PETER DICKINSON

CRITICALLY QUEENIE: THE LESSONS OF *FORTUNE AND MEN'S EYES*

Résumé: L'adaptation du drame carcéral de John Herbert, *Fortune and Men's Eyes*, réalisée en 1971 par Harvey Hart, nous permet de réfléchir à certains codes binaires qui contrôlent les représentations de la sexualité et des rôles sexuels dans les espaces institutionnels. S'attardant à l'adaptation comme acte transformateur dans la représentation gaie, l'auteur propose que les différences entre la pièce de Herbert et le film de Hart impliquent des différences épistémologiques narratives et sexuelles. Tout en faisant référence à d'autres films pertinents, l'auteur se concentre particulièrement sur le rôle crucial et hautement visuel que joue le travesti et « mère de cellule » Queenie, dans *Fortune and Men's Eyes*. L'article suggère que ce personnage offre un modèle iconographique puissant de la représentation et de la réception du travestisme dans les cinémas canadien et québécois.

Canadian playwright John Herbert died in June 2001 at the age of seventy-four. Although he wrote more than twenty-five plays in a career spanning five decades, was a respected teacher and dramaturge, and enlivened the Toronto gay scene with his drag artistry and activism, he is best known for writing *Fortune and Men's Eyes*, his exploration of the dynamics of sex and power in a men's prison that premiered off-Broadway in 1967. The play would go on to receive more than one hundred productions world-wide, and would be translated into some forty different languages. In 1971, it was also turned into a film by director Harvey Hart, based on Herbert's own screenplay. Given the acclaim that Tom Fontana's television series Oz has recently garnered for its frank depiction of life on the inside, including sexual life on the inside,[1] it seems only appropriate, thirty years after its initial release, to reconsider Hart's film in light of its

own, equally complex, interrogation of the prison system's queer subculture. Dismissed at the time of its release by several openly gay critics writing in the mainstream press (and later by noted film historian Vito Russo) as retrograde in its depiction of heteronormative role-playing among the inmates it portrayed, in retrospect the film's situational politics offer productive ways to think through some of the binary codes of representation that adhere to the regulation of gender and sexuality in most institutional spaces, as well as some of the ways those codes might be resisted within the particular space of the prison.

In this regard, it is worthwhile remembering that the film of *Fortune and Men's Eyes* is an adaptation, and that the transformative process literary texts undergo when they are brought to the screen is, in effect, one of "queering," in which one narrative form is disassembled and reordered as another. It is this latter process to which I wish to turn in this paper, not in order to leave the discussion of queer representation in *Fortune* by the wayside, but rather in order to examine how the adaptation process *specifically impacts on queer representation*, both in the play and in the film. While a detailed summary of theories of cinematic adaptation is beyond the scope of this paper, it is important to note that *Fortune*'s movement from a verbal to a visual signifying system is further mediated by the expressly performative framework that governed this translation, one that raises important questions of authority, intentionality, interpretation, and spectatorship.[2] In drama and film, where and with whom is meaning invested? With the printed script or the staged/filmed performance? With the individual idea or the collaborative *mise-en-scène*? With the playwright/screenwriter or with the director? Or with the audience? In the case of *Fortune*, these questions are especially relevant. Not only did back-to-back New York stagings of the play in the 1960s result in wildly different interpretations, but the film adaptation (which several reviewers have found "confusing" and schizophrenic, not least in its depiction of homosexuality) was itself the product of two different directorial visions.

For these and other reasons, it is crucial to situate *Fortune*'s successive adaptations—both on stage and on screen—within the increasing proliferation and politicization of queer cultural references post-Stonewall. Viewed within such a context, the changes made between the "original" source text and the film version of *Fortune* can be seen to have resulted not only in the production of a different narrative epistemology in each case, but in a different sexual epistemology as well, one in which the compulsory institution of heterosexuality and the traditional gender roles ascribed

and inscribed therein, are more openly, one might even say flagrantly, challenged and undermined, if only by virtue of the *visualization* of important queer counter-images on screen. My remarks, in this regard, will focus mainly on the pivotal, and highly visual, role played by the drag queen and cell "mother," Queenie, in the play and the film. I argue that her centrality, as both a figure of gender *and* narrative ambivalence refuses to allow the viewer to foreclose upon her in the spectatorial production of desire on and off screen; she exceeds the parameters of the film's closing frames—quite literally, as we shall see.

In addition to examining what I am calling *Fortune*'s further "queering" of the sexual politics of its source text, in what follows I attempt to provide some of the background to the original production and reception of the play, as well as the initial impetus for, and context surrounding, the turning of it into a film. Here, as I have already intimated, the process of reception will be scrutinized, particularly in terms of the national and sexual differences that emerge among American and Canadian reviews of the play and among straight and gay critiques of the film. Contemporary gay reviewers' responses to the film version of *Fortune*, along with Vito Russo's more extended consideration of it in *The Celluloid Closet* ten years after its release,[3] were thoughtful, impassioned, complex, and, on the whole, negative.

My paper concludes with a coda that attempts to contextualize historically the shifts over the past three decades in the politics of representation and reception *vis-à-vis* queer images on screen, particularly drag and transgenderism. To this end, I move from a close reading of *Fortune*'s gender and sexual politics to a more expansive and generalized survey of some of the films that might be said to have either absorbed or rejected *Fortune*'s queer tutelage. Among the films briefly considered in this section are three from Canada and Québec that, like *Fortune*, are adaptations: André Brassard's *Il était une fois dans l'est* (1974), his miraculous cinematic amalgam of six of the plays in Michel Tremblay's "Belles-Soeurs cycle"; Richard Benner's *Outrageous!* (1977), the Craig Russell vehicle based on the short story "Making It," by Russell's friend, Margaret Gibson; and Paule Baillargeon's *Le Sexe des étoiles* (1993), based on the novel by Monique Proulx, and part of a recent trend in cinematic history that has seen the transsexual eclipse the drag queen in terms of undermining gender and narrative coherence on screen.

• • •

Fortune and Men's Eyes is based on Herbert's own six month stay in a Guelph, Ontario reformatory in 1946.[4] Having been sexually and physically harassed by a group of local homophobes, Herbert, the victim, ended up doing time when his victimizers accused him of coming on to them—this at a time when homosexuality was still illegal in Canada. Interestingly, Herbert would use this as the basis for the incarceration of Mona's character, who reveals to Smitty at the end of the play and film that he ended up in prison after having been similarly accused of propositioning the group of men who had gang raped him. That Mona's sexual exploitation continues at the hands of his fellow inmates reveals much about Herbert's comment on how closely inside mirrors outside in this case, particularly in the replication of hierarchies of power.

To this end, the play follows new inmate Smitty, a clean-cut teenager who has been convicted of marijuana possession, as he gradually becomes acculturated to these hierarchies. Smitty is educated, in this regard, by his three cellmates. Tough guy Rocky first outlines to him the specific rules of the prison system: every new "boy" needs an "old man" to look after him, to protect him from being "gang splashed" in the storeroom, among other brutal indignities; in exchange, the boy (in this case, Smitty) agrees to supply his old man (Rocky) a little one-on-one action in the showers. "It's me or a gang splash," is how Rocky presents Smitty's options at the end of Act 1, Scene 1, "Now move your ass fast. I'm not used to punks tellin' me what they want."[5] Next, Queenie savvily—and swishily—demonstrates how this system can be subverted, how Smitty can "play it" so that he ends up "on top": "Rocky's nowhere near the top dog in this joint...," Queenie instructs Smitty sagely at the end of Act 1, "just a hard crap disturber who gets a wide berth from everybody.... If you get out from under Rocky, and I spread the news you're boss in this block, they'll listen" (first ellipsis in original).[6] Finally, Mona, the sensitive "punk," in refusing to let Smitty become his old man at the end of the play, reveals that Smitty, far from subverting the system in his toppling of Rocky, has merely reinscribed its power dynamics: "Now you've flexed your muscles and found power, I'm an easy convenience."[7]

The film adaptation, which fleshes out the play's action with additional scenes of prison life, and which adds a few minor characters, mostly follows Smitty along the same narrative trajectory. Noticeable plot differences do occur, however, which will be discussed at more length below. That the prison system, in both the play and the film, is clearly a metonym for the larger sex/gender system and its own binaristic rules of identification and

role-playing invites critical interrogation. Interestingly, this interrogation—what little there is of it—has tended to coalesce around the 1971 film adaptation rather than around successive stagings of the play.

The play premiered off-Broadway, at the Actors' Playhouse, in 1967, in a production directed by Michael Nestor. Given one's particular point of view, it is either sadly ironic or wholly appropriate that the beginnings of modern gay drama in Canada, indeed, one might say modern Canadian drama *tout court*,[8] should have happened elsewhere. While the play had been workshopped at the Stratford Festival in 1965, it did not receive a full-scale, commercial production in Canada until 1975, only after a wildly successful 1969 remounting of the play in New York (by an increasingly out Sal Mineo), only after several other acclaimed productions around the world, *and* only after the play had been turned into a motion picture with the financial backing of a major Hollywood studio, MGM.[9]

However, the 1967 premiere of *Fortune* was covered by two prominent Toronto theatre critics—Nathan Cohen and Herbert Whittaker—and their enthusiasm for the play is worth noting, if only for how spectacularly it contrasts with the overwhelmingly negative response of most New York critics. Both Dan Sullivan, in dismissing *Fortune* in *The New York Times* as "distressing," "self-pitying," and "monotonous," and Edith Oliver, in panning the show in *The New Yorker* as "histrionic" and "repulsive," make explicit reference to the Canadian setting of the play, as if this should explain the poor quality of the production.[10] Perhaps to compensate for this slight by his American counterparts, Whittaker writes in the opening paragraph of his *Globe and Mail* review of Herbert's play, "[I]f success in Canadian theatre continues to be measured by approval in the United States the Toronto playwright may find his purposes best served by the taut, lively production Mitchell [*sic*] Nestor has directed here. The praise Brundage wins under his pen-name, John Herbert, and the art of washing our dirty linen in the neighbor's yard may indeed bring him the recognition in Canada he deserves."[11]

For his part, in noting that *Fortune*'s critical reception in New York has been "mixed," and that the "resistance of the entertainment departments of the press and other media to the play" borders on "active hostility," Cohen, a longtime supporter of Herbert, maintains that such reaction proves that *Fortune and Men's Eyes* "poses a truly critical challenge. It asks deeply disturbing questions about long-established personal and social assumption [*sic*]. It does not enrich our vision. It undermines it."[12] Thanks in large measure to Cohen's active endorsement of the play and his ongoing tracking

of successive productions, cultural impresarios in Canada started to take notice. Cinemax Canada eventually joined MGM as co-producers of the film version of *Fortune*, and the Canadian Film Development Fund helped finance the production, which took place on location at a penitentiary in Québec City.

While belated interest in a native son who achieved success south of the border helps to explain the CFDC's somewhat surprising (especially in its cautious early days) involvement in so controversial a project, in order to understand the process that led MGM to attach itself to a film based on a "queer-themed" play by a little-known Canadian, it is important to place the play's second New York production into context. June 28, 1969, was, of course, a watershed moment in the history of North American gay liberation: the impact of the riots at the Stonewall Inn, where queers fought back against their police oppressors, cannot be underestimated. Moreover, within the context of the argument outlined in this paper, it is also worth stressing that it was the drag queens who were at the front lines of this revolt. The increased political visibility in the media that resulted from Stonewall was accompanied by an increased artistic visibility on stage.

The landmark production of Mart Crowley's *The Boys in the Band*, for example, had opened off-Broadway only a year earlier. Its depiction of nine self-absorbed (and self-hating) gay men gathering at a surprise birthday party for one of its members received mostly rave reviews from the straight press, evoking numerous comparisons to Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (itself a closet gay drama) and prompting *New York Times* critic Clive Barnes to philosophize as follows: "We are a long way from 'Tea and Sympathy' here. The point is that this is not a play about a homosexual, but a play that takes the homosexual milieu, and the homosexual way of life, totally for granted and uses this as a valid basis of human experience. Thus it is a homosexual play, not a play about homosexuality."[13] Although gay audiences were much more mixed in their reactions, the play quickly became a phenomenon: it opened in London in 1969, was immortalized in an A&M cast recording, and was eventually adapted for the screen (with the same original off-Broadway cast) in 1970 by director William Friedkin, who ten years later would gain infamy in the gay community for making the Al Pacino vehicle *Cruising* (USA, 1980), about a "gay" serial killer and the cop who goes "undercover" to catch him.

A year after *The Boys in the Band* opened in New York, and only four months after the Stonewall Riots, former Hollywood-ingenue-turned-theatrical-risk-taker Sal Mineo directed a controversial revival of *Fortune*

and Men's Eyes at Stage 73, with Michael Greer in the pivotal role of Queenie, a role he would reprise in the screen version (a fortunate bit of casting that I will return to momentarily). The remount involved a significant "gaying up" of the material, with lots of nudity and a specific focus on the scenes of male-male sex, both consensual and non-consensual. This time around, the estimable Clive Barnes was not amused. "I consider that the changes Mr. Mineo has made in this play have been in the interest of sexual titillation—chiefly of the sado-masochistic variety—rather than in the interest of drama," he opined in the *Times*. "There is no objection to sexual titillation (although I strongly believe that pornography of a sado-masochistic nature is the one thing that should be outlawed) but I resent very much when it poses as raw and vital art."[14] Despite Barnes's and other reviewers' protests, the remounting of the play was a hit. Given this sudden craze for "homosexual images," is it any wonder that MGM wanted its own "gay movie" to do business alongside that of its rival, CBS Films, who produced *The Boys in the Band*?

According to Vito Russo, however, MGM's interest in *Fortune*, and particularly that of co-producer Lester Persky, was the kiss of death for the film. Not only did Persky sack original director Jules Schwerin (who had presided over the first thirty-one days of the film's shoot in Québec City, and who was apparently interested in using the film to make a plea for prison reform), replacing him with Harvey Hart, but he did so, in Russo's estimation, in order to change "the basis of...Herbert's play (seemingly with the cooperation of the author) from a comment on sex as power to an exploitation of sex as a matter of gender identification."[15] Russo's central objection to the film version finished by Hart is that it fails to adequately stress that the heteronormative roles of "old man" and "wife," "politician" and "mother" that Smitty, Rocky, Mona, and Queenie alternately find themselves acquiescing to and resisting, overturning and displacing, are situationally contingent, engendered (Russo's term) by the institution of the prison itself, where sex as an eroto-genital act, as opposed to sexuality as an identity category, is a commodity to be traded, like cigarettes, drugs, cushy work details, and freshly pressed linen.

Instead of critiquing "a society that demands we play one sexual role and one sexual role only," Russo claims that the movie version turns *Fortune* into a "sexual peep show," playing up "a covert homoeroticism for a burgeoning 'gay market'" by having the camera linger, for example, over scenes of male nudity and gang rape, and internalizing homosexual stereotypes of the active, masculine, straight-identified top and the passive, feminine, bottom.[16]

The *coup de grâce*, according to Russo, is the fact that in the movie, unlike in the play, Rocky commits suicide after he is successively humiliated by Smitty in front of their fellow inmates and the prison guards, the implication being that death is preferable to submitting to this reversal of dominant roles.

Russo's condemnation of the film adaptation of *Fortune* was presaged by several other contemporary gay reviewers, whose chorus of disapproval stood in contrast to the generally favourable notices the film received from straight critics.[17] Writing in *The New York Times*, Stuart Byron noted that the film is

> unbearably confusing in its treatment of homosexuality. Near the end, in a tender scene between Smitty and Mona, it seems to be saying that homosexuality is as valid a form of love as any other kind, and even that, by being a prisoner, Smitty found out something which would have been denied him otherwise. Yet everything else in the film, intensified by the leering, overwrought direction of Harvey Hart, screams and yells that prison is bad because it causes homosexuality.[18]

Village Voice critic Richard McGuiness claimed, "The film has an unliberated, craven homosexual personality.... Gay and proud it is not. Elusive, self-destructive and cruel it is."[19] And Jack Babuscio compared *Fortune* unfavourably to Jean Genet's classic prison-set film of homoerotic sexual fantasy, *Un Chant d'Amour*, declaring that Genet's 1947 film "goes far further than the sadly compromised film version of John Herbert's play. Genet...challenges the morality of his audiences. The real prison, he seems to be saying, is within."[20]

While I sympathize to a certain degree with some of the criticisms made by Russo and other critics, and while I do think that MGM and Persky's interest in *Fortune* was cynically motivated (something which backfired on them, as the film performed poorly at the box office), I also think that Russo, in particular, errs greatly in trying to separate "sex-as-power" from "sex as a matter of gender identification." Both the play and the film question the rigid gender roles imposed on men in our society, demonstrating how sex *becomes* or is *acquired* as an instrument of power: Smitty learns from Rocky what it means to rape, from Mona what it means to be raped, and from Queenie how one negotiates between these two extremes. That Smitty by the end of the play and the film displaces Rocky as the cell's "old man" indicates just how well he has absorbed the brutal lessons

of masculine identity formation. Moreover, while I agree that Rocky's death in the film is somewhat problematic in terms of what Russo calls its "equation between homosexual discovery and suicide,"[21] I think that Russo retrospectively mis-reads key aspects of the play, particularly in the changes made in adapting it for the screen.

Finally, I think Russo's failure to discuss in any substantive way the two self-identified queer characters in the film, Mona and Queenie, is rather puzzling. Queenie, in particular, has undergone substantial revision between play and film, with Herbert's screenplay moving her from the peripheries to the centre of the action. As played by Michael Greer, these changes to Queenie's character are arguably even more iconically—and iconographically—rendered. For, not only did Greer play the role on stage two years earlier in Mineo's controversial revival of *Fortune*, but that same year he appeared as the flamboyant queen Malcolm in Bruce Kessler's *The Gay Deceivers* (USA, 1969), a performance Russo effusively praises in *The Celluloid Closet*, which makes his glossing over of Greer's performance as Queenie in Hart's film all the more curious. In her reclaiming and embracing of the epithet "faggot," in her promiscuous switching of allegiances between and among her cellmates, and especially in her tour de force drag performance and the specific gender (dis)identifications it prompts in her audience, Queenie in the screen version would seem to destabilize the proscribed social norms that Russo rails against at every turn. Indeed, from a late-1990s Judith Butler-inspired perspective, we might say that Queenie is among the most "critically queer" characters in the film.[22]

In this regard, Queenie, the self-declared "mother" of the cell, ironically seems to disrupt heterosexual role-playing in prison every chance she gets. Whenever couples re-form along old man/wife lines, she renders these liaisons asunder. It is Queenie, for example, who first reveals to Smitty Rocky's gender hypocrisy, noting that Rocky essentially played the role of "wife" on the outside, being kept by a wealthy sugar daddy. (Rocky himself reveals to Smitty that the reason he ended up in jail was that, during an S/M scene with his lover, he refused to reverse roles and allow himself to be topped; in a fit of rage, Rocky stole his lover's car and a bunch of jewellery.) Queenie also reminds Rocky, in front of Smitty, of his "first semester" at the prison, when Rocky came in for some special attention of his own from an older inmate named Screwdriver: "Wasn't it Screwdriver who gave you your coming out party? I believe he made you debutante of the year." The implication of Queenie's comments, supported by other scenes in the film, is that this relationship between Rocky and Screwdriver continues, that

every cell's old man plays boy to another politician further up the ladder. It is after this scene that Queenie counsels Smitty to turn the tables on Rocky by fighting him in the showers.

At the end of the film, Queenie, newly returned from solitary following her drag show at the Christmas pageant, disrupts Smitty and Mona just as Mona says "I love you" to Smitty, because the same heteronormative paradigm is once again reestablishing itself. Although it *is* possible to read Queenie's actions throughout as motivated by her own jealousy and unrequited love for Rocky—she does seem, at the end of the film, to be visibly upset by Rocky's suicide, and the sight of Smitty and Mona in a clinch on what used to be Rocky's bunk might be read as "setting her off"—her subsequent remarks to Mona after Smitty is lead away to solitary seem to contextualize her actions in terms of a defiantly oppositional queer stance: "There'll be other Smitties," she says to an upset Mona, adding that "If you weren't such a goddamn martyr...well, honey, I could almost like you."

It is worth spending a bit more time on the ending of the film, because it subtly revises the play's narrative closing and, in so doing, radically shifts its dominant sexual epistemology. In the play, as in the film, Mona and Smitty are alone in the cell. After Mona reveals how he ended up in prison—by being falsely accused of opportuning his homophobic assailants—Smitty tries to put the make on his young cellmate, offering to become his old man. Mona rejects the overture, recognizing that it is motivated only by "circumstance," and that he is being offered "indifference," not love. "I separate things in order to live with others and myself," he tells Smitty. "What my body does and feels is one thing, and what I think and feel apart from that is something else.... It's to the world I dream in you belong. It endures better. I won't let you move over, into the other, where I would become worthless to you—and myself. I have a right to save something."[23] The rejection, because it directly assails the sexual and gender hierarchies he has so recently internalized, provokes a violent reaction in Smitty, and after first verbally assaulting Mona, he then turns on him physically: "Did you think I wanted your body? You make me sick. I wanted some kind of reaction to me, and only because I'm caught in this hellhole, you filthy fairy! You cocksucker!"[24]

The film makes it very clear that Smitty does indeed want Mona's body by having actors Wendell Burton and Danny Freedman mime a struggle over Smitty's desire to have Mona go down on him. Moreover, the camera's close-up makes it clear that their reconciliation—effected by Mona's admission of love for Smitty (something less explicitly articulated in the

play)—will likely be sealed with a kiss, which is interrupted only by the untimely (or timely, depending on one's viewpoint) return of Queenie to the cell. In the play, by contrast, it is the poetry of Shakespeare that brings Mona and Smitty back together, specifically Sonnet 29, which also furnishes Herbert with his title. (In the movie, the sonnet is visible as a fragment of text above Mona's bunk, but its enunciation is notably displaced onto a pop song that plays over the opening and closing credits; I will have more to say about the film's deliberate marginalization of Shakespeare below.)

It is at this point in the play that Queenie and the still very much alive Rocky return to the cell. Queenie, who we learned only moments before has been sleeping with Smitty (a plot revelation noticeably absent from the film), flies, in true bitch-queen fashion, at Mona. Rocky and Smitty join the fray and a full-scale brawl ensues. When the guard breaks up the melee and demands an explanation, Queenie and Rocky claim that Mona had been making a pass at Smitty. Despite Smitty's denials of this claim, as well as his offer of a fifty-dollar bribe to the guard, Mona is "not going to get off so easy": "Up off your ass, you little pansy!," the guard yells at him. "You know what you got the last time this happened, don't you? You can bend over all you want, in the kitchen."[25] Mona is then led away screaming, with Smitty vainly trying to retroactively claim responsibility for making the pass (which is, of course, the way it happened in the first place). Smitty then turns on Rocky and Queenie, laying the ground rules for their immediate and future submission to his dominance as top dog of the cell. Having fully usurped Rocky's position, in the closing tableau of the play Smitty lights a cigarette with Rocky's lighter and stretches out on Rocky's bunk, *"a slight, twisted smile that is somehow cold, sadistic and menacing"*—as the stage directions read—playing across his face as he speaks his final line: "I'll pay you all back."[26]

The quid pro quo of the sex/gender and prison systems thus remains intact at the end of the play, but can we really say this of the ending to the film adaptation? When Queenie returns to the cell in the film, alone this time, she again flies into a rage upon discovering Smitty and Mona in what appears to be an intimate embrace. But this time, when the guards are called, it is Smitty who is led away kicking and screaming. Above the clamour of voices—Smitty's pleas of innocence, Mona's screams, fellow prisoners' incitements to violence—the word "faggot" is clearly audible, repeated at least twice (by whom it is unclear) as Smitty is hauled out of the cell and down the prison corridor. In this scene, Smitty's vehement denunciation of the charge (both of starting the fight with Queenie and,

presumably, of being queer), ironically constitutes an active avowal of just the sort of role reversal he had hitherto been unable (or unwilling) to acknowledge in his reconstituting of heteronormative power dynamics within explicitly homosocial and homosexual contexts. As such, he discovers that while his "gender melancholia" (the process, according to Butler, "by which heterosexual genders form themselves through the renunciation of the *possibility* of homosexuality"[27]) entrenches a certain proscribed position of dominance in most situations, it can also deny him the space to manouevre when this position forecloses upon him.

In other words, it denies him queer agency, something that mobilizes Queenie's political resistance to all forms of institutionalized coupling within the space of the prison, and her open mocking of the heteronormative roles underpinning such coupling in her drag act; this is something that also, in its own way, mobilizes Mona's separation of what goes on in the kitchen and storerooms from what goes on in the showers. That these two "queer" characters remain in the cell while Smitty is carted off to solitary at the end of the film strikes me as a powerfully heroic (even if unintentionally so) statement to make about the regulation of desire, and about resistance to that regulation, and contrasts sharply with the opening tableau of the film, which features Smitty, handcuffed to another male prisoner, being loaded onto a bus as his girlfriend mournfully gazes after him through a chain-link fence.

However, Queenie's most heroic assault against the "gender melancholia" inherent in the compulsory regime of heterosexuality comes in her triumphant drag performance at the prison's annual Christmas pageant (see Figure 1). Performed offstage in the play (we glimpse only an impromptu rehearsal that Queenie gives for Rocky, Mona, Smitty, and the Guard), in the film a full eight minutes are devoted to the spectacle and the frenzied chaos that ensues when the Warden calls an abrupt halt to the proceedings. Indeed, this scene is the most visually stylized of the film, with the camera at its most carnivalesque, miming the handheld spotlights trained upon Queenie by her fellow inmates as it swoops around her, first catching her from below, then from above, then from side to side. This is parody, to be sure, but of a highly sophisticated and critical nature, with heteronormative canonicity being displaced in much the same way as the canon of Shakespeare. When Mona attempts to recite Portia's "quality of mercy" speech from *The Merchant of Venice* (which is nothing if not a plea for the maintenance of a certain dominant, i.e. Christian, status quo or world view), he is booed off the stage; when Queenie offers her own queerly

Figure 1. *Fortune and Men's Eyes*

redistributive (but no less retributive) take on Shylock's "craving of the law," it's eaten up.

Clearly, for these prisoners, there's drag and then there's drag. While the critical crossings inherent in Mona's performance are no less complex than in Queenie's—a boy playing a woman playing a man—they work to obscure the body's legibility through concealment and disguise, through an absence of signification.[28] Mona's/Portia's speech depends for its effect on affect, on the solicitation of certain desired emotions in his/her audience. But Mona's fellow prisoners, as the film and play have up to this point made abundantly clear, lack a context both for Shakespearean quotation and any virtues of mercy extolled therein. Like Shylock, they want their pound of flesh. And Queenie happily obliges, bumping and grinding her way to a money shot that, Russo's and other reviewers' criticisms notwithstanding, is neither so narratively nor ideologically gratuitous as at first it might seem. When the Warden, repulsed by the excess of femininity on display before him, calls a halt to her act, Queenie responds by stripping off her remaining undergarments, exposing the one signifier whose meaning even the Warden cannot fail to grasp.

Indeed, the climactic revelation that, as one of the reviewers of this paper felicitously phrased it, "Queenie has a weenie" (not to mention that actor Michael Greer is a natural blond), reminds us that Queenie is performing her act for two different though simultaneously present audiences: the prison officials and their wives and the prisoners. If, in performing the "*sexually* unperformable," Queenie allegorizes or exposes what Butler calls "heterosexual melancholy" (the assumption of a masculine or feminine gender identification based upon the renunciation of—or refusal to grieve—that same gender as a "possibility of love"),[29] it must be remembered that she is doing so within a profoundly homosocial environment, where such melancholic gender identifications are even more precariously maintained. Thus, while Queenie's lascivious song and dance, her gaudily painted face and light up nipples, occasion in the warden and his screws more than a little discomfort by avowing as possible what they have disavowed as impossible, and therefore prohibitive, they have their wives beside them to preempt the full expression of their grief.

Not so for the prisoners, and for Rocky in particular, who, just prior to the start of Queenie's performance, is bumped from his seat beside Smitty by Screwdriver. The implication is clear: word has gotten out about Smitty's besting, or topping, of Rocky in the showers (indeed, this scene immediately follows upon the fight between Rocky and Smitty), and Screwdriver has shifted his political (and no doubt sexual) allegiances accordingly. Rocky is banished to the back of the room, there to mourn, or "beweep," his newly "outcast state," as Shakespeare's sonnet would have it. That Queenie, the prison's "good fairy," is playing as much to Rocky's personal anxiety over the possibility that he has just been publicly outed as "queer," as she is to the collective heterosexual melancholy of the assembled audience, is made clear through specific codings in the lyrics of her song: she taunts Rocky during one of her sashays to the back of the room by singing "I'll be glad to give your bed a test—remember, Rocky?" And, on passing the bench where Screwdriver and Smitty are sitting, she croons "He's free, Driver, he's free." The song itself, "It's Free" (written by Michael Greer, who also composed most of his own dialogue for *The Gay Deceivers*), queers the pitch even further by parodying the economics of exchange that characterize heteronormative relations in both the sex/gender and prison systems:

> When you're out with me, you're out on bail.
> My hips are tripped to take you out of jail.
> And, as you can see,
> There's quite a lot of me.
> And it's free, Daddy,
> It's free.

The prison officials cannot contain the cross-gender identifications unleashed by Queenie's tour de force striptease: a riot erupts when the Warden calls a halt to the performance and orders the naked "pervert" to spend a week in the hole. Neither can the film itself contain Queenie. And I mean this quite literally. She, alone among the characters in *Fortune and Men's Eyes*, turns up in another of Herbert's later plays. "Pearl Divers," one of four short works that make up *Some Angry Summer Songs*, premiered in Toronto in 1974. It features Queenie, newly released from prison, applying for a wait staff position as part of a government-sponsored rehabilitation program. She announces her presence on stage by singing the last few bars of Helen Kane's "I Wanna Be Loved By You," and, in typical fashion,

proceeds to offend both the restaurant's gruff hostess and its harried assistant manager. Only the working-class Irish dishwasher, Mary, recognizes in Queenie a fellow foot soldier in the ongoing war against normative bourgeois culture and, since Mary really runs the joint, promptly hires her on the spot.

• • •

This aspect of the drag queen exceeding the parameters of the final frame of the film is also a constitutive feature of two other film adaptations to emerge from Canada and Québec during this period. La Duchesse de Langeais and Hosanna had already had individual plays devoted to them, in 1969 and 1973 respectively, when Michel Tremblay's long-time director, André Brassard, brought them together on screen in *Il était une fois dans l'est* in 1974. But Sandra, arguably the film's pivotal queen in terms of her destabilization of the narrative and sexual epistemologies of Tremblay's previously published dramatic corpus—and especially those of the play that immediately preceded the release of the film, i.e. *Hosanna*—would have to wait until 1977 for her own moment in the theatrical spotlight in *Damnée Manon, sacrée Sandra*, the final installment of his "Belles-Sœurs cycle." In the film not only does Sandra, at the club that bears her name, stage in the film the scene of Hosanna's humiliation that we only hear about in the 1973 play, but, in so doing, she shifts the focus on identity inherent in both away from questions of national authenticity to a more explicit engagement with questions of gender and sexual ambivalence.[30]

In the play Claude/Hosanna's dispensing of his Elizabeth Taylor-as-Cleopatra costume is meant to signify, according to the playwright, that he has "kill[ed] all the ghosts around him as Quebec did";[31] whereas, in the film the proliferation of Cleopatras on screen, each one more resplendent and beautiful than Hosanna, visually reinforces for the viewer what Butler has called the "imitative structure" and "radical contingency" of gender itself,[32] exposing what's real as a copy, and the copy as what's real (see Figure 2). Like Queenie, Sandra is motivated primarily by self-interest, but she is also critically aware of the heteronormative presumption that underscores life both on and off the Main, including Hosanna's relationship with her boyfriend, Cuirette.

Likewise, Craig Russell was simply "too outrageous" in his first screen outing as Robin, drag star on the rise and soul mate to Hollis McLaren's

Figure 2. *Il était une fois dans l'est*

Figure 3. *Outrageous!*

schizophrenic Liza (see Figure 3) not to have a sequel of that very name eventually devoted to his outsized talents in 1987, to say nothing of Brad Fraser's recent morbid attempts at reviving Robin/Russell's divaesque spirit in the musical version of *Outrageous!*, which briefly played Toronto's Canadian Stage from September to October, 2000. The process of bringing *Outrageous!*, in its initial incarnation, to the screen involved not so much changing Margaret Gibson's original narrative, as elaborating it or filling it in, the short story upon which the film is based having been written as a series of letters between Liza and Robin.[33] But the epistolary genre is historically based on certain normative romantic conventions, and it should come as no surprise, then, that as much as Gibson queers those conventions in her story, reproductive sexuality looms large throughout.

While Liza's pregnancy remains a significant focalizing event in the film, it is not the only one, and both the gay male and the straight female main characters are depicted as happily non-monogamous and sexually promiscuous. Moreover, the film's narrative does not end with the stillbirth of Liza's child, as it does in the story. Rather Robin, who in Gibson's text cannot bring himself to reply to Liza's news that "Vanessa was born dead,"[34] reanimates Liza's thirst for life by bringing her to New York and by demonstrating that they can make their own queer family without replicating the structures of heteronormative domesticity. "I've never known anyone worth knowing who wasn't a positive fruitcake," Robin, dressed as Tallulah Bankhead, tells Liza in the film's closing frames. "You and me are here to love and look after each other."

At one point, early on in *Outrageous!*, Robin's boss at the hair salon where he works is reluctant to give Robin time off work to practice his "tacky drag." Worried about losing the "straight edge" he has cultivated among his women clients, the boss vows that he will never have "a drag

queen working in my shop." And, true to his word, he eventually fires Robin after the gay son of one of his clients mentions having caught Robin's nighttime act. The reaction of Robin's boss accords with similar sentiments expressed by many gays and lesbians who were active politically and socially in the decade after Stonewall. The drag queen didn't parody society's gender roles; she internalized the worst of their sex-affective stereotypes. Her hyper-femininity did not constitute a subversion of the patriarchal system but was rather a reconstitution of a culturally inherited misogyny. Such views perhaps go a distance towards contextualizing the fact that another constitutive feature of the reception of *Il était une fois* and *Outrageous!* is that, like *Fortune*, they too attracted their share of negative criticism from the gay press, with Robert Trow, in the July/August 1975 issue of *The Body Politic*, lamenting the "uncritical way" Tremblay and Brassard present the "shattered lives" of their protagonists, and Michael Riordon, in the October 1977 issue of the same magazine, questioning Richard Benner's motives in pitching the gay stereotype of a hairdresser/drag queen to a mostly straight audience: "Will one heterosexual be changed by it—not comforted but changed, challenged, moved to original thought?"[35]

What a difference a few decades—and a few thousand pounds of pancake, eyeliner, and sequins—make. Whereas in the "gay 70s" the drag queen was quite often someone to denigrate and/or pity, in the "queer 90s and 00s," she's someone to celebrate and even emulate, exported to mainstream, heteronormative culture as a metonym for virtually the whole spectrum of the queer community. This process has been greatly facilitated by Hollywood. What gay-themed, studio-produced movie of the past decade hasn't featured a drag queen in a prominent, and prominently heroic, role? *To Wong Foo...* (USA, 1995, Beeban Kidron), *The Birdcage* (USA, 1996, Mike Nichols), and *Flawless* (USA, 1999, Joel Schumacher) are just three examples where Hollywood actors like Patrick Swayze, Wesley Snipes, Philip Seymour Hoffman, and the oh-so-butch Nathan Lane have camped it up in crinolined chiffon and shiny taffeta. Independent films produced from within the gay community also frequently contain a requisite scene featuring a larger-than-life drag queen.[36] In fact, drag has become so synonymous with queerness in the twenty-first century, especially as represented on film, that the Showcase channel in Canada has run, for the past several years, a series of ads promoting its June Pride Film Festival featuring three drag queens (Toronto's B-Girlz; see Figure 4) and three drag kings dancing and spouting famous lines from movies like *On the Waterfront* (USA, 1954, Elia Kazan) and *Taxi Driver* (USA, 1976, Mrtin Scorsese). At the end

of each ad, in a parody of the Gap's ubiquitous consumer rhetoric and in a subtle critique of gender as commodity fetish, the text reads: "Everyone in drag."

Figure 4. *B-Girlz*

The popular dissemination of drag in film and other media coincided, in the 1990s, with its critical rehabilitation in queer theory as the *sine qua non* of gender "performativity" (Butler) and "undecidability" (Garber). Critics like Judith Butler, Marjorie Garber, Carole-Anne Tyler, and John Champagne, among others, saw drag as a powerful deconstructive tool of normative culture.[37] (And I should note that I am not exempt, especially in this paper, from this list.) Indeed, according to Butler, "drag fully subverts the distinction between inner and outer psychic space and effectively mocks both the expressive model of gender and the notion of a true gender identity."[38] While Butler would later disavow, in *Bodies That Matter*, any notion of drag as unproblematically "*exemplary* of performativity" or of putting on a gender the way one puts on clothes,[39] she does so, interestingly, by citing (repeatedly) Jennie Livingston's *Paris is Burning* (USA, 1991), a documentary about the drag balls put on by rival "houses"of gay and transgendered Latinos and African-Americans in Harlem.

Livingston's film has received a lot of ink from queer critics, including Garber and Champagne, for the way its subjects parody the normative "realness" of various identity categories such as gender, race, sexuality, and class. In so doing, several of these critics seem to imply that transvestism and transsexualism are coextensive terms, subsumed equally under the drag ball participants' resistance of "a normalized, gendered subjectivity."[40] This elision is particularly apparent in discussions of the fate of Venus Xtravaganza, the petite and light-skinned transgendered ball walker and sex worker who can presumably pass as white, but not completely as a woman, as her subsequent murder (by a trick, perhaps) implies. This tendency to conflate the drag queen with the transgendered person as oppositional hero/heroine is also replicated in several recent feature films. In Stephen Elliott's *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (Australia, 1994), many reviewers conveniently overlooked the fact that Terrence Stamp's Bernadette, unlike her fellow ABBA-loving divas, is actually transgendered. And in *Flawless*, Philip Seymour Hoffman's Rusty, in addition to

Figure 5. *Better Than Chocolate*

tinkling the ivories for Robert De Niro, is actually saving up for sex reassignment surgery.

Recently, of course, the transsexual (at least the male-to-female transsexual) has emerged in popular film and television as a fully-fledged hero/heroine in his/her own right, and one who even more radically and subversively "troubles" gender and sexual norms. Think of the Lady Chablis, playing herself, in Clint Eastwood's otherwise forgettable *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* (USA, 1997); or of John Cameron Mitchell's star turn in *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (USA, 2001, John Cameron Mitchell); or of any of Pedro Almodovar's beloved trannies, including those featured most recently in the award-winning *All About My Mother* (Spain, 1999); or even of little Ludovic's re-orientation of his family's gender politics in Alain Berliner's *Ma Vie en rose* (France, 1997). Of course, for every fictional Hedwig, for every Anna Madrigal and Roberta Muldoon, for every Dil and Heaven and Kim Foyle, there is always the embodied life (and death) of a Venus Xtravaganza, or a Robert Eads, or a Brandon Teena—Hillary Swank's Oscar-winning turn in Kimberley Pierce's *Boys Don't Cry* (USA, 1999) notwithstanding.[41]

That the transsexual may in fact be eclipsing the drag queen in film as the ambivalent sign of gender instability, on the one hand, and narrative coherence on the other, can be seen in two recent films to emerge from this country, one from English Canada, and one from Québec. In Anne Wheeler's frothy *Better Than Chocolate* (1998), based on Peggy Thompson and Sharon McGowan's liberal romp through recent Vancouver queer history, Peter Outerbridge plays Judy Squires, a male-to-female transsexual who self-identifies as a lesbian and is in love with Ann-Marie MacDonald's uptight bookseller, Frances. Judy is not only made to suffer the grossest indignities in the film (renunciation by her parents, harassment by gender-policing dykes), she also emerges as the film's wise, moral centre, as illustrated by her help in reconciling baby dyke Maggie (Karyn Dwyer) with her mother Lila (Wendy Crewson) (see Figure 5). She is also given a bravura scene, in which she sings, at the local Cat's Ass dyke bar, the show-stopping number "I am Not a Fucking Drag Queen."

Figure 6. *Le Sexe des étoiles*

Five years earlier, in 1993, Paule Baillargeon's film adaptation of Monique Proulx's 1987 *Le Sexe des étoiles* surfaced briefly in Canadian theatres. In Proulx's sexually polymorphous and narratively polyphonic novel, Marie-Pierre Deslauriers, a former award-winning microbiologist, returns to Montréal following a successful sex change operation in order to reconcile with her young daughter, Camille, a budding astronomer. Woven into this story are those of several other Montréalais and Montréalaise, including a blowzy but efficient female radio researcher and a blocked male writer, who cross paths with Marie-Pierre and, in turn, become fascinated by her complicated sexuality, as well as the apparent ease with which she inhabits this sexuality. Marie-Pierre, whose excesses (in dress, in food and drink, and in the recounting of her own life story) are wonderfully matched by the hyperbolic expressiveness of Proulx's prose, delights in confounding the normative assumptions of these "Biologiques," as she calls them, suggesting that Gaby, the researcher, must learn to get more in touch with her male "yang" side, and telling Dominique, the newly unblocked writer, that he is not really in love with her, but rather "l'idée que je représente, tu aimes en moi la Femme avec un F majuscule, justement.... Tu es très énormément excité, mon chou, par mon F majuscule. Ne compte pas sur moi pour régler tes problèmes."[42] The genderfuck that Marie-Pierre so revels in is replicated in the narrative construction of the novel, with the authorial/authoritative representation of the male and female writing subject merging at least twice, once when the text of the final paragraph of Proulx's novel mirrors that of the final paragraph of Dominique's, and again when Gaby, sent a copy of Dominique's manuscript following his untimely death in a traffic accident, crosses out Dominique's name on the title page and appends her own.

All of this is absent from the film version, as Proulx, adapting her own work in the screenplay, chooses to cut Gaby and Dominique, concentrating instead on the family triangle between Marie-Pierre, Camille, and Michèle (Camille's mother and Marie-Pierre's estranged wife), as well as on Camille's blossoming romance with Lucky Poitras, a classmate who moonlights as a young male prostitute. Once again we find in a film adaptation

a radically different sexual epistemology to accompany the narrative changes made to the source text. This time, however, the results do not challenge heteronormative culture, but rather reinscribe some of its most entrenched clichés regarding masculinity and femininity. Marie-Pierre, rather than heroically celebrating her new identity, as she does in the novel, must sublimate and repress it in order to ease Camille through the transition into young womanhood (see Figure 6).

Indeed, as the film nears its conclusion Marie-Pierre, in straight male drag, says good-bye to Camille, having just been bribed by Michèle to leave for New York and never see Camille again. There follows a cut to a scene a few months later. Camille, up until this point a rather androgynous-looking young girl, is in the bathroom, applying make-up and fixing her hair; after kissing her mother good-bye, she dons a helmet and hops aboard Lucky's scooter, wrapping her arms around him. Camille, who earlier in the film (and book) railed against the "coupling" of the universe and ruminated on the fact that, among the stars at any rate, such couples are the product of a "paradoxe le plus fantasque: les Trous noirs et les Quasars,"[43] is now effectively–and very heterosexually–coupled.

A similar sort of black hole often surrounds our understanding of gender (a space of identification from which no body that matters can escape), insisting that, in order to be read legibly, there must be some sort of correspondence or coherence between one's interior, psychic identification as one or another gender, and the exterior expression of that gender, and that "if one identifies *as* a given gender, one must desire a different gender."[44] Queenie, and her drag and trans successors in film, do not automatically free us from such imprisoning logic.[45] But the figure (an "iconographic" or "hyberbolic" figure, in the words of Butler) s/he represents on screen does help to expose the limits of a theory of gender and sexual identity (or any identity, for that matter) based on causality or equivalence. Moreover, as both a seasoned performer *and* a seasoned prisoner, Queenie understands better than most that any role is situationally contingent, dependent equally on who is taking it on, where it is being played out, and who is receiving it.

NOTES

1. The series, now in its fifth season, is carried on the HBO network in the United States, and on Showcase in Canada.
2. The present paper is part of a larger study examining the relationship between genre and gender in film treatments of Canadian and Québécois literature, where the theoretical implications of adaptation are addressed extensively.

3. Originally published in 1981, *The Celluloid Closet* was republished in a revised edition in 1987 (see note 15).

4. He was later incarcerated in another Toronto-area reformatory after he was arrested for appearing in public in drag. See the obituary by Kate Taylor, "John Herbert: Playwright Wrote Landmark Drama," *Globe and Mail*, 26 June 2001, R7.

5. John Herbert, *Fortune and Men's Eyes* (New York: Grove, 1967), 35-6.

6. Ibid., 51.

7. Ibid., 89

8. See, for example, Jerry Wasserman, who, in the introduction to the canonical anthology *Modern Canadian Drama* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1986), lists 1967 as the "key date" for the beginning of modern drama in English Canada, citing such defining moments as the Centennial, Expo 67, and the Dominion Drama Festival, alongside contemporaneous productions of James Coulter's *Louis Riel*, George Ryga's *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*, and Herbert's *Fortune and Men's Eyes*.

9. The 1975 production of the play was staged at the Phoenix Theatre in Toronto, and was directed by Graham Harley. It promptly won the Chalmers Award for Best Play, a "belated Canadian acknowledgement" which Herbert accepted with "a mixture of humour and irony" (see Geraldine Anthony, ed. *Stage Voices: Twelve Canadian Playwrights Talk About Their Lives and Work* [Toronto: Doubleday, 1978], 166). Lest the national slight against Herbert be over-emphasized (not that the author himself didn't interpret it this way), it should also be pointed out that a touring production of the off-Broadway show (with the original cast) did visit Toronto in October 1967 for a brief run, and was enthusiastically reviewed by Nathan Cohen (see "Fortune and Men's Eyes Rich in Reality," *Toronto Daily Star*, 20 Oct. 1967, 23).

10. See Dan Sullivan, "Theater: A Distressing 'Fortune and Men's Eyes,'" *The New York Times*, 24 Feb. 1967, 29; and Edith Oliver, Review of *Fortune and Men's Eyes*, *The New Yorker*, 4 March 1967, 134.

11. Herbert Whittaker, "Toronto's Jack Brundage Has a Winner," *Globe and Mail*, 4 March 1967, 18.

12. Nathan Cohen, "Prison Drama Softened," *Toronto Daily Star*, 17 April 1967, 22.

13. Clive Barnes, "Theater: 'Boys in the Band' Opens Off Broadway," *The New York Times*, 15 April 1968, 48. Of the comparisons with Albee, Barnes made sure that he was first off the mark: "As the conventional thing to say about Mart Crowley's 'The Boys in the Band' will be something to the effect that it makes Edward Albee's 'Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?' seem like a vicarage tea party, let me at least take the opportunity of saying it first."

14. Clive Barnes, "Theater: Question Marks at Stage 73," *The New York Times*, 23 October 1969, 55.

15. Vito Russo, *The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies*, revised edition (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), 198. Schwerin, a left-leaning documentarian and educational filmmaker from New York, saw *Fortune* "in the greatest tradition of cinema and social drama" (see Dane Lanken, "Director has credentials," *Montreal Gazette*, 7 Nov. 1970, 37). By contrast, Hart was a journeyman director who had worked mostly in television, and whose job it was to wrap up an over-budget production as quickly as possible. Thus, if the film's narrative seems at times to unspool at generic cross purposes, this has as much to do with each director's different film training as it does with any additional exigencies experienced on the set.

16. Russo, 198, 199.

17. See, for example, the capsule reviews in *Newsweek*, 5 July 1971, 72 and *The New York Times*, 2 Sept. 1971, 125.

18. Stuart Byron, "Finally–Two Films Dealing With the Issues of Gay Lib," *The New York Times*, 18 July 1971, 12. Both Byron and Russo decry the tag line that accompanied MGM's advertising and promotion of the film–"What goes on in prison is a crime"–rightly suggesting that the "crime" being alluded to here is homosexuality.

19. Quoted in Russo, 199.

20. Quoted in Russo, 200. Interestingly, fellow British gay film critic Richard Dyer explicitly places *Fortune* in a tradition of films "that have the Genet flavour" (see Richard Dyer, *Now You See It: Studies on Lesbian and Gay Film* [London: Routledge, 1990], 101).

21. Russo, 198.

22. See the last chapter of Judith Butler's *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 223-42.

23. Herbert, 89.

24. Ibid., 90.

25. Ibid., 94.

26. Ibid., 96.

27. Butler, 235.

28. In the play, Mona's recitation follows Queenie's act rather than proceeds it, and he is able, with Smitty's encouragement, to get through the whole speech–although he is later discouraged from delivering it at the Christmas concert itself. For interesting readings of Mona's cross-gender performance within the play, specifically as it contrasts with Queenie's, see Ann P. Messenger, "Damnation at Christmas: John Herbert's 'Fortune and Men's Eyes,'" in *Dramatists in Canada: Selected Essays*, William H. New, ed. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1972), 174-5; and Neil Carson, "Sexuality and Identity in *Fortune and Men's Eyes*," *Twentieth Century Literature* 18.3 (1972): 214. More recently, Robert Wallace has convincingly argued that "Mona's drag performance, while less stereotypical than Queenie's, is more sophisticated in its technique. Replacing the obvious parody of Queenie's act with complex intertextual ironies, Mona's performance politicises role-playing by eliciting negative reactions." Moreover, Wallace suggests that "[m]etonymically, the performance of Mona, like Queenie's performance, initiates a crisis of category that more than subverts stable classifications of Herbert's play" and that has led to ongoing "academic confusion" about its generic status as either gay drama or social problem play. (Robert Wallace, "Defying Category: Re/viewing John Herbert's *Fortune and Men's Eyes*," in *Siting the Other: Re-visions of Marginality in Australian and English-Canadian Drama*," Marc Maufort and Franca Bellarsi, eds. [Brussels: Peter Lang, 2001], 304, 305.) Reid Gilbert has likewise argued that "[i]t is around the character of Mona that gender debate [in *Fortune*] centres." However, Gilbert conflates key differences in the play and the film in his description of Queenie's and Mona's drag performances (Reid Gilbert, "'My Mother Wants Me to Play Romeo Before It's Too Late': Framing Gender on Stage," *Theatre Research in Canada* 14.2 [1993]: 127).

29. Butler, 236, 235.

30. For a reading of how different productions of *Hosanna*, the play, have also accomplished similar allegorical shifts (see Robert Schwartzwald, "From Authenticity to Ambivalence: Michel Tremblay's *Hosanna*," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 22.4

[1992]: 499- 510; see, as well, Peter Dickinson, *Here is Queer: Nationalisms, Sexualities, and the Literatures of Canada* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999], 108-15). André Loiselle has demonstrated, in this regard, how the film, coming as it does in the middle of Tremblay's "Belles-Sœurs cycle," in many ways "frees" Tremblay's later plays from the burden of nationalist allegorization and overdetermination, although Thomas Waugh has also shown that the film was itself subject to just this kind of nationalist overdetermination from several reviewers in Québec (see André Loiselle, "The Function of André Brassard's *Il était une fois dans l'est* in the Context of Michel Tremblay's 'Cycle des Belles-Sœurs'" [Master's thesis, University of British Columbia, 1989]; Thomas Waugh, "Fairy Tales of Two Cities: Queer Nation[s]–National Cinema[s]," in *In a Queer Country: Gay and Lesbian Studies in the Canadian Context*, Terry Goldie, ed. [Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp, 2001], 285-305).

31. Michel Tremblay, in Anthony, ed., 284.

32. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 137, 138.

33. The story is based on Gibson's real-life struggle with mental illness and her friendship with Craig Russell.

34. Margaret Gibson, "Making It," *The Butterfly Ward* (Toronto: Oberon, 1976), 118.

35. See Robert Trow, "Once Upon a Time in the East," *The Body Politic* 9 (July/August 1975), 21; and Michael Riordon, *"Outrageous!* How Can You Argue With Success?," *The Body Politic* 37 (October 1977), 15.

36. See, for example, *Flow* (USA, 1997, Quentin Lee), *Trick* (USA, 1999, Jim Fall), and *Gypsy Boys* (USA, 2000, Brian Shepp).

37. See Butler, *Gender Trouble*. See also Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Carole-Anne Tyler, "Boys Will be Girls: The Politics of Gay Drag," in *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, Diana Fuss, ed. (New York: Routledge, 1991), 32-70; John Champagne, *The Ethics of Marginality: A New Approach to Gay Studies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).

38. Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 137.

39. Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 230.

40. Champagne, 105.

41. Anna Madrigal (Olympia Dukakis) is the wise and motherly transgendered landlady in Armistead Maupin's fictional *Tales of the City* miniseries: *Tales of the City* (UK/USA, 1993, Alastair Reid); *More Tales of the City* (Canada/UK/USA, 1998, Pierre Gang); *Further Tales of the City* (Canada/USA, 2001, Pierre Gang). Roberta Muldoon (John Lithgow) is the former pro football player who becomes Jenny Fields' (Glenn Close) bodyguard in *The World According to Garp* (USA, 1982, George Roy Hill). Dil (Jaye Davidson) and Heaven (Danny Edwards) are the soulful trans entertainers of colour in *The Crying Game* (UK, 1992, Neil Jordan) and *Heaven* (UK, 1998, Scott Reynolds), respectively. Kim/Karl Foyle (Steven Mackintosh) is a career girl pursued by a former school chum in *Different for Girls* (UK, 1997, Richard Spence). Robert Eads, an FTM diagnosed with ovarian cancer, and Lola Cola, his demure MTF partner, are members of a southern U.S. transsexual community featured in Kate Davis' *Southern Comfort* (USA, 2001). Finally, for a much more brutal look at the fate of Brandon Teena/Teena Brandon, see Susan Muska and Gréta Ólafsdóttir's *The Brandon Teena Story* (USA, 1998).

42. Monique Proulx, *Le Sexe des étoiles* (Montréal: Québec/Amérique, 1987), 229; ellipsis

in original. Matt Cohen's English translation reads as follows: "you love the idea I represent, you love in me the woman with a capital W, that's what it is.... My dear, you are tremendously excited by my capital W. Don't count on me to solve your problems" (*Sex of the Stars* [Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1996], 173).

43. *Le Sexe des étoiles*, 159; "the most fantastic paradox: black holes and quasars" (*Sex of the Stars*, 117).

44. Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 239.

45. Witness, in this regard, the somewhat problematical ending of Mitchell's *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, which sees Hedwig doff her stage attire and female "persona" in favour of her more authentic naked, and very masculine-looking, self, and which sees what appears to be her hitherto FTM-identified partner and bandmate, Yitzak, with the aid of a makeover and Hedwig's blonde wig, finding the femme within. To Mitchell's credit, in the stage version of *Hedwig*, Yitzak was played by a male actor as a gay-identified character. Miriam Shor's undertaking of the role in the film version necessarily complicates such a reading. Nevertheless, however we read–or read through–Yitzak's/Shor's body, Mitchell's representation of gender identification and presentment in this film remains muddled, to say the least. My thanks to Becki Ross and Judith Halberstam for enlightening conversations on the gender politics of *Hedwig*.

PETER DICKINSON is Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Simon Fraser University. He is the author of *Here is Queer: Nationalisms, Sexualities, and the Literatures of Canada*, and has recently edited "Literatures, Cinemas, Cultures," a special issue of the journal *Essays on Canadian Writing* on film adaptation.