

Mannequins on the Stage: Contemporary Theatrical Adaptations as a Socio-Cultural Discourse on Gender Fluidity

Angadbir Singh Kakkar

PhD Research Scholar, Department of English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University, India.

Abstract: The proposed research paper analyses contemporary socio-cultural influences on adaptations, particularly regarding the gender of characters. For this purpose, Anton Chekhov's play *Uncle Vanya* and its theatrical adaptation, *Vanya*, directed by Sam Yates, are examined. *Vanya* is a 2024 theatrical adaptation featuring a single actor, Andrew Scott, who plays the entire cast of nine characters from Chekhov's original play. Usually, one actor is associated with a single character, thereby serving as an on-stage anchor of narratorial continuity for the audience, especially regarding the gender of the character. The paper explores the unique ability of adaptations to assign multiple characters – or, in this case, all characters – to a single actor, effectively dismissing the actor as a gendered anchor. Andrew Scott plays both male and female characters without any costume or prop changes. The paper argues that this removal of blatantly gendered stage tools as a consequence of the socio-cultural nature of adaptations, focusing solely on narrative presentation, may be caused by the contemporary liberal stance regarding gender fluidity in society. This tacit socio-cultural commentary on gender fluidity in theatrical adaptations is the research gap scrutinized by this paper by expanding Jeremy Hawthorn's concept of the Gaze, where the 'gazer' and the 'gazed' interact with each other. Hawthorn comments that this Gaze enables us to connect to socio-cultural scenarios simply by being a passive participant. The paper addresses *Vanya*, a single-actor gender-less adaptation, as a possible result of a liberal society conducting itself as the 'gazer' to which current theatrical adaptations respond as the 'gazed.'

Keywords: Gaze; Gender Fluidity; Theatrical Adaptation; Chekhov

Introduction

Adaptation as a concept has always been bogged down by the heavy shackles of catering to a source text. Since adaptations are, more often than not, visual renditions – a play, a movie, or an episodic series – of a novel or a text, the field of adaptation studies is construed as comprising the evaluation of these visual adaptations in two ways. One such way is a constant, in-depth comparison with the source text; the other is an isolated study of visual adaptation with no reference to the source text (Leitch 162). Since the term ‘adaptation’ inherently adheres to a possible source text, the second of the two ways is a rare possibility. The first way, then, brings into sharp relief the remediation of the text into a visual medium. A prime concern, now, is the fidelity with which the text may be transformed and adapted into the chosen visual medium. While reading a book, a reader may focus on every word and, therefore, on every situation described, but can the same be claimed when the text is adapted into a movie being displayed on a humongous screen in a cinema hall where the two eyes of a spectator can only focus on certain elements at one point in time? Can the richness of the text, felt while reading it in absolute silence, be relished again as it is adapted on a stage, knowing that theatre actors would play their characters differently from how the reader imagines them? These questions point to the concept of ‘fidelity’ in adapting a text to a visual medium.

Thomas Leitch adequately debunks fidelity as “a hopelessly fallacious measure of a given adaptation’s value because it is unattainable, undesirable, and theoretically possible only in the trivial sense” (161). A removal of fidelity as a pre-requisite for a successful adaptation reveals the undeniable link between the source text and the adaptation. If not absolute fidelity, readers/viewers/critics seek constant comparison between the source text and the adaptation, leading to adaptations being viewed as mere “intertexts” (165). As an intertext, an adaptation is “assumed to be a window into a text on which it depends for its authority, and the business of viewers and analysis is to look through the window for signs of the original text” (Leitch 166). Since this analysis of the adaptation as an intertext is contingent upon the reception of the adaptation by the viewer – the richness of the translation (if any), whether all characters from the source text have been used in the

adaptation, whether any events mentioned in the source text have been omitted in the adaptation, and so on – the proposed research paper aims to study the influence of the viewer’s gaze on contemporary adaptations. Further, the viewer’s gaze is examined through a two-pronged approach: pre-informed reflections on the actors in the visual adaptation and the contemporary ideological and legal perspectives of viewers (regardless of the adaptation's or the source text's geographical or ideological context). In other words, these two prongs refer to the stage directions (particularly the number and gender portrayal of the actors) and the geo-temporal settings of the play.

For this purpose, this research paper investigates Anton Chekhov’s play, *Uncle Vanya*, originally published in 1897, and its 2024 theatrical adaptation *Vanya*. Chekhov’s play comprises nine characters, has four acts, is set in rural Russia, and has at least two different scene settings. *Vanya* has eight characters, is a one-act play, is set in contemporary Ireland, and has a single actor playing all the eight characters in a single setting. In order to scrutinize how the viewer’s gaze affects *Vanya* as an adaptation, the aforementioned two prongs are used like so: the pre-conceived notions pertaining to Andrew Scott, the single actor playing eight characters in *Vanya*, as a gay actor; the legal and ideological stance regarding queer sexualities in the United Kingdom (as the place where *Vanya* is shown and to where most of the viewership belongs). It must be noted that the sexuality of the actor and the United Kingdom’s (hereafter referred to as the UK) laws about queer sexualities have no active part in the theatrical adaptation of the play. This paper claims that these two contemporary influences on the viewers form a ‘passive gaze’ leading to a certain sexuality-based interpretation of the adaptation rooted in the two prongs. In other words, this paper aims to develop the stance that any changes in the adaptation (in *Vanya*, the change of the number of characters, the outward portrayal of the characters, the geographical and temporal settings) mixes with the pre-informed notions that the viewers have about these changes (the contemporary queer laws of the UK, and the previous works and acting skills of Andrew Scott) to create a passive gaze that influences how these adaptations are received and interpreted. Given the scope of this paper, the analysis focuses primarily on any changes in the adaptation based on the portrayal of the gender of the characters. The proposed

concept of the ‘passive gaze’ is developed in depth in this paper and is grounded in the perception that adaptations are inevitably compared with their source texts if they diverge from the stage directions or the geo-temporal setting of the source text.

Producing Passive Gaze

Andrew Scott is a forty-eight-year-old Irish actor with an expansive array of acting experience and projects in both cinema and theatre. Scott, due to the roles he has played and his open and progressive views on queer sexualities, is heralded as a ‘gay icon’ worldwide (Theil). In 2010, he played the character of Moriarty in BBC’s production *Sherlock Holmes*, a show popular for its homoerotic undertones. Scott’s on-screen chemistry with the eponymous character of the series, played by Benedict Cumberbatch, led to widespread speculations about the sexualities of both characters, even though neither of the characters is portrayed as queer (Geen). In 2013, Scott openly spoke about his being homosexual, subtly linking it to his character in *Sherlock Holmes*, thereby creating a foundation for such a link between the sexualities of the characters of his future projects with his homosexuality (Rampton; Theil). Over the years, Scott has appeared as Hot Priest in *Fleabag*, as Colonel John Parry in *His Dark Materials*, and as a queer character in *All of Us Strangers*. Though Hot Priest and Colonel John Parry were not queer characters, Scott was lauded for his portrayal of those heterosexual characters. In *All of Us Strangers*, Scott was widely celebrated for his on-screen chemistry with heterosexual actor Paul Mescal (Theil). Scott’s characters as well as his acting projects have consistently been linked with his sexuality, and always in a complementary role – if the character is queer, viewers claim Scott to have drawn from his own experiences, as in the case in *All of Us Strangers*; if the character is non-queer, Scott’s sexuality is heralded as a way of helping in his method acting.

Jeremy Hawthorn elaborates on his concept of the interactive gaze by explaining that the gaze of the viewers is a cumulative process (508). This cumulative nature of connecting Scott’s homosexuality with the sexuality of his characters – that is, attributing the portrayal of his characters’ sexualities to his own, in such a way that this connection intensifies over time – even if in opposition

(that is, the character being played possibly having a non-queer sexuality), forms a part of the pre-informed notions held by viewers. These pre-informed notions are present in the form of the label of ‘gay icon’ being given to Scott, as exemplified by the initial success of *Vanya* being screened in Bulgaria, not due to his acting skills, but because of his gay-icon-ness – “[In Bulgaria, *Vanya*] initially gained attention due to the actor’s popularity” (Terziev). This perception of the viewers – this gaze – that is ubiquitously present, contributes towards the formation of the viewers’ passive gaze. A corroboration of the application of this gaze in a real-world scenario is seen by studying Scott’s role as the eponymous character in *Ripley*. In episode two of *Ripley*, Scott’s character said “I like girls” (Allen) in a serious tone, but viewers received it sardonically. The episode and Scott’s line delivery led to a series of online memes, emphasizing Scott as a queer actor and Ripley as a queer character, despite blatant evidence contrary to it (Allen). Scott has long realized this tendency of the viewers, often calling it out, declaring that his being gay is “just a fact” (Rampton) and not a bridge connecting him to the characters that he plays. Expanding on his position regarding his sexuality, Scott has quite often linked it with his being announced (at interviews and award shows) as an “openly gay” (“Openly-Gay Scott”) actor. He insists that being ‘openly gay’ connotes that some people might be secretly gay, and therefore highlighting the social taboo related to homosexuality, which is in stark contrast to the liberal society and progressive sexuality laws in the UK. This connects the first prong of the research undertaken in this paper (the actor’s sexuality) to the second prong (the geo-temporal setting of the viewers) regarding the UK’s legal position on queer sexualities.

Currently, the UK is ranked twenty-ninth in the world equality rankings, is considered a widely progressive and tolerant country regarding queer sexualities, and legally allowed non-heterosexual marriages in 2014 (“LGBT Rights”; “UK Gov”; Persaud). Given the blatant bigotry of the UK media towards queer people as recently as twenty years ago, the policies of the UK have come to greatly reflect the liberal and inclusive nature of the UK citizens. Laws and legal sanctions of the land contribute to a large extent in helping form the perspectives of the citizens, influencing the way in which they look at society, and consequently affecting social institutions. The “looking activities

[of the citizens] are saturated with the residues of [their] social and cultural existence” (Hawthorn 508), which, in turn, highly affects and is also affected by the law. Thus, Scott, as a gay actor playing characters with alleged homoerotic undertones in a country where the laws are progressive and supportive of such social perceptions of queer sexualities, cumulatively forms the pre-informed notions of the viewers. A prime example is Scott recalling the sheer paucity of queer visual content during his childhood at a time when homosexuality was illegal (Ireland decriminalized homosexuality in 1993; legalized queer marriages in 2015), and drawing parallels with “the current era of identity politics” (“Openly-Gay Scott”) where identity is used in partisan politics.

This exchange of gaze between society and law – the law reflects society, and the social norms reflect the law – is what Hawthorn terms as ‘interpersonal looking’ and defines it as an “interactive, two-way process . . . [where] we reveal things about ourselves, including things we may not wish to reveal or of which we are unaware” (Hawthorn 508). Similarly, between an actor and the place/country where he performs, there is an interpersonal looking – Scott’s own beliefs about sexuality, through his acting, may affect the country and its citizens. Thus, in a country intolerant of queer sexualities, Scott’s position as a gay icon may create a prejudice against him in the minds of that country’s citizens, and this perception might lead to a skewed interpretation of Scott’s acting. Importantly, this exchange of gaze, this interpersonal looking, is not influenced in any way by the context or the content of the movies or plays that Scott acts. Thus, Andrew Scott, as a gay actor in a country whose laws dictate queer inclusivity, acts in *Vanya* and is seen by viewers who already have a pre-informed notion about him. This notion is passive because it is not directly affected by the play – both source text and adaptation – and is therefore termed as the ‘passive gaze’ of the viewer. The process of taking an active facet of Scott’s identity, which is his queer sexuality, and passively linking it to the lens used by viewers to spectate Scott’s characters in various works, forms the passive gaze.

From Uncle Vanya to Vanya

Madison Rouleau, in her study of Gaze in *Paradise Lost*, speaks of gaze as a discursive practice, invoking gaze as a concept affected by social institutions, gender binary, as well as cultural and

historical entities such as gods and religions. In particular, she speaks about the gaze of the reader as “the final link in the spectatorial chain” (Rouleau 7). If parallels are drawn with passive gaze, then the viewer’s gaze is conceived as the last link or the final spectator, where Althusser’s ideological state apparatus, in the form of pre-informed notions, affects passive gaze. Since the passive gaze is founded in the laws of a particular country, it can be argued that the passive gaze is a tool for shifting influence and “a means of control” (Hawthorn 512) by the country on the adaptation via the viewer. Thus, while everyone attributes Andrew Scott to gay-ness, the reception of that gay-ness is contingent upon the passive gaze. This paper now investigates passive gaze as an active influence and final gaze on theatrical adaptations, with particular focus on *Vanya*.

Uncle Vanya describes a rural Russian setting: a large country estate owned by a retired professor who lives with his extremely young second wife, his daughter from his first wife, his brother-in-law, and his mother-in-law. The actors, then, have a pre-established age, gender, as well as clothing that Chekhov has already decided and presented with the stage directions – the second wife is twenty-seven years old, the character of Ilya is described as “impoverished” and thereby would present the actor playing Ilya in tattered clothes, and Marina is unequivocally presented as “elderly” (Chekhov 3). In *Vanya*, Andrew Scott wears a blue half-sleeve shirt and grey trousers, his face devoid of any blatant make-up, showing no enhancement or patterns to show a change in age. The only indication of a change in the character being played on-stage is via minimal accessories – black sunglasses to denote Ivan, a thin necklace for the second wife, Helena, a yellow ball for Michael, and a chequered handkerchief for the daughter, Sonya. Scott’s ability to shift between characters, depicting them with extreme skill, is posited as:

In resumé, Andrew Scott plays a total of eight characters and manages to give each a distinct appearance and tone. This is amazing on its own and a real feat of acting, which can happen only in the theatre. The virtuoso actor moves swiftly from character to character without ever changing costume, with only subtle shifts in attitude and tone of voice and with an astonishingly precise economy of gesture. Ironic black sunglasses plus agitated, waving hands, and the

anxious Ivan springs into life; a slow and gentle fondling of a thin necklace, and the audience is drawn into the hypnotic orbit of the beautiful Helena. The human sketches are sharp and convincing, and the timing of delivery impeccable. [...] Yet, when the actor cries, we spectators of his one-man show are never certain which exact character is crying—is it Sonya now, or is it Vanya, or someone else? The shift from person to person is so rapid, so gentle, so fluid that there are moments when the boundaries between the different characters seem to melt away. They flicker across the actor's face and body like passing ghosts, creating an electric chain of emotion in which an impulse starts in one character and swiftly moves to another. (Terziev)

Within the span of one minute, Scott plays three characters – Sonya, Michael, Liam; the daughter, the distinguished doctor, and the impoverished landowner respectively – without a change of clothes or use of any props to showcase a change in bodily features (*Vanya*, 00:18:20-00:19:20). He only uses the tokens associated with the characters to aid the viewer in realising the character he is playing, such as bouncing the yellow ball on the floor for Michael, wiping his hands with the handkerchief to present Sonya, and sitting on a stool to enact Liam. This swapping of one character for the other should be seen in this way: there is no chorus or another actor on-stage to aid the viewers in distinguishing between characters, there is no overtly stereotypical gendered props used to signal a change of characters such as clothing or facial hair, the quickness of the swapping of characters leaves almost no time to properly swap the character tokens. Many times, Scott is seen juggling multiple tokens on-stage, such as when he pushes Ivan's sunglasses atop his head and is fondling Helena's necklace with his left hand while simultaneously holding on to Michael's yellow ball with his right hand (*Vanya*, 00:24:20). This one-man theatrical adaptation becomes more complex when the passive gaze is taken into account. Scott is a gay actor, championed as a gay icon, often uses his own life experiences as a homosexual to fuel his acting, *and* is rapidly switching between eight gendered characters (four male and four female) without any change in clothing or stage setting and is constantly modulating his voice to suit the characters. At one point during the adaptation, as Scott shifts from the baritone voice of Michael to the seductive purr of Helena, the baritone bleeds into the

first few words uttered by Scott-enacting-Helena (*Vanya*, 00:25:54-00:25:56). The effect produced is that of a mixing of predominantly stereotypical male and female characteristics, that is the baritone of the male with the seductive cadence of the female. This mixing, then, presents the entire adaptation as if it were comprising a single gender-variant character played by Scott.

Ali Jamali, while incorporating Hawthorn, in his seminal work on female gaze and its manifestations in one-act plays and their theatrical adaptations, describes a characteristic of the female gaze as a “continuous, non-stop presence of sympathy and identification [which is] . . . nowhere to be found in the male gaze” (42). If Jamali’s theory is put to use to identify the female characters via the presence of the female gaze, there are only three ways to differentiate between the characters – stereotypically female features pertaining to the body, overt props or stage settings, and dialogues and events of the adaptation as attributed to the characters. Firstly, Scott does not use any props to depict bodily features such as breasts (to show a female) or a moustache (for a male character), and he merely changes voice intonation, which, as posited above, bleeds into other characters’ voices whenever Scott shifts between characters. Secondly, Scott retains the clothes (with which he starts the play) till the end, and none of the clothes that he wears is exclusively female (as a contrast to his own maleness). If anything, the blue shirt unbuttoned till the middle of his chest and casual grey trousers are ambiguous in nature, and may be worn by both men and women (since the adaptation is set in contemporary Ireland, where both men and women may wear such clothes). Lastly, while the events in the adaptation largely remain the same as those of the source text, the dialogues have been translated and some of the names from Chekhov’s text have been anglicised – Chekhov’s Sofya, Mikhail, Ilya, and Marina are now Scott’s Sonya, Michael, Liam, and Maureen. Most importantly, Chekhov’s play was situated in imperial Russia, where females were dependent on males for social security. The theatrical adaptation, played by Andrew Scott, is situated in democratic Ireland, where men and women are equals. So, even in dialogues and events, it would be a fallacious claim that a sycophantic or submissive character ought to be female. Thus, using passive gaze, Scott’s enactment of the characters in *Vanya* can be seen as a gender-variant or a gender-fluid adaptation.

Even if this gender-fluidity in *Vanya* were attributed to Scott as an intentional “political act” (Halberstam, *Trans** 88), an attempt to subvert both the source text and the adaptation, a passive gaze would not allow such a reading. Scott’s presence as a gay icon necessitates that viewer, via passive gaze, would read the gender fluidity as an inherent part of Scott’s acting in *Vanya* and, therefore, as a pre-determined part of the theatrical adaptation (that is, the gender fluidity precedes *Vanya* being conceived as an adaptation). Moreover, the laws of the UK allow such a presentation of gender fluidity, keeping in line with the passive gaze. More importantly, these self-same assertions would be wrong, had Chekhov’s play been simply enacted on stage by Irish actors. Possibly, then, the audience might have assumed that the contemporary Irish actors were acting out a Russian play that was set in an imperial Russian setting. Thus, an important distinction between a theatrical adaptation of a play and the source text being enacted on stage is that the adaptation always includes the passive gaze, whereas the enactment of the source text does not.

In an interview, while *Vanya* was playing at Lucille Lortel Theatre, in New York, USA, Andrew Scott described the adaptation’s setting: “This is incredibly modern. There’s no doubt that it’s set in the present day. . . . This idea of one person doing the whole show” (*Off-Broadway*, 00:00:14-00:00:28). He seems to imply that the notion of a single actor acting out eight characters of a play, condensing the four-act play into a one-man adaptation, is a modern narrative technique. Using passive gaze, his statement may be interpreted in a way that describes a modern setting of an adaptation as an any-gender actor playing an infinite number of any-gender characters, disregarding all stereotypes pertaining to on-stage presentation of gender of those characters, in an adaptation. Consequently, the passive gaze may be theorised as a discursive concept that may change its contents, depending on the actor and the viewers’ country. This flexibility enables passive gaze to suit itself to possibly all variants of all theatrical adaptations.

An Alternate Version of *Vanya*

A gender-variant or gender-fluid portrayal of *Vanya*, using passive gaze, has been thoroughly discussed. The gender-fluid approach is a very inclusive approach, taking into account all sexualities,

labels, and beyond-label portrayals of the sexualities and genders of the characters. This leaves ample space for experimental approaches to interpreting adaptations, using passive gaze, such as a trans*gender reading of the adaptation and its subsequent nuances.

Jack Halberstam's concept of 'trans*' or 'trans with an asterisk' is an approach to redefine contemporary perception of trans-ness and transgender. Similar to passive gaze as a discursive narrative perspective, trans* undermines the current understanding of trans-ness as a permanent shift from one gender to another. Trans-ness caters to the gender binary of male-female, often labelling a person 'transgender, after that person has decisively shifted from identifying with one gender to another. Thus, trans-ness would comprise either a male-to-female person or a female-to-male person. Trans*, on the other hand;

Holds open the meaning of the term [trans] and refuses to deliver certainty through the act of naming. The asterisk modifies the meaning of transitivity by refusing to situate transition in relation to a destination, a final form, a specific shape, or an established configuration of desire and identity. The asterisk holds off the certainty of diagnosis; it keeps at bay any sense of knowing in advance what the meaning of this or that gender-variant form may be, and perhaps most importantly, it makes trans* people the authors of their own categorizations. (Halberstam, "Toward a Trans* Feminism")

In *Vanya*, Scott may be understood as a trans* site for all eight characters. Since adaptations employ passive gaze, the gaze affects *Vanya* such that the characters blend into one another, creating a gender-fluid perception of them. Thus, no character is exclusively male or female, which further reasons that none of those characters may be argued as transgender, since trans-ness requires identification with a particular side of the gender binary. In *Vanya*, portrayed by Scott, all the characters have a dynamic, fluctuating understanding of gender, so they can be placed anywhere on a gender spectrum, with the two ends being 'male' and 'female.' Thus, effectively, these characters may be investigated as trans* characters, where "the asterisk modifies the meaning of transitivity by refusing to situate transition in relation to . . . a specific shape, or an established configuration of desire and identity. The asterisk

holds off certainty of diagnosis . . .” (Halberstam, *Trans** 4). This trans* reading of *Vanya* is not simply because it can be done using the gender-fluid characters of the adaptation, but due to contemporary citizens, due to “young people who cross-identify . . . [and] imagine themselves into other bodies, bodies that feel truer to who they are” (Halberstam, “Toward a Trans* Feminism” 2) being active participants of society and avid viewers of adaptations. Trans* readings of adaptations keep pace with the discursivity of the passive gaze, which incorporates political and social ideologies of contemporary times, often visible in the law, rather than treating such concepts as reified or static. Thus, a trans* version of an adaptation would not just be one of the many probable adaptations of a source text, but one of the *more* probable ones, thereby reflecting social undertones.

Moreover, these queer readings of adaptations are not due to any possible ambiguity related to the changes made to the source text while it is being adapted. On the contrary, passive gaze helps explain that these queer readings are made plausible due to certain cultural nuances as well as performative conditions present in the socio-political avenue that is hosting the adaptation. A queer-intolerant society might emphasise a queer actor (who is Andrew Scott) heavily invested in portraying a heterosexual character, where a queer-friendly one would view and project the queerness more expansively, as has been sufficiently exemplified by the increasing viewer feedback where *Vanya* has been hosted or screened.

Conclusion

Passive gaze, while distinguishing between adaptations and source texts, also demands a more comprehensive analysis of the ideological state apparatuses that underpin it. Scott delineates that succinctly, opining:

It’s about the stories that we say to ourselves about ourselves. We think, oh, well, I’m too old, or she’s beautiful, or he’s ugly, or he’s whatever. And when you have one person playing all the characters, you look at other things, you look at their attributes, or how they might feel about the way they look or the way they are, or what their history is. So, you have to look at, in

a way, ignore what the surface stuff is and look at what's kind of underneath. (*Off-Broadway*, 00:00:34-00:00:57)

Passive gaze, then, facilitates relatability between the adaptations and the viewers, paving the way for a more interactive relationship with the adaptation. Passive gaze is a cumulative active-to-passive perspective by a viewer, leading to this perspective influencing future inferences. In the context of this paper, passive gaze is involved via the fact that Scott declared himself as a queer person, forming the active part of passive gaze. This facet is cemented in the minds of the viewers and spectators, thereby forming the passive part of passive gaze. In contrast with 'ideological interpellation,' propounded by critics like Louis Althusser, which talks about ideology leading to the creation of dominant social patterns, passive gaze deals with the minority social segments (such as queerness) which are brought to the forefront by the participation of a queer entity (such as Scott's heterosexual roles being analysed by viewers as possible criticisms of heterosexuality because of his queer identity). Reception Theory, worked on by theorists like Hans-Robert Jauss, engages with the active interaction of the spectator with the text to present a constantly in-flux perception of the text. This active engagement is also characteristic of the concept of 'cultural spectatorship.' Passive gaze, on the contrary, as explored in this paper, adopts an active-to-passive approach in which certain facets of a social entity are reified and continually used by spectators to view that entity's social interactions.

Apropos of using queer sexualities as a connecting bridge, passive gaze might contribute to the burgeoning avenue of feminism, as well. This helps introduce another facet to passive gaze – the sexuality and gendered gaze of the viewer themselves. A gender-fluid viewer watching a gender-fluid character on stage would perceive it differently than a cisgender female viewer watching the same adaptation. Does this own-gender analysis reveal any changes in the influence of the passive gaze on adaptation? Since own-gender spectrum might be more volatile and susceptible to change than the laws of the country the viewer is a resident of, should own-gender analysis be considered separate from passive gaze? Such questions help formulate passive gaze as an important concept in adaptation

studies, thereby expanding the scope of research and providing a fertile ground for comparative study of multiple adaptations of the same source text.

Works Cited and Consulted

- Allen, Samantha. "Andrew Scott's Perfect Delivery of 'I Like Girls' in *Ripley* Has Critics and Viewers Laughing." *Them*, 8 Apr. 2024, www.them.us/story/andrew-scott-ripley-i-like-girls-netflix. Accessed 4 Sept. 2025.
- "Andrew Scott on Taking on Chekhov's *Vanya* Off-Broadway." Directed by Broadwaycom, *YouTube*, uploaded by Broadwaycom, 21 Mar. 2025, www.youtube.com/watch?v=zROzXPZnXj0. Accessed 4 Sept. 2025.
- "Andrew Scott Says Being Gay Is 'The Greatest Joy of My Life.'" *Gayety*, 23 May 2024, gayety.com/andrew-scott-says-being-gay-is-the-greatest-joy-of-my-life. Accessed 4 Sept. 2025.
- Chekhov, Anton Pavlovich. *Uncle Vanya*. Translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, Theatre Communications Group, 2020.
- Geen, Jessica. "BBC Drama Hints Sherlock Holmes Is Gay." *PinkNews*, 23 July 2010, www.thepinknews.com/2010/07/23/bbc-drama-hints-sherlock-holmes-is-gay/. Accessed 4 Sept. 2025.
- Halberstam, Jack. "Toward a Trans* Feminism." *Boston Review*, 18 Jan. 2018, www.bostonreview.net/articles/jack-halberstam-towards-trans-feminism/. Accessed 4 Sept. 2025.
- . *Trans: A Quick and Quirky Account of Gender Variability*. U of California P, 2018.

- Hawthorn, Jeremy. "Theories of the Gaze." *Literary Theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide*, edited by Patricia Waugh, Oxford UP, 2006, pp. [insert page range].
- Jamali, Ali. "Theories of the Gaze Crossing Feminisms: *Trifles* as a Site to Ponder the Fundamentals." *Critical Literary Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2023, doi:10.34785/J014.2023.003. Accessed 3 Sept. 2025.
- Leitch, Thomas. "Twelve Fallacies in Contemporary Adaptation Theory." *Criticism*, vol. 45, no. 2, 2003, pp. 149–71. *JSTOR*.
- "LGBT Rights in United Kingdom." *Equaldex*, www.equaldex.com/region/united-kingdom. Accessed 4 Sept. 2025.
- Persaud, Reagan. "A History of LGBTQ+ Rights in the UK: Remembering the Past to Inform the Future." *Young Citizens*, 14 Feb. 2024, www.youngcitizens.org/blog/history-of-lgbtq-rights-in-the-uk/. Accessed 4 Sept. 2025.
- "Promoting and Protecting the Rights of LGBT+ People Programme Summary 2022 to 2023." *GOV.UK*, www.gov.uk/government/publications/official-development-assistance-oda-fcdo-international-programme-spend-objectives-2022-to-2023/promoting-and-protecting-the-rights-of-lgbt-people-programme-summary-2022-to-2023. Accessed 4 Sept. 2025.
- Rampton, James. "'Sherlock Has Changed My Whole Career': Andrew Scott Interview." *The Independent*, 15 Nov. 2013, www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/features/sherlock-has-changed-my-whole-career-andrew-scott-interview-8940114.html. Accessed 4 Sept. 2025.
- Rouleau, Madison. "'Eyes Opened and Cleared': The Discourse of Gaze in *Paradise Lost*." *Locus: The Seton Hall Journal of Undergraduate Research*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2023, doi:10.70531/2573-2749.1066.
- Terziev, Asen. "Andrew Scott's *Vanya*: A Fusion of Souls." *Critical Stages/Scènes Critiques*, 4 Dec. 2024, www.critical-stages.org/30/andrew-scotts-vanya-a-fusion-of-souls/. Accessed 4 Sept. 2025.

Theil, Michele. "Everything You Need to Know about Gay Icon Andrew Scott." *PinkNews*, 29 Jan. 2024, www.thepinknews.com/2024/01/29/everything-you-need-to-know-about-gay-icon-andrew-scott/. Accessed 4 Sept. 2025.

Vanya. Directed by Sam Yates, National Theatre, 2024.