

## EDITOR'S LETTER

**Right now, I want you to imagine a ball on a table.**

**Have you done it?**

**Great. Stay with me.**

**I now want you to imagine that someone has walked up to the ball and pushed it. What has happened to your imaginary ball?**

**Better yet, what colour was your ball? And who pushed it? A man or a woman? What kind of ball was it - a tennis ball, a basketball? And how about your table? Do you remember what shape it was? What was it made of?<sup>1</sup>**

I first learned of this challenge years ago, when questioned in this manner by a family friend. What this exercise is, is a visualisation experiment. How many questions you were able to confidently answer - without reconstructing your mental image of your ball being pushed - demonstrates the strength of your visualising abilities. When I tried it all that time ago, I was not able to tell my family friend any more than my ball's colour, despite everyone else around me having seemingly impossibly well fleshed-out narratives for their imaginary rolling balls.

It is perhaps for this reason that I, and so many others, appreciate film adaptations of literature. I have no qualms with immediately accepting Nicole Kidman as *The Goldfinch's* (2019) Mrs Barbour or Jennifer Lawrence as *The Hunger Games'* (2012) Katniss Everdeen. In fact, I much prefer them to whatever spongy, half-baked figures I could think up. And yet, film adaptations often come under rigorous fire by booklovers for their attempts to translate literature to the silver screen.

Our special edition of *Literary Cultures* considers the value of visual adaptations of literature. What needs, beyond those of the imaginatively challenged, do they fulfill? Where can they supersede their written counterparts and where do they fail, if they fail at all? This journal reflects on examples spanning from the canonical works of Shakespeare to the contemporary novels of Sally Rooney and juggles the Gothicism of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) with the relentless warmth of *Call Me by Your Name's* (2017) Northern Italy. While our authors have achieved startling variety in the contents of articles and reviews, they are each united in their praise of how film adaptations bring new meaning and relevance to their literary counterparts.

We hope we trigger your imaginations and get the ball rolling with our evaluations of some of our favorite literary works and their on-screen legacies.

With thanks to all of our amazing writers,

**Mackenzie Waller**

*Editor in Chief*

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<sup>1</sup> Waiting247 (@Waiting247), 'Ball on a Table – Visualization Experiment', Reddit, 13 August 2019, <[https://www.reddit.com/r/Aphantasia/comments/cpwimq/ball\\_on\\_a\\_table\\_visualization\\_experiment/](https://www.reddit.com/r/Aphantasia/comments/cpwimq/ball_on_a_table_visualization_experiment/)> [accessed 4 January 2025].