In terms of programming, Canada's largest theatres are, generally speaking, conservative institutions. While these theatres do present (and, from time to time, commission) new work, their programming tends to rely on 'tried and tested' names. The two theatres (Soulpepper and the Shaw Festival) that produced the works I will consider below, have built their reputations and audiences on mandates to produce, respectively, 'classics' (however ill-defined that term may be) and the work of George Bernard Shaw and his contemporaries. Though both theatres have broadened their mandates beyond these parameters in recent years, works by highly recognizable names (Shaw, Wilde, Chekhov, Priestley, Miller, Ayckbourn, Stoppard, Wilder, Pinter, Albee, etc.) have tended to predominate. Productions of these texts tend not to de-familiarize such works in any significant way (again, there are exceptions of course, but, in the main, Canada's largest theatres tend to produce familiar works in familiar ways). The reasons for this situation are varied and complex and, as such, beyond the scope of this article. I want to focus on one strategy that theatres and playwrights have used to circumvent this limitation: adaptation.

As "deliberate, announced, and extended revisions of prior works," (Hutcheon 2006, xiv) adaptations trade, in this context, on the prior work's cultural capital. As variations with difference(s), adaptations satisfy the producing theatre's and/or their audience's desire for the familiar and offer a space in which something new can be brought forth. I will discuss two such projects, both produced in 2018: Anthony MacMahon's adaptation of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* for Soulpepper Theatre in Toronto and Sarena's Parmar's *The Orchard (After Chekhov)*, her 'transplant' of Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard* for the Shaw Festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Both projects can be considered examples of "borrowing," which Dudley Andrew identifies as the "most frequently used mode of adaptation. Here, the artist employs, more or less extensively, the material, idea or form of an earlier, generally successful text" (Andrew 1984, 30). Shakespeare is the borrower *par excellence* of the theatre, though rarely acknowledged as such. The question with this type of adaptation is not "the replication of the original […] instead the audience is expected to enjoy basking in a certain pre-established presence and to call up new and especially powerful aspects of cherished works" (ibid.). However, as Linda Hutcheon notes, "there is frequently a palpable tension between the audience's desire for fidelity to the beloved literary work and the creator's desire for autonomous reconfiguration or even critical commentary" (Hutcheon 2006, 48).

**Animal Farm**

Soulpepper's production of *Animal Farm* began life as a proposal from director Ravi Jain to explore Orwell's novel physically. A graduate of l'Ecole Jacques Lecoq, Jain
was intrigued by the challenges a theatrical adaptation presented. After exploring a variety of approaches, it became clear that the physical life of the play and its scenography would depend very much on the nature of the adaptation. All the initial collaborators (Jain; designer Ken MacKenzie, and I as dramaturge) felt strongly that we were not interested in the familiar reading of *Animal Farm* as a condemnation of Soviet communism, Stalinism in particular. We wanted to update the play (*Animal Farm 2.0* was a working title) and use the allegory to somehow reflect or interrogate contemporary politics. We read other adaptations, but they did not appeal. Some relied too heavily on narration to be exciting theatrically; others seemed to have turned the play into a musical. None of them felt particularly immediate to the world we and our audience experienced. While we did not live under an oppressive political regime, we did live within an economic system that seemed to increasingly dominate our lives. Could we use Orwell’s fable to critically analyze capitalism? We invited the young, communist playwright Anthony MacMahon to tackle the challenge of adapting the novella for the stage, and he, to our delight, agreed.

Fidelity to the Orwell text was not a concern when discussing the adaptation. We knew that invention and changes were required if we hoped this version would speak to our contemporary situation. We did, however, discuss the notion that what we were being true to the ‘spirit’ of Orwell’s work. We felt Orwell’s novella was a fable exposing the deceptions and falseness of actually-existing communism. Our revision then would be a fable exposing the deceptions of actually-existing capitalism. Critics such as Kamilla Elliot might argue that we had fallen prey to one of the “unofficial concepts” (Elliot 2003, 134) of adaptation, that of ‘psychic’ transfer, in which “the spirit of the [source] text” is understood – or believed, depending on where one stands in these theoretical debates – to pass to the adaptation. The spirit of the prior text can be understood to be “authorial intent, imagination, or style” (ibid., 136). While authorial intent is a suspect term in criticism it remains a significant idea – though not a guiding one – in adaptation practice. Elliot and others question the possibility of determining or identifying such a thing as the spirit of a text, but, again, in practice, this admittedly nebulous notion retains a certain vitality. Some scholars who have written about adaptation, for example Linda Hutcheon, recognize the deeply personal nature of these transpositions, reformulations and re-mediations. Indeed, in my work on both these projects, the playwrights’ intentions, experiences, and politics were central to the development of these pieces. My intention here is not to rehearse these debates, which others have explicated at length, but to illustrate how the context of creation of these adaptations informed the variations played on the source texts.

MacMahon’s adaptation of Orwell’s novella borrows the basic structure of the original and most of the characters. His Manor Farm is like Orwell’s, “a quaint little farm, run by a man named farmer Jones, with a big barn, an apple tree, a horse, a donkey, some pigs and sheep, and a flock of chickens” (MacMahon 2018, 1). However, MacMahon signals his interest in the next line of Benjamin the donkey’s introduction. “You know the type – the increasingly destitute rural properties owned by the descendants of white settlers, with high capital costs, low yields, only just getting by” (ibid.). In his reference to “white settlers,” MacMahon locates the action of his play in North America, and by quickly changing tone from the folksy description of the farm
to the language of business, MacMahon highlights economics, or, more precisely, political economy as a focus of the piece.

There was a strong temptation to comment directly on US politics during the writing and creation of MacMahon's *Animal Farm* as Donald Trump had recently been elected. His presidency seemed ripe for satire and the character of Napoleon seemed a perfect analogue for Trump. However, the decision was made to try to steer clear of a focus on specific leaders and to try to emphasize the structural aspects of contemporary politics. In other words, the critique is not focused on the qualities of an individual leader (despotic, autocratic or munificent) but on the larger systems that leaders and citizens live within. While some audience members did 'read' Napoleon as Trump – an interpretation communicated to us in talkbacks after performances – the primary focus was to take on life under a neo-liberal economic regime.

Neo-liberalism is a broad term that is used to denote economic theory and practical policies, as well as an ideology. For our purposes, we may safely define it as a revivified, hyper-charged classical liberalism in which primacy is placed on individual freedom as expressed through market transactions. Though there are differences in actually existing neo-liberalism as it is practised around the globe, generally, neo-liberalism promotes: financial and trade liberalization; a reduction in the size and role of the government in economic and social life; privatization, and deregulation. The market is entrusted to regulate increasingly more of social and political life, and government's role is reduced to ensuring the growth of market principles in daily life.

In MacMahon's *Animal Farm*, neo-liberalism emerges over time. As in Orwell's novella, the animals on the farm are alerted to their condition by Old Major's dream-inspired speech. In it, he describes the life of farm animals as "miserable, laborious, and short" (ibid., 3). Old Major explains to the assembled animals, most of whom cannot entirely grasp what he says, that "all the evils of life spring from the tyranny of man." The answer to their state of servitude is, of course, an "animal revolution" (ibid., 4), which, through a combination of luck, strategy, and sacrifice eventually comes to pass. Old Major's animal utopia, however, is not so quickly won. While many of the animals can think only of food, an outbreak of swine flu, as well as challenges to the farm's economy raised by the revolution have hampered the farm's ability to support all the animals. The pigs, Snowball and Napoleon primarily, argue over how to best run the farm and ensure their collective survival. Snowball wants to bring in monkeys to help build a mill that will increase productivity, an idea Napoleon rejects because he doesn't "trust the monkeys. They have too many skills, and they speak a different language than us. We don't know what they're saying" (ibid., 25). Here, of course, MacMahon is spoofing contemporary anti-immigration rhetoric, while delineating the political differences between the two pigs. Napoleon insists the farm must grow, however, and proposes to achieve this goal by annexing the neighbouring Assad and Genghis farms rather than trading with them. Eventually, an election is called so that the animals can decide on the competing visions for the farm.

It is here that MacMahon's adaptation deviates clearly from Orwell's template. In MacMahon's version, Snowball is something of a technocrat of the social-democratic persuasion and wants to address the systemic inequality – those structural barriers that account to a great extent for the differences in social achievement, in wealth and income.
that exists on the farm and proposes a "planned system, [...] a barn that looks after you" to "ameliorate these problems" (ibid., 29). The animals are confused by his proposal since Old Major told them in his visionary speech that all animals are (already) equal. In much the same way, they could not 'see' how they were oppressed under Farmer Jones, the animals cannot understand how they are not equal now that Jones is gone. Napoleon, a more gifted speaker than Snowball appeals to Old Major's memory and his dream of a farm run by animals. He argues that Snowball thinks and talks like a human. "Think about the dream," he tells the assembled animals. "Did it come from planned systems? No. It came from Old Major. A pig. What about the revolution, what won the battle with Jones? Was it a bunch of human books? No! It was strong, hungry animals" (ibid., 32). Instead of Snowball's vision of a "barn that looks after you," which he argues positions the farm animals as babies, chicks, and piglets, Napoleon claims, in a deliberate echo of Margaret Thatcher, that "there is no society. There are only individual animals who make their own choices" (ibid., 31). Against Snowball's social welfare, Napoleon argues an individualist ethos: "Looking after yourself is looking after your neighbour." When Snowball admits that his plan may require a "bailout from the humans," who he believes aren't dangerous, the assembled animals turn on him and drive him out. Napoleon is hailed as the newly elected leader of "a bold new farm" (ibid., 32).

As well as articulating the theory that underpins the new direction the farm – and MacMahon's Animal Farm – will move in, this scene also softens Orwell's emphasis on the Repressive State Apparatus. Though there was a "police" dog in this scene, it is not a violent seizure of power by Napoleon that drives Snowball away as in the novella, but rather a combination of Napoleon's insinuations and the collected animals' anger at and fear of Snowball's ideas, led perhaps by the dog. A similar move occurs later in the play, when Napoleon deals with the chickens' strike. We felt that state violence in most western capitalist democracies (the world we were keen to represent and critique) is much less overt than what is represented in Orwell's text (or than what is suffered in autocratic regimes), and that by simply allowing Napoleon or his dog to wipe out resistance it would be easy for our audience to distance themselves from the action, essentially telling themselves, 'that could never happen here.' Instead, we wanted, as much as possible, to make the text 'familiar' – not in the sense that it cleaved or conformed to Orwell's but in the sense that it sounded like the world our audience lived in daily.

The second act opens with all the animals punching in for work – a signal of the new quasi-Fordist regime that governs their lives. Benjamin explains as they line up at the clock that they do not have chores anymore, instead they have jobs. The farm has grown and most of it is now owned by a few pigs. Currency has been introduced: "a thousand stalks to a sheaf, but most animals never see a sheaf in their life. We use loose grain to buy hot oats at the lunch truck" (ibid., 34). If the animals were, in a sense, serfs before their revolution, they have entered the labour market now and are subject to its operations. If they are free of their conditions as serfs, they are now, in a sense, commodities, though some (the pigs primarily and some of the horses) quickly move in to professional and managerial positions. Molly, for example, becomes a media personality who sells a line of shoes that "put the up in your gallop" (ibid., 34).

The second act sees Napoleon's vision of a "bold new farm" implemented and developed. Trade with the Genghis farm – an economic relationship he had earlier
opposed – helps pay for a fence to keep the "shifty goats" from the Assad farm out of the pasture (ibid., 42). Chickens are brought in from the other side of the fence – "they wear special tags and get paid less" – to increase egg production. Trade is interrupted or suspended from time to time to wage war on one or the other of the neighbouring farms. When pressed by Mercy the chicken, Napoleon claims, "we've always been at war with Genghis farm," (ibid., 51) an intertextual nod to 1984.

Trade liberalization and deregulation are key aspects of Napoleon's economic program, as they were for the Washington Consensus – the economic program promoted by the IMF and the World Bank in the 1990s. "Thousands of regulations have been torn up," (ibid., 38) he tells Squealer in a television interview that the animals watch or overhear while working overtime. While the liberalization of trade and deregulation of labour have brought benefits to some – Napoleon has a smart phone and the Animal Farm news network has new and dazzling "state of the art lights" – others, like Boxer, buy lottery tickets in the hope of securing his retirement because as he notes, they're "working harder for less every day" (ibid., 44).

The ethical claim at the centre of neoliberalism – individuals are responsible for their own success – appeals of course to the industrious horse, Boxer. He is incapable of seeing, however, how the odds are stacked against him. Boxer's response to this dilemma – to work harder – puts him squarely in the position of Marx's alienated worker who "becomes all the poorer the more wealth he produces, the more his production increases in power and size. The worker becomes an ever-cheaper commodity the more commodities he creates" (Marx 2007, 67). At the same time, this condition alienates him from his old friend, Benjamin whom he turns on in a moment of crisis: "It's because of animals like you that we keep losing everything. We lose our weekends, we lose our benefits, we lose our insurance, because animals like you aren't working hard enough (MacMahon 2018, 44). In these exchanges, we see how neoliberalism is not simply a series of policies or an economic program but also an explicative paradigm, one that, in this case at least, poisons interpersonal relations.

Opposition to the neo-liberal program comes from an unexpected quarter. Having just received the "latest industry demands from the shed." – working thirteen days straight without a day off, a demand framed as necessary to help the economy – the chickens ask, "why would we help the economy when the economy isn't helping us?" (ibid., 42). They launch a work stoppage, and insist they want "more, more, more" (ibid., 49), a demand that approaches that of the Italian autonomists who claimed, "we want everything," and announced the emergence of the "bawkupy" – pronounced bawk-u-pie to rhyme with occupy – movement. Like Occupy and the Indignados, the chickens question the notion of individual political leadership and parties because, they realize, no party or leader has ever represented or championed their interests. Instead they adopt a model of direct democracy, in which the decisions are made by the group, and represent "the pen not the hen" (ibid., 48). Mercy acknowledges that it may take a long time to make decisions under such a system "but what's the point of making decisions quickly if they're bad for everyone?" (ibid., 48) When challenged by Napoleon who reminds Mercy that she is free to run for leadership – this is after all democracy – Mercy attempts to re-frame the issue arguing that what is needed is a system that represents the interests of all the animals, not simply the "elites" (ibid., 54). She wants "all animals
represented on every policy” (ibid.). This is a utopian notion perhaps, but one in keeping with the current of popular and mass movements throughout the world.

MacMahon’s *Animal Farm* does not propose a revitalized communism as a solution. Instead, it stages the difficulty of seeing beyond capitalism. This is a world in the grip of what Mark Fisher has called “capitalist realism” (Fisher 2009, 4). Fisher explains this idea with reference to

a phrase attributed to Fredric Jameson and Slavoj Zizek, that it is easier to imagine the end of the world than it is to imagine the end of capitalism. That slogan captures the meaning of ‘capitalist realism’: the widespread sense that not only is capitalism the only viable political and economic system, but also that it is now impossible even to imagine a coherent alternative to it. (ibid., 2)

MacMahon’s *Animal Farm* ends with a final gesture of rebellion. As in Orwell’s novella, the farm animals gather to witness a dinner between Napoleon and several humans. In MacMahon’s version, they are investors who welcome Napoleon "to the club," once Napoleon explains to them that he has convinced the animals on the farm of the merits of the new "global animalism" and that those who cannot see the benefits will "be left behind." The farm undergoes a final transformation into "Animal Farms Inc.," a multinational corporation specializing in the automated processing of "chicken product" (MacMahon 2018, 64). Locked into the global marketplace, to escape from this system seems impossible. Is the attack on the dinner by the animals, most of whom cannot remember the original animal revolution, a futile romantic gesture? Does it signal a new start or simply repetition with no significant difference?

**The Orchard (after Chekhov)**

Sarena Parmar's revisioning of Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard* transplants the play to Canada, specifically to British Columbia's Okanagan Valley, a fertile agricultural area known for its fruit production. Parmar moves the play from the property of a fading aristocratic Russian family to the Basran family farm, three generations of Sikh farmers, originally hailing from Punjab. Temporally, it transports the play from the first days of the 20th-century to the 1970s. These shifts allow Parmar to address the position of minoritized Canadians within the context of nascent multiculturalism, and in so doing her play interrogates the issues of place and attachment, in a way the Russian original never can, given its almost exclusive focus on psychology, character, and Russianness.

An actor as well as an emerging writer, Parmar was especially interested in the possibility an adaptation of a ‘classic’ play offered actors of colour. Though the situation is changing, there is resistance to casting actors of colour in classic plays for a number of reasons. The reasons for this are various but resistance from some audiences who have difficulty 'suspending disbelief' – and make their discomfort known to theatre administrations – when encountering an actor of colour in a Russian play or a play by Shakespeare is a factor. A second equally pernicious factor is the conviction that actors of colour cannot 'handle' classical text. A kind of aural prejudice prevails, in which the sound of certain minoritized voices or accents is not deemed suitable for 'elevated' or difficult texts. Clearly, a variety of subtle and not-so-subtle racist and classicist notions intermingle here to limit the work actors of colour are offered. As well as a desire to
represent her own experience – she grew up on an orchard in the Okanagan – Parmar also wanted to contest these attitudes to the kinds of work actors of colour are suitable for. Revising Chekhov provides access to a classical text for Parmar and other actors in her situation, as well as raising valuable questions about our relationships to the lands and properties we occupy or claim.

*The Orchard* remains faithful to almost all of Chekhov's narrative and structure. What Parmar has done within that structure is populate the play with characters specific to its new (Okanagan) setting. Ranyevskaya and her brother Gayev become Loveleen (or Lallee) and Gurjit (or Gus), farmers who have lived their lives on the orchard; Loveleen's daughter Annie (Anya); Yepihodov, the clumsy groundskeeper becomes Yebisaka, the son of Japanese-Canadians who may have been born in a Second World War internment camp. These characters, with the exception of Kesur – Loveleen and Gurjit's father inspired by Chekhov's Firs – are first- or second-generation Canadians who have lived their lives in the valley. Anglo-Caucasian characters are limited to Michael (Lopakhin) and the neighbour Paul, whose good fortune ironicizes the melodramatic possibility of rescuing the farm. Other neighbours are mentioned but never appear – they represent the community outside the farm who, we gradually learn, may not all have been as accepting of their Sikh neighbours as it seemed at first.

Parmar refracts Chekhov's interrogation of belonging and attachment through three significant interventions. In her *The Orchard*, the central figures are not aristocrats. Though they may be landowners, they are also farmers with a practical connection to the property. This fact does not preclude affective ties to the land, but those ties are significantly reinforced or perhaps created by their work on the property. As well as this change, Parmar introduces an ongoing argument about nascent multiculturalism, which Annie feels heralds a new possibility for people such as her family. In tension with her optimism is Peter (the tutor) who believes that only in India will they realize their potential, and the more complicated struggle of Barminder (Masha in Chekhov) to assimilate. Finally, challenging all these claims is Charlie, the First Nations rodeo queen, who is simultaneously cut off from her heritage through years of government-imposed assimilationist policies and connected to the land through ancestral heritage.

As in Chekhov's play, the matriarch of the family has returned to the farm after a long absence – in India rather than Paris – after the death of her son by drowning. The farm is financially imperilled, about to be auctioned if they cannot find the money to pay their debts. The self-made business man, Michael, has a proposal to save the orchard, which involves cutting down most of the trees and creating an agricultural RV park (Parmar 2018, 16). As in the Chekhov play, the family rejects this proposal because of their love of the place, but this love is a product of their labour, not only a sentimental one to do with family. Gus responds to Michael's proposal by asking Michael what he can smell. Michael replies that he can smell the fresh air and tractor grease. Gurjit tells him:

> Well I can smell the dirt. And not just any dirt, this is Morning Dirt. Smells musty, like clay. And when I walk back to the house for dinner every day, the last thing I smell is the Sunset Dirt. Smells like an earth worm that's been baking in the sun with his swim trunks all day. But my favourite is the mid-day heat, it's dry and hot. And the dirt smells like the fuzz of a peach. (ibid., 18)
This remarkable sensory acuity is both a signal and a product of his intense relationship to this particular place. He is intimately connected to the land, so deeply related to it that he can parse different qualities of the soil, interrelating them in a sensual description that speaks to his deeply embodied relationship to the orchard. He is after all, "a farmer … Like my father and his father before him" and his "heart gets weary if I'm not up at the crack of dawn" (ibid., 16). Kesur, Loveleen and Gurjit's father, explains that the family hails from Punjab, which "means land of the five rivers, so green you can grow anything. Back and back and back, we have been farmers since the birth of those five rivers. That is in the blood" (ibid., 17). What Kesur renders as essential (natural or somehow biological) here with his reference to "blood" is the practice of farming, a tradition that is, in fact, continually renewed, revised, in short, performed.

Loveleen too expresses her attachment. "God, I love this country, I had forgotten, my own country! It made me weep on the bus. I pressed my cheek against the window and I felt the cool mountain air on the glass, and it made me cry even more" (ibid., 25). Though she often, like Ranyevskaya in the source text, relates her emotions upon her return to her childhood – "Oh god, my childhood. So pure" (ibid.) – these childhood memories are also related to work on the farm. "I woke up every morning to the same sound, Mummy whistling and starting the sprinklers" (ibid., 23). We can note again here the sensual and embodied relation to the land. Theirs is not simply an optical relation, one of surveillance, but fully sensory: haptic, aural, and olfactory. This relation to the land is forged through work; it is, to borrow from de Certeau, "practiced." It is produced "by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it" (de Certeau 2002, 117). (De Certeau proposes that space is practiced place; I would invert the terms space and place, but the fundamental point – that one is produced out of the other – still stands). This production of a particular locality – the orchard – is what also connects the Basran family to their neighbours who are also primarily farmers and who also express their relation to the land in terms of their labour. Paul, for example, claims a right to his land because he's "growing on [it]" […] with these hands and this aching back" (de Certeau 2002, 14). However, this shared labour is not necessarily enough to ensure the Basrans' right to belong in the place in the eyes of others, a point we will return to later.

If work on the farm produces a deeply embodied sense of belonging, of rootedness, of "home," other social and political developments could formally recognize and amplify this attachment. Set in the early 1970s, Parmar's _The Orchard_ reflects the early discussions about the meaning of the Canadian policy of multiculturalism. Official multiculturalism, put forth as government policy in 1971 by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, was a response to changes in Canadian society, changes brought about through years of immigration. Some commentators have described the policy as purely opportunistic (Gwyn 1980, 139). While there may be some truth to this claim, the policy was primarily an attempt to reflect (and, perhaps, give meaningful shape to) certain undeniable demographic realities. By 1970, at least a quarter of the nation's population was already "of other than British or French origins" (Friesen 1993, 7). Some of these immigrants lived in "many fairly well-defined Italian, Jewish, Slavic and Chinese neighbourhoods in larger Canadian cities," while "visible concentrations" of "Ukrainians, Doukhobors, Mennonites and Hutterites" were "scattered across the prairies" (1993, 8). Trudeau may have had many things in mind when announcing this
new policy – confounding Québécois nationalism, for example – but the policy arose directly as "the outcome of changing social relations between ethnic and national collectivities in Canada" (Juteau 1997, 104), changes which Trudeau himself played a leading role in effecting. He was, after all, responsible for liberalising "immigrant and refugee policies that made Asian, African, Latin American, and Caribbean applicants as eligible for Canadian citizenship" (McCall and Clarkson 1994, 431) as European applicants.

Annie notes excitedly that "Trudeau is opening up immigration in an unprecedented way" (Parmar 2018, 56). His alteration of the makeup of the country is for her a sign of positive change but Peter argues that while "multiculturalism pervades every message […] our stories are not in the classroom. Our medicine is not in the hospitals. Our philosophies which have evolved tens of thousands of years" (ibid., 41) are not represented either. Peter believes strongly that the future lies in India, that "all of India is [their] orchard" (ibid., 46). Peter's concerns about "nativism" receive a subtle echo from Paul who says,

You know I like that Trudeau guy, he's a bit of a passion fruit, but look, this has always been a tight knit community, I mean you all fit right in. We're a place built on immigrants – my dad's Polish! But we gotta do it responsibly. I just don't want a them and us situation. Boil it down, it comes back to jobs doesn't it. (ibid., 57)

Though not overt, the tensions here can be discerned. Change must be managed, and must not disrupt the status quo. The subtle tension here is articulated most forcefully in the Act Two scene, which echoes Chekhov's scene with the mendicant. A boy appears and helps himself to peaches that have been picked and when confronted by Gus he tells Gus to "[k]eep your turban on, I'm not gonna steal your job" (ibid., 46), and only addresses Michael, who, he assumes is the owner of the property because Michael is white. He addresses the Basrans with racially derogatory language and bursts the bubble of a multicultural utopia of racial harmony.

Racial tensions are considered with more complexity through the character of Barminder/Barbara, whose Chekhovian equivalent is Varya. She is going through a difficult process of religious conversion, relinquishing her Sikh faith for the dominant Christian religion of the area. She is secretive about this change, only telling Yash, one of the workers on the farm, that she has just been baptized. However, even the renunciation of her Sikh faith is not enough to guarantee her acceptance by the others at the church, which is clearly the centre of her social life as "everyone hangs out there" (ibid., 12). She tells Yash that the girls at church (who later on refuse to enter the house) didn't want to celebrate her baptism at home with her but chose to go to Kentucky Fried Chicken, where she cannot eat because she is vegetarian. "I wore their clothes. I ate their food. I prayed to their God. I'm doing everything right!" she protests (ibid., 51).

Yash, who seems to be one of the most assimilated characters in the play suggests she try a "shaggy haircut" (ibid., 49) like his and reminds her that it is "their country. Their rules" (ibid., 49). Barbara asks Yash to take her kara, the steel bracelet Sikhs wear as a sign of their unbreakable attachment to God, and Yash gently assures her that her "secret is safe" with him (ibid., 49). Abandoning one attachment in the hope of forging another, Barminder struggles to find or make a place in this changing world. She does
not marry Michael, of course, and at the end of play she is planning to move in with "Susan from church" (ibid., 13) though it is understood that in fact she will be working for her, not living with her as a roommate or friend.

Though their lives in multicultural Canada are difficult – Gus shaves his beard, removes his turban and cuts his hair so he can work in a bank once the farm is lost – all the characters, with the exception of Peter and Loveleen remain there. Annie, despite Peter's repeated attempts to entice her to India has decided to stay and fulfill a dream of building a real Gurdwara (Sikh house of worship). Until now, the family and friends have only prayed in a "makeshift temple" (ibid., 47), made of plastic sheets, but Annie's visit to a temple in India has strengthened her resolve to build their "first Gurdwara" in the Okanagan. Though City Hall has not approved the permits, Annie is certain she will "convince them and raise the money" (ibid., 78). As optimistic and future-oriented as many of Chekhov's idealists, Annie says, "A better world is coming, Peter. I can see it." (ibid., 78). Unlike Chekov's idealists this better world is not two hundred years in the future. When Peter asks if she will see this better world, she answers with an unequivocal "yes" (ibid., 78).

Perhaps the most significant element of Parmar's post-colonial The Orchard is Charlie, a First Nations former rodeo queen who also works on the farm. Like Charlotta in the source text, Charlie entertains the guests and family, though she performs rodeo rather than card tricks. More importantly, she represents another claim on the land at the heart of the play. A residential school survivor, Charlie has at best patchy access to her roots or family. Where the Basrans can claim a heritage as old as the five rivers of Punjab, Charlie has only scattered memories of things her grandfather taught her (ibid., 33). Working on the rodeo till it "went belly up," it is thanks only to "old Man Glenmore" that she learned her 'res' "was five miles away [from where she had ended up] the whole time." She "went home but [her] mom had passed, and granddad too" (ibid., 34). She has "no parents, no story […] I don't even have a birth certificate, so I still act young." However, Charlie is not defeated or crushed by her position or lack of family connections. "I'm a lost generation," she says but then appends the phrase, "so they say" (ibid. 35). In other words, she may not believe or feel she is lost. Others can say she is, but she does not need to subscribe to that position. Elsewhere, Charlie says, "Who am I? No one can tell me..." (ibid., 35), which, again, sounds potentially like a lament, but Jani Lauzon, the Metis actor playing the role, gave the line a defiant laughing inflection, and we understood that Charlie takes responsibility for forging her own identity and relationship to her world.

Charlie's is the last voice we hear in the play. Parmar plays a very clever variation on Chekhov at the end of the play. It appears that Kesur, the grandfather, has been forgotten in the commotion, like Firs in the source text, but Charlie appears and keeps him company. Then the family rushes back in, collects Kesur, leaving Charlie in the empty house. It appears that Charlie has been forgotten or abandoned. Charlie speaks:

Before there was an orchard here, before there was a ranch, there was a hill. And at the bottom of the hill, there used to be a great creek. Filled with the biggest sockeye salmon in the entire Okanagan. In the summer, the creek would run red with fish, bursting out of the water and overflowing onto the rocks. My great-grandfather was the Salmon-Chief,
so I’ve heard. And that’s the only story I know. People may come and go from this land. But the salmon is my brother and I belong to this creek. (ibid., 87)

A disembodied voice, presumably that of Greisha, the son who drowned, asks "What happens next, Charlie? Where will you go?" and she replies, "I’ll be here." Despite her lack of family memories, kin, and legal recognition, Charlie and the indigenous presence she represents will not be erased, will persist. Charlie sings while slowly crossing the space, scattering earth across the floor. The final sound we hear is her voice raised in a simultaneously defiant and celebratory ululation.

This dense theatrical moment reveals another substrate of the complex layers of belonging that inform this play and the world it represents. Transplanting Chekhov to the Okanagan valley, Parmar has interrogated the thorny questions of ownership, attachment and belonging that still underscore much political and theoretical debate in Canada. If Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard* builds its pathos and comedy from an uninterrogated attachment to place, her *Orchard* achieves its pathos and comedy from staging how attachment and belonging are made, performed and contested.

Both playwrights, MacMahon and Parmar, have borrowed classic or familiar sources and adapted them for a new temporal and geographic context. Playing variations on their sources, they have opened a space for new work and new voices. While MacMahon's *Animal Farm* discusses Canada's current political and economic reality, Parmar's *The Orchard* stages the social realities that gave rise to Canada's current postcolonial politics. Drawing on the familiar and authorized, these two plays displace familiar readings of canonical texts in favour of new understandings of Canadian social and political realities.

**Works Cited**


