An Online Academic Journal of
Interdisciplinary & transcultural topics in Humanities
& social sciences

TJHSS

Designed by Abeer Azmy& Omnia Raafat

BUC Press House

BUC

Transcultural Journal for Humanities and Social Sciences (TJHSS) is a journal committed to disseminate a new range of interdisciplinary and transcultural topics in Humanities and social sciences. It is an open access, peer reviewed and refereed journal, published by Badr University in Cairo, BUC, to provide original and updated knowledge platform of international scholars interested in multi-inter disciplinary researches in all languages and from the widest range of world cultures. It's an online academic journal that offers print on demand services.

TJHSS Aims and Objectives:
To promote interdisciplinary studies in the fields of Languages, Humanities and Social Sciences and provide a reliable academically trusted and approved venue of publishing Language and culture research.

Badr University in Cairo & Faculty of Alsun, Ain Shams University, Egypt
Email: rasha.kamal@buc.edu.eg

Prof. Sun Yixue
President of The International School of Tongji University
Email: 98078@tongji.edu.cn

Prof. Wang Genming
President of the Institute of Arab Studies
Xi'an International Studies University
Email: genmingwang@xisu.cn

Prof. Zhang hua
Dean of post graduate institute
Beijing language university
Email: zhanghua@bluc.edu.cn

ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERATURE

Prof Alaa Alghamdi
Professor of English Literature
Taibah University, KSA
Email: alaaghamdi@yahoo.com

Prof. Andrew Smyth
Professor and Chair
Department of English
Southern Connecticut State University, USA

Email: smyth2@southernct.edu

Prof. Anvar Sadhath.
Associate Professor of English,
The New College (Autonomous), Chennai - India
Email: sadathvp@gmail.com

Prof. Hanaa Youssef Shaarawy
Associate Professor of Linguistics
School of Linguistics & Translation
Badr University in Cairo, Egypt
Email: hanaa.shaarawy@buc.edu.eg

Prof. Hashim Noor
Professor of Applied Linguistics
Taibah University, KSA
Email: prof.noor@live.com

Prof. Nagwa Younis
Professor of Linguistics
Department of English
Faculty of Arts
Ain Shams University
Email: nagwayounis@edu.asu.edu.eg

Prof. Tamer Lokman
Associate Professor of English

Taibah University, KSA
Email: tamerlokman@gmail.com

GERMAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Prof. Baher El Gohary
Professor of German Language and Literature
Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt
Email: baher.elgohary@yahoo.com

Prof. El Sayed Madbouly
Professor of German Language and Literature
Badr University in Cairo & Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt
Email: elsayed.madbouly@buc.edu.eg

Professor George Guntermann
Professor of German Language and Literature
Universität Trier/ Germany
Email: Guntermann-Bonn@t-online.de

Prof. Herbert Zeman
Professor of German Language and Literature
Neuere deutsche Literatur
Institut für Germanistik
Universitätsring 1
1010 Wien
E-Mail: herbert.zeman@univie.ac.at

Prof. Lamyaa Ziko
ᵥ Professor of German
Language and Literature
Badr University in Cairo &
Menoufia University,
Egypt
Email:
lamiaa.abdelmohsen@buc.
edu.eg

Prof. p`hil. Elke Montanari
Professor of German
Language and Literature
University of Hildesheim/
Germany
Email: montanar@uni-hildesheim.de,
elke.montanari@uni-hildesheim.de

Prof. Renate Freudenberg-Findeisen
Professor of German
Language and Literature
Universität Trier/ Germany
Email: freufin@uni-trier.de

ITALIAN LANGUAGE & LITERATURE

Professor Giuseppe Cecere
Professore associato di
Lingua e letteratura araba
Università di Bologna
Alma Mater Studiorum,
Italy
Email:
giuseppe.cecere3@unibo.it

Prof. Lamiaa El Sherif
Professor of Italian
Language & Literature
BUC, Cairo Egypt
Email:
lamia.elsherif@buc.edu.eg

Prof. Shereef Aboulmakarem
Professor of Italian
Language & Literature
Minia University
Email:
sherif_makarem@yahoo.com

Spanish Language & Literature

Carmen Cazorla

Professor of Spanish
Language & Literature
Universidad Complutense
de Madrid, Spain
Email:
mccazorl@filol.ucm.es

Elena Gómez
Professor of Spanish
Language & Literature
Universidad Europea de
Madrid, Spain
Email:elena.gomez@universidadeuropea.es
Universidad de Alicante,
Spain
Email: spc@ua.es

Isabel Hernández
Professor of Spanish
Language & Literature
Universidad Complutense
de Madrid, Spain
Email: isabelhg@ucm.es

Prof. Manar Abd El Moez
Professor of Spanish
Language & Literature
Dean of the Faculty of
Alsun, Fayoum University,
Egypt
Email:
manar.moez@buc.edu.eg

Mohamed El-Madkouri Maataoui
Professor of Spanish
Language & Literature
Universidad Autónoma de
Madrid, Spain
Email: el-madkouri@uam.es

Prof. Salwa Mahmoud Ahmed
Professor of Spanish
Language & Literature
Department of Spanish
Language and Literature
Faculty of Arts
Helwan University Cairo-
Egypt
Email: Serket@yahoo.com

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Professor Ahmad Zayed
Professor of Sociology
Faculty of Arts,
Cairo University, Egypt
Ex-Dean of the School of
Humanities & Social
Sciences
Badr University in Cairo
Email: ahmed-abdallah@buc.edu.eg

Professor Amina Mohamed Baiomy
Professor of Sociology
Faculty of Arts
Fayoum University, Egypt

Email:
ama24@fayoum.edu.eg

Prof. Galal Abou Zeid
Professor of Arabic
Literature
Faculty of Alsun, Ain
Shams University
Email:
gaalswn@gmail.com

Professor M. Safeieddeen Kharbosh
Professor of Political
Science
Dean of the School of
Political Science and
International Relations
Badr University in Cairo,
Egypt

Email:
muhammad.safeieddeen@
buc.edu.eg

Prof. Sami Mohamed Nassar
Professor of Pedagogy
Dean of the School of
Humanities & Social
Sciences
Badr University in Cairo
Faculty of Graduate
Studies for Education,
Cairo University
Email:
sami.nassar@buc.edu.eg

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Staging Body Politics in Tomson Highway's *The Rez Sisters* (1986) and Brian Friel's *Dancing At Lughnasa* (1990)

Marwa Alkhayat

Department of English, Faculty of Languages and Translation,

Ahram Canadian University, Egypt,

Email: marwa.alkhayat@acu.edu.eg, http//orcid.org/0000-0003-0156-2139

ABSTRACT: The present paper examines Tomson Highway's *The Rez Sisters* (1986) and Brian Friel's *Dancing At Lughnasa* (1990) within the paradigm of Performance Studies to dramatize an emotional rapture in an exasperated choreographic show. My interest in the performing body is pivotal to interrogate stage oral histories as performances in which the Native abject body appears as a signifying practice since the female performing body in question has no faith in a rationally unified subject. The Cree and Irish women's dance performances exhibit a patent example of bodies that materializes gender within the legacies of colonial histories. The native women's titanic power is reflected in a fast-moving structure full of frenetic moments to destabilize the monolithic logical and orderly structures escaping teleological assumptions of the linear time through the deployment of a physical lyricism, a rhythmical movement and a theatrical rapture. The Bingo Game and the Festival of Lughnasa give rise to the seductive abject body that hovers at the periphery of the indigenous women's consciousness. Therefore, performance – as a dynamic practice – is grotesque, fluid and ephemeral echoing the instability of the inward/outward border of the abject body.

Keywords: Body Politics – Native Performance Genre – Abject Body – Autobiographical Performance

Introduction: Gender in Performance

"Theatre is an art of body and art grounded in body" (Shepherd 7).

The present paper examines the "specific ways in which performance has been controversial in resisting the continuing effects of imperialism" (Gilbert and Tompkins i) in Native Canadian and Irish theatres. Tomson Highway's *The Rez Sisters* (1986) and Brian Friel's *Dancing At Lughnasa* (1990) interrogate the legacies of colonial histories and austerely investigate the configurations of theatre space and its theatrical conventions: the performing body, props, dances and gestures as postcolonial encoded signs to underscore testimonial performances. Pairing gender and Performance Studies underlies ethnographic theatrical practices to capture bodily actions. Bodily presence subverts normative gender acts through choreographed movement reconfiguring the classical assumptions of dramaturgical insights. As such, dissolving hierarchies is a key premise to dismantle the mind/body dichotomy rethinking the body's materiality to be re-inscribed in a postcolonial womanist critique.

The corporeality of performance explores feminine materiality to address gender issues through the bodies of the Cree and Irish women as performers of physicalized writing "that gives material form to ideas, concepts, philosophy and theory, adding fleshiness to

abstraction, deconstructing the binary that privileges male cognition over female emotion" (McEvoy 64). In this sense, *The Rez Sisters* and *Dancing At Lughnasa* are interrogations of gendered mind/body opposition to challenge the supremacy of language and the conceptual. Postcolonial theatre-making addresses the corporeal defying the patriarchal rational imaginary to assert the primacy of the physical gendered female. What joins the two selected plays is a sense of performance as a practice that is at the heart of oral history. Oral history is interpreted as a "performance of possibility" (Madison 277) and as "a process of *making history in dialogue*, it is performative" (Pollock, *Remembering* 2; emphasis in original). On occupying the stage center, the marginalized bodies become transformative agents to tell personal histories resisting objectification and reclaiming their oppressed voices. In view of this, the premise of the present study is to question stage oral histories as performances which are sensuous in nature and artful in their achievement of scenic practice. Postcolonial stage speaks for the abject female body to stage postcolonial agency, thereby, the abject Self is a catalyst to articulate unruly subjectivity.

The present study offers a materialist reading of gender in performance to challenge male/colonial ideologies relying on "the incremental process of theatre-making [to underlie] a gender-conscious phenomenology of performance [emphasizing] bodies in space, improvising and testing expressive forms of corporeal thinking" (McEvoy 71). Significantly, the study also explores the bodily co-presence of actors and spectators defining the poetic experience of the performance itself within the polyphonic modes of dramaturgy. As Erika Fischer-Lichte writes, "a performance has very different *medial condition* stemming from its reliance on bodily co-presence" (19; emphasis in original). Performance spaces are atmospheric, transient and ephemeral dwelling on the actors' vocality and physicality. The actor/spectator co-presence epitomizes the tonality of performance as manifested in the Rez and Mundy sisters' singing voices, wild laughter, sobs and moans. Hence, the female performing body reinforces its material presence through its vocality and ritualistic physicality dissolving the boundaries between the phenomenal body and the semiotic one. Staging traumatized bodies is an amalgamation of violent colonial practices and personal archives perceived in non-linear performances. The theatrical enactments of painful silences, dancing, screaming and storytelling document colonial brutality, traumatic experiences and healing acts. More expressively, the performing bodies share a repertoire of agonizing memories enacted with dignity and pride defying white colonial records.

Rationale

The present paper interprets *The Rez Sisters* and *Dancing At Lughnasa* within the paradigm of Performance Studies to dramatize an emotional rapture in an exasperated choreographic show. Performance-based theatre embraces an illustration of the visual and aural signifiers to undermine the supremacy of language on stage. The Rez and the Mundy sisters' dance performances exhibit a patent example of bodies that materializes gender within historical codes to expose the socio-economic malaise and the loss of spiritual fulfillment. Furthermore, the study interrogates postmodernist salient features to underscore the dialectic relation between language and metaphor, mundane reality and transcendence and finally between temporal and atemporal framework to escape ideological repression and to address a

number of research questions: 1) What makes theatre Native? 2) What is a theatrical text? Is it a script or a performance? Is the performer's body a postcolonial trope? 3) How far can a subversive Womanist theatre be Postdramatic? Gender performance has ensured the theatrical position of the female performer within the physical and dynamic gendered gaze. To establish the women performers as speaking subjects, the female bodies in performance involve not only the discourse of language, but also the physical presence to threaten the patriarchal structure with a rebellious corporal body.

I have been attracted by the close parallels between *The Rez Sisters* and *Dancing At Lughnasa* on the levels of themes, settings and dramatic techniques within the paradigm of a rhythmical postcolonial dramaturgy. The female protagonists in both plays suffer from traumatic experiences and deep seated nostalgia for the precolonial past. Significantly, womanist histories displace the singular domination of imperialism's master narratives. Within this rationale, the indigenous women are written back into history to rethink colonial history's account and to rework its axiomatic forms through the use of metahistorical theatres which provide a postmodernist reading of the visual and aural signifiers. Performativity interrogates spatial and temporal teleological aspects to underscore the telling-showing dichotomy. Therefore, *The Rez Sisters* and *Dancing At Lughnasa* – as hybrid drama - attack mimesis and the performance tropes are considered subversive to destabilize fixity and binary oppositions. Finally, dancing dismantles axiomatic ways of conceiving historical narration to escape teleological assumptions of the linear time through the deployment of a physical lyricism, a rhythmical movement and a theatrical rapture.

Highway (b. 1951 -   ) reworks Michel Tremblay's *Les Belles Soeurs* (1965) to depict the harsh realities of seven Cree women living in a reservation in Northern Ontario. Yet, they are quick-witted and spiritually resourceful enough to control their destinies in opposition to Tremblay's Québécois women who are defeated by a dark sense of nihilism. Highway's canonical counter discourse is a two-act play performed by an indigenous cast. Highway defines Native theatre as the one that is "performed and produced by Native nations themselves and theatre that speaks out on culture and the lives of this country's Native people" ("On Native mythology" 29). This destabilizes the colonial power by illustrating a storyline that frees the play from the constraints of the naturalistic theatre space. Creating a movement-centered play determines a performing action that is punctuated by memory and re-enacted history to attain a release from the psychological legacy of colonial violence. The storyline follows the pattern of journey motif since the Cree women are on a comic quest to attend The World's Biggest Bingo Game in the city of Toronto to win the one million dollars. The Big Game is a shared economic aim tackled from a gendered perspective to signify the deep sense of sisterhood acting as a catalyst to fulfill humble dreams. The plot is disrupted by tense verbal arguments as well as by memories of the past abuse to displace official colonial records.

Friel (1929 – 2015) deploys language in a performative rather than a mimetic sense as "a disclosure of personal and historical meanings" (Kearney 46) undermining the sovereignty of language on stage and reconstructing theatrical ruptures. *Dancing At Lughnasa* is a dramatization of "ahistoricity" favoring non-linearity to "mock history" (O'Toole 203) and to explore private memories within an expression of subaltern defiance to colonial hegemonic

power. Friel embraces a non-linear performance landscape which itself becomes a metaphor for theatre itself. This de-privileges the control of the dramatist himself over the text to reinforce the autobiographical topographies of the Mundy sisters within "the ontology of paganism" (Boltwood 6). *Dancing At Lughnasa*, thus, privileges the performing body and physicality is incorporated within the elements of rituals as the play's subtitle indicates "robustly pagan Irishness" (Boltwood 176). This inclination addresses the Irish mind that embraces both heart and intellect, imagination and rationality, thereby, it favors "a more dialectical logic of both/and: an intellectual ability to hold the traditional oppositions of classical reason together in creative confluence" (Kearney 9). This creates a rich and an exotic quality of the Irish personality that accepts diversity by holding two views of life. In this sense, the Mundy sisters' exasperated show is a rhythmical theatrical rupture dramatized in flashback to reclaim pre-Christian rituals on the eve of the manufacturing revolution struggling for survival in a hostile colonial/patriarchal society.

The two dramatists dedicated their theatrical texts to their indigenous women: Highway's sisters and Friel's aunts. Highway addresses the "cool Rez sisters" (*The Rez Sisters* IX). Friel makes a tribute in the "Dedicatory Note" to "Five brave Glenties women" (4) whose names are those of his real aunts with whom he spent his Summers when he was a child. This establishes a drama with autobiographical resonances that fuse memory and history – a drama structured by autobiographical accounts and testimonial performances within the double time-scheme. Finally, the two dramatists establish fictional imaginary settings: Highway's Wasaychigan Hill Indian community and Friel's Ballybeg in Donegal. Both dramatists exhibit honor of their native rituals as concretized in the depiction of the mythological trickster Nanabush and the Celtic god Lugh to expose the pitfalls of claustrophobic communities. Both mythological figures are inserted in a ritualistic drama to break down the boundaries between indigenous fluid stage and western realistic theatre.

Native Female Performing Body

Native, as a term, implies a historical connotation of imperial legacies. It refers to indigenous nations who existed long before the arrival of the white colonial settlers. Native performance seeks to recuperate indigenous identity and to reclaim Native womanhood since "women's bodies often function in postcolonial theatre as the spaces on and through which larger territorial or cultural battles are being fought" (Gilbert and Tompkins 214) to create a subversive performativity described as an "action that disturbs, disrupts and disavows hegemonic formations" (Bhabha 146). Accordingly, performativity is the interwoven triad of identity, gender and race. To study performance as performativity is to become conscious of the performance itself as a contested space where meanings and desires are generated and multiply interpreted.

The study of the performing body has been delegated to Cultural Anthropology and Folklore Studies. However, my interest in the performing body is pivotal to relate it to gender histories communicating harsh colonial experiences in terms of mythic rituals within movement-based theatre in which the body is the dominant mode of expression. Is gender an act? Gender is an act of performance that is "repeated" (Butler 140). Gender identity is "performative" rather than being an expression of a predetermined "essence", thereby, we

"do" gender rather than we "are" a gender. Performance is about "doing" something rather than "re-enactment" (140). Within this rationale, Native performance marks the shift from "viewing the world as text to the world as performance" (Conquergood 179). It is a shift from referentiality to ephemerality and spectatorship. This paradigm shift can be envisioned as "a set of oppositions" (179):

World as Text

-     Production
-     Fixed meanings
-     Emphasis on Space

World as Performance

-     Reception
-     Dynamic changes
-     Emphasis on Time
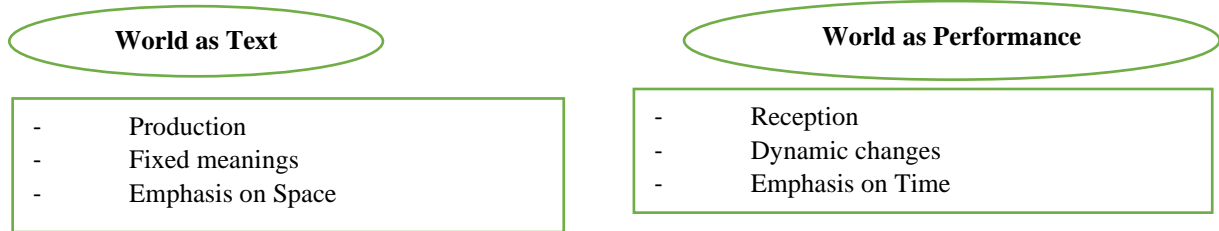
Figure 1

Fresh and sensory performance enhances "embodied practice" (Conquergood 180) investigated as "an intensely sensuous way of knowing" (180). The performing body - as a provocative space of knowing - explores bodily sensations as well as imaginings of decentered and polyphonic sensibility.

Native staging is process-oriented and hermeneutical since indigenous performance engages with the spectator's dynamic interaction between the stage and the auditorium as illustrated below:

Theatrical Text

- Written Signs
- Mimesis and Dramatic Coherence
- Conceptual
- Structure

Performance

-     Stage Signs
-     Dynamic and Polyphonic
-     Doing Dramaturgy
-     Event
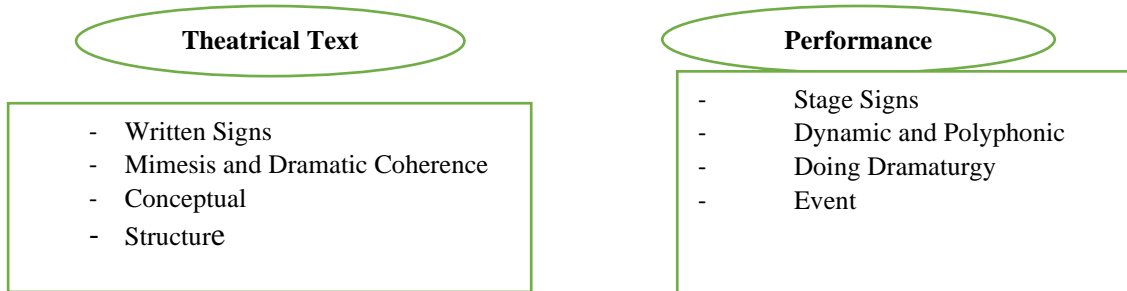
Figure 2

This visual illustration reconfigures the relationships between actors, spectators and dramaturgical embodiment emphasizing the nature of performance as a practice to examine performed events such as "dance, theatre, ritual, political rallies, funerals – that involve theatrical, rehearsed, or conventional/event-appropriate behaviors" (Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire* 3). In view of this, the totality of the theatrical performance - in terms of scenography and the choreography of movement - is about the rhythmed assemblage of musical ceremonies, festivals and dancing bodies to destabilize the theatrical coherence blurring "the boundaries between the world onstage and offstage, between form and content, and between fictional words represented and the reality of what happens on the stage" (Bleeker 38). Thus, *The Rez Sisters* and *Dancing At Lughnasa* enact cultural memory and the embodied memory – displayed in bodily sensations, musicality, grotesque dance and wild singing – requires a materialist presence in a subversive performance.

It is noteworthy that the performance should start with the actor "for the actor is at the center of the mise-en-scène" (Pavis 55) and the focal point is to establish a performance space interwoven in a vigorous relation between the spectators and the stage. The performing body

on stage is a practice and a process that is eventually perceived by the audience through strategies of staging. In *Postdramatic Theatre*, Hans-Thies Lehmann proposes a theatre that exhibits a unique "intersection of aesthetically both scenic and body dynamic practices dominated by grotesque forms, rhythm and tone in opposition to static dramatic text or Aristotelian dramaturgy" (68). The present study centralizes the feminized performance that "distills a 'truer' true than real life itself" (Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire* 4) to stage a corporeally female body and to dismantle the traditional notion of embodiment. This juxtaposes the spiritual void of the Western postmodern worldview and the life-affirming one of the Native peoples. *The Rez Sisters* and *Dancing At Lughnasa* are selected since they are vibrant examples of a Formalist theatre which rejects mimetic action to enhance a lyrical performance with no plot, but "energetic" musical-rhythmic ceremonies foregrounding "peculiar *temporality* and *spatiality of the scenic process* itself" (Lehmann 74; emphasis in original) to inspire new dynamic dramaturgy.

The Rez Sisters: Autobiographical Performance

The term "First Nation" has been "adopted by Canada's indigenous people in a politically astute move that reminds other North Americans that the land was already occupied when Europe claimed it" (Gilbert and Tompkins 13). Thereby, the term Native refers to the indigenous inhabitants of the settler-invader colonies. Genocide has been the Native's most traumatic experience threatening indigenous identity and communal culture. Being a Native Cree dramatist, Highway is overwhelmed by the shackles of the White occupation. As such, Aboriginal Theatre relies heavily on Cree mythologies and stories of survival to reclaim memory and history. Cree philosophy is a self- rejuvenating power that regards life as a joyous celebration. This establishes a "performative repertoire" (Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire* xvi) to defy hegemonic structures through testimonial performances that require a disruptive materialist presence.

Highway's portrayal of the Rez sisters empowers their deep sense of dignity and physical superiority. He posits in the play's "Production Note": "make the Rez cool, to show and celebrate what funky folk Canada's Indian people really are" (*The Rez Sisters* IX). The Rez sisters are physically strong performing hard and masculine work: Pelajia is seen with her silver hammer to nail shingles on the roof wearing "*faded blue denim men's coveralls and baseball cape to shade her eyes from the sun*" (1 [Stage direction]). Emily Dictionary is "*one tough lady, wearing cowboy boots, tight blue jeans, a black leather jacket [with] a loud voice that paralyzes all movement in the room while she speaks*" (37 [Stage direction]). Annie Cook's walking is described as "mighty fast. Must be excited about something" (*The Rez Sisters*, 9). Annie's first appearance is "*All cheery and fast and perky*" (9 [Stage direction]). She is obsessed with the Country rock, Fritz the Katz. The Rez sisters struggle to attain their dreams sharing hardship, anger and laughter to overcome both callous patriarchal and colonial practices.

The thought-provocative question: Is autobiographical performance a woman's genre? Autobiographical performance and marginalized womanist voices are responses to traumatized and raced bodies. Testimonial times are shared between the womanist bodily actions on the stage and the spectators revisiting indigenous history and communal beliefs. In this sense, the decolonized body on stage is a doorway to political ideologies that occur all the

time with and through that body whose movement is an agent to reclaim its identity. The Rez sisters' harsh past experiences are redeemed when they settle down their old disputes and renew their bond of sisterhood. The journey functions as a salvation to challenge colonial trauma and genocide dissolving the oppressive monotonous life on the reserve. The Rez sisters exhibit the human spirit to overcome socio-economic ills and even face death courageously. In so doing, the Native women's silence has been broken as displayed in the intimate gossip, vibrant singing, wild dancing and bold confessions to announce a state of transformation.

Phantasmagoric Bingo Game

Bingo mania is symbolic of escape from poverty; an enterprise to realize humble dreams and to go beyond the bleak life as manifested in a myriad of aspirations; Marie Adelé's utopic island and good medical diagnosis, Philomena's new white toilet, Annie's Country music records and Veronique's new kitchen stove – all are modest hopes for a better and decent life. The gendered quest depicts the fusion of realistic and imaginary multiple settings: Pelajia's roof and basement, Emily's store, Band's council, the van, the Bingo hall and the grave site to convey a sense of physical freedom and a flow of movement. The women's "*fundraising activities with a vengeance [underlined] by a wild rhythmic beat from the musician*" (70 [Stage direction]) depict their enthusiastic about earning much money very quickly to be able to travel to Toronto. They are indulged in hard jobs with a frenzy mood of excitement visualizing "*The movement of the women [that] covers the entire stage area, and like the music, gets wilder and wilder*" ([Stage direction]). This poses key questions: What is the purpose of any movement? Why and where the performer moves? Bodies are primarily performative and the use of space dramaturgically lies in the actor's physicality. As such, the performers' movements in space involve the use of rhythm to create a performative action as well as to explore moods and physical liberty.

Aesthetically, it is the personal kinetic sphere of the indigenous women to reclaim their physical freedom through staged stories of survival. The articulating corporeal female bodies control the theatrical space which is both literal and metaphoric, mnemonic and a dynamic microcosmic within a tangible paradigm of their sense of belonging and community. The move to the Bingo palace is indicated through the use of lighting "*full blast*" (100 [Stage direction]) and the Bingo Master is "*the most beautiful man in the world*" (100 [Stage direction]) magically occupying the stage center. The appealing theatrical aspect is the participation of the audience as detailed in the stage direction, "*The audience plays bingo, with the seven women, who have moved slowly into the audience during the Bingo Master's speech. Playing alone. Until somebody in the audience shouts, "Bingo"!*" (101). The intervention of the audience is significant to the here-and-nowness of the theatrical performance as discussed by Della Pollock: "performance is a promissory act. Not because it can only promise possible change but because it catches its participants – often by surprise – in a contract with possibility: with imagining what might be, could be, should be" (*Remembering* 2). Spectatorship functions as a driving force to enhance a rhythm of an empathy with the dramaturgical experience in an ambiguous spatio-temporal framework that seems to be neither imaginative nor real, and both at the same time. The spectators are

surrounded by the soundscape of their own voices rather than by the actors' physical vocality setting the emotional intensity of the whole dramaturgical insight.

A Bingo table is "*magically appeared with Zhaboonigan at the table's center ... the scene is lit so that it looks like 'The Last Supper'*" (102 [Stage direction]). This brings to mind the fifteenth-century painting by da Vinci to tell the last days of Jesus's life. Expressively, the Bingo Game is the last event shared by all the Rez sisters before losing Marie-Adelé. The Bingo Game is absurdly staged to symbolize a larger-than-life experience. The Bingo cards – "*flying like confetti*" (103 [Stage direction]) – creates a circus-like spectacular that is fluid, eerie and dreamy to mirror the Rez sisters' unruly bodily movements on the stage. The game chaotically ends: "*Total madness and mayhem. The music is going crazy [and the] stage area, by means of 'lighting magic', slowly returns to its Wasaychigan Hill appearance*" (103 [Stage direction]) to bury Marie-Adelé's dead body. It ends on a cathartic theatrical note to lament Marie-Adelé's death visualized through the use of the light-scheme in a representation that bears a resemblance to the iconic portrayal of Jesus's Last Supper. The visual clue is described as "*a surreal sort of glow*" (102 [Stage direction]) to evoke physical mobility, freedom and to illustrate Marie-Adelé's transfiguration after experiencing severe pain. In this sense, the Bingo Game is hilarious and its surrealistic feature destabilizes oppressive patriarchal/colonial practices. The whole play becomes a Bingo Game and the polyphonic structure juxtaposes stage/surrealist scenography and audience/Bingo Game/reality conveying an air of enthusiasm, pleasure and rebellious inclination. Hence, the Bingo Game scene is climactic in the sense of reactivating a collective memory and in repossessing indigenous cultural milieu.

The remarkable theatrical practice is the use of imaginary places that are created through mime on stage: the walk to the store, the march to the Band office, the move from the van to the Bingo hall and from the Bingo hall to Marie Adelé's grave scene. This emphasizes a sense of fluidity and proposes a performance theatre that can shock the audience to shatter a false reality. This enhances the tendency to speak of the body as a dramaturgy in itself: the body is "a proposition of *dramaturgical content* that is simultaneously inscribed and performed" (Behrndt 189; emphasis in original). It proposes a body that moves through space and time to decenter the workings of hierarchies and to inspire a new history. Time zones are telescoped to move from one scene to the next one without transition in order to interpret a dramaturgical presence of the female bodies in motion subverting fixed colonial stereotypes.

Testimonial Performance

Indigenous theater is deeply rooted in the oral culture. Orality is "a logical extension of the storytelling technique [and] the process of taking your audience on a journey, using your voice, your body and the spoken word. Moving that journey onto the stage is merely the next logical step" (Taylor, "Alive and Well" 29). The seven Cree women's personal tragedies are all of equal prominence to authenticate Native survival stories. The presence of a physical body exposes aggression, physical abuse and sexual violence which afflicted First Native women whose bodies function as the spaces on which the spiritual and the cultural battles are being fought to reclaim womanhood; a poignant theme of Aboriginal repertoire so as to maintain rebellious Native voices through testimonial performances.

The night trip to Toronto is structurally unique to underlie the sisterhood consciousness revealing the innermost secrets and sincere emotions. The Cree women are engaged in "*intimate conversations*" (77 [Stage direction]) and talk in pairs. Philomena confesses her affair with a white married man thirty years earlier and the relation has ended with an illegitimate baby. Marie Adelé expresses her fear about her children's future prospect as she is dying of cancer. Emily Dictionary narrates the domestic violence she has experienced with an alcoholic husband who attempted to beat her with an axe. This domestic trauma drives her to seek a lesbian bond with Rose who has dramatically died in a road accident. Back to the reserve, she is sexually involvement with Big Joey and becomes pregnant. Her cyclical journey from being victimized to lesbianism is a symbolic healing and a self-rejuvenating potency which is at the heart of the Cree philosophy.

The indigenous presence to enact stories of survival and to dismiss the colonial assumption of the vanishing Indian is at the core of associations between performance, politics and history. In this sense, Pollock proposes fundamental questions: "What does it mean to represent the past? How have politics shaped traditions of representation?" ("Performing Writing" 3). Autobiographical Performance is "inherently fraught with the complexities of the relationship between history and representation - between what happened and what is remembered and performed" (Carver 15). The spectator subtly asks: Why is this appropriate, here and now, to me? Thereby, the autobiographical act evokes a sense of resistance, challenge and transformation. Autobiographical performances move towards an intense physicality: "the *body is absolutized* [and] what happens is an interesting volte-face: as the body no longer demonstrates anything but itself [thus] the body becomes the *only subject matter*" (Lehmann 96; emphasis in original). Testimony of trauma is a dramaturgical strategy to rebut the Western power of the written word as a dominant form to maintain the cultural/political hegemony. Moreover, the act of witnessing one's own or others' trauma enables "the subject to reconstitute the experience of objectification" (Oliver 194), hence, the Rez sisters have survived pitiable conditions with stormy humor, gusty wit and optimistic outlook. Their autobiographical performances document their poor lives releasing catharsis to create an emotional/physical intricate bond with each other.

Nanabush: An Agent of Performative Repertoire

Marie Adelé and Zhaboonigan take ownership of their stories creating authentic autobiographies with the aid of Nanabush, a traditional native Canadian spirit. His dual roles signify performative manipulations of the history/time structure within the metatheatrical device to contribute to the notion of temporality by breaking the time frame of the play. The role of Nanabush is performed by "a male dancer – modern ballet, or traditional" (Highway, *The Rez Sisters* XI) who embodies the theatrical performance literally and metaphorically. As a trickster, Nanabush is a shape-shifter switching genders and having many manifestations. Tomson manipulates the mythic trickster figure to dramaturgically push the plot forward through the theatrical use of infinite space, cyclical time frame and the movement between the immaterial world and earthy places.

Dance is "a metaphor for everything in our culture: for ritual, for art, for religion. Dance is a metaphor for being, so if we cannot dance, we cannot pray" (Highway, "Life and

Times" 2). Nanabush's dancing conveys the embodied performance to communicate spiritualism through bodily expressions as he does not verbalize any spoken lines. He is the only male in the cast switching between states of being going "beyond gender identity" (Fortier 205).   Although Nanabush is "essentially comic, clownish", "he straddles the consciousness of man and that of God, the Great spirit" (Highway, *The Rez Sisters* XI) to represent the oral memory of the Cree women and the lost Indian spiritual culture. As a transformative agent, Nanabush hovers everywhere occupying the stage in different guises; as a white bird (seagull) to symbolize joy, as a black bird (nighthawk) to foreshadow death and as a glittering Bingo Master to embody wish fulfilment. He occupies the emotional center of Marie Adelé's and Zhaboonigan's movements as they can "*see the spirit inside the bird and recognize him for who he is*" (18 [Stage direction]). A close spiritual connection is established among the trio; Nanabush and Marie Adelé and Zhaboonigan. In his white feathers, Nanabush invites Zhaboonigan to join him and she intimately calls him "Nice white birdie" (Highway, *The Rez Sisters* 48). As a white seagull, Marie Adelé speaks a lengthy monologue in Cree language to show familiarity and comfort. The main paradox lies in the time-scheme; Nanabush occupies the circular time while the two Cree women exist in the linear one.

The interrelated notions of place, time-scheme and autobiographical acts are eloquently displayed when Marie Adelé romantically dances in the arms of the Bingo Master "*with sudden bird-like movements into nighthawk to escort her into the spirit world*" (104 [Stage direction]) to relieve her pain and to attain a reunion with the spiritual repertoire. When Nanabush appears to Marie Adelé in dark feathers, she realizes that her death is imminent and has "*a total hysterical breakdown*" (92 [Stage direction]) sobbing and screaming. Thereby, the performance space is switched into a listening space to foreground the materiality of the female voice illustrating the close bond between body and voice manifested in screams, sighs, moans, sobs, and laughter: "These utterances are unmistakably created through a process that affects the whole body: the body doubles over, contorts, and enlarges. These non-verbal utterances also impress themselves physically onto the listener" (Erika Fischer-Lichte 35). Thus, the female performing body, with its movements and voices, sets the physical soundscape in the performance to evoke a repossession of physical identity and spiritual culture.

The indigenous woman/land trope is figured in Zhaboonigan's diseased body which is deliberately reduced to its sexual function by the white colonizers. The white assault has caused her a historical trauma which Nanabush embodies in performing the "*agonizing contortions*" (48 [Stage direction]). The brutal White rape is the perfect metaphor of violating indigenous culture and of usurping the native land as concretized in the colonized female body that has been an object of colonial fascination and revulsion:

> In colonial representation, exclusion or suppression can often literally be
> seen as 'embodied'. From the point of view of the colonizer specifically,
> fears and curiosities, sublimated fascinations with the strange or the
> 'primitive', are expressed in concrete physical and anatomical images….
> [T]he Other is cast as corporeal, carnal, untamed, instinctual, raw, and
> therefore also open to mastery, available for use, for husbandry, for
> numbering, branding, cataloging, description or possession. (Boehmer 269)

The colonial records describe the Indians as "bloody thirsty monsters" (Trigger 15), "idolatrous and immoral" (Trigger 34) to justify the violent sexual penetration for "the project of colonial sexual violence establishes the ideology that Native bodies are inherently violable - and by extension, that Native lands are also violable" (Smith 12). This intellectual racism regards indigenous women's bodies as objects of conquest, thereby, they are "vulnerable to the phallic thrust of the masculine colonizer technology" (McClintock 26). The White savage gangs have put a screwdriver inside Zhaboonigan as she is seen "*pointing to her crotch underneath her dress*" (47 [Stage direction]). Being mentally retarded, she uses simple and brief sentences that mirror her disorder mental state and her tone is lighter than her rough Rez sisters. "Traumatic memory", Aleida Assmann postulates, is "encapsulated in the body" (21) to depict the sufferer's body as "a body of evidence" and as a "truthful recording of the past" (Wald 97). Hence, staging Zhaboonigan's suffering is a theatrical enactment of traumatic historical experiences and an act of healing as well.

Native performance is a spiritually-based worldview as structurally manifested in the circular plot – starting and ending with the same scene of Pelajia's act of hammering on the roof and Nanabush in his guise as a seagull seen "*dancing to the beat of the hammer merrily and triumphantly*" (118 [Stage direction]). The act of hammering significantly establishes both the physical and the psychological motion setting the rhyming tone of the play's soundscape. Thereby, the Rez sisters' journey is cyclical in the physical and spiritual senses concretized in the extensive use of tempo to denote the flow of time. What is more, Cree, as a language, is "hilarious, genderless and sensual [in opposition to the] somber patriarchal discourse" (Johnston 225). Reclaiming indigenous spirituality is theatrically performed to maintain a distinctive language, traditions and practices. Cree's cultural worldview is an embodiment of a timeless healing to address colonial calamities. Indigenous ceremonial practices are filled with a linguistic aliveness, a communal renewal and authentic feelings.

Finally, the absence of the male figure is symbolically displayed in the Rez sisters' massive insults to each other and the extensive use of lexical items full of sexual lures such as "fucking self-righteous old bitch", "You slippery little slut" (Highway, *The Rez Sisters* 44) and "fat-assed floozy" (Highway, *The Rez Sisters* 47). This subtly signifies the sisters' apprehension about being sexually dysfunctional. They strive to be in full control of their bodies to counter male hegemony. For example, Emily Dictionary is depicted with masculine tendencies and described by her sisters as a "truck [with] a voice like a fog-horn" (Highway, *The Rez Sisters* 45). The Toilet Humor Scene also highlights the trope of the grotesque body and its scatology-producing 'lower stratum'; "*Throwing the toilet door open, she sits there in her glory, panties down to her ankles*" (43 [Stage direction]). Philomena is in view of the audience ordering the sisters to "shut up, all of you, and let me shit in peace" (Highway, *The Rez Sisters* 43). Poignantly, it is Philomena who wins $ 600 and eventually buys the new wide white toilet.

Dancing At Lughnasa: Female Bodies on a Ritualistic Transformation

Historically speaking, *Dancing At Lughnasa* is set in a post-partition, pre-troubled epoch marking the ruthless encroachment of modernization upon small rural villages for "modernization is replacing the old certainties to breach the family home" (Jones 155). It

depicts the grim lives of the five unmarried Mundy sisters and their elder brother Father Jack who has come from a missionary in Uganda. Like Highway's Cree women, the Mundy sisters are doubly colonized; they are caught between pre-Christian, wild dancing bodies and repressed ones under the patriarchal control and the trauma of imperialism. The Mundy sisters are set in complete contrast to Butler Yeats's Cathleen Ni Houlihan in being no longer national symbols of Mother Ireland. Friel revisits the romantic image of the Irish women to create a subversive performance landscape that transcends all physical constraints and moves beyond the mundane reality.

Kate is a firm national school teacher and the "*wage-earner*", Agnes and Rose are hand-knitters with "*little money*" while Chris and Maggie "*have no income*" (7 [Stage direction]). Maggie is the "joker", an energetic baker and a caretaker of "simple" Rose who shares affinities with Highway's Zhaboonigan to signify the social ills of colonized communities. All women are seen wearing "*wellingtons and large boots*" (7 [Stage direction]) which indicate their masculine tendencies to perform tough work in a manner akin to the seven Cree women. The Mundy sisters are distinguished by the power of handcraft which is an emblem of the family integration awaiting destruction by the forces of rough industrialization manifested in the new knitting factory. All their personal tragedies are moved into a theatrical center to voice the rebellion of the abject female body celebrating passionately the Celtic festival named after Lugh, the pagan deity of reaping the crops. The rural women relocate their physical presence to reclaim joyfully their sense of humanity defying rigid socio-political mores and domestic life disintegration.

The Abject Female Body

The Mundys are rendered voiceless in a marginalized, suppressive community overwhelmed by domestic chores and responsibilities. However, a ritualistic hectic dance rehumanizes them until they exhibit a wild enthusiasm dramatized in the "*kitchen throbbing with the beat of Irish dance music*" (10 [Stage direction]). Accordingly, the female body represents two different Irelands: Celtic Ireland and an industrialized one. The Celtic calendar is a key event of a ritualistic transformation while modern Ireland marks the encroachment of industrialization and technology. The Mundy sisters suffer physically from a liminal status and their celebration of the festival is a sisterly act to move beyond physical limitation and psychological trauma to enjoy the sacred and the profane, the unconscious and the conscious identifying the Irish mind which rejects the "orthodox dualist logic of either/or" (Kearney 9). Both paganism and Christianity co-exist in the collective memory – a dynamic fluidity that defines humanity. Ritual is both an action and a physical motion that replaces the oppressive word that proves to be dysfunctional and inexpressive.

The bodily ritualistic transformation can be interpreted within the theory of the abject body and the *"*Dual-Subjectivity*"* or "Double-Othering" strategy (Gilbert and Tompkins 231). In *Powers of Horror*, Julia Kristeva tackles the abject's persistent attempts to haunt the borders of identity to dissolve the unity of the subject. These attempts are a central part of the identity process to confirm the subjectivity through the abjection of the other. The abject body constantly violates its own boundaries disrupting the disposition for physical self-control and social decency. The ritualistic exuberance – akin to "jouissance" - drives the abject to accept

the grotesque body to defy laws (15). Kristeva's abject body, hence, puts subjectivity into crisis to underline the state of dissolution and subversive identity. In *Horror and the Monstrous Feminine: An Imagery Abjection*, Barbara Creed states that the "place of the abject is where meaning collapses, the place where 'I am not' [to be deposited] on the other side of an imaginary border which separates the Self from that which threatens the Self" (65). Significantly, the abject divided self is fully conscious of the boundaries of subjectivity and identity. The Native abject body appears as "a signifying practice": "the subject is a contradiction that brings about practice because practice is always both signifying and semiotic where meaning emerges only to disappear" (215). "Dual-Subjectivity" ensures that "a single character is embodied in several ways, even in several sites" (Gilbert and Tompkins 231). The Mundy sisters' bodies are breached to "signify more than just a corporeal unit" (Tompkins 504). Their bodies are described as being "*consciously subverted … consciously and crudely caricaturing themselves, indeed of near-hysteria being induced*" (31 [Stage direction]). Therefore, the Mundy sisters have created their own imaginary borders in full recognition of the dual-subjectivity state to experience a sense of spontaneity and disruption. The duality of the abject body as subject (rebellious and transgressive) and as object (frustrated and repressed) is dramatized in their vigorous and full-bodied dance as illustrated in the stage direction, "*They look at each other; half smile in embarrassment; feel and looks ashamed and slightly defiant*" (32). The performing bodies embody the conflict between ancestral memories and a gloomy present after the Anglicization across Ireland's landscape.

Dancing at Lughnasa's double presence is displayed in the ritual-theatrical time dichotomy; the ritual time is timeless, fluid and temporal to remove the events from the constraints of naturalistic theatre space. Celebrating the harvest of Lughnasa is a re-enactment of history to attain a release from the physical legacy of racism. Consequently, the Mundys' carnival bodies are multiple and transformative. They are performing corporeal signifiers that are "open to multifarious inscriptions" (Gilbert and Tompkins 205) rendering them "as dialogic, ambivalent and unstable signifier(s) rather than a single, independent and discrete entity" (205). The dance of the abject female body is interwoven with family narrative history both metaphorically and realistically, irrationally and rationally, thereby, "the actor of postdramatic theatre is often no longer the actor of a role but a performer offering his/her presence on stage for contemplation" (Lehmann 135). In this sense, the Irish female body becomes a locus of subjugation and insurgence psychologically and physically. The female performing body does not only embody the character on stage, but also the *Self*. Both are present since the staged body represents the *Other* through the *Self*. Both the actor and the *Self* share the space and the body in a performance landscape and herein lies the recognition of dual-subjectivity.

Can The Subaltern Dance?

The audience witnesses the household chores performed by the Mundy sisters as stated in the stage direction; they are "*busy and work in silence*" (2). They work together to maintain a sense of wholeness to face traumatized identities which have experienced freedom through physical celebration as the act of "encoding identity through movement, dance often functions as a mode of empowerment for oppressed characters" (Gilbert and Tompkins 40).

The Mundy sisters scream, laugh and dance like "excited schoolgirls" (Friel 11) to break their monotonous life, thus, dance is a spectacular practice and an act of communication to convey emotional/instinctual values within erotic physicality. Dance is deviant, transient and ephemeral to eschew stable meaning physically and herein lies the vital strength of the pagan celebration that relies upon female bodily energies. This challenges the adult Michael's narrative control, a point explained by Friel himself, "Dancing as if language had surrendered to movement – as if this ritual, this wordless ceremony, was now the way to speak, to whisper private and sacred things, to be in touch with some otherness" (84). *Dancing at Lughnasa* promotes non-naturalistic dramatic strategies depicting the corporeally dissolving five personalities of the Mundy sisters into each other. Musicality and wild dancing occupy the stage center in a rural setting to uncover a particular historical moment materialized in troubling dancing bodies corporeally in dialogue with a colonial context.

The Mundys' ceremony embodies "the whole spectrum of movements and processes that have no referent but are presented with heightened precision; events of peculiarly formalized communality; musical-rhythmic or visual architectonic constructs of development; para-ritual forms, as well as *the ceremony of the body and of presence; the emphatically or monumentally accentuated ostentation of the presentation*" (Lehmann 69; emphasis added). Kate's bodily dance is both "*controlled and frantic*" (31 [Stage direction]); it is a strange duality that embodies the clash between pre-Christian liberated body and strict Catholicism. Maggie's flour mask is a transformative performance practice that entices the rest of Mundy sisters to join the wild dance with a Dionysian spirit concretized in dynamic actions as dramatized in the stage direction, "*loud music*", "*pounding beat*", "*jumping, leaping, shouting, calling and singing*" (9). It is "the painful and pleasurable physicality" (Lehmann 96) that functions within the semiotic process of signification; "as its presence and charisma become decisive, the body also becomes ambiguous in its signifying character, even to the point of turning into an insoluble enigma" (96). This is well-illustrated in Maggie's reaction to the Irish Dance Music by a Ceili band: "*her features became animated by a look of defiance, of aggression absorbing the rhythm with a white frantic dervish*" (30 [Stage direction]). The Mundy sisters move "*sensuously [and their] wellingtons pounding out their own erratic rhythm*" (31 [Stage direction]). This creates a theatrical/poetic image that paralyzes the grim reality in a grotesque mode that assembles exuberant memories and ritualistic dances that gear towards transcendence unveiling private tales interwoven with political clashes.

Dancing in circle with clapped hands evokes intimacy and union while the female bodies move to an audible exterior music in a frenzy manner. Kate resists joining in but suddenly leaps to her feet and emits a loud "Yaaaah!" conveying a transitory escape from all imposed restrictions. The materiality of this energetic practice emerges through the materiality of the voice as tonality gaining "physicality because the voice leaves the body through breath, and it creates spatiality because it spreads through the space and enters the ears of the listeners" (Fischer-Lichte 36). Maggie "paints" her face with flour pushing "*her hair back from her face and pulls her hands down her cheeks and patterns her face with an instant mask [emitting] a wild raucous 'Yaaah'*" (30 [Stage direction]). In a similar unruly manner, Christina dances madly "*on top of the table tossing Jack's surplice!*" (31 [Stage direction]). The female performing body's vibrancy is turned into chora-graphy to deconstruct

verbal discourses and instead of linguistic representation, soundscape creates ruptures within the corporeal and vocal unity. The paganism of the Mundy sisters' hectic spectacle is juxtaposed with Chris's and Gerry's romantic dance: "*He suddenly swings [Chris] round and round and dances her lightly, elegantly across the garden*" (43 [Stage direction]). They are a "beautiful couple" (Friel 43) dancing very well evoking a dynamic practice that appeals to sensory metaphors.

Michael remembers the wild happiness of his aunts when they have got their first wireless set, Marconi. The radio acts as a catalyst to seduce the Mundy sisters to dance enthusiastically as it communicates exotic music. It creates a theatre from a largely static situation to reject a neat arrangement of events. The ritual soundscape is a way of capturing ancestral memories within the ruptures of a colonial history. Structurally, the domestic kitchen is matriarchal and functions as an empowering performance space with its visual stage rhizome: tableau with a garden, a wall-less kitchen and a hearth. However, the Catholic Church lurks in the background of this carnival setting evoking ominous tones to assert the state of marginalization in a male-dominated community. As Marconi's music fades in the midst of this "*hectic activity*" (34 [Stage direction]), the sisters bitterly resume their domestic chores, and the dance is seen as an "*erratic moment* [that creates] a *grotesque*" (34 [stage direction]) dance. Again, they are traumatized identities as concretized in their possession of a cracked mirror which signifies their sense of estrangement and feelings of marginalization. The fractured mirror evokes distorted selves to implicitly reveal the reality of the festival of Lughnasa as a mockery of unfulfilled desires and frustrated aspirations.

Father Jack's Decolonized Body: Going Native Rhythmically

Dance – inspired by the harvest festival – is a mythic enactment of Father Jack's African ritual performance. Father Jack's physical movement is unique in the sense that it is inspired by the African pagan melodies instead of the Irish ones. Father Jack's bodily dance is described as a "*structured beat whose rhythm gives him pleasure*" (41 [Stage direction]) and his singing is "*incomprehensible and inaudible*" (52 [Stage direction]) as well. The wordless ritual dance emphasizes the "breath, rhythm and the present actuality of the body's visceral presence [that] take[s] precedence over the logos" (Lehmann 145). Father Jack relies on bodily dance to communicate his inner most feelings since his "vocabulary has deserted" (Friel 49) him. Father Jack has lost the linguistic power to communicate verbally, yet, he relies on bodily expression as a motif of transgression and freedom that resides in wild paganism.

The appeal of the African rituals makes Father Jack's choreographed performance individual not shared by his sisters signifying a break away from Ballybeg's claustrophobic atmosphere. The strict orthodox Irish Catholicism is threatened by the Celtic and the African rituals since they release a fiery passion, a point argued by Elizabeth Grosz:

> If the body is the strategic target of systems of codification, supervision and
> constraint, it is also because the body and its energies and capacities exert an
> uncontrollable, unpredictable threat to a regular, systematic mode of social
> organization. As well as being the site of knowledge-power, the body is thus
> a site of resistance, for it exerts a recalcitrance, and always entails the

possibility of a counter-strategic reinscription, for it is capable of being self-
marked, self-represented in alternative ways. (64)

Like the Mundy sisters, Father Jack's performing body is not a passive object dominated by
the regimes of powers, but a site of resistance. Father Jack embodies the postcolonial struggle
of both the African and the Irish natives for self-independence. This comparative ethnography
also highlights the difference between the Ryangan rituals and that of Lughnasa in the sense
that there are no boundaries between the spiritual rites and the secular every day affairs in the
African ancestral celebration while the believers of god Lugh are considered savages and the
kitchen dance is performed in secret in the back hills. A question poses itself: Is Father Jack in
Ireland or Uganda? Although the performance is linear in the real time, it gives rise to
temporal moments simultaneously in Father Jack's subconscious. This temporal/spatial
ambiguity takes place within the dark hidden part of Father Jack's mind because the Native
performances produce a here that is not here and a now that is not now and agitatedly divide
time and space into layers of fluid and elusive structures. Father Jack's bodily dance expresses
his diasporic experience and recuperates the 'distant home' as he is unable to distinguish
between the Celtic festival and the African tribal rites. More significantly, Father Jack's
engagement with the African rituals is a reworking of the noble savage motif visualized in his
shabby army uniform. He and Gerry enact a Ryangan ritual in which they swap hats; a
theatrical implicit critique of strict institutionalized religion that has failed to address the
spiritual/emotional inclinations.

Finally, the male presence is not powerful enough as theatricalized in the contrast
between the Mundy sisters' strong thumping of boots and the kite sticks used by Father Jack
to drum with. Kate ends Father Jack's staged dance throwing away the sticks; "They aren't
ours. They belong to the child" (Friel 53), Kate comments. Her religious rigidity has no space
for paganism. This explains why Father Jack feels cold in Ballybeg, a repressive city set in
opposition to the East African wilderness. On the other hand, the male narrator is a Frielian
technique to exercise a control over the Mundy sisters' traumatic experiences. This stands in
contrast to Highway's testimonial performances in which the Cree women have full power of
their own authorship. The adult Michael's narration exhibits fluid imaginations of past
memories incarnated within the borderline of the actual and the illusory as dancing with
closed eyes maintaining the dreamy atmosphere. The Mundy family float on sweet and
frenetic sounds and move rhythmically to respond to the mood of the music. Michael is lured
by the music of the thirties associated with his parents whose love story is sealed with an
elegant dance, however, this music nostalgia matches neither his aunts' Dionysian dance nor
Father Jack's African rites.

Conclusion

What intrigues the argument of the present study is the question of body politics in
performing indigenous theatres. The representation of the female performing body has been
investigated to reveal a deep inclination to return to the body to emphasize the roots of the
Self in a time where conventional categories of identity undergo a radical challenge. The term
politics refers to how performed practices of the female performing body are related to Native
performance. Native performance is fundamentally a microcosmic paradigm of how the

female performing body comprehends the spaces and worldviews that dominate the domestic life. The process of memory-making is performative residing in oral gendered histories. Performance of oral histories is transformational since it enhances embodied autobiographical and memory acts. Both Tomson Highway and Brian Friel interrogate the essentialisms of transcendental Native performance and the surrealist/postmodernist dramaturgy. This can be interpreted as an act of appropriation to create a 'Third Space' that moves beyond the Western theatrical practices and ancient spiritual dramaturgy in order to generate a new visual syntax within the performance-based spectacle. Physical theatre emphasizes the bodily co-presence of both the actors and the spectators to reject the teleological mimesis-based theatre.

The critical thrust of *The Rez Sisters* and *Dancing At Lughnasa* is the articulation of indigenous womanist aesthetics of self-discovery. The healing voices encapsulate Indianness/Irishness as powerful mythic theories of survival. As such, the present study affirms the poetics of staging the female body within Nativist Ethnocritical Discourse; a legitimate theoretical framework of tribal poetic strategies to eschew Eurocentric viewpoints that fail to embrace indigenous criticism in academia. Thus, staging the female body is an authentic performative enterprise to fervently represent nationalistic sensibility within fluid indigenous theatre. On deconstructing the monolithic critical discourse, *The Rez Sisters* and *Dancing At Lughnasa* are transformative epistemologies embracing a highly rich dialogic approach to hopefully contribute to Native Studies. The Womanist concept in question dismantles the white tyranny through myth, rituals and story-telling tradition to reinforce hermeneutic possibilities for making a cross literary aesthetics manifested in the cultural borders between Native America and Northern Ireland. The Indian American and Irish cultural commonalities are set as dynamic textual practices to spiritualize ancient values and to indigenize Native/womanist Theatre as a vehicle for resistance and survival. *The Rez Sisters* and *Dancing At Lughnasa* are a celebration of woman-centered societies in which the maternal control of resources and household goods questions patriarchal colonizers and gender issues from a tribal-oriented paradigm. Land/memory paradigm encapsulates personal histories as a lifeway and as a range of aesthetic strategies to counter western forces that have consistently silenced native tribal worldview.

The Rez Sisters and *Dancing At Lughnasa* examine Native performance within the here and now paradigm since the performers and the audience move into recognition of possible reconciled realms that they inhabit. The Cree and Irish women's titanic power is reflected in a fast-moving structure full of frenetic moments to destabilize the monolithic, logical and orderly structures. The Bingo Game and the Festival of Lughnasa give rise to the seductive abject body that hovers at the periphery of the indigenous women's consciousness. The Native abject body appears as a signifying practice and the female performing body in question has no faith in a rationally unified subject, therefore, performance – as a dynamic practice – is grotesque, fluid and ephemeral echoing the instability of the inward/outward border of the abject body.

Works Cited

Assmann, Aleida. *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives*.
   Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011.

Behrndt, Synne. "Dance, Dramaturgy and Dramaturgical Thinking, Contemporary".
   Theatre Review, 20(2), (2010), pp. 185-196, DOI: 10.1080/10486801003682393

Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture.* London: Routledge, 1994.

Bleeker, Maaike. *Doing Dramaturgy: Thinking Through Practice.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2023.

Boehmer, Elleke. "Transfiguring: Colonial Body into Postcolonial Narrative".
   Novel, 27(2), (1993), pp. 268–77.

Boltwood, Scott. *Brian Friel, Ireland and the North.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge, 1990.

Carver, Heather. *Voices Made Flesh: Performing Women's Autobiography*. Madison: Wisconsin UP, 2003.

Conquergood, Dwight. "Rethinking Ethnography: Towards a Critical Cultural Poetics".
   Communication Monographs, 58(2), (1991), pp. 179-94.

Creed, Barbara. *Horror and the Monstrous Feminism: An Imagery Abjection*.
   London: Routledge, 1993.

Fischer-Lichte, Erika. *The Routledge Introduction to Theatre and Performance Studies*.
   London: Routledge, 2014.

Fortier, Mark. *Theory/Theatre: An Introduction*. London: Routledge, 2002.

Friel, Brian. *Dancing at Lughnasa*. NY: Dramatists Play Service, Inc, 1991.

Gilbert, Helen and Tompkins, Joanne. *Post-Colonial Drama: Theory, Practice, Politics*.
   London: Routledge, 1996.

Grosz, Elizabeth. "Inscriptions and Body-maps: Representations of the Corporeal", *Feminine/ Masculine and Representation,* edited by T. Threadgold and A. Cranny-Francis, Sydney: Allen and Unwin, (1990), pp. 62–74.

Highway, Tomson. "On Native mythology". *Theatrum*: *A Theatre Journal, 6* (Spring), (1987), pp. 29-31.

Highway, Tomson. *The Rez Sisters*. Saskatoon, SK, Canada: Fifth House, 1988.

Highway, Tomson. "Life and Times of Tomson Highway: Thank You for the Love You Gave".
   CBC Interview, 1996.

Kearney, Richard. *The Irish Mind: Exploring Intellectual Traditions*. Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1985.

Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Translated by S. Roudiez,
   NY: Columbia UP, 1982.

Johnston, Denis. "Lines and Circles: The Rez Plays of Tomson Highway". *Canadian Literature.*
   Spring/Summer, (1990), pp. 254-265.

Jones, Nesta. *A Faber Critical Guide: Brian Friel*. NY: Faber and Faber, 2000.

Lehmann, Hans-Thies. *Postdramatic Theatre*. Translated by Karen Jürs-Munby.
   London: Routledge, 2006.

Madison, D. Soyini. "Performance, Personal Narrative, and the Politics of Possibility."
   The Future of Performance Studies: Visions and Revisions, edited by Sheron J. Dailey.
   National Communication Association, (1998), pp. 276-286.

McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest.*

London: Routledge, 1995.

McEvoy, William. "Theatre du Soleil and Arian Mnouchkine: Living and Performing Gender Politics", *Analyzing Gender in Performance*, edited by J- Paul Halfery and Cathy Leeney, Palgrave Macmillan, (2022), pp. 57-73.

Oliver, Kelly. *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Intersubjectivity.* Edited by Shaun Gallagher et al. Mont-Saint-Aignan: Publications de l'université de Rouen, 2004.

O'Toole, Fintan. ''Marking Time: From Making History to Dancing at Lughnasa''. *The Achievement of Brian Friel*, edited by Alan Peacock, Colin Smythe, (1993), pp. 202-214.

Pavis, Patrice. *Analyzing Performance: Theatre, Dance and Film*. Ann Arbor: Michigan UP, 2003.

Pollock, Della. "Performing Writing". *The Ends of Performance*, edited by P. Phelon and J. Lane, NY: NY UP, (1998), pp. 73-103.

Pollock, Della. *Remembering: Oral History Performance*: *Palgrave Studies in Oral History.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

Shepherd, Simon. *Theatre, Body and Pleasure*. London: Routledge, 2006.

Smith, Andrea. *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide.* Cambridge MA: South End Press, 2005.

Taylor, Diana. *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. Durham: Duke UP, 2003.

Taylor, Drew Hayden. "Alive and Well: Native Theatre in Canada". *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 31(3), (1996), pp. 29-38.

Tompkins, Joanne. "Breaching the Body's Boundaries: Abjected Subject Positions in Postcolonial Drama". *Modern Drama*. Toronto UP, Winter, (40) 4, (1997), pp. 502-514.

Trigger, Bruce G. *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's 'Heroic Age' Reconsidered.* Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1985.

Wald, Christina. *Hysteria, Trauma and Melancholia*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

The Maids in Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad*: Transgenerational Haunting

Dina Abdulsalam

Department of English Language and Literature,

Faculty of Arts, Alexandria University, Egypt.

Email: d.abdelsalam@alexu.edu.eg

Abstract

Margaret Atwood confesses in her "Introduction" to *The Penelopiad* that she has always been haunted by the maids who were hanged in *The Odyssey* upon the orders of Odysseus. In Homer's epic, they were given no voice, and their side of the story was silenced. In *The Penelopiad*, which is Atwood's rewrite of *The Odyssey*, Penelope becomes the heroine of the work and the twelve maids play the role of the chorus. Both Penelope and the maids relate their stories from the underworld, and haunt the text as ghosts who have come back to vent. Though Penelope is the main narrator, the maids, who represent the chorus, keep intervening in the action. Their intervention counterbalances the narrative and forces Penelope to reveal some secrets which she would have preferred to conceal, had they been absent. Based on the work of Nicolas Abraham, Maria Torok, and Jacques Derrida regarding transgenerational haunting, the paper will focus on the narrative of the maids in *The Penelopiad*, as it is the one that has always haunted Atwood. Not only are the stories of the maids subversive in content, but they are equally subversive in form. In a postmodern streak, Atwood parodies the epic form, and juxtaposes different styles and genres to disrupt the grand narrative of Odysseus, and the epic form through which it was delivered. In so doing, the narrative of the maids is allowed to surface and to present itself in defiance of established and canonized structures.

Keywords:

Margaret Atwood, *Penelopiad*, haunting, postmodernism, Nicolas Abraham, Maria Torok, Derrida

Introduction:

Margaret Atwood's novella *The Penelopiad* is a rewrite of Homer's *Odyssey*. It was published by Canongate in 2005 in *The Myths* series where writers were commissioned to retell old myths afresh in "a contemporary and memorable way" (*The Penelopiad* vii). Unlike Homer's *Odyssey*, Penelope becomes the heroine of *The Penelopiad* and the twelve maids play the role of the chorus. The story is now recounted through Penelope's eyes, who adopts the voice of the first-person narrator, and it covers Penelope's childhood in Sparta, her marriage to Odysseus and life in Ithaca, her suffering and loneliness after Odysseus joined the Trojan war, the tension that ensued with the suitors who invaded her house, the ruse of the shroud, Odysseus's eventual return after twenty years and his killing of the suitors and the maids. Similarly, the twelve maids are given a voice. As is typical of Greek drama

where the chorus comments on the action, Penelope's story is punctuated with the recitals of the maids, who comment on their dismal fate at the hands of Odysseus and Telemachus. The book is divided into twenty-nine chapters, eighteen narrated by Penelope and eleven recited by the maids, and "the chapters narrated by Penelope as well as those sung by the maids will present versions and inventions of their own stories" (Renaux 5).

Interestingly, in the final lines of her "Introduction" to *The Penelopiad*, Atwood clearly states: "I've always been haunted by the hanged maids; and, in *The Penelopiad*, so is Penelope herself" (xxi). Thus, though *The Penelopiad* is mainly a rewrite of Penelope's story, and is named after her, the story of the maids, and their brutal massacre is what haunts not only Atwood, but also Penelope herself in Atwood's text. In the last two chapters of the *The Penelopiad*, the maids also come to haunt Odysseus: "and now we follow/you, we find you" (195). The twelve maids are given the final word, or verdict in *The Penelopiad* "since they recite the envoi proclaiming their decision to haunt both Penelope and Odysseus for eternity" (Bottez 55). As such, haunting emerges as a pivotal theme in *The Penelopiad*, and the driving force behind writing the text. Though Penelope too is a ghost who inhabits the underworld and who starts her narrative with "*Now that I'm dead I know everything*" (1), the paper will focus only on the transgenerational haunting of the maids, which, as Atwood clearly mentions, is her main concern. The latter will be examined through exploring the way the maids have come to haunt Atwood's text in a postmodern way after centuries of their massacre.

Haunting as Transgenerational Communication:

In "Notes on the Phantom: A Complement to Freud's Metapsychology", Nicolas Abraham asserts that "all the departed may return, but some are predestined to haunt: the dead who have been shamed during their lifetime or those who took unspeakable secrets to the grave" (171). In *The Penleopiad*, the dead maids, who were "shamed during their lifetime" and who were brutally hanged, return to disclose their secrets which were interred with them. Abraham adds:

It is a fact that the "phantom," whatever its form, is nothing but an invention of the living. Yes, an invention in the sense that the phantom is meant to objectify, even if under the guise of individual or collective hallucinations, the gap that the concealment of some part of a loved one's life produced in us. The phantom is, therefore, also a metapsychological fact. Consequently, what haunts are not the dead, but the gaps left within us by the secrets of others. (171)

According to Abraham, the dead maids are "an invention of the living", in this case, they are an invention of Atwood's imagination, who willingly summons them from the dead to fill the "gap" produced by the concealment of the secret behind their murder, for they were silenced and never allowed to speak their minds, or express themselves. Colin Davis explains that this kind of transgenerational communication, psychologically formulated by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, happens when "the undisclosed traumas of previous generations might disturb the lives of their

descendants even and especially if they know nothing about their distant causes"
(374). The cause presented for the killing of the maids in *The Odyssey*, according to
Atwood, "doesn't hold water: there are too many inconsistencies" ("Introduction"
xxi). Thus, she restores the maids to life in her text and allows them to vent. The
phantom is not a personal fear interred in one's psyche, but an empathy with the
traumas of one's ancestors. Explaining the difference between the return of the
repressed and the return of the phantom, Torok says:

the "phantom" is a formation in the dynamic unconscious that is found there not
because of the subject's own repression but on account *of a direct empathy with the
unconscious or the rejected psychic matter of a parental object*. Consequently, the
phantom is not at all the product of the subject's self-creation by means of the
interplay between repressions and introjections. The phantom is alien to the subjects
who harbor it. (181)

In his *Specters of Marx*, Derrida introduces his concept of hauntology. The
title of the book is inspired, as Derrida explains, by the opening line of *The Manifesto
of the Communist Party:* "A specter is haunting Europe-the specter of communism"
(Derrida 4). Derrida argues that the specter of communism haunts Europe as much as
the ghost haunted Shakespeare's *Hamlet* right from the opening scene. Derrida coins a
word for this state of haunting: hauntology. He says: "Let us call it a hauntology"
(10); since both "hauntology" and "ontology" are pronounced in the same manner in
French, Derrida practises his favourite game of confounding the two, and of
demonstrating how the slipperiness of language makes both words feed into each
other (10). Thus, haunting, according to Derrida, flows into the nature of being and its
metaphysics. Additionally, Derrida's specters come from the past, visit the present
and tap into the future: "what stands in front of it must also precede it like its origin:
before it. Even if the future is its provenance, it must be, like any provenance,
absolutely and irreversibly past" (xix). Again for Derrida, the visitations emanating
from the past are interlocked with the future, hence the fluidity of their being; their
presence relies on flowing from one state to the other and is "possible only on the
basis of the movement of some disjointing, disjunction, or disproportion: in the
inadequation to self" (xix).

The reason for the visitations of those ghosts from the past is always related to
knowledge. Abraham and Torok believe that they come to lie to us: "the dead do not
return to reunite the living with their loved ones but rather to lead them into some
dreadful snare, entrapping them with disastrous consequences" (Abraham 171).
Speaking of the consequences of the appearance of the ghost of Hamlet's father,
Abraham says: "As the curtain falls, only corpses and riddles are left, silent like the
night of Elsinore. Having lost all hope of seeing the mystery unraveled, the spectator
remains bewildered" (187). According to Abraham, the reason behind the riddles,
silence, mystery and bewilderment is that a "ghost returns to haunt with the intent of
lying: its would-be "revelations" are false by nature (188) … a subterfuge" (189). The
hope of attaining any knowledge from the phantom is totally dismissed by Abraham.
In fact, it returns only to confound and baffle the living; "the phantom is a liar; its

effects are designed to mislead the haunted subject and to ensure that its secret remains shrouded in mystery" (Davis 374). Its return results in more confusion, and distortion, since whatever is delivered to the haunted one is mistaken and misleading; instead of attaining knowledge, the haunted one only gets more misinformation. Derrida, on the other hand, finds that specters open up a slippery space where exchanges between the past and the future yield unending answers and possibilities. While Abraham and Torok find that attaining solid knowledge about the past from the phantom will only result in disappointment, Derrida, being the deconstructionist he is, is aware that absolute knowledge is unattainable:

Phantoms lie about the past whilst spectres gesture towards a still unformulated future. The difference between them poses in a new form the tension between the desire to understand and the openness to what exceeds knowledge; and the resulting critical practices vary between the endeavour to attend patiently to particular texts and exhilarating speculation (Davis 379). Deconstructuion allows for uncertainty, hesitation, blurriness, and vagueness, since the vehicle for delivering knowledge is language, which by definition is slippery, elusive and open to different interpretations.

The Maids in Homer's *Odyssey*

The research uses the Penguin Classics edition of Homer's Odyssey, translated by E.V. Rieu, as Atwood specifies in the *Notes* that it is the "the main source for *The Penelopiad*" (197). In *The Odyssey*, Odyssey's return to his homeland Ithaca, after the Trojan war, constitutes the main plot line, and Odysseus is unarguably the hero of the epic. His return ultimately turns into a journey of suffering and pain, and his tumultuous ventures into the land of the Lotus eaters, the land of the Cyclopes, the land of Laestrygones, the island of the goddess Circe, the underworld, the island of the Sirens, the island of the nymph Calypso, and the hazards of the Scylla and Charybdis represent one obstacle after the other which he overcomes with wit, patience and resilience.

In Homer's narrative, the maids are totally silenced and their side of the story is concealed. The little information available about them is delivered from the omniscient point of view of Homer, the narrator, who relates this episode fleetingly and without much heed to their suffering. Homer presents the reason why they are to be hanged in the exchange between Odysseus and his maid Eurycleia as follows:

'But what of the women-servants in the house? Tell me which have been disloyal to me and which are innocent.' 'My child,' his fond old nurse Eurycleia replied, 'I'll tell you the truth. You have fifty women serving in your palace, whom we have trained in household duties like carding wool and to be willing servants. Of these there are twelve all told who behaved shamelessly and snapped their fingers at me and Penelope herself. Telemachus has only just grown up and his mother would not allow him to order the maids about. (215)

To this Odyssey replies: 'But tell the women who have behaved disgracefully to come here' (215). Eurycleia's account is readily believed, and Odysseus's verdict is final. This is immediately followed by the hanging of the maids, which is carried out by Telemachus in cold blood and is related by Homer in a matter-of fact tone, with no lament for their fate whatsoever. The maids are treated as property and playthings both by the suitors and by Odysseus, and are not given a voice to relate their side of the story; they are only heard "wailing bitterly, with the tears streaming down their cheeks" (215). In the Homeric epic, they are mercilessly driven to meet their end for a crime which they should not have been held accountable for in the first place, since they were powerless and could not check the advances of the strong, lecherous suitors, who were physically and socially their superiors.

Postmodern Techniques in *The Penelopiad*

In defining intertextuality, Julia Kristeva, who coined the term, asserts that "any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (66). If that applies to "any text", then *The Penelopiad*, which is a rewrite of *The Odyssey*, is an intertext par excellence; "meaning becomes something which exists between a text and all the other texts to which it refers and relates, moving out from the independent text into a network of textual relations. The text becomes the intertext" (Allen 1).

In her rewrite of *The Odyssey*, the narrative is retold by a different narrator, and thus yields a different perspective. For centuries, the Homeric version of the tale has been canonized, to the exclusion of female voices. In *The Penelopiad*, not only is Penelope given a voice, but her maids too are given a voice to tell their own story. Penelope is the main narrator; she gets more chapters for her narrative, but the maids, who represent the chorus, keep intervening in the action, commenting, responding, blaming, lecturing and demanding a new trial. Their presence controls Penelope's narrative, as she might have attempted to present a different version of the narrative and to whitewash disturbing details of her life at the expense of the maids. Their intervention counterbalances the narrative and forces Penelope to reveal some secrets which she would have preferred to conceal had they been absent: "[w]riting against this erasure, Atwood uses her novelistic imagination to expand Homer's text, giving voice to this group of powerless silenced women. Not surprisingly, their stories are very subversive" (Howells 6). Not only are their stories subversive in content, but they are equally subversive in form.

First, in a postmodern streak, *The Penelopiad* parodies the epic form; it playfully emulates it to make fun of it; "Atwood is deconstructing some conventions inherent to the epic form such as the grandiloquence of tone, the portrayal of a male hero and the in *media res* narrative" (Nunes 231). The tone is more down-to-earth, the hero is now replaced by a heroine and her servants, and the narrative traces Penelope's life since her birth. Second, Atwood uses another postmodern technique, that of blending different genres; the chapters recited by the maids are an assortment of different genres and moulds: a rope-jumping rhyme, a lament, a popular tune, an

idyll, a shanty, a ballad, a play, a lecture, a trial, a love song and an envoi. The hybridity created by this collage is definitely postmodern in nature.

Postmodern literature's "juxtaposition of styles and codes, of different and sometimes apparently incompatible forms of representation, serves to question, disturb and even subvert the dominance of those established forms" (Allen 190). Thus, Atwood resorts to collage, and juxtaposes all of those different styles, and genres to disrupt the grand narrative of Odysseus, and the epic form through which it was delivered. In so doing, the narrative of the maids is allowed to surface and to present itself in defiance of the established and canonized structures. In allowing them to haunt her text, Atwood frees herself of all preconceptions about writing and representation.

Additionally, metafiction is another feature of the novella. It can be readily labelled metatheathre too for the presence of the chorus, which happens to be one of the main features of Greek drama, gives this novella a theatrical dimension. It comes as no surprise that the novella was repeatedly presented on stage. The chorus directly addresses the readers in many instances, engaging them in the action, and also making them aware of the artifice of what is presented. Instances of parabasis in the novella can be easily considered metafictional. The parabasis is "derived from the verb parabainein ("to step forward")…to describe the action of the chorus in turning around to face the audience instead of the stage" (Hubbard 17). In directly addressing the audience, the chorus disrupts the "mimetic structure of the dramatic event" (Hubbard 28) and allows the audience "to connect the worlds of drama and reality" (Hubbard 28).

An Analysis of the Chapters Presented by the Maids in *The Penelopiad*

In *The Penelopiad*, Odysseus is sidelined, and the voices of Penelope and the maids are foregrounded. The hanged maids now have eleven chapters where they present their point of view regarding what came to pass. They present a parody of the classical Greek chorus as the chorus now is made up of female rather than male singers, who give a different version of the events than what would have been typically delivered by a male choir. This is also done in a playful manner as Atwood chooses to deliver each chapter in a different mould: a rhyme, a lament, a tune, an idyll, a ballad, a lecture, and so on. All the different moulds persistently present the point of view of the maids, which has been wiped from history for centuries. The playfulness, triggered by the use of different genres and moulds, contrasts with the grand epic style of *The Odyssey*, and befits the little narrative of the maids who finally get back at the grand narrative which has been canonized and stabilized for centuries.

Though Chapter ii titled "The Chorus Line; A Rope-Jumping Rhyme" would initially give the impression that what follows is funny and light-hearted as befits a rope-jumping rhyme, it turns out to be quite grim and bitter:

We are the maids

The ones you killed

The ones you failed

[…]
We did much less
Than what you did
You judged us bad
You had the spear
You had the word
At your command (7)

Addressed to Odysseus, their words clearly show that they are so bitter at the fact that such an undeserved fate was thrust upon them simply because they did not have the power to control their lives. They also pinpoint Odysseus's double standards for he indulged in extra-marital relationships with Circe and Calypso during his travels, but ironically decided to kill them on account of their behavior with the suitors, thus highlighting the power imbalance triggered by their gender and augmented by their slavery. The maids here parody a particular genre, only to subvert it; instead of a light-hearted rhyme, the reader gets an embittered retort.

Chapter iv "The Chorus Line: Kiddie Mourn, A Lament by the Maids" is as the title suggests a lament, and comes as a response to the preceding chapter, which is narrated from Penelope's point of view about her own childhood, titled "My Childhood". The chapter starts with a statement about their lowly origins as they were born to "poor parents, slave parents, peasant parents, and serf parents; parents who sold us, parents from whom we were stolen" (13), thus, immediately drawing the attention of the reader to the root of their misery. The chapter goes on to enumerate one misery after the other in a mournful tone befitting a lament. One point they purposefully raise is: "We were the dirty girls. If our owners or the sons of our owners or a visiting nobleman or the (13) sons of a visiting nobleman wanted to sleep with us, we could not refuse" (14). The reason why this point is particularly important is that they are finally given the right to justify their behavior with the suitors; powerless and helpless as they were, they did not have the right to reject the sexual advances of the suitors. Not only were they raped, but they were also punished for being raped. That is why they haunted Atwood as per her words, and eventually haunted her text to vent. Placing this lament next to other genres and literary forms in the novella creates a jumbled assortment to deliberately destabilize old narratives. Perforating the fabric of the narrative with different genres, not only shakes the foundations of traditional storytelling, but also playfully mocks all the ideological convictions they relay.

Chapter viii "The Chorus Line: If I Was A Princess, A Popular Tune" is delivered in the form of a popular tune with the accompaniment of a fiddle, an accordion and a penny whistle, and it bespeaks their misery and yearning for a different life; the first maid wishes she was a princess loved by a hero, while the second maid says:

I fetch and I carry, I hear and obey,
It's Yes sir and No ma'am and the whole bleed
  ing day;
I smile and I nod with a tear in my eye,

I make the soft beds in which others lie. (52)

The third maid wishes the gods would change her life. Their song clearly underlines their oppression and helplessness as all they are capable of is to wish for a different life. The maids spare no effort, in Atwood's text, to persistently express their misery using different genres playfully placed next to one another.

Though Chapter x "The Chorus Line: The Birth of Telemachus, An Idyll" is presented as an idyll, the vibes are far from idyllic. The maids contrast their birth with that of Telemachus, as they were almost born at the same time but to different circumstances. They played together as children and were unaware that he would become their murderer one day. This is when the idyll becomes a vent for the envy and ill-feelings they harbor for Telemachus:

> We did not know as we played with him
>   there in the sand
> On the beach of our rocky goat-island, close
>   by the harbor,
> That he was foredoomed to swell to our
>   cold-eyed teenaged killer.
> If we had known that, would we have
>   drowned him back then? (68)

Far from being happy, serene and peaceful, the idyll is unexpectedly drenched in sadness; the maids continue to mockingly use different genres to relate their grievances, and disrupt the peace and quiet of the Homeric grand epic. The same applies to the following chapter, chapter xiii "The Chorus Line: The Wily Sea Captain, A Sea Shanty", where the maids cast off their identities and perform the shanty in sailor costumes, playing the role of Odysseus's sailors as they sing about his numerous adventures on his way back home to Ithaca after the Trojan war, while persistently pointing to "his lies and his tricks and his thieving" (93).

In chapter xvii "The Chorus Line: Dreamboats, A Ballad", the maids haunt the ballad to pinpoint their suffering and oppression once more:

> Sleep is the only rest we get;
> It's then we are at peace:
> We do not have to mop the floor
> And wipe away the grease
>
> We are not chased around the hall
> And tumbled in the dirt
> By every dimwit nobleman
> Who wants a slice of skirt. (125)

Here the maids use the ballad form to express their helplessness; sleep becomes their escape from the harshness of life, for when they are awake they have to put up with endless chores and the harassment of the suitors. Sleep, however, gives them the opportunity to dream of all their unfulfilled wishes.

Chapter xxi "The Chorus Line: The Perils of Penelope, A Drama" is a play presented by the maids, which suggests right from the beginning that what will ensue is fictional, and not real. Though in *The Odyssey* Penelope has been depicted as a chaste and loyal wife who awaited the return of her husband for twenty years, the play performed by the maids questions the fidelity of Penelope and casts doubt on this long-established truth. The play is preceded by a prologue presented by the maid Melantho wherein she enumerates all the rumours that circulated about Penelope's promiscuity with the suitors. Interestingly, Melantho, in a metafictional move, (or rather a metatheatrical one, since what is presented here is a play) directly addresses the readers/audience, hence breaking the illusion of the performance: "The truth, dear auditors, is seldom certain/ But let us take a peek behind the curtain" (148). This is followed by a play where a maid plays the role of Penelope and another plays the role of Eurcleyia, and in which we see both of them conspiring, upon the return of Odysseus, to conceal Penelope's infidelity by planning to get rid of the twelve maids who knew about it:

Penelope:
You are the only one of us he'll trust.
Point out those maids as feckless and
    disloyal,
Snatched by the Suitors as unlawful spoil,
Polluted, shameless, and not fit to be
The dotting slaves of such a Lord as he!

    Eurycleia:
We'll stop their mouths by sending them to
    Hades –
He'll sting them up as grubby wicked
    ladies! (150-151)

The play ends with the maids forming a chorus and repeatedly singing the refrain "Blame it on the maids". Though nothing is presented with certainty in this chapter as it all takes the form of a play, doubts about Penelope's behavior and her use of the maids as scapegoats to evade Odysseus's anger are raised. Just like any rumour that cannot be proven true or false, yet still causes turbulence, this chapter casts doubt on Penelope's fidelity. In fact this is the crux of *The Penelopiad*; in the "Introduction" to the novella, Atwood clearly states the questions that drove her to rewrite *The Odyssey* after many centuries: "what led to the hanging of the maids, and what was Penelope really up to? (xxi). It is for these reasons that Atwood has always been haunted by the maids, as she states.

The hypocrisy and double standards of patriarchal societies are pointed out by Penelope who complains to Eurycleia about it:

While he was pleasuring every nymph and
    beauty,
Did he think I'd do nothing but my duty?

> While every girl and goddess he was prais-
>   ing,
> Did he assume I'd dry up like a raisin? (149)

The oppressive practices of patriarchy also set women against one another; instead of bonding together, Penelope sacrifices the maids to save herself. Malaise such as deceit, lying, jealousy, envy, insecurity and competition among women are shown to be the typical offshoots of women's weakness and frailty in male-centered societies. Using the form of a play, the maids once more shake the foundations of settled truths, and by directly addressing the audience in the prologue, Melantho breaks the illusion of this mimetic form and reminds the audience that what is to be presented is yet another fiction to be added to preexisting fictions.

Chapter xxiv "The Chrous line: An Anthropology Lecture" gives a feminist reading of the calamity of the maids from an anthropological point of view, a discipline that has come to be known as feminist anthropology. Interestingly, it is provided by the maids themselves. Rodriguez Salas argues that "[w]ith this chapter devised as a lecture, Atwood introduces academic discourse and complements female genres with a masculine realm that has been progressively appropriated by women, hence the direct insertion of a feminist discourse in the novel" (30).

Feminist anthropology is a subfield of anthropology, which became largely recognized in the 1970s, a time which saw the rise and consolidation of feminism, particularly "the second wave of feminism that emerged in the late 1960s and 1970s" (Silverstein & Lewin 9) and which along with "the civil rights movement, opposition to the Vietnam War" inspired the general intellectual upheaval of the time (Silverstein & Lewin 8). It tries to redress the long history of inequality between the sexes in the field of anthropology and to break the vicious circle of ethnography which has been dominated by androcentric attitudes and views. The problem with traditional anthropology is that anthropologists worked "within male-centred models of social organization and culture" and relied "on male informants during fieldwork, and therefore replicate[d] the indigenous male view" (Barnard & Spencer 386). By contrast, most of the work published in the 1970s by female anthropologists gave voice to silenced women and helped "formerly invisible women across the world's cultures be recognized and allowed to speak" (Lewin 13). The result was that "placing women at the heart of analysis yielded results very different from what one would find in a traditional, male-centered ethnography" (Lewin 13).

In this chapter, the maids, in another metafictional move, directly address the reader. They start with questions about the significance of the number twelve, since they are twelve in number, and in order to illicit answers from the readers/spectators, they yell: "Yes? You, Sir, in the back, Correct!" (163). One important point which the maids bring up in this chapter, and which takes feminist anthropology as its springboard, is the result of the overthrow of matrilineality by patrilineality. Regarding this point, the chorus says:

Thus possibly our rape and subsequent hanging represent the overthrow of a matrilineal moon-cult by an incoming group of usurping patriarchal father-god-

worshipping barbarians. The chief of them, notably Odysseus, would then claim kingship (p.165) by marrying the High Priestess of our cult, namely Penelope. No, Sir, we deny that this theory is merely unfounded feminist claptrap. We can understand your reluctance to have such things brought out into the open- rapes and murders are not pleasant subjects- but such overthrows most certainly took place all around the Mediterranean Sea, as excavations at prehistoric sites have demonstrated over and over. (166)

Here the maids analyse their miserable fate, that is their rape at the hands of the suitors and then their subsequent hanging by Telemachus, from a feminist anthropological perspective. They attribute the reason why they were treated as such to the fact that matrilineal rule was overtaken by patriarchy, and support this anthropological theory with archaeological evidence as excavations in prehistoric sites revealed what seems to have been a repeated pattern where old matriarchal cults were replaced by patriarchal ones. The chorus argues that this is not "feminist claptrap", and that there are excavations all around the Mediterranean which prove that, in prehistoric times, women had the upper hand until the advent of patriarchy with "father-worshipping barbarians".

The chorus adds that "[i]n the pre-patriarchal scheme of things, there may well have been a bow-shooting contest, but it would have been properly conducted. He who won it would be declared ritual king for a year, and would then be hanged" (Atwood 167). What they are referring to here is the fact that the shooting contest, which Penelope held to choose one of the suitors as husband, must have had its origins in an old matriarchal rite, related to enhancing the fertility of the land. Since matriarchy was essentially rural in nature, queens and priestesses presided over fertility rituals carried out in the fields, and the rites usually entailed sacrificing a male, which is similar to hanging the ritual king. Unlike the previous chapters, the maids here resort to a scholarly and academic mould to express their views. This lecture is placed alongside a song, a ballad, a shanty, etc. creating an admixture of different genres which sneeringly disrupts the epic form. The epic emerges as a dated literary form which is rewritten as a novella that features different genres within. Moreover, to stress the fictionality of what is presented, the chorus engages the reader with questions at the outset of the chapter.

Following the above chapter which is modelled along the lines of an anthropology lecture, Chapter xxvi "The Chorus Line: The Trial of Odysseus, as Videotaped by the Maids" is, as the title indicates, a trial set up for Odysseus in the twenty-first century. Strangely, Odysseus is acquitted again, for killing both the suitors and the maids, which indicates that the rules have not changed over the centuries. One important point is that the maids had to bring the attention of the judge to their case, as he had totally forgotten about it, which proves that the atrocity of their massacre had fallen out of mind; it did not cause any alarm back then, and continues to go unnoticed up until the present day. Odysseus's attorney responds by saying: "He was acting within his rights, Your Honour. These were his slaves" (178). Though the judge responds by saying: "Even slaves ought not to be killed at whim" (178), and

though he consults *The Odyssey* during the tribunal as, according to him, "it is the main authority on the subject", to find that it states that the maids were raped by the suitors, he eventually dismisses the case as Odysseus's "times were not our times" (182). He goes on to say that "[i]t would be unfortunate if this regrettable but minor incident were allowed to stand as a blot on an otherwise exceedingly distinguished career" (182), as if the murder of twelve innocent souls is just a stain which ought not defile Odysseus's outstanding career. Their massacre was not taken into account in ancient Greece, and when the maids insist on reopening the case in the twenty-first century, it is dismissed once more as "minor" and irrelevant. This chapter, which is presented as a trial, questions justice practised by male judges and attorneys within a patriarchal system which regards women as inferior and second-rate.

Chapter xxviii "The Chorus Line: We're Walking Behind You, A Love Song" is a parody of a love song, but is actually all about hate, and revenge. The twelve maids haunt Odysseus, and pursue him wherever he goes to remind him of his unjustified act: "Here we are, walking behind you, close, close by, close as a kiss, close as your own skin" (193), and it seems he is doomed to be haunted by them, as they tell him "you can't get rid of us, wherever you go: in your life or your afterlife or any of your other lives" (192). The following and final chapter, Chapter xxix "Envoi" is the conclusion to the preceding one, for the maids follow Odysseus seeking revenge as justice has not been served because the judicial system functions within the confines of patriarchy.

Presented as a mélange of different genres, the chapters of the maids "undermine any kind of cohesive narrative" (Niemann 44). Their ironic, parodic and playful approach leaves the reader with a feeling of "lightness and evanescence" (Hassan xvi). Truth is no longer the prerogative of a particular gender or class. Not only do the maids offer a different view of the whole story, but they also do it in a way that mocks all the traditional ways of storytelling. As Linda Hutcheon argues, "postmodernist parody is a value-problematizing, de-naturalizing form of acknowledging the history (and through irony, the politics) of representations" (94).

The parabases in these chapters, where the chorus directly addresses the readers, break the suspense of disbelief and constantly remind the readers that they are reading a novella. The chorus's addressing of the readers initiates a state of metafiction, as they keep stepping in and out of the world of the novella. But metafiction, like metatheatre, is also "subsumed into the category of parody" (Slater 3). In mockingly parodying different genres, the chorus constantly reminds the readers of the artifice of what they are reading, and makes them aware of the illusion created and sustained by these different genres.

The Penelopiad is, by definition, intertextual for it depends on the readers' prior knowledge of *The Odyssey* for its full realization of meaning. Written as an answer to *The Odyssey*, *The Penelopiad* cannot be understood except in light of the former. Their intertextual relationships require not only moving back and forth between the two texts to realize the web of textual relations, but also reading them as part of a larger mosaic of social, political and ideological contexts.

Haunting to Lie or to Raise Questions?

But what do the maids deliver through those hybrid collages? Do their phantoms, as Abraham and Torok argue, haunt the text to mislead us? Or do their specters, as Derrida proposes, provide yet another uncertainty? Knowing that what is presented in *The Penelopiad* is fictive in the first place, the reader does not expect any kind of final statement, particularly since it is all presented in a playful postmodern manner. Thus, Derrida's view is more in keeping with Atwood's narrative where "readers end up with contradictory versions of events and characters as they can never know the truth, being tied up in an utterly puzzling indeterminacy of meaning (Bottez 55).

In "The Introduction", Atwood says that the chanting chorus of the maids is to address two main questions: "what led to the hanging of the maids, and what was Penelope really up to?" (xxi). Far from providing answers, the chanting chorus raises more doubts and uncertainties. The important thing is that they are made to haunt our imagination after centuries of oblivion and neglect. Giving the maids a voice is what matters: "Atwood's haunted adaptations reopen questions of the past as a settled topic" (Niemann 46). Destablising the singular, monophonic, androcratic narratives of the past and "dislodging the myth of Penelope" (Akgun 36) is what matters. Those myths were initially designed for "the patriarchal setting down of behavioural norms for women" (Mathews Mulloor 135). By disrupting this old order, shaking its foundations, and deconstructing its arguments, Atwood is paying homage to the maids who have haunted her ever since she read their story.

Conclusion

Coming from the underworld, Penelope tells her story with hindsight in the voice of the first-person narrator; the narratee is presented with a narrative which ultimately deconstructs the Homeric grand narrative. The maids, however, not only deconstruct the Homeric narrative, but disrupt Penelope's narrative too. Assuming the role of the Greek chorus, they keep interrupting, commenting, reminiscing, juxtaposing, questioning, and challenging both Homer's and Penelope's narratives. They even go as far as lecturing male academics in the chapter that takes the form of an anthropology lecture and indicting male judges in the chapter that takes the form of a trial. Thus, the twelve maids not only haunt Atwood, as per her words in the "Introduction", but haunt Penelope too, and by the end of the novella, they haunt Odysseus as well. In this spectral world evoked by Atwood, the aim is not to provide answers, but to raise questions and doubts; to deconstruct in a Derridean fashion. In keeping with the content of this subversive text, Atwood resorts to a number of postmodern techniques to subvert the narrative of the Homeric epic. Modelled on the way Classical epics were titled: *The Penelopiad* becomes Penelope's epic, just as *The Iliad* was Ilium's epic. Atwood, however, playfully and mockingly parodies the epic form. The male hero is replaced by a female hero along with her maids. The epic does

not start in medias res, but traces the life of both Penelope and the maids ab ovo. Atwood resorts to collage by juxtaposing different genres and moulds to present a subversive parody. Metaficition is yet another postmodern feature of *The Penelopiad*: to remind the readers of the artifice of all fictional narratives, including the narrative at hand, she allows the chorus to directly address the readers, hence drawing their attention to the fictional nature of the text. The parabasis, which is originally a theatrical device, is subsumed into this novella, hence jumbling metatheatre with metafiction. The chorus itself, which is one of the prominent elements of Classical drama, is appropriated into the fabric of the novella. Using all of those postmodern devices, Atwood's *Penelopiad* qualifies as a highly subversive intertext.

Works Cited

Abraham, Nicolas. "Notes on the Phantom: A Complement to Freud's Metapsychology", *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Nicholas T. Rand, Vol. 1, 1st ed., University of Chicago Press, 1994, pp. 171-176.

Abraham, Nicolas. "The Phantom of Hamlet or the Sixth Act Preceded by the Intermission of Truth", *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Nicholas T. Rand, Vol. 1, 1st ed., University of Chicago Press, 1994, pp. 187-190.

Akgun, Buket. "*The Penelopiad*: Dislodging the Myth of Penelope as the Archetype of Faithful and Patient Wife", 4th International IDEA "Studies in English" Conference Proceedings, 2010, pp. 36-42.

Allen, Graham. *Intertextuality*. Routledge, 2000.

Atwood, Margaret. *The Penelopiad*. Canongate, 2005.

Barnard, Alan & Jonathan Spencer, eds. *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*. Routledge, 2002.

Bottez, Monica. "Another Penelope: Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad*", 2012, pp. 49-56.

Davis, Colin. "Hauntology, Spectres and Phantoms". *French Studies*, Vol. LIX, No.3, 2005, pp. 373–379.

Derrida, Jacques. *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*. Trans. Peggy Kamuf. Routledge, 1994.

Hassan, Ihab. *The Postmodern Turn: Essays in Postmodern Theory and Culture*. Ohio State University Press, 1987.

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Trans. E. V. Rieu. Penguin Classics, 2003. First published 1946.

Howells, Coral Ann. "Five Ways of Looking at *The Penelopiad*". Sydney Studies in English. Vol.32, 2006, pp. 5-18.

Hubbard, Thomas K. *The Mask of Comedy: Aristophanes and the Intertextual Parabasis*. Cornell Studies in Classical Philology, Vol. 51. Cornell University Press, 1991.

Hutcheon, Linda. *The Politics of Postmodernism*. Routledge, 1989.

Kristeva, Julia. *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. Columbia University Press, 1980.

Lewin, Ellen. "Introduction". *Feminist Anthropology: A Reader*. Ed. Ellen Lewin. Blackwell Publishing, 2006, pp. 1-38.

Mathews Mulloor, A. M. "Subverting the Myth of the Submissive Woman in Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad*". *SMART MOVES JOURNAL IJELLH*, Vol 9, no.5, 2021, pp. 135–141. https://doi.org/10.24113/ijellh.v9i5.11052

Niemann, Ruby. "Negotiating with the Dead": Authorial Ghosts and Other Spectralities in Atwood's Adaptations". *Adapting Margaret Atwood, Palgrave*

Studies in Adaptation and Visual Culture. Eds. S. Wells-Lassagne, F. McMahon, 2021, pp. 35-48.

Nunes, Ruan. (2014). "Looking into Margaret Atwood's 'The Penelopiad': Appropriation, Parody and Class Issues". 18. 228, pp. 228-240.

Renaux, Sigrid. "Margaret Atwood and the re-invention of myth in *The Penelopiad*". pp. 1-23.
https://www.academia.edu/7112098/Margaret_Atwood_and_the_re_invention_of_myth_in_The_Penelopiad_Sigrid_Renaux

Rodriguez Salas, Gerardo. "'Close as a kiss': The Challenge of the Maids' Gyn/Affection in Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad*". Revista de mitocrítica. Vol. 7, 2015, pp. 19-34.

Silverstein, Leni M. & Ellen Lewin. "Introduction: Anthropologies and Feminisms: Mapping Our Intellectual Journey". *Mapping Feminist Anthropology in the Twenty-First Century*. Eds. Ellen Lewin and Leni M. Silverstein. Rutgers University Press, 2016, pp. 6-37.

Slater, N. W. *Spectator Politics: Metatheatre and Performance in Aristophanes*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002.

Torok, Maria. "Story of Fear: The symptoms of Phobia-the Return of the Repressed or the Return of the Phantom?", *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Nicholas T. Rand, Vol. 1, 1st ed., University of Chicago Press, 1994, pp. 177-186.

Fansubbing as a Locus of Experimentation and Subversion-A Case Study of Amateur Arabic Subtitles of Selected English Movies

Sherihan Medhat Abo Ali
Department of English Language and Literature
Faculty of Arts, Alexandria University, Egypt
Email: sherihanaboali@alexu.edu.eg

Abstract

One of the manifestations of the culture of prosumption that has arisen owing to the proliferation of digital technologies is the so-called fansubbing. The present study is premised on the idea that fansubbing, which refers to the practice of providing pro bono subtitles by fans for fans in affinity spaces, has heralded a paradigm shift in the field of audiovisual translation studies by virtue of its experimental and subversive ethos. It is experimental through introducing novel, creative practices that diverge glaringly from standard subtitling norms for the purpose of offering an immersive experience for the audience. It is subversive in the way it challenges the conventional invisibility of subtitlers by resorting to diverse forms of intervention in the semiotic composition of audiovisual texts. The significance of this amateur translation practice in Arabic is arguably underexplored. To address this paucity, the present study attempts to explore the phenomenon of Arabic fansubbing through a corpus of selected English movies from different genres. The analytical framework comprises Nornes's (1999, 2007) concept of abusive subtitling as it resonates with a core issue in the study, namely the visibility of fansubbers. The study draws on Díaz Cintas and Muñoz Sánchez's (2006) taxonomy of fansubbing conventions for the purpose of providing a detailed perusal of the experimental and subversive strategies used in Arabic fansubbing.

Keywords: fansubbing, abusive subtitling, visibility, experimentation, subversion

1. Introduction

When the internet came into being last century, it transformed communication, giving rise to virtual communities where audiovisual exchanges have become at the disposal of cybercitizens (Díaz Cintas, 2013). The predilection for audiovisual interaction was impelled first by the rise of the cinema and television industry and was later catalyzed by the onset of the digital revolution toward the end of the twentieth century (Díaz Cintas, 2013). The rise of Web 2.0 has oiled the wheels of the creation and dissemination of contents by users, thus bestowing power on them (Díaz Cintas, 2013; Jiménez-Crespo & Ramírez-Polo, 2022). Web 2.0 is home to generating ideas and actualizing them in a digital space that draws on collective intelligence (Perrino, 2009). That is why it can be argued that communication is witnessing "a process of internetisation," the reach of which extends to subtitling (Díaz Cintas, 2013, p. 121). Given the mounting importance of technology, Pym (2011) argues that it is no longer a matter of being able to translate but rather a matter of being able to harness

technology, which poses a threat to "established power" and opens the door to "volunteers and paraprofessionals" (p. 5), hence "driving us to a world of amateurish fun" (p. 6). In a similar vein, Jenkins (2007) believes that "*fandom* is the future" (p. 361) and that "there is a new kind of cultural power emerging as fans bond together within larger communities, pool their information, shape each other's opinions, and develop a greater self-consciousness about their shared agendas and common interests" (pp. 362-363). With the increasing engagement of consumers-cum-producers in translation practices, the standards governing the acceptability of translation and translators "are being altered by new configurations in the virtual reality of the global web" (Cronin, 2010, p. 136). The aggrandizement of digital technology has facilitated the flux of audiovisual materials on the internet, with subtitling being the audiovisual translation form that has the lion's share of preference among netizens (Díaz Cintas, 2005). Viewers are no longer passive receivers of ready-made subtitles; rather, they have assumed a more active role by venturing into the world of subtitling by dint of the affordability of subtitling software. The thriving of subtitling "has allowed for the emergence of new voices—voices of dissent that subvert rules and conventions traditionally considered standard in the delivery of subtitles" (Díaz Cintas, 2005, p. 29). These new voices represent a growingly subversive movement to reckon with. The realm of audiovisual translation is experiencing "a process of hybridization where different subtitling approaches and strategies are competing" (Díaz Cintas, 2005, p. 31). Against this backdrop, the objective of the present study is to examine the phenomenon of Arabic fansubbing of selected English movies to highlight the experimental and subversive strategies that reflect the abusive approach adopted by the fansubbers. In other words, the study attempts to address the following research question:

How can the amateur Arabic subtitles of the selected English movies be indicative of the experimental and subversive paradigm of fansubbing?

2. Literature Review

2.1. *Rise of Fansubbing*

Research on audiovisual translation has long been dominated by a focus on professional practices informed by standard conventions and norms. The situation has changed, however, in the wake of the new, burgeoning culture spearheaded by amateurs and fans. The academic focus has steered more toward exploring the dynamics of amateur audiovisual translation practices, such as the subtitling of Japanese anime and manga by ardent fans of their own volition. The dissatisfaction of anime fans with official corporate subtitles that obliterate the cultural nuances of anime was the driving force behind the rise of the fansubbing movement in the 1980s (Dwyer, 2019; Pérez-González, 2007a; Pérez-González, 2020). Moreover, it rose as a backlash against the dubbing of Japanese anime for English-speaking audiences (O'Sullivan, 2011) and was propelled by the desire to overcome language hurdles and the limited dissemination of Japanese animations (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007). Without remuneration, fans have taken matters into their own hands and started

producing subtitles that meet the expectations of their fellow fans. Fandom culture essentially forms the bedrock of fansubbing where fans revel in popularizing contents that they are passionate about and sharing them with others in languages they comprehend (Costales, 2012).

Japanese anime fansubbing is the starting spark for the ensuing booming of fansubbing practices beyond the anime remit. This fans-for-fans translation praxis has extended to include, inter alia, fansubbing of movies. Principally, fansubbing denotes "fan communities that voluntarily produce and freely distribute subtitles via the internet as opposed to an officially licensed translation done by professionals" (Díaz Cintas, 2018, p. 133). Fansubbing is a fan activity that can be carried out by a single person or by groups of fans and can be stimulated by aesthetic or political objectives (Pérez-González, 2012b). Besides the term fansubbing, there are many names that refer to the practice of producing translation on a voluntary basis, such as *collaborative translation* (Costales, 2012; O'Brien, 2011), *user-generated translation* (O'Hagan, 2009), *community translation* (Costales, 2012), *volunteer translation* (Olohan, 2014; Pym, 2011), *non-professional translation* (Pérez-González & Susam-Saraeva, 2012), *cybersubtitling* (Díaz Cintas, 2018), *voluntary subtitling* (Chaume, 2018), *co-creational subtitling* (Pérez-González, 2012a), among others.

Initially being of hazy contours, fansubbing has now amassed wide attention, transiting from the margins to the light (Orrego-Carmona & Lee, 2017). Regardless of its contentious legality on account of its reliance on disseminating materials with copyright over the internet without obtaining permission, translation carried out by fans has morphed into "a global phenomenon" (O'Hagan, 2009, p. 94). Sweeping technological advances and low-cost subtitling software have provided a breeding ground for fansubbing (Díaz Cintas, 2018; Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007). The way digital technologies have become largely accessible has encouraged many to embark on subtitling outside the confines of industrial subtitling spheres for a variety of purposes (Huang, 2022). The exponential involvement of amateurs in subtitling practices "is inextricably intertwined with the reconfiguration of the digital media industries into participatory spheres" (Pérez-González, 2017, p. 18). Being one of the exemplifications of community translation, the raison d'être of fansubbing lies in the desire to grant others the opportunity to enjoy media contents in their languages (Costales, 2012). This chiefly springs from a sense of affinity for a community that is based on collective efforts to share and circulate contents of common interest (Costales, 2012). Given this aspect of affinity, fansubbing is exemplary of Gee's (2004) concept of *affinity space* which denotes "a place or set of places where people can affiliate with others based primarily on shared activities, interests, and goals, not shared race, class, culture, ethnicity, or gender. They have an affinity for a common interest or endeavor" (p. 67). People who speak different languages and descend from various cultural roots can come together in this affinity space. Interaction lies at the core of fansubbing affinity spaces where it is customary in these digitally mediated spaces that the audience articulate their feedback concerning the fansubbed materials, which helps fansubbers enhance their practice (Vazquez-Calvo et al., 2019).

Fundamentally, fansubbing emblematizes the rise of participatory zones that are established by self-appointed subtitlers for the creation and dissemination of free subtitles for various audiovisual texts.

2.2.   *Fansubbing as a Paradigm of Prosumption*

The internet has paved the way for the evolution of the so-called *prosumption* (Ritzer, 2015). Prosumption is a blended word that was created by Toffler (1980) from the combination of the two words of production and consumption. The long-established dividing line between production and consumption in mediascape is fading (Jones, 2019), "leading to new forms of playful citizenship" (Chouliaraki, 2010, p. 227). The unremitting progress in communication technologies has helped users gain the upper hand apropos of the creation of what they need (von Hippel, 2005). The cyberspace is characterized by "decentralisation" and "deregulation" that "offer individuals the potential to act as prosumers and to become a source of information" (Díaz Cintas, 2018, p. 140). The empowering potential of electronic media resides in allowing ordinary citizens to play the role of prosumers, which poses a serious challenge to "the top-down tyranny of the media" (Gross, 2009, p. 67). Chaume (2018) argues that "the producers and distributors of audiovisual contents will have to take into account the social, co-participating and unrestricted nature of this new scenario whereby contents have to be produced together *with* the audience and no longer *for* the audience" (p. 52). Simply put, the dynamics of production and consumption have been largely revolutionized and have empowered consumers, turning them into producers.

The practice of fansubbing is marked by proactivity; fansubbers bow out of the role of passive users of cultural products and instead take on the role of agents (Vazquez-Calvo et al., 2019). Accordingly, fansubbing epitomizes the burgeoning culture of prosumption (Dwyer, 2019). Since amateur subtitlers not only consume audiovisual materials but also play an active role in producing subtitles for them, these amateurs can be regarded as prosumers whose subtitling practices are characterized by a transformative timbre (O'Hagan, 2009; Pérez-González, 2014). Pérez-González (2014) posits that the translation practice of prosumers can be viewed as "an act of resistance against the dynamics of the media marketplace and the socio-economic structures that sustain it" (p. 245). Empowered by digital technologies, amateur subtitlers have instigated a new mode of consumption of media content, thus "turning digital media into new terrains of democratization" (Pérez-González, 2012c, p. 159). The digitization of mass media has turned it into "a more interactive experience, thus giving individuals the opportunity of being not only information receivers, but also information sources" (Díaz Cintas, 2018, p. 131). In light of this, fansubbing bears a resemblance to a Bakhtinian carnival, principally in the way they both involve tearing down hegemony and subverting norms (Díaz Cintas, 2018). As cultural chaos tightens its grip on media, "top-down control is eroded, bottom-up creativity flourishes" (McNair, 2006, p. xxi). In media sociology, a paradigm shift has occurred with control being subordinated to chaos. By extension to the context of fansubbing,

mainstream subtitling corporates represent the control paradigm, whereas self-mediated practices carried out by amateurs symbolize the chaos paradigm. The abundance of digital media technologies has facilitated the toppling of the top-down media corporate model of gatekeeping. Fansubbing undercuts the power of media corporates that hold sway over means of dissemination and consumption of audiovisual materials (Pérez-González, 2012b), which signals a power reshuffle. Fansubbing has engendered a novel system of media consumption, which renders it "indicative of fundamental and far-reaching social transformations, epitomising the increasingly 'participatory' nature of today's popular and public realms alike" (Dwyer, 2017, p. 137). In effect, digital technologies have reconfigured the balance of power in the audiovisual terrain. Before the rise of participatory amateur subtitling practices, means of production and distribution of audiovisual materials have been monopolized by media corporates. With the democratization of technology and decentralization of the power of media corporates, the demarcation line between production and consumption of audiovisual materials is evanescing, giving rise to prosumption, the quintessence of which is the practice of fansubbing.

2.3.   Fansubbing and Abusive Subtitling

With the advent of talkies, subtitles have entered the scene and have become subject to stifling regulations that entail "violent reduction" where subtitlers "accept a vision of translation that violently appropriates the source text" (Nornes, 2007, p. 155). This reduction-based practice is what Nornes (2007) calls *corrupt subtitling*. In corrupt subtitling, the foreign elements of the source text are accommodated to the target language culture by either omitting or domesticating them, which consequently leaves the target viewers "ignorant of the conspiracy and the riches that remain hidden from the cinematic experience" (Nornes, 2007, p. 178). This reflects how the subtitler's part in actualizing the traverse of the source text to a new linguistic and cultural terrain is obscured (Nornes, 2007). Invisibility of subtitlers is the norm in mainstream media industries "to guarantee that audiences have a positive viewing experience and that commercial interests are protected" (Díaz Cintas, 2018, p. 140). Moreover, there is no room for experimenting with the way subtitles are produced so as not to run the risk of producing an estranging effect on the target audience (Díaz Cintas, 2018).

One of the major theoretical contributions to the hotly debated issue of the subtitler's visibility is Nornes's (1999, 2007) proposed approach of *abusive subtitling*. It is Nornes's (2007) contention that "what we need are translators who are unruly, not transparently naked. Not sober but intoxicated … positively abusive. We want translators with attitude" (p. 27). Abusive subtitling draws on Lewis's (1985/2000) concept of *abusive translation* which denotes translation that "values experimentation, tampers with usage, seeks to match the polyvalencies and plurivocities or expressive stresses of the original by producing its own" (p. 270). This experimentation is essential when translating conceptually dense or literary texts (Palumbo, 2009). By the same token, abusive subtitling is the practice of preserving the otherness of the cinematic text, which is instrumental in flaunting the subtitler's visibility. This

abusive approach to subtitling rose as a backlash against corrupt subtitling practices which pivot on domesticating the source text, ultimately reducing the subtitler's visibility and preventing the target audience from savoring the otherness of the source culture. Unlike corrupt subtitling, abusive subtitling "avoids this kind of erasure of difference, seeking to intensify the interaction between the reader and the foreign" (Nornes, 2007, pp. 178-179). As opposed to the reductionist bent of corrupt subtitling that requires subtitlers to "suppress the fact of this violence necessitated by the apparatus," those engaged in the practice of abusive subtitling bask in "foregrounding it, heightening its impact, and testing its limits and possibilities" (Nornes, 2007, p. 179). The abusive approach to subtitling entails "experimentation with language and its grammatical, morphological, and visual qualities—to bring the fact of translation from its position of obscurity" (Nornes, 1999, p. 18). The subtitler who adopts an abusive approach "assumes a respectful stance vis-à-vis the original text, tampering with both language and the subtitling apparatus itself" (Nornes, 2007, p. 179). For example, whereas obscenities are left untranslated in the practice of corrupt subtitling, the opposite is true in abusive subtitling (Nornes, 2007). In abusive subtitling, "rather than smoothing the rough edges of foreignness, rather than convening everything into easily consumable meaning, the abusive subtitles always direct spectators back to the original text" (Nornes, 2007, p. 185). While corrupt subtitling is solidly grounded in the principle of effacement of subtitlers, abusive subtitling is undergirded by the precept of valorizing the foreign, which subsequently crystalizes into a heightened visibility of those who conduct the transfer of the cinematic text into the target language.

Being a norm-breaking practice in essence, fansubbing is paradigmatic of the abusive turn in audiovisual translation. This quality of being abusive is intrinsically entwined with the quality of creativity. There is "a creative turn" that has started to characterize movie subtitling studies with the surge in fansubbing communities (McClarty, 2012, p. 133). Visibility of subtitlers is the key feature of fansubbing that reflects these abusive and creative strands. The co-creational aspect of subtitling forges a departure from its being representational into becoming interventionist (Pérez-González, 2014). This interventionist streak can be best captured in Nornes's (1999, 2007) concept of abusive subtitling. Movie fansubbing can be construed as a case of aesthetic activism or "a new paradigm of abusive mediation" where fansubbers surmount linguistic barriers in innovative ways that deviate from subtitling norms (Pérez-González, 2014, p. 79). Falling under the category of "DIY" practices, Dwyer (2017) maintains that "uncontrollability and non-standardisation are built into the fansubbing ethos" (p. 154). Fansubbers do not treat subtitling "as unwanted interference" (Dwyer, 2017, p. 135). On the contrary, they resort to a variety of experimental and subversive strategies to amplify their visibility and enhance the immersive experience for viewers as discussed in the following subsection.

2.3.1. Experimental and Subversive Strategies in Fansubbing.

Fansubbing is exponentially growing, with plenty of room for idiosyncrasy and aberrancy. By analogy to cultural chaos theory, fansubbers can be perceived as "agents of chaos" (Pérez González, 2007b, p. 276). They have ushered in novel subtitling conventions, the influence of which on professional subtitling practices ought not be downplayed. Those engaged in the practice of non-professional subtitling pay no heed to professionally established rules, thereby wreaking disruption (Orrego-Carmona & Lee, 2017). The reciprocity of recognition between amateur subtitlers and their target audience provides a strong basis for the resort to intervention, eventually producing subtitles that pander to the tastes and expectations of their audience (Pérez-González, 2012b). There are possibly points of convergence between fansubs and subtitles produced by professionals; however, the former "are clearly more daring in their formal presentation, taking advantage of the potential offered by digital technology" (Díaz Cintas & Muñoz Sánchez, 2006, p. 51). Fansubbers "exploit semiotic resources in full" (Pérez-González, 2007a, p. 72). Contrary to professional subtitling, there are no constraints on the number of lines in amateur subtitling (Bogucki, 2009). Fansubbers resort to the use of the so-called *headnotes*, *topnotes* (Díaz Cintas, 2005) or *pop-up gloss* (O'Hagan, 2013), and they sometimes opt for the use of comments akin to book prefaces preceding the start of subtitled materials (Díaz Cintas & Muñoz Sánchez, 2006). This practice stands in stark contrast to the professional subtitling rule that requires that subtitles be unobtrusive, hence the pressing demand for domestication. The concept of headnotes or pop-up glosses widely used in fansubbing praxis is congruent with Appiah's (1993/2012) concept of *thick translation* which "seeks with its annotations and its accompanying glosses to locate the text in a rich cultural and linguistic context" (p. 341). Fansubbers enhance their visibility through the interventionist act of adding non-diegetic headnotes that provide explanation for culturally bound terms and information related to the background of the displayed events (Pérez-González, 2014; Pérez-González, 2020). Headnotes constitute an interactive zone between subtitlers and viewers, maximizing subtitlers' visibility and catering for viewers' expectations (Pérez-González, 2012b). The tendency for making subtitles override the visual semiotic mode of movies stems from the paramount importance accorded to the notion of affectivity (Pérez-González, 2014). Affectivity is a substantial "non-representational" impetus for amateur subtitling where subtitles "seek to performatively intervene in the articulation and reception of the audiovisual semiotic ensemble" (Pérez-González, 2012b, p. 335). Amateur subtitlers perk up picture-related aspects of the semiotic composition of audiovisual texts through, for example, using a variety of fonts and colours. This experimental practice, accordingly, converts subtitles into "spatially affective spaces within the audio-visual ensemble, ultimately providing an immersive spectatorial experience for their viewers" (Pérez-González, 2012b, p. 347). Additionally, the use of various fonts and colours "is a very important aspect of this trend towards spectacularization" (Pérez-González, 2014, p. 261). Along these lines, resorting to the use of animated and karaoke-style subtitles emanates from the fansubbers' keenness on maximizing the immersive experience for

their fellow fans or viewers (Pérez-González, 2014). Johnson (2019) explains that "foregrounding the written lyrics in a music video alters the affective experience of the music and, in most cases, constitutes a superimposition upon the intended visual dimension of the semiotic ensemble" (p. 425). The feasibility of the aforementioned experimentation in subtitling attests to the fragility of the traditionally imposed constraints and regulations (Dwyer, 2017). There have been many attempts at formulating codes for proper subtitling practices. The ultimate aim of such proposed codes is to outline some standards or recommendations that can be taken into account when subtitling. They are not preserved in aspic; on the contrary, they are amenable to modification (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007). The catapult of fansubbing to prominence among netizens in the cyberspace arguably suggests that the norms and constraints grounded in commercial codes of subtitling can potentially undergo transformation.

3. Methodology

3.1.   Model of Analysis

For the analysis of the selected movies, the study employs Díaz Cintas and Muñoz Sánchez's (2006) taxonomy of the common experimental and subversive strategies adopted in fansubbing:

1. use of different fonts throughout the same programme
2. use of colours to identify different actors
3. use of subtitles of more than two lines (up to four lines)
4. use of notes at the top of the screen
5. use of glosses in the body of the subtitles
6. the position of subtitles varies on the screen (scenetiming)
7. karaoke subtitling for opening and ending songs
8. adding of information regarding fansubbers
9. translation of opening and closing credits (p. 47)

There is another strategy discussed in the analysis section, but it is not included in the above taxonomy. This strategy is the use of colloquial Egyptian words and expressions. It is peculiar to fansubbing in the Egyptian context. Its inclusion in the analysis contributes to reinforcing the argument adopted herein concerning the fansubbers' penchant for subverting mainstream subtitling norms.

3.2.   Corpus of the Study

The movies selected for the analysis belong to a variety of genres, such as animation, fantasy, action, drama, and thriller to show that the experimental and subversive fansubbing strategies are not confined to a particular movie genre. The subtitles of the selected movies are produced by an Egyptian fansubber named Eslam Al-Gizawi. The movie subtitles are produced either by Eslam Al-Gizawi on his own (i.e., *Minions, Deadpool, Deadpool 2*) or in collaboration with others (i.e., *Coco*, *Mother!*, *Thor: Ragnarok*, *Justice League*, and *Spider-Man: Homecoming* are fansubbed by Eslam

Al-Gizawi and Omar Al-Shakiki; *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle* is fansubbed by Eslam Al-Gizawi, Omar Al-Shakiki, and Mohamed Al-Azazi).

Al-Gizawi's fame is the reason for choosing his subtitles to be scrutinized as an exemplification of the phenomenon of Arabic fansubbing. His Facebook page has 1.4 million followers. The rating of his page is 5, which reflects the satisfaction of his viewers with the subtitles he produces. He was hosted in a symposium organized by the Faculty of Al-Alsun, Kafr El-Sheikh University, on March 31, 2019, to deliver a talk on his movie subtitling career. This rapturous acclaim Al-Gizawi has garnered signals that Arabic fansubbing is taking root regardless of its questionable legality. It begs the question of how norms and conventions are tweaked in fansubbing in order to provide an immersive experience for viewers as discussed in the following section.

4. Analysis

4.1. *Use of* **Different** *Fonts Throughout the Same Programme*

The visual aesthetics of fansubbing comprise the use of text animation as found in the subtitling of the movie title *Minions*. The Arabic title mimics the yellow colour, the big font size, and even the space between the letters and appears at the top of the screen:

Figure 1: Screenshot from the movie *Minions* (00:01:39)

Al-Gizawi employs a zoom effect animation in subtitling the name of Marvel entertainment company in the opening credits of the movie *Deadpool*. Figure 2 shows the entry of the Arabic subtitle "مارفل" in small red font:
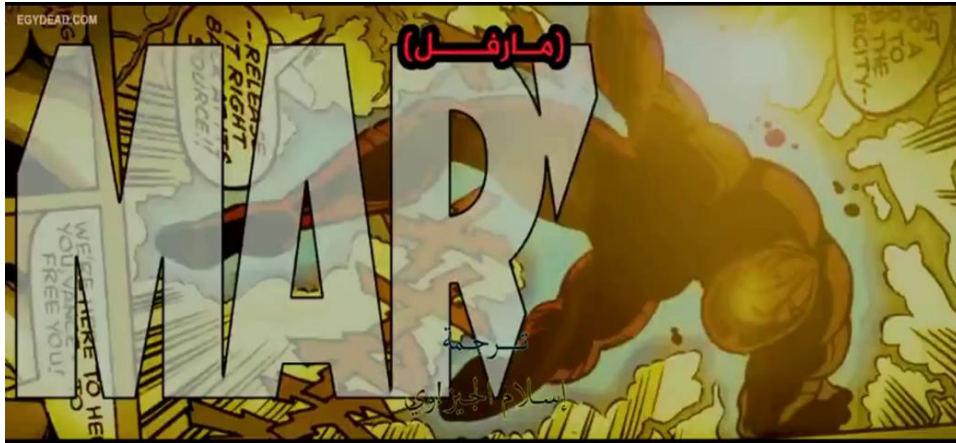
Figure 2: Screenshot from the movie *Deadpool* (00:00:31)

Given the zoom effect, the font size of the Arabic word gets bigger as shown in Figure 3:

Figure 3: Screenshot from the movie *Deadpool* (00:00:33)

The experimental styling of fonts reflects how subtitles are treated as part and parcel of the cinematic experience and not relegated to a secondary status. Experimenting with fonts can be construed as a norm-breaking, abusive subtitling strategy for it contributes to rendering subtitles innovatively conspicuous.

4.2.   *Use of Colours to Identify Different Actors*

A panoply of colours is used for various purposes by the fansubbers. In the movie *Justice League*, the name of each superhero is written using a colour that corresponds to his or her outfit. For example, in subtitling Superman's name in Arabic, both red and blue are used to dovetail with his blue costume and flowing red cape:

Figure 4: Screenshot from the movie *Justice League* (00:00:35)

The same strategy is adopted when subtitling Lantern's name in Arabic in the same movie through the use of green:

Figure 5: Screenshot from the movie *Justice League* (00:00:41)

To distinguish between actors speaking over the phone, two colours are used in the scenes cited from the movie *Deadpool 2*. Blue is used to signal Deadpool's talk turn (Figure 6) and orange to signal that of the Chinese interlocutor (Figure 7):

Figure 6: Screenshot from the movie *Deadpool 2* (00:03:00)

Figure 7: Screenshot from the movie *Deadpool 2* (00:03:03)

The employment of an array of colours is conducive to aestheticizing the viewing experience. Akin to the experimentation with fonts, the use of various colours is a manifestation of the abusive approach adopted by the fansubbers as it accentuates the prominence of subtitles among other semiotic modes.

4.3.   Use of Subtitles of More Than Two Lines (up to Four Lines)

Since the conviction in many professional subtitling circles that subtitles should not be attention grabbing, it has become the norm that interlingual subtitles should not exceed two lines (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007). In fansubbing, however, there is no limit to the number of the lines of subtitles. In *Spider-Man: Homecoming*, there is a scene which depicts a situation of misunderstanding and commotion. A woman says, "Hey! Shut that off!" in reference to a car alarm, to which Spiderman apologetically responds, "I was ..." and gets interrupted by the man he mistakenly thinks is trying to steal a car. This man says, "Can you tell him it's my car?" These three exchanges are rendered using three lines of subtitles:

Figure 8: Screenshot from the movie *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (00:17:42)

Another example of three-line subtitles is found in *Deadpool* in the scene where the main character comes up with his superhero name. His friend makes a toast saying, "To Mr. Pool. Deadpool" as shown in Figure 9:

Figure 9: Screenshot from the movie *Deadpool* (00:59:59)

This talk turn is rendered using two lines which remain on the screen and overlap with another line of subtitle for the remaining of his utterance "That sounds like a fuckin' franchise":

Figure 10: Screenshot from the movie *Deadpool* (1:00:01)

The encroachment of subtitles on the images gives weight to the role of subtitles in the semiotic ensemble. The disregard to the conventional number of subtitles attests to how subtitles are not deemed subordinate to the pictorial mode in fansubbing. This runs counter to mainstream subtitling conventions where the image holds sway.

4.4.   Use of Notes at the Top of the Screen

The fansubbers' visibility is heightened through the use of intrusive headnotes. For example, the leading actress in the movie *Mother!* brings ice to a woman who burns her hand. A pop-up gloss in red is inserted to advise viewers not to do the same in case of burns and to use lukewarm water instead:

Figure 11: Screenshot from the movie *Mother!* (0:21:22)

The insertion of this headnote cues the audience to the presence of the fansubbers, which intensifies the virtual bond between them and their audience. In contrast to conventional subtitling practices which require that subtitles be kept as low-key as possible, the addition of such non-diegetic headnotes is a subversive strategy that renders subtitles glaringly obtrusive. This arguably stems from the notion of affectivity which constitutes a driving force for amateur subtitling practices. The cinematic text is harnessed to function as a virtual space for fansubbers to indulge in not only providing subtitles for different audiovisual elements but also in communicating with their audience.

Content warnings are another form of pop-up glosses that are used in fansubbing. In *Deadpool 2*, the leading character, Deadpool, is a foul-mouthed superhero, which makes the movie rife with obscenities. In the content warning displayed in red before the start of the movie, Al-Gizawi mentions that the movie is for adults only as it contains profanity. He translates the majority of the profane words literally instead of opting for the conventional way of rendering them into "اللعنة" and "تبًا لك", in a nod to the subtitling strategy of obscenities used in mainstream subtitling spheres, such as Anis Ebeid's movie subtitling organization, the most famous one in the Middle East:

Figure 12: Screenshot from the movie *Deadpool 2* (00:00:05)

As mentioned earlier, it is the norm to translate obscenities in abusive subtitling. In light of this, Al-Gizawi's literal translation of taboo words marks a daring break with the conventional strategies used in mainstream subtitling spheres. The resort to literal

translation in rendering obscenities signals the abusive approach adopted by the fansubber; instead of deodorizing profanity, he remains faithful to the source text and deviates from traditional subtitling strategies. Another content warning is displayed inside the movie *Deadpool* itself. It alerts the viewers that an inappropriate scene is about to start:

Figure 13: Screenshot from the movie *Deadpool* (00:23:17)

Providing content warnings augments the fansubber's visibility and reflects the profound attention paid by him toward tailoring the cinematic experience to the expectations of conservative viewers.

Another type of headnote is the one used in *Justice League* to draw the viewers' attention that the movie has not yet ended and that there is still a scene coming after the end credits:

Figure 14: Screenshot from the movie *Justice League* (1:48:36)

This further enhances the interpersonal dynamics between the fansubbers and their fellow fans. It gives the impression that they share the viewing experience with them. Their task is not confined to providing subtitles; rather, they virtually accompany the viewers to ensure they do not miss out on any details. In addition to drawing the viewers' attention that there is still a scene coming after the end credits of *Deadpool 2*, Al-Gizawi addresses his viewers, stating how exhausting it was to subtitle this movie and expressing his hope that they like his subtitles:
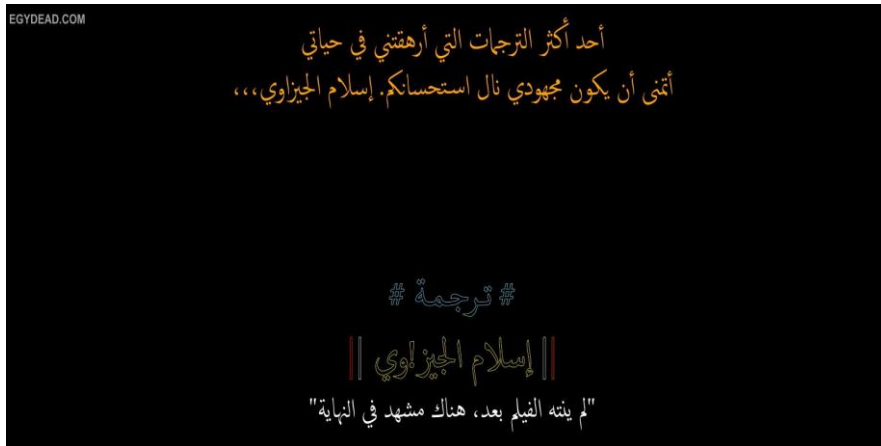
Figure 15: Screenshot from the movie *Deadpool 2* (02:07:48)

This gives insights into how the fansubber makes the most of the audiovisual text by expanding its boundaries beyond the mere delivery of subtitles and transforming it into a hub for personal expression and interaction.

4.5.   Use of Glosses in the Body of the Subtitles

In mainstream subtitling practices, there is no leeway for subtitlers' intervention to provide extralinguistic information, for example in the form of footnotes, to explain puns or culturally bound items so as not to counter the conventional precept of keeping subtitles unobtrusive within the confines of two lines and in synchrony with the source text dialogues and displayed images (Díaz Cintas, 2005). The situation is quite the opposite in fansubbing where non-diegetic glosses are used extensively, materializing Appiah's (1993/2012) concept of thick translation where fansubbers can provide necessary information for the interpretation of obscure references in source texts. When providing explanatory glosses under the main subtitles, different colours are used to signal their non-diegetic nature. For example, in *Deadpool 2*, Al-Gizawi explains the reference Deadpool sarcastically makes to the movie *Batman vs. Superman* "Actually, I was fighting this caped badass, until I found out that his mom is also named Martha" in a footnote using yellow colour and inverted commas:

Figure 16: Screenshot from the movie *Deadpool 2* (00:11:00)

There is another example in *Justice League* where Al-Gizawi and Al-Shakiki explicate a humorous scene using two-line footnotes in red. The superhero named Flash mistakenly bids a little Russian girl farewell saying "Dostoevsky," the renowned Russian novelist, instead of the Russian expression for bidding someone goodbye "Dasvidaniya" because of his incomprehension of Russian:

Figure 17: Screenshot from the movie *Justice League* (1:41:22)

Footnotes are used as well for the explanation of culture-specific items. For example, in the movie *Coco*, the food item "tamales" is transliterated into "التمال", and an explanatory footnote "طحين ذرة يغطى بأوراقه ويطهى على البخار", written in red and enclosed between inverted commas, is used:

Figure 18: Screenshot from the movie *Coco* (00:03:49)

Sometimes the explanation of certain words appears in the line of the subtitle itself. For example, the name "Zeitgeist" is transliterated into "زايتغايست" and an explanatory note "روح العصر" is provided in the same line between inverted commas after the equation symbol as shown in Figure 19:
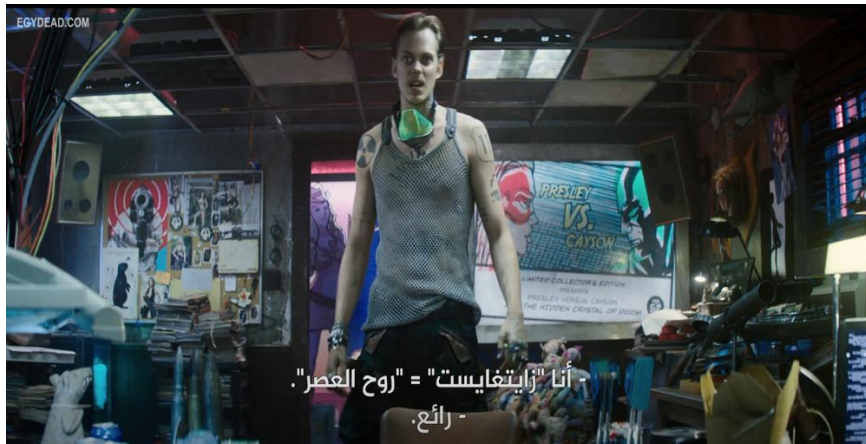
Figure 19: Screenshot from the movie *Deadpool 2* (01:05:13)

Transliteration exemplifies the abusive strategy of foreignization. The subversiveness of foreignization rests on defying the commercially prescribed politics of domestication that denies viewers an authentic experience of the other under the pretext of achieving naturalness. The use of explanatory notes signals a considerable shift from prescribed invisibility to a highly overt presence and intervention of fansubbers in the audiovisual texts.

4.6.   The Position of Subtitles Varies on the Screen (Scenetiming)

Conventionally, subtitles are placed horizontally at the bottom of the screen so as not to interfere vastly with the pictorial mode. Fansubbing is characterized by an unbridled latitude when it comes to placing subtitles on the screen; subtitles can be located anywhere in the audiovisual text. For example, in *Deadpool 2*, the subtitle of a leaflet title partly written in green "Haunted Segway Tours" is provided on the middle left side of the screen in green "جولات بالدراجات الكهربائية":

Figure 20: Screenshot from the movie *Deadpool 2* (00:02:39)

In *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle*, boxes appear next to each of the four main characters listing their strengths and weaknesses in different colours. This feature is faithfully rendered in Arabic. For example, the subtitles are written in yellow and located in different parts on the screen with the main subtitle of the character's

utterance "Paleontology? What does that even mean?" kept at the bottom of the screen:

Figure 21: Screenshot from the movie *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle* (0:32:18)

The non-conformist strategy of distributing subtitles in different places on the screen reveals how subtitles in the praxis of fansubbing are ascribed a great weight and not deemed peripheral. They are instrumental in providing a comprehensive understanding of all the meaning-making signs present in the cinematic text. Additionally, this subversive strategy betokens the essence of abusive subtitling, notably the need to boost the visibility of subtitlers.

4.7.   Karaoke Subtitling for Opening and Ending Songs

The experimental streak of fansubbing is well demonstrated in the use of karaoke-style subtitles for the translation of song lyrics. The Arabic translation of the original lyrics "Everybody rolls with their fingers crossed" are rendered using karaoke subtitling, enclosed between hashtag symbols, and placed on the upper right side of the screen as shown in the following screenshot from *Justice League*:

Figure 22: Screenshot from the movie *Justice League* (00:05:21)

Using karaoke-style subtitles arguably vivifies the audiovisual text and conduces to a better immersive experience. It is congruous with the aspect of spectacularization that is idiosyncratic of fansubbing. Apart from rendering song lyrics, Al-Gizawi provides

the names and singers of the songs played in *Deadpool 2* in karaoke-style subtitles as illustrated in Figure 23:

Figure 23: Screenshot from the movie *Deadpool 2* (00:04:06)

In addition to heightening the fansubber's visibility, the use of extratextual information is reflective of the fansubber's eagerness to furnish the viewers with the minutest details that could be of interest to them, which is congruent with the ethos of fandom.

4.8.   Adding of Information Regarding Fansubbers

In the practice of fansubbing, fansubbers are not treated as unsung entities. Although fansubbing is legally questionable, this does not deter fansubbers from indulging in making their names in the fansubbing industry and garnering fans. An important means of attaining visibility for fansubbers is the addition of their names and information about them in the audiovisual texts they mediate. For example, in the end credits of *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle*, as shown in Figure 24, the fansubbers' names are provided in three different colours (i.e., yellow, red, and green), with a link to Al-Gizawi's Facebook page written in red, overriding the closing credits. Al Gizawi's Facebook page serves as the affinity space in which he shares his subtitles with fellow movie aficionados and practises other fan-related activities, such as providing movie reviews and starting discussions on that matter.

Besides the fansubbers' names, a karaoke-style message appears at the top of the screen saying "نتمنى أن تكون ترجمتنا نالت إعجابكم" (We hope you like our subtitling), which arguably reflects the fansubbers' care to provide a satisfying viewing experience buoyed by suitable, bespoke subtitles:

Figure 24: Screenshot from the movie *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle* (1:52:38)

This intrusive message reveals how fansubbers prioritize optimizing their visibility over subtitling norms that leave no room for the addition of non-diegetic elements.

4.9.   *Translation of Opening and Closing Credits*

The name of the company "Warner Bros. Pictures" in the opening credits of *Justice League* is rendered into Arabic using karaoke-style font and is enclosed between inverted commas. Besides translating the opening credits, the fansubbers insert a three-line directive, namely that it is better for viewers to first watch *Batman vs. Superman* to be able to understand the events in *Justice League*:

Figure 25: Screenshot from the movie *Justice League* (00:00:13)

This further substantiates their abusive approach to maximizing their visibility and to keeping the viewers fully apprised. Similarly, karaoke-style font is employed in the same movie in the subtitling of the name of the company "Access Entertainment," along with the use of inverted commas around the Arabic transliteration of the word "Access." The translation is divided into two parts: the first one "أكسيس" appears at the upper right side and the second one "للمواد الترفيهيّة" appears at the upper left side, which further reflects how the fansubbers are unfettered by subtitling conventions regarding the position of subtitles:

Figure 26: Screenshot from the movie *Justice League* (00:00:30)

Aside from translating opening and closing credits, fansubbers resort to the use of explanatory notes akin to book endnotes. For example, *Mother!* is a highly controversial movie based on an allegory to God and the creation of Earth, but this allegory is left unexplored in the movie. The fansubbers, however, decode the allegory by providing explanatory notes that obscure the closing credits:

Figure 27: Screenshot from the movie *Mother!* (1:56:35)

A preface-like explanation is provided at the opening credits of the movie *Thor: Ragnarok*. The explanation starts with the sentence "معلومات عليك تذكرها قبل مشاهدة الفيلم" (Information you need to remember before watching the movie). It is followed by a numbered summary, which takes up the whole screen, of the events of the second part of the movie anthology and a glossary of the terms used in the movie:

Figure 28: Screenshot from the movie *Thor: Ragnarok* (00:00:02)

The intrusion of the complementary paratextual material on the opening and closing credits signals the importance ascribed to the non-diegetic elements in fansubbing; walking the audience through the movie plots by explaining important details on which the understanding of the movies relies is integral to the immersive experience. This strategy of addition materializes Nornes's (2007) call for translation with attitude; fansubbers impose their interpretations and offer guidance to their audience.

4.10.   The Use of Colloquial Egyptian Words and Expressions

Since "foreign audiovisual materials are almost universally rendered into Fusha" (Gamal, 2008, p. 7), the use of the colloquial Egyptian variety is significantly reflective of the subversive approach adopted in fansubbing. For example, in the movie *Spider-man: Homecomig*, there is a scene of two neighbors exchanging pleasantries. The male character says, "Marjorie! How are you? How's your mother?" This utterance is rendered into "إزيّك وإزيّ أمك! ،(مارجري)" where the colloquial form "إزيّك" is used instead of its modern standard Arabic counterpart "كيف":

Figure 29: Screenshot from the movie *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (00:17:57)

In the movie *Coco*, which revolves around the dream of a young boy named Miguel to become a musician, there is a dialogue between him and a musician. The latter advises Miguel to confront his family with his desire to pursue his dream saying, "I'd march right up to my family and say, 'Hey! I'm a musician. Deal with it!'" The last part of "Deal with it!" is rendered using the colloquial Egyptian expression "أعلى ما في خيلك اركبوه" which is uttered when someone boldly states that he or she does not care much about something disapproved by another person:

Figure 30: Screenshot from the movie *Coco* (00:06:55)

In *Thor: Ragnarok*, a character named Thor is forced to have a haircut. He pleads with the barber saying, "Please, kind sir, do not cut my hair." The fansubbers resort to the use of a colloquial equivalent "وحياة أمك" for the English expression of pleading instead of the modern standard Arabic equivalent "أرجوك":

Figure 31: Screenshot from the movie *Thor: Ragnarok* (00:51:19)

The significance of using this strategy lies in challenging the mainstream convention of confining Arabic subtitles to modern standard Arabic given its prestigious status as opposed to the colloquial variety. The insertion of colloquial words and expressions boils down to an attempt to render the source text messages easily comprehensible for Egyptian viewers who use colloquial Egyptian Arabic and not modern standard

Arabic in daily life, which is another testament to the due attention paid to delivering subtitles that are tilted toward viewers' tastes and expectations.

5. Conclusion

The voluntary participation of fans, without prior training in subtitling and with no expectation of monetary rewarding, in the subtitling of their favorite audiovisual contents betokens a paradigm shift apropos of the dynamics of movie subtitling. The analysis of the fansubbing strategies used by Al-Gizawi, Al-Shakiki, and Al-Azazi reveals their abusive approach to subtitling. The experimental and subversive streak of their practice lies in not toeing the line when it comes to standard subtitling conventions. By employing unorthodox subtitling strategies, such as playing around with fonts and colours, injecting vibrancy into subtitles through employing karaoke-style and animation effects, scattering subtitles all over the audiovisual texts, and using subtitles of more than two lines, it is evident how subtitles are not deemed subordinate to images. Rather, vast salience is placed on subtitles, and they are accordingly presented in a conspicuously creative fashion. This creativity is conducive to enhancing the fansubbers' visibility—an anathema to mainstream subtitling circles. The subversive flair of the fansubbers is demonstrated in the use of colloquial Egyptian words and expressions in defiance of the established convention of confining subtitles to modern standard Arabic in official subtitling spheres. Foreignization is another significant subversive strategy employed by the fansubbers as it challenges the mainstream convention of domestication that keeps viewers in the dark concerning culture-bound information and conduces to the invisibility of subtitlers. The fansubbers' visibility is fostered via the insertion of information germane to them and subtitles that transcend the diegetic boundaries, such as headnotes and footnotes. All such strategies signal a considerable shift from prescribed invisibility to blatant visibility marked by the intervention of fansubbers in the audiovisual texts they mediate. That is why fansubbing can be perceived as a locus of unrestrained experimentation and subversion.

References

Appiah, K. A. (2012). Thick translation. In L. Venuti (Ed.), *The translation studies reader* (3rd ed., 331-343). Routledge. (Original work published 1993)

Bogucki, L. (2009). Amateur subtitling on the internet. In J. Díaz Cintas & G. Anderman (Eds.), *Audiovisual translation: Language transfer on screen* (pp. 49-57). Palgrave Macmillan.

Chaume, F. (2018). An overview of audiovisual translation: Four methodological turns in a mature discipline. *Journal of Audiovisual Translation*, *1*(1), 40-63. https://doi.org/10.47476/jat.v1i1.43

Chouliaraki, L. (2010). Self-mediation: New media and citizenship. *Critical Discourse Studies*, *7*(4), 227-232. https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2010.511824

Costales, A. F. (2012). Collaborative translation revisited: Exploring the rationale and the motivation for volunteer translation. *FORUM*, *10*(1), 115-142. https://doi.org/10.1075/forum.10.1.06fer

Cronin, M. (2010). Globalization and translation. In Y. Gambier & L. van Doorslaer (Eds.), *Handbook of translation studies* (Vol. 1, pp. 134-140). John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Díaz Cintas, J. (2005). Back to the future in subtitling. In H. Gerzymisch-Arbogast & S. Nauert (Eds.), *Challenges of Multidimensional Translation*: *Proceedings of the Marie Curie Euroconferences MuTra* (pp. 16-32). Advanced Translation Research Center.

Díaz Cintas, J. (2013). The technology turn in subtitling. *Translation and Meaning*, 119-132.

Díaz Cintas, J. (2018). 'Subtitling's a carnival': New practices in cyberspace. *The Journal of Specialised Translation*, (30), 127-149.

Díaz Cintas, J., & Muñoz Sánchez, P. (2006). Fansubs: Audiovisual translation in an amateur environment. *The Journal of Specialised Translation*, (6), 37-52.

Díaz Cintas, J., & Remael, A. (2007). *Audiovisual translation: Subtitling*. Routledge.

Dwyer, T. (2017). *Speaking in subtitles: Revaluing screen translation*. Edinburgh University Press.

Dwyer, T. (2019). Audiovisual translation and fandom. In L. Pérez-González (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of audiovisual translation* (pp. 436-452). Routledge.

Gamal, M. (2008). Egypt's audiovisual translation scene. *Arab Media & Society*. https://www.arabmediasociety.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/20080510203556_AMS5_Muhammad_Gamal.pdf

Gee, J. P. (2004). *Situated language and learning: A critique of traditional schooling*. Routledge.

Gross, L. (2009). My media studies: Cultivation to participation. *Television & New Media*, *10*(1), 66-68. https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476408325105

Huang, B. (2022). Relatively abusive and relatively corrupt: An analytical framework for the study of subtitlers' visibilities. *The Journal of Specialised Translation*, (38), 102-127.

Jenkins, H. (2007). Afterword: The future of fandom. In J. Gray, C. Sandvoss, & C. L. Harrington (Eds.), *Fandom: Identities and communities in a mediated world* (pp. 357-364). New York University Press.

Jiménez-Crespo, M. A., & Ramírez-Polo, L. (2022). Translation and the world wide web. In E. Bielsa (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of translation and media* (pp. 352-368). Routledge.

Johnson, R. (2019). Audiovisual translation and popular music. In L. Pérez-González (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of audiovisual translation* (pp. 418-435). Routledge.

Jones, H. (2019). Mediality and audiovisual translation. In L. Pérez-González (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of audiovisual translation* (pp. 177-191). Routledge.

Lewis, P. E. (2000). The measure of translation effects. In L. Venuti (Ed.), *The translation studies reader* (pp. 264-283). Routledge. (Original work published 1985)

McClarty, R. (2012). Towards a multidisciplinary approach in creative subtitling. *MonTI*, (4), 133-153. https://doi.org/10.6035/MonTI.2012.4.6

McNair, B. (2006). *Cultural chaos: Journalism, news and power in a globalised world*. Routledge.

Nornes, A. M. (1999). For an abusive subtitling. *Film Quarterly*, *52*(3), 17-34. https://doi.org/10.2307/1213822

Nornes, A. M. (2007). *Cinema Babel: Translating global cinema*. University of Minnesota Press.

O'Brien, S. (2011). Collaborative translation. In Y. Gambier & L. van Doorslaer (Eds.), *Handbook of translation studies* (Vol. 2, pp. 17-20). John Benjamins Publishing Company.

O'Hagan, M. (2009). Evolution of user-generated translation: Fansubs, translation hacking and crowdsourcing. *The Journal of Internationalization and Localization*, *1*(1), 94-121. https://doi.org/10.1075/jial.1.04hag

O'Hagan, M. (2013). The impact of new technologies on translation studies: A technological turn? In C. Millán & F. Bartrina (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of translation studies* (pp. 503-518). Routledge.

Olohan, M. (2014). Why do you translate? Motivation to volunteer and TED translation. *Translation Studies*, *7*(1), 17-33. https://doi.org/10.1080/14781700.2013.781952

Orrego-Carmona, D., & Lee, Y. (2017). Non-Professional subtitling. In D. Orrego-Carmona & Y. Lee (Eds.), *Non-professional subtitling* (pp. 1-12). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

O'Sullivan, C. (2011). *Translating popular film*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Palumbo, G. (2009). *Key terms in translation studies*. Continuum.

Pérez-González, L. (2007a). Intervention in new amateur subtitling cultures: A multimodal account. *Linguistica Antverpiensia*, *6*, 67-80. https://doi.org/10.52034/lanstts.v6i.180

Pérez-González, L. (2007b). Fansubbing anime: Insights into the 'butterfly effect' of globalisation on audiovisual translation. *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*, *14*(4), 260-277. https://doi.org/10.1080/09076760708669043

Pérez-González, L. (2012a). Co-creational subtitling in the digital media: Transformative and authorial practices. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, *16*(1) 3–21. https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877912459145

Pérez-González, L. (2012b). Amateur subtitling and the pragmatics of spectatorial subjectivity. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, *12*(4), 335-352. https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2012.722100

Pérez-González, L. (2012c). Amateur subtitling as immaterial labour in digital media culture: An emerging paradigm of civic engagement. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, *19*(2), 157-175. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856512466381

Pérez-González, L. (2014). *Audiovisual translation: Theories, methods and issues*. Routledge.

Pérez-González, L. (2017). Investigating digitally born amateur subtitling agencies in the   context of popular culture. In D. Orrego-Carmona & Y. Lee (Eds.), *Non-professional subtitling* (pp. 15-36). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Pérez-González, L. (2020). Fan audiovisual translation. In M. Baker & G. Saldanha (Eds.), *Routledge encyclopedia of translation studies* (3rd ed., pp. 172-177). Routledge.

Pérez-González, L., & Susam-Saraeva, S. (2012). Non-professionals translating and interpreting: Participatory and engaged perspectives. *The Translator*, *18*(2), 149-165. https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2012.10799506

Perrino, S. (2009). User-generated translation: The future of translation in a Web 2.0 environment. *The Journal of Specialised Translation*, (12), 55-78. https://www.jostrans.org/issue12/art_perrino.php

Pym, A. (2011). What technology does to translating. *Translating & Interpreting*, *3*(1), 1-9.

Ritzer, G. (2015). The "new" world of prosumption: Evolution, "return of the same," or revolution? *Sociological Forum*, *30*(1), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1111/socf.12142

Toffler, A. (1980). *The third wave*. William Morrow and Company.

Vazquez-Calvo, B., Shafirova, L., Zhang, L. T., & Cassany, D. (2019). An overview of multimodal fan translation: Fansubbing, fandubbing, fan translation of games, and scanlation. In M. D. M. O. Pozo & F. R. Rodríguez (Eds.), *Insights into audiovisual and comic translation. Changing perspectives on films, comics and video games* (pp. 191-213). UCO Press.

von Hippel, E. (2005). *Democratizing innovation*. The MIT Press.

Filmography

Aronofsky, D. (Director). (2017). *Mother!* [Film]. Paramount Pictures; Protozoa Pictures.

Balda, K., & Coffin, P. (Directors). (2015). *Minions* [Film]. Illumination Entertainment; Universal Pictures.

Kasdan, J. (Director). (2017). *Jumanji: Welcome to the jungle* [Film]. Columbia Pictures; Matt Tolmach Productions; Radar Pictures.

Leitch, D. (Director). (2018). *Deadpool 2* [Film]. Twentieth Century Fox; Marvel Entertainment; Kinberg Genre.

Miller, T. (Director). (2016). *Deadpool* [Film]. Twentieth Century Fox; Marvel Entertainment; Kinberg Genre.

Snyder, Z. (Director). (2017). *Justice league* [Film]. Warner Bros.; RatPac Entertainment; DC Entertainment.

Unkrich, L., & Molina, A. (Directors). (2017). *Coco* [Film]. Walt Disney Pictures; Pixar Animation Studios.

Waititi, T. (Director). (2017). *Thor: Ragnarok* [Film]. Walt Disney Pictures; Marvel Studios.

Watts, J. (Director). (2017). *Spider-Man: Homecoming* [Film]. Columbia Pictures; LStar Capital; Marvel Studios.

English Movies	Links to the Fansubbed Versions
Mother!	https://w8.egydead.live/%d9%85%d8%b4%d8%a7%d9%87%d8%af%d8%a9-%d9%81%d9%8a%d9%84%d9%85-mother-2017-%d9%85%d8%aa%d8%b1%d8%ac%d9%85/
Minions	https://w8.egydead.live/%d9%85%d8%b4%d8%a7%d9%87%d8%af%d8%a9-%d9%81%d9%8a%d9%84%d9%85-minions-2015-%d9%85%d8%aa%d8%b1%d8%ac%d9%85/
Jumanji: Welcome to the jungle	https://w8.egydead.live/%d9%85%d8%b4%d8%a7%d9%87%d8%af%d8%a9-%d9%81%d9%8a%d9%84%d9%85-jumanji-welcome-to-the-jungle-2017-%d9%85%d8%aa%d8%b1%d8%ac%d9%85/
Deadpool 2	https://w8.egydead.live/%d9%85%d8%b4%d8%a7%d9%87%d8%af%d8%a9-%d9%81%d9%8a%d9%84%d9%85-deadpool-2-2018-%d9%85%d8%aa%d8%b1%d8%ac%d9%85/
Deadpool	https://w8.egydead.live/%d9%85%d8%b4%d8%a7%d9%87%d8%af%d8%a9-%d9%81%d9%8a%d9%84%d9%85-deadpool-2016-%d9%85%d8%aa%d8%b1%d8%ac%d9%85/

Justice league	https://w8.egydead.live/%d9%85%d8%b4%d8%a7%d9%87%d8%af%d8%a9-%d9%81%d9%8a%d9%84%d9%85-justice-league-2017-%d9%85%d8%aa%d8%b1%d8%ac%d9%85/
Coco	https://w8.egydead.live/%d9%85%d8%b4%d8%a7%d9%87%d8%af%d8%a9-%d9%81%d9%8a%d9%84%d9%85-coco-2017-%d9%85%d8%aa%d8%b1%d8%ac%d9%85/
Thor: Ragnarok	https://w8.egydead.live/%d9%85%d8%b4%d8%a7%d9%87%d8%af%d8%a9-%d9%81%d9%8a%d9%84%d9%85-thor-ragnarok-2017-%d9%85%d8%aa%d8%b1%d8%ac%d9%85/
Spider-Man: Homecoming	https://w8.egydead.live/%d8%b4%d8%a7%d9%87%d8%af-%d9%81%d9%8a%d9%84%d9%85-spider-man-homecoming-2017-%d9%85%d8%aa%d8%b1%d8%ac%d9%85/