism in favor of a more objective record. "There *are* ascertainable facts" he insists, "and there *is* history beyond received narrative conditioning" (21, original emphasis). Because postcolonial theory is primarily concerned with the issues of colonial contact and its aftermath – historiography instead of rigid historicism – Foster actively rejects it as a marker to describe Ireland. To him the word does not apply. He argues that, "as a general rule, the more hermeneutic and convoluted the post-colonial theorizing in the text, the more reductionist, naïve and reactionary the political views expressed in the footnotes" (xii).

Interestingly Bahri sees a productive critique of this refusal of the category, suggesting that, what she calls "the Irish Case", challenges the tendency to make

postcolonial politics wholesale and its accompanying identities generic. Reading the political and aesthetic dimensions of Irish literature in tandem, she writes:

> the characteristic complexity of the Irish case holds valuable lessons for a postcolonial criticism that seeks to reinvest the postcolonial with a fuller understanding of its morphogenic intricacy. The pathology of normalism surrenders the object to general categories[…]The intimacies of difference suggest that the 'globalization' of postcolonial literature must also nonetheless be revalenced as an 'internal' affair, both contextually and aesthetically. (76)

Yet, she also points out that that these arguments against Ireland's inclusion under the umbrella of "postcolonial" betray a problematic amnesia about overlapping histories. A challenge "the pathology of normalism" Bahri suggests that postcolonialism can offer way to think about the cross-cultural and historical experiences of racial construction (long after Derricke and Spenser, Roddy Doyle called the Irish "the Niggers of Europe"), the annihilation of native languages by colonial education (the loss of Gaelic), mimicry (how many Irish writers are part of the English canon?), and solidarities between subjugated people initiated by England's subjugation of Ireland by the British Empire (like that between Jawalharlal Nehru and Éamon de Valera and Rabindranath Tagore and W.B. Yeats) (Bahri 57-68).

Mutabilitie, a revisionist's nightmare, is illustrative of the "morphogenic intricacy" of the postcolonial experience (Bahri 76). It deliberately defies revisionism's empirical historicism – in fact, a resistance to fact-based history characterizes the entirety of McGuinness's oeuvre. As Anne Fogurty puts it: "The theoretical worlds that Frank McGuinness creates are unsettlingly pluralist, heterodox, and unpredictable. His is an

artistic vision that refuses to be pinned down or constitute identifiable signatures and secure homeplaces for itself" (101). *Mutabilitie*, in addition to staging a meeting between Spenser and Shakespeare in Kilcolman, is also set in the nearby forest, inhabited by a recently vanquished Irish court. McGuinness writes a new Irish mythology by bringing together King Sweney of the *Buile Suibhn*, and his queen, the warrior Queene Maeve of the *Táin* who come from, as Nicholas Grene points out, "totally different parts of the Irish mythological wood" (93). They have a daughter, Annas, and two sons, Niall and Hugh – who might be Hugh O'Neill and in cahoots with the File, who is, implausibly, a woman and his wife. The File leads their local insurgency and, with Hugh, plays dumb in Spenser's castle to spy on their English colonizers, Spenser and Elizabeth. They even kidnap and enslave William's fellow travellers, Richard (Burbage) and Ben (Jonson), who are also looking for easy money in Ireland. Annas, with the encouragement of the File, pretends to seduce Richard, playing on his early modern stereotypes of Irish women; she lets him repeatedly call her a "whore" until she unexpectedly enacts her "revenge" on all English men by killing him (27-28, 83-84).

Mutabilitie has garnered a lot of criticism as a result of these historical liberties and temporal anachronisms. When it was staged in 1997 at the Royal National Theatre in London, it was deemed a flop. Charles Spenser called it, "one of the worst new plays by a major dramatist in recent memory" (qtd. in FitzPatrick Dean 81). Robert Butler wrote: "Halfway through the three and a quarter hours, I had a fantasy that [McGuinness had] mislaid his script on the way to the National and had been forced to rewrite it at tremendous speed. If McGuinness had forgotten half the things that *Mutabilitie* is about, it would have been a better play" (2). Georgina Brown wrote, "There are occasions when

a play is so long in the making that the plot is lost in the mists of time, or, in this case of *Mutabilitie*, lost in the mists and swallowed by the bogs of Ireland" – clearly she did not engage with stereotype-breaking ideas of the play (1). Four years later, John Waters tried to revive the play, celebrating its restaging at the Samuel Beckett Theatre in Dublin, calling it an "Irish *Tempest*". However, the damage had been done and the performance was largely dismissed. Waters laments: "I find it strange that a playwright so beloved of the artistic establishment should have his best work so willfully ignored. There may be a clue in the fact the original production […] was not a success, ironically for the reasons prefigured in the text. This year's fringe revival […] was well received by small audiences, but should have been gracing the stage of our national theatre" (1).

This rejection of *Mutabilitie* by both the Royal National Theatre and the Irish national stage is telling. The play does not sit comfortably in either, perhaps because it does not clearly outline stable English or Irish identities. It, instead, is invested in the failure of them – which is not different from ethical and political investments of his other plays. Indeed, McGuinness himself, although highly celebrated, does not fit comfortably in the theatrical mainstream of Ireland. His work is characterized by its foregrounding of queer characters. Most notably, his early play *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Toward the Somme* (1985) centers on the experience of eight unionist Ulstermen at the beginning of World War I and dramatizes their homosocial/homosexual interactions within military company. As Brian Cliff highlights, the play was rejected by Brian Friel and Stephen Rea's Field Day Theatre Company that aimed to excavate an imaginary "fifth province" in which a new discourse of unity might emerge (3). McGuinness's

work has a history of being rejected by even the most progressive politics and most creative spaces.

McGuinness's work, with its investment in the deconstruction of wholesale identity, knowable history, and linear time enacts, in the words of José Muñoz, "queer failure" in that it "rejects normative ideas of value," taste and temporality (Cruising 173-174). Muñoz argues: "Within straight time the queer can only fail; thus, an aesthetic of failure can be productively occupied by the queer artist for the purpose of delineating the bias the underlies straight time's measure. The politics of failure are about doing something else in relation to a something that is missing in straight time's always already flawed temporal mapping practice" (174). Queer failure is a "refusal" or an "escape" (Cruising 174).

McGuinness's unfaithful translation of the figures of the English canon – Spenser and Shakespeare—*and* the figures of Irish mythology – Sweney, Maeve, Hugh O'Neill, and the file – enacts a deliberately queer failure. It is not unlike what Declan Kiberd, in his book *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* (1995), describes as WB Yeats's "iconoclast" readings of Shakespeare, particularly that of Richard II. Yeats inverted the conventional English celebration of the man of action, Bolingbroke, and replaced it with Richard's frailty. He writes:

> I have turned over many books in the library at Stratford-on-Avon, and I have found in nearly all an antithesis, which grew in clearness and violence as the [nineteenth] century grew older, between two types, whose representatives were Richard II, "sentimental", "weak", "selfish", "insincere", and Henry V, "Shakespeare's only hero". These books took the same delight in abasing Richard

> II that schoolboys do in persecuting some boy of fine temperament, who has weak muscles and a distaste for school games. (103-104)

As Christopher Murray points out, "Yeats clearly genders the argument," but he stops short "of 'queering' it" (164). Yeats's English critics, however, were quick to detect its queer potential. One English critics complained that "there is something in Richard which calls out the latent homosexuality of critics" (qtd. in Kiberd 270). As Kiberd argues, "The Celtic feminine, in its insurrectionary mode, was beginning to bring out the homophobe" (270). Yeats's refusal of Bolingbroke was coded as a particularly queer failure. Kiberd writes: "Yeats's Richard was no peripheral victim, but the centre of meaning, moral and poetic, in Shakespeare's play: if Bolingbroke epitomized the failure of triumph, then Richard embodied the triumph of failure" (269).

It is here that McGuinness takes the Irish revivalist tradition a step further – marking failure as explicitly queer. Unlike the nineteenth century national theatre or even The Field Day Theatre Company, McGuinness does not stop short of opening thinking about the ways in which gender and sexuality are integral to the construction and deconstruction of national identity. As David Cregan points out:

> The Irish theatre has often been the site of innovative forms of representation and a place where political connections are woven into drama and performance. In this sense, McGuinness is firmly rooted within the tradition, even dealing with traditional issues of national identity. What makes his dramaturgy unique is the fact that he uses gender and sexuality as a critique of the way in which contemporary identity in Ireland has become stagnant (56).

Mutabilitie, pushes audiences to think about how the writing and reading of history – historicist impulses – can be complicit in the definition and division of identities. McGuiness's engagement with ambivalently queer desires offers a way to read history against affectively sanitized Irish revisionism. In turn, it nuances revivalist theatre, which has largely ignored the way in which the struggle over national identity – or even a resistance to it – is a matter of desire.

In *Mutabilitie*, McGuinness's challenges gender assumptions with his outspoken female File, who has some resonances with Lady Macbeth; Hugh says that she "dashed" the "brains" of her own child so it would be not be taken from her by the English. Early in the play the File critiques marriage, which is coded English. She tells Maeve: "Wedlock means marriage. It is appropriate for them, for they lock up their women up. A savage race. The power of any civilization depends on the potency of its women" (13). Her final thought is tongue-in-cheek as Irish files – revered oral poets and historians – were not women themselves.

And McGuinness challenges heterosexual assumptions by playing with historicist theories of "the Bard's" decidedly "gay" identity. Ben and Richard blame William for their captivity, call him stupid, and discuss his lurid sex life:

Richard: William has never had a thought in his head. The only reason he's been let stay with us is because he can write down what we say […] He's mad. And he's molly.

Ben: No, he's not.

Richard: He's molly, he's into men.

Ben: How do you know?

Richard: I've had him. Once.

Ben: What was he like?

Richard: He meowed.

Ben: That's perverted. (37)

McGuinness implicates Richard, Ben, and William into the homosocial world of Elizabethan theatre, including the prostitution of boys. Nicholas Grene highlights how McGuinness offers his own "impish" theory of the love triangle in the Sonnets. The Welsh boy actor, the imagined candidate for Mr. W.H. in Oscar Wilde's story "The Portrait of Mr. W." is remembered by Richard as "the Welsh bit William brought among us" and who was given a Welsh part, Lady Mortimer in 1 Henry IV, because "he wouldn't learn English" (McGuinness 63, Grene 93). That young actor married "the Earl of Southampton" – the Friend to whom the first 126 of Shakespeare's sonnets are addressed (Grene 93). Grene charts this theory further: "In McGuinness's all-gay version, the mistress, the 'Dark Lady' of the later sonnets, is also man, who married the Friend, in a mock wedding ceremony, borrowed from Prospero's masque for Miranda and Ferdinand in *The Tempest*, presided over by a transvestite Burbage as Juno" (93-94). Thus, as Cregan summarizes: "[McGuinness's] is a queer theatrical epistemology in that it offers a dramatic vision that questions all reductive notions of identity, gay or straight" (Cregan, 47).

Indeed McGuinness's "straight" characters are anything but. McGuinness illustrates the ways in which the traumas of war, colonialism, and nationalism impede normativity. At the end of *Mutabilitie*, McGuinness scrambles the heteronormative family structure – which, as the File outlines, is markedly English. McGuinness rewrites

the loss of Spenser's castle at Kilcolman. The official record states that it was burned during the Nine Years War and Ben Jonson asserted that one of his infant children died in the blaze. However, in *Mutabilitie*, out of desperation to return to England with Elizabeth, Edmund burns down the castle himself and his son does not die. Rather, he is "found" by the Irish forest where Niall finds him:

> *Niall enters, leading a bedraggled, terrified Child by the hand.*
>
> Niall: Look what the forest has found.
>
> *Silence. The Child recognizes the File and Hugh.*
>
> Child: Are you our servants?
>
> Hugh: Aye, your servants.
>
> Child: You were kind.
>
> File: Kind.
>
> Annas: Why are you lost in the forest, child?
>
> Child: Our castle caught fire. Bad men must have done it. Our father was laughing. Our mother could not get him to leave. I was frightened of the flames. They looked like hell. I ran away. Then they were gone. They have thought I was dead in the fire. I was only hiding. They didn't know I was alive. I tried to follow them but got lost. And I've found you. File, what's wrong? Are you frightened?
>
> File: Yes, I'm frightened.
>
> Child: Did I frighten you? I'm very sorry.
>
> File: I'm very sorry too.
>
> Annas: We have a child.
>
> Niall: An English child.

The Child's speculation that "bad men" must have burned down his house signals the English point of view of Hugh O'Neill's rebellion. It is, however, Spenser – gone mad – who burned his family's Irish home, leaving his son to be cared for by his Irish servants who never really served him. The File's fear is ambiguous. It might signify the violent repercussions that might occur if English soldiers find the savage Irish with an English child. King Sweney's priest, Donal, suggests that the child is a "hostage". It might, however, signify the immense task of caring for her colonizer's son. For Hugh that decides that it is to be "fostered" "reared" and "nurtured" as their own (100-101). He is to be "natured", however, "as *his* own" by Irish "laws", "customs", and "religion" (101). The end of *Mutabilitie*, thus, queers the family structure – that of Spenser *and* that of Sweney and Maeve are altered. This child does not represent the reproductive futurity of national identity. Rather, the Child represents a subversive political possibility in what Spenser might have seen as the horrifying "degeneration" of his own son. The Child represents the failure of the colonial project – for he, like his father, and the Irish characters in the text, have been irrevocably translated by the colonial project. Edmund's son does represent England or Ireland; he represents the impossibility of identitarian fidelity. He exists liminally, with no clear future ahead.

The loose movement of translation, this dissertation contends, offers a way out of identity. The final stage direction of *Mutabilitie* presents an appropriate image to close my study. When the "English child" says he's hungry, Annas fetches a "little milk". The File commands the Child to "Drink the milk" and "Eat" with them, the dispossessed Irish court (101). The final stage direction echoes the last line of George Herbert's poem "Love (III)": *They sit and eat* (101).

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