The Silk Road of Adaptation

The Silk Road of Adaptation: Transformations across Disciplines and Cultures

Edited by

Laurence Raw

CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARS PUBLISHING

The Silk Road of Adaptation: Transformations across Disciplines and Cultures
Edited by Laurence Raw

This book first published 2013

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN (10): 1-4438-4975-8, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-4975-3

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The entire conference could not have taken place without the input of Günseli Sönmez İşçi, Professor of English at Yeni Yüzyıl University, İstanbul, who not only helped to organize the magnificent venue, but offered her usual input and enthusiasm to ensure the success of the event. She was ably assisted by İlknur Kursunlugil Tuncer, who coped ably with all the manifold duties involved in organizing the event, including transport, accommodation, room organization and travel. We could not have had such a success without her. I'd like to thank the Association of Adaptation Studies for giving us the chance to organize the event in the first place, notably Jeremy Strong. Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan were two of the plenary speakers, as well as Savaş Arslan of Bahçeşehir University in İstanbul, who offered a challenging piece on the role of Turkish cinema in the modern age. Tim Corrigan and Marcia Ferguson offered moral support as well as asking just the right questions at the right time. Tony Gurr offered valuable perspectives on teaching adaptations, ably supported by Şahika Arıkan and Şebnem Demirci. James Mavor of Edinburgh Napier University offered a valuable workshop on screenwriting. Nazmi Ağıl of Koç University provided a wonderful poetry-reading as a last-minute substitute. I'd also like to thank Carol Koulikourdi, Amanda Millar and Emily Surrey of Cambridge Scholars Publishing for their continual support of this project.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: TRAVELING THE SILK ROAD OF ADAPTATION

LAURENCE RAW

The Silk Road is an historical network of interlinking trade routes that connected South Asia with Europe and the Mediterranean, as well as parts of East Asia. Routes extended through Syria, the Republic of Turkey, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan and China. Trade on the Silk Road was a significant factor in the development of China, the Indian subcontintent, Iran/Persia and Europe. Though silk was the principal commodity, many other goods were exchanged, while various technologies, religions and philosophies also traveled along the routes. One example was the encounter between Chinese and Xiongnu nomads. The Xiongnu adopted Chinese agricultural methods, clothing and lifestyle, while the Chinese converted to the Xiongnu way of life as a means of avoiding punishment from their superiors.

Such cross-cultural exchanges invariably involved adaptation – of styles, clothing, and modes of behavior – which helps to explain why the metaphor of "the Silk Road" continues to exert considerable sway in different cultures. Former American Secretary of State Hillary Roddam Clinton embraced a vision of "the new Silk Road" in the Near and Far East, based on the ideas of cooperation and collaboration in the areas of trade, research and intellectual development. Her Deputy Assistant Secretary Geoffrey Pyatt remarked in a speech given on 9 July 2012 that the strategy would help reconnect countries "that had been torn apart by decades of war and rivalry" – for example the United States, India, Japan and Afghanistan. Cooperation could be achieved through increased trade flow and dialogue between opinion-formers at all levels, whether industrial, diplomatic, or educational. This was no easy task: "years of ambivalence about the merits of cooperation, and even geography will need to be overcome." The term "geography" is problematic: Pyatt understood that it was often used as an excuse to prevent rather than

promote dialogue between representatives of different countries. Hence it was necessary to construct an "open and integrated" framework for dialogue so that "the progress we have all worked hard to achieve is preserved and has the momentum to continue" (Pyatt, "Delivering.")

Robert O. Blake jr., the Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of South and Central Affairs in the State Department, remarked in another speech dated 13 March 2013 that the "New Silk Road" strategy depended to a large extent on United States and Turkish involvement: the Republic could not only provide the industrial and financial impetus to ensure the success of various schemes, but it could encourage trade liberalization, permitting the flow of goods, services, people and ideas throughout the region. Note the choice of words here: Blake believes that trade-links can be better established through cross-cultural understanding, as entrepreneurs and their customers learn to adapt themselves and the products they deal with. Greater cooperation helps people address "important issues related to human rights, the rule of law, and corruption" and thereby improve "the region's long-term stability and security" (Blake, "The New Silk Road.") In Blake's formulation, the need to adapt is essential to the creation of a better world in which the purpose of the Silk Road metaphor – the need to exchange ideas as well as commodities – can be rediscovered.

Published in New York, the literary journal *Words without Borders* adopts a similar purpose; to promote greater communication between creative artists of different culture by publishing new writing both in translation and in its original language. Joshua Mandelbaum, managing editor of the journal, believes that this strategy can help readers "examine themselves," while encouraging analysis "of 'the other' in relation to the self." The subjects of previous editions have included African women, Brazil, Black Markets, Cities of Asylum and Venezuela (Mandelbaum). While the Silk Road metaphor does not appear in the journal's title, its principal aim consists in forging a better world by showing how writers have reinterpreted it according to their own cultural preconceptions, for better or for worse. Published out of the University of Oregon, the *Silk Road Review* provides a forum for a variety of material – fiction, poetry, reportage, travel documents – that captures "a vivid point of exchange and space." The term "interaction" is significant: the journal tries to publish "crucial, defining and relevant" work designed to appeal to as cosmopolitan a readership as possible. The points of contact are not only cross-cultural but cross-disciplinary, giving writers of all specialisms the chance to participate in a literary and creative forum" (Postma).

What relevance does the Silk Road metaphor have for the future of adaptation studies? Perhaps most significantly, it provides the opportunity

for a revaluation of the term "adaptation," that not only refers to textual transformations (literature to film, film to fanflic, and so on), but also describes a process of coming to terms with new material and new phenomena. Through dialogue members of different trading nations, as well as scholars, forge new partnerships through adaptation, just like the Chinese and Xiongnu peoples. By providing a variety of material from a variety of backgrounds, journals like *Words without Borders* and the *Silk Road Review* encourage their readers to perform similar transformative processes. More importantly the Silk Road metaphor promotes the idea of adaptation as a *continuous* process in which individuals continually have to adjust themselves to new ideas and new material. Applying that idea to adaptation studies (understood as the process of transforming one text into another) means that we not only have to look at the ways in which texts have been transformed, but the ways in which readers, audiences, and critics have responded to them at different points in time and space. Comparing and contrasting such reactions rehearses a process similar to those involved in the "New Silk Road" initiative: the only way people can move forward is to make sense of each other's reactions. Thirdly, it is clear that adaptation is a *psychological* process: only by coming to terms with other people and other cultures can individuals address issues of human rights, or "examine themselves" and their existing beliefs. Finally adaptation should be approached as a transmedial as well as a transdisciplinary act, assuming equal significance in the political and diplomatic as well as the literary spheres.

Such notions are very different from those put forward by recent theorists of adaptation studies. Anne-Marie Scholz's recent *From Fidelity to History* acknowledges the role of active viewers in film adaptations – of James and Austen in particular – who "construct […] for themselves an understanding of the context that specific date [of release of an adaptation] implies; it will be informed by more or less knowledge about the time period based upon personal experience […] or any number of other possibilities" (13). However this formulation does not allow for difference; each viewer might respond to an adaptation in an idiosyncratic manner. Analyzing their responses tells a lot about the cultures and customs that shape them. The issue here is one of perspective: looking at film adaptations using the Silk Road metaphor requires us to start with individual viewpoints and look at the ways in which viewpoints have influenced texts (literary, cinematic, or otherwise). Scholz starts with texts and moves outwards to consider ways in which "the viewer" – viewed as a generalized entity – responds to them.

Judith Buchanan's edited collection *The Writer on Film* looks at the ways in which literary authors have been reconstructed in the cinema as a way for cinema to reflect on its own identity and processes, especially *vis-à-vis* more established means of artistic communication such as the book. The representation of authors on film offers vital evidence of the authors' reputation in (western) cultures by rewriting "the evolving cultural monuments we collectively erect, and variously rewhittle, to the writers whose stories we want to tell and retell" (Buchanan 23). Buchanan's observation neglects the audience's active presence in the cinematic event as authors; in a film like John Madden's *Shakespeare in Love* (1998), for instance, Tom Stoppard's reconstruction of the Bard can be (re) constructed according to different cultural monuments, depending on the viewers' socio-cultural backgrounds. By comparing these monuments we can learn a lot about how adaptations are marketed (and more significantly) consumed. Buchanan concludes that cinema's transnational gaze towards the literary author "had been torn between envy and condescension, between an impulse to idealize and the temptation to debunk" (23). Such binaries might not assume too much significance in contexts where the subjects of literary films might not be so well-known (for example, in nonwestern popular cultures).

Analyzing a cinematic representation of an author using the Silk Road metaphor requires us to make more nuanced conclusions, helping us to understand how such representations vary according to time, space, geography and – most importantly – purpose. The references to the Bard in a Turkish film like *Komser Şekspir* [Commissar Shakespeare] (2001) fulfill very different functions from those in *Shakespeare in Love*: director Sinan Çetin – a veteran of the Turkish *yeşilçam* industry – treats Shakespeare as a general symbol of "western" cultures, allowing him to make a serio-comic examination of the ways in which the police are perceived in the contemporary Republic of Turkey.

The Silk Road metaphor allows us to view adaptation as a fundamental process of human understanding. Great authors such as Shakespeare or Henry James function simultaneously as objects transformed by perpetually shifting critical and political interventions, as well as by the subjects performing the adaptations. Their works function as the means by which new conceptualizations can be produced, or provide an opportunity for individuals to explore the implications and potential of new critical and/or social constructions. This is an interesting approach insofar as it restores the centrality of "the author" to the act of adaptation. However this does not represent a return to the old New Critical view of the author as a disembodied product of textuality, or the bearer of symbolic capital in

the literary or societal spheres (i.e. treating James or Shakespeare as so-called "canonical" authors). Rather the author functions as a means by which individuals can reflect on their own experiences or cultural concerns, and hence become authors of their own adaptations. They experience the same acts of imaginative transformation that authors such as James or Shakespeare underwent while creating their works. Everyone is treated as an "author;" there is no privileged status granted to one person over another.

Shelley Cobb argues that reception is the place where authorial authority and authorial identity is made, sustained and fought for. It is not just academic reception that provides a site for this struggle: popular film criticism plays an important role, as do press reviews, interviews and advertising. Cobb further suggests that in terms of film adaptations, the adapter's emotional identity competes for authority with that of the source-text's author, thereby proving the truth of Fredric Jameson's argument that modern artists seek each other's death in the sense that they brook no other gods besides themselves (118). These kind of struggles for authority assume importance in cultures where literary texts are prioritized over other types of text, telling us a lot about how different socio-economic groups construct and reconstruct "cultural monuments" for ideological and/or self-interested purposes. The editors of a recent anthology on Henry James understand this point well, as they suggest how the Master's work can be used to explore "a web of social, cultural, aesthetic, and philosophic discourses" across cultures. Such discourses are not only critiqued in James's novels, but the novels can be used as a means by which readers can conduct their own critiques of such discourses (Biasio, Despotopoulou and Izzo 2).

The significance of this process of adaptation was understood several years ago by the translator Patrice Pavis, as it provided a means for "acknowledging cultures, individualities, minorities, sub-cultures, pressure-groups, and thus for refining socio-cultural methods of measuring the extent and effects of culture[s] [….] whose identity, determination and precise place within infra- and superstructure we no longer know" (42). Through adaptation we can find out more about the cultures we inhabit and the role that literary texts – as well as other texts – play in helping us towards this process of self-discovery. As long ago as the mid-Seventies the clinical psychologist Hans Selye observed that the act of adaptation consisted of a series of strategies, both physical and mental, whereby individuals learn to do things or reach to things better as time goes by:

> The degree of adaptation you can acquire varies from case to case, but there are very few things in life which you cannot learn to do […] When

> we are first confronted with a complex mathematical problem, we attempt to solve it in different ways [….] This process might be quite exhausting, but […] eventually we learn always to use the simplest formula […] with a minimum of effort (160-1).

Watching a film adaptation or reading a literary text involves the same strategies as when we read a James novel: we try to solve the complexities of language and thought, but once we have adapted ourselves to the style, we can construct our own interpretations.

Adaptation is an important means by which individuals come to deal with specific social and personal problems. The psychologist Vamık D. Volkan interviewed several Turkish Cypriots in the wake of the Cyprus conflict during the mid-Seventies. Many of them had been removed from their family homes and forcibly resettled in the Turkish sector. They had to learn to adapt to the diasporic experience, something that proved especially difficult on account of elements "hidden *under the skin*, as it were […] I learned […] about a general belief that the waters of the Cyprus beaches were contaminated by some organism that caused itching […] a sign of repressed anxiety, repressed rage, or repressed sexual excitement" (138-9). The condition only subsided when Volkan's subjects discovered their own ways of dealing with their anxieties.

The only way that countries along the Silk Road could learn to cooperate with one another was through similar adaptive strategies. Mosut Bozkır, the Head of the Board of Trustees at the International Black Sea University in Tbilisi, remarked in 2003 that this was the only means by which "people may realize and tolerate different views and thoughts […] The main reason for current conflicts is that people do not know each other very well" (14). Individuals should be brought together around the same table "so that they can get to know each other better and strengthen their mutual relations." Ultimately the spirit of the Great Silk Road can be recreated, producing "wealth, experience and cultural richness as a result of positive interactions" (14).

The Silk Road metaphor is both transdisciplinary and transnational, making little formal distinction between the processes of reading and interpreting a novel, watching and consuming a film adaptation, and forging a community of purpose amongst representatives of different cultures. All of these strategies require us to make sense of new experiences and hence develop our personalities. This lies at the heart of all creative development, as the educational theorist W. D. Wall remarked in 1975: "True creativeness involves qualities of mind […] [as well as] exposure to a rich and varied experience which is both

cognitively and emotionally stimulating, and which provides the 'compost' from which to recombine experience [and adapt to it] in new ways" (327-8).

It was this desire to foster an emotionally stimulating transdisciplinary environment that informed the way we planned the 2011 Association of Adaptation Studies conference, where most of the chapters in this anthology were originally presented. The event took place at the *Anadolu Külübü* [Anatolian Club] on Büyükada, one of the Prince's Islands off the coast of İstanbul. Founded in 1928, the club represented an attempt to recreate the atmosphere of a London gentleman's club, complete with restaurant, smoking and billiard rooms, and overnight accommodation. Even today the club is usually restricted to members, who pay high subscriptions for enjoying its facilities, so securing it as a conference venue represented a notable coup. The venue seemed ideal for a conference entitled "The Silk Road of Adaptation" insofar as the event's entire organization depended on a delicate fusion of cultures. Elderly club members sat in their armchairs reading their newspapers in rooms festooned with Ottoman fixtures and fittings, while conference delegates from all over Europe, Australasia, Asia and the Americas hurried from room to room to listen to or present their papers. I don't want to push this parallel too far, but it seems as if the club's managers had provided an effective means to synthesize "different views and thoughts," to invoke Bozkır's phrase once more.

In keeping with the Silk Road metaphor, the conference tried to be as transdisicplinary as possible by including papers on film and theater, Turkish history and politics, constructivist educational theory, teaching foreign languages and literatures, and translation studies. The papers included in this anthology offers a representative selection of material presented. Imelda Whelehan's "Where Are We and Are We There Yet?" provides a suggestive introduction. She surveys recent theoretical trends in adaptation studies, taking due account of the movements towards transdisciplinarity. She believes with some justification that adaptation studies remains enmeshed in yesterday's theoretical battles, especially in its enduring obsession with "fidelity" (fidelity to what, we might ask?) Whelehan believes that the discipline is branching out into different areas; the fact that it lacks a coherent theoretical core might be one of its strengths, as different cultures and different disciplines approach it in a variety of ways, extending far beyond the literature/ film/ media paradigm.

The next three pieces prove the truth of Whelehan's observation about the diversity of work going on in adaptation studies. Victoria Bledsloe looks at the history of the Silk Road as a site of cultural and commercial negotiation. This provides a suggestive framework for Sinan Akıllı's fascinating piece of historical excavation into the ways in which national anthems were adopted and subsequently discarded during the last century and a half of the Ottoman Empire. The anthems encouraged people to believe in visions of national unity; to adapt themselves and show loyalty to the ruling hegemony. The fact that several tunes were chosen suggests that this policy failed, as the rulers could not – or more likely would not – acknowledge the importance of cultural difference among their subjects. This lack of success contrasts with the *Istiklal Marşı*, the anthem embraced during the Republican period from 1923 onwards that continues to be used today.

Himmet Umunç and Defne Ersin Tutan look at different constructions of orientalist adaptation. Umunç's essay on Lord Byron discusses how the poet consciously adopted an oriental mode of dress in an attempt to make himself appear less "English," both to himself and those around him. In the end he became a Kiplingesque figure, one who never lost his western education, but nonetheless made a conscious effort to embrace the Other. Ersin Tutan discusses Robert Irwin's 1983 novel *Arabian Nightmare*, where the author makes a valiant attempt to adapt the west/east binary through historiographic metafiction, but only succeeds in reinforcing it. Unlike Byron, Irwin cannot shed himself of his belief in western superiority.

The next five chapters all look at the means by which different film directors have adapted a variety of source-texts. Joyce Goggin surveys Karel Reisz's version of Dostoyevsky's *The Gambler* (1974), in which the story has been transformed into a quasi-morality piece of a professor of literatue (James Caan) being sucked into the world of late capitalism represented by the gambling table. In his search for the "real" hard-core gold rush, he is seduced by the aesthetics of sensation. Whereas Lord Byron retained the freedom to adapt himself to new ways of life, Caan's professor finds himself deprived of the power of self-determination. Capitalism can destroy the individual, which makes the need for understanding and negotiation in any form of cultural exchange all the more significant as a means of resisting its apparently unstoppable force.

Charles Hamilton shows how Peter Viertel's account of working with John Huston on *The African Queen* (1951) was transformed into a Clint Eastwood vehicle, in which the protagonist (a thinly disguised

Huston-figure) tried to deal with his inner demons as he completed the film. Unable either to adapt to unfamiliar surroundings or the crew working with him, Wilson (the fictionalized Huston) cannot come to terms with himself. The film offers an object lesson in the importance of group negotiation. Two pieces written by Selga Goldmane and Ela İpek Gündüz and Rahime Çokay address some of the issues referred to earlier on in this introduction: Goldmane looks at the ways in which Stanley Kubrick stamped his cinematic imprimatur on Stephen King's *The Shining*, while Gündüz and Çokay focus on how Virginia Woolf has been represented in Stephen Daldry's *The Hours*. The latter piece is exceptionally interesting as the authors show how Woolf's life and work provide an object lesson for viewers to trust in their own judgment, and thereby adapt themselves for the better. Faruk Kalay and Bülent Tanrıtanır identify a similarly optimistic message in their analysis of Bharati Mukherjee's novel *Jasmine*, whose protagonists learns how to come to terms with living in an alien culture.

The next three pieces discuss how Shakespeare has been adapted in different socio-cultural contexts. Wu Hui discusses Chinese versions of *Hamlet* that perpetually negotiate the distinctions between known and unknown, repetition and creation, fidelity and innovation. While recognizing Shakespeare's global reputation, the directors try to rewrite his texts to make comments on contemporary Chinese social and cultural politics. Each film creates its own particular Silk Road, a balance of different interests, both artistic and political. The same phenomenon can be discerned in Peter Brook's and Akira Kurosawa's versions of *King Lear*. Peter E. S. Babiak argues that both films present apocalyptic visions of the world in highly different ways. Analyzing both texts tells us a lot about how cultures represent apparently familiar ideas. Marilise R. Bertin surveys the history of Brazilian translations of Charles and Mary Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*, showing how politics on a national as well as a global level shaped the texts' adaptation and reception. Combining politics, textual analysis and reception theory, Bertin draws attention to the transdisciplinarity of adaptation studies.

The next three pieces extend that transdisciplinary framework. Hugo Vandal-Sirois, Tânia Hoff and João Anzanello Carrascoza all look at adaptation in advertising. In an interesting counterpoint to Goggin's piece, they show how capitalism depends for its continued success on recognition of difference. It has to adapt itself to different social, cultural and linguistic contexts – something that influenced all transactions conducted along the Silk Road in the past. Heather

Schell's fascinating analysis of how Harlequin romances are reworked in the Turkish context illustrates one of the complications of this point: while these texts must necessarily be reworked for their new audience, such a necessity is not acknowledged by the publishers. This conflict renders the process of adaptation invisible, Schell suggests, and therefore frees the Harlequin translators to make significant adaptations to the stories.

Turning to issues of adaptation in education, the next three pieces offer contrasting accounts of how western-produced texts have been adapted in nonwestern classrooms. A graduate of a Turkish Department of English Literature, Mustafa Bal recalls how a literature curriculum was introduced in Sarajevo in the wake of the Bosnian civil war. He does not discuss the strategy in terms of its "success" or "failure," but rather looks at the ways in which educators and learners used the experience to adapt themselves and their views of western cultures, as well as trying to forge a community of purpose. Seçil Horasan writes about a similar experience of working with learners of English at a private university in Ankara; through drama she helped them to deal with their basic fears of making mistakes in English, and hence increased their self-confidence. This type of pedagogy contributed greatly to their creative development through adaptation. Drawing on her experience as a language educator in several contexts, Charlotte McPherson stresses the link between the spirit of cross-cultural exchange inherent in the Silk Road, and effective language and/or culture learning. Everyone in the learning event – educators and learners alike – should cultivate respect for differences, some of which can be subtler than others. Effective learning depends on negotiating these differences, if not necessarily overcoming them.

The collection ends with a salutary tale, proving that some cross-cultural and/or cross-disciplinary initiatives do not have successful outcomes. Liz Jones looks at F. W. Murnau's 1926 version of *Faust*, whose premiere attracted volleys of criticism from filmgoers and reviewers alike. Despite his reputation, Murnau had produced a piece that failed to fulfill what she describes as the German public's "generic expectations." Negotiation proved impossible; the film flopped; and Murnau's reputation as an *auteur* suffered as a result. However time has been kind to *Faust*; critics now recognize it as a classic reconstruction of Goethe's source-text incorporating several intertexts. The film's checkered career tells us something about the Silk Road metaphor: if one cross-cultural transaction fails, then it's important to set it aside and move on to another. This is what adaptation involves;

the ability to learn from failure and to use it as a basis for further experiment.

While this collection is undoubtedly eclectic in terms of subject-matter, it nonetheless proves how adaptation assumes equal significance across a variety of disciplines and/or socio-cultural contexts. Hopefully it will encourage readers to travel along their own Silk Roads, whether intellectual or otherwise, in pursuit of new exchanges.

Works Cited

Blake, Robert O. jr. "The New Silk Road and Regional Economic Integration." *US Department of State*, 13 Mar. 2013. Web. 16 Jun. 2013.

Bozkır, Mesut. "Opening Address." *2nd International Black Sea Symposium: BSEC Studies, 6-7 May 2005, Tbilisi, Georgia*. Tbilisi: Georgian Ministry of Economy, Georgian Academy of Sciences, International Black Sea University, 2005. 14. Print.

Buchanan, Judith. "Introduction." *The Writer on Film: Screening Literary Authorship*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. 3-35. Print.

Cobb, Shelley. "Film Authorship and Adaptation." *A Companion to Literature, Film and Adaptation*. Ed. Deborah Cartmell. Malden, VA, and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2012. 105-22. Print.

De Biasio, Anna, Anna Despotopoulou, and Donatella Izzo. "Introduction: Transformations." *Transforming Henry James*. Eds. De Biasio, Despotopoulou, and Izzo. 7-10. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013. Print.

Faust – Eine Deutsche Volkssage [Faust: A German Folk-Tale]. Dir. F. W. Murnau. Perf. Gösta Ekman, Emil Jannings. UFA, 1926. Film.

The Gambler. Dir. Karel Reisz. Perf. James Caan, Paul Sorvino, Lauren Hutton. Paramount Pictures, 1974. Film.

The Hours. Dir. Stephen Daldry. Perf. Meryl Streep, Nicole Kidman, Julianne Moore. Paramount Pictures/ Miramax Films, 2002. Film.

Irwin, Robert. *Arabian Nightmare*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1983. Print.

King Lear. Dir. Peter Brook. Perf. Paul Scofield, Irene Worth. Filmways, Inc., 1971. Film.

Komser Şekspir [Commissar Shakespeare]. Dir. Sinan Çetin. Perf. Vahdet Çakar, Okan Bayülgen, Mesut Ceylan. Plato Film Production, 2001. Film.

Mandelbaum, Joshua. E-mail to the author, 13 Jun. 2013.

Mukherjee, Bharati. *Jasmine*. New York: Grove Weidenfield, 1989. Print.

Pavis, Patrice. "Problems of Translation for the Stage." Trans. Loren Kruger. *The Play out of Context: Transferring Plays from Culture to Culture*. Eds. Hanna Scolnicov and Peter Holland. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989. 25-45. Print.

Postma, Kathlene. E-mail to the author, 8 Jun. 2013.

Pyatt, Geoffrey. "Delivering on the New Silk Road." *US Department of State*, 9 Jul. 2012. Web. 16 Jun. 2013.

Ran. Dir. Akira Kurosawa. Perf. Tatsuya Nakadai, Akira Terao. Greenwich Film Productions/ Herald Ace, 1985. DVD.

Scholz, Anne-Marie. *From Fidelity to History: Film Adaptation as Cultural Events in the Twentieth Century*. Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2013. Print.

Selye, Hans. *The Stress of Life*. Rev. ed. 1976. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1978. Print.

The Shining. Dir. Stanley Kubrick. Perf. Jack Nicholson, Shelley Duvall, Barry Nelson. Warner Bros., 1980. Film.

Volkan, Vamık D. *Cyprus: War and Adaptation. A Psychoanalytic History of Two Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Charlottesville:: UP. of Virginia, 1979. Print.

Wall, W. D. *Constructive Education for Children*. London: George G. Harrap and Co. Ltd., 1975. Print.

White Hunter, Black Heart. Dir. Clint Eastwood. Perf. Clint Eastwood, Jeff Fahey, Alun Armstrong. Warner Bros. 1990. DVD.

CHAPTER TWO

WHERE ARE WE AND ARE WE THERE YET?

IMELDA WHELEHAN

In a recent volume on adaptation, the editors draw attention to "the persistent recourse in the literature to a spatial discourse of 'turning-points'" (Hopton et. al.. xv). To support this view they mention in particular both Thomas Leitch's influential review article, "Adaptation Studies at a Crossroads"(2008), which focuses on key publications on the subject, and Eckart Voigts-Virchow's "Metadaptation: Adaptation and Intermediality – Cock and Bull" (2009), that examine the critical gulf between what is called adaptation studies and what is often termed studies in intermediality. This chapter follows these threads and begins by focusing upon spatial metaphors, as well as metaphors of movement, constraint and liberation, to tease out current tensions and possibilities in the field of adaptation studies. I shall continue by asking why so many adaptation critics describe themselves as trapped in current discourses of adaptation studies, in order to establish what it is they want to be liberated from. I shall explore the possibility of consensus in adaptation theory and consider what studies in intermediality might offer instead. I hope to show that there is a thread of anxiety that runs through most criticism about what adaptation studies is or could be, which suggests core concerns about disciplinarity, direction and possible evolution. Whether such concerns are symptoms of malaise or, perversely, evidence of the field's rude health is a key topic of this piece.

The rest of the discussion is intended to further interrogate this sense of lack of direction or confusion about the correct path for the adaptation critic to take. Significantly, it seems to be a good time to reflect on why there is a new focus on "correct" approaches to study, as well as why this debate is framed in terms of locatedness and space. From this point of view, Leitch's essay is a good place to start. Leitch's review, appearing in the first issue of the journal *Adaptation,* is intended to initiate the question: "where now in adaptation studies?" Given that 2008 saw the publication of two new journals devoted to this field of study, the image of the crossroads

seemed a pertinent and useful one: one pauses at a crossroads, before determining which direction to take; and of course figuratively speaking, to be at a crossroads is to be at a moment of decision-making. Eckart Voigts-Virchow, in his article a year later, sees adaptation studies as more of a cul-de-sac, or perhaps a one-way street, unable to exploit the intersections that he sees as being available with intermediality and other theoretical positions. This, as he points out, is not just a question of avoidance, but one of changing national and regional theoretical habits, and an issue related to the location of academic disciplines and discursive norms within certain cultural contexts. His acknowledgement of the Anglophone dimension of adaptation studies and the European focus on intermediality reminds us that the gap between the two is not just perceived as philosophical or epistemological, but is crucially about different educational traditions organized in different cultures which itself determines the nature of communication: "The story I would like to tell is a similar tale of incompatible languages emerging in the two rival pubs 'Adaptation' and 'Intermediality'" (138). He extends this analogy further by posing them as businesses of sorts with their own figureheads: "The intermediality pub is a franchise of Julia Kristeva's" (138), reminds us that dominant voices shape a discipline and determine the direction and focus of critical investigation to a degree. The image of rival pubs also suggests a certain arbitrariness: maybe we go to one pub rather than another because it is nearer, or because our friends drink there; but one day we may take a different turning and find ourselves sitting in a pub under an unfamiliar sign, drinking a different brand of beer and nervously observing the locals. Voigts-Virchow importantly raises the issue of how differing intellectual traditions have fostered different approaches, but with numerous points of crossover and similarities that are sometimes obscured by their difference in location and differences in constructions of language.

Studies in intermediality have the theoretical rigor and maturity, a sense of process and method; and while adaptation studies draws from numerous theoretical perspectives there is a niggling sense of lack at its heart. For some, adaptation studies suffers from a certain critical naivété, and as it gains momentum and breadth from scholars located in several disciplines, this sense of a lack of a theoretical core, an untheoretical responsiveness to texts is felt more keenly. In a recent collection devoted to adaptation, but originating largely from the intermediality side of the camp, Lucia Krämer asserts: "in the present situation it would not seem too unreasonable to characterise adaptation scholars as ultimately just another fan group with a specialist discourse" (169). She implies that adaptation critics remain intensely subjective and try rather too hard to

distinguish themselves from professional film critics by eschewing any discussion of fidelity. Some years earlier Sarah Cardwell wrote of the need to "break from established interpretive and evaluative paradigms." (1), arguing that adaptation studies was locked into a comparative novel-film approach that was unable to fully evaluate the cultural and aesthetic impact of the adaptation, but also implying that the analytical strategies, borrowed largely from literary critical approaches, were not fit for purpose. As well as adaptation studies being conceived as perhaps unequal to the task it sets itself because of its lack of theoretical frameworks, it is also a body of work whose enduring precepts (usually an assertion of what adaptation is not rather that what it is – the fallacies route) have already become a cage.

Leitch's conception of the provenance of adaptation studies as originating from the "backwaters of the academy" (63) suggests an enduring taint cast by such humble beginnings, despite the dynamism indicated by recent adaptation criticism. Leitch reflects on Christine Geraghty's consideration of the discourses which circulate adaptation as ghostly presences leaving their imprints (Geraghty, 195), and declares that adaptation studies itself is 'haunted by concepts and premises it has repudiated in principle but continued to rely on in practice" (63). It is haunted by tensions between literary and film studies, George Bluestone, fidelity and Wagner's three degrees of adaptation, to name just a few of the ghosts one can immediately identify. More recently what haunts adaptation studies is a desire for some critical tools agreed upon and shared; and this sense of a remaining and significant absence in our practices prompts a sense of loss of direction and the desire for a proper "map" of the field.

So far I have reflected on images of adaptation studies as haunted by past traumas and actually imprisoned in a cage of its own making. Leitch imagines Christine Geraghty, Julie Sanders and Linda Hutcheon as escapees from the "prison-house of adaptation studies" (76) tunneling out to meet their *confrères* from intermediality halfway. This notion prompted me to revisit my and Deborah Cartmell's perhaps rather complacent assumption that "the area is beginning to settle down under a banner which can contain multitudes, and denies either 'literature' or 'film' unwelcome primacy" (1). When we wrote this it seemed to us that the time for all-encompassing last words on adaptation studies had passed, and that it had become a meeting point for scholars in a multitude of disciplines and sub-specialisms, whose specialist knowledge lent ever broader variety to the approaches to be taken to the adaptation process, more than one individual could ever hope to master in a single scholarly work. For us, adaptation *is* the crossroads.

The editors of the recent volume I mentioned at the start of this chapter, a volume entitled *Pockets of Change*, respond directly to both Leitch and Voigts-Virchow and argue that:

> we need more pubs, and if we are to move between them, then we want more tunnels, in all directions. We would rather not pause at a crossroads, where the next step entails either continuing on the same trajectory, going back over old ground, or making a sharp, perpendicular turn. We invoke "pockets" as an alternative space of change, exchange, transition, and transposition. A pocket may be an enclosed or isolated space; its contents may be obscure or even invisible, may require tunneling blind. But a pocket of change can stretch, and there are no set trajectories for its expansion (xvi).

The movement from tunnels, to crossroads, to pockets creates a bizarre clash of mental images, but one can identify the attempt in this veritable manifesto a suggestion for free exchange, and certainly the anthology is itself an eclectic collection focusing on theatre, poetry, agricultural shows and even post-1945 confectionery in Australia. The ambition is explicitly stated from the start--to broaden the disciplinary range at the core of adaptation studies, and permanently move away from the vertical excavatory activities of fidelity criticism. What is acknowledged here is that for much contemporary scholarship in the humanities, the disciplinary maps of old make less and less sense, and that adaptation studies is one of a number of approaches which provide a stimulus for studies which can soar off in different directions. Julie Sanders, another of Leitch's would-be escapees from adaptation studies, offers an optimistic preface to this volume, asserting that: "as adaptation studies embeds itself within publishing catalogues and university curricula, a new need arises, I think, to map the future landscape(s) of the field," to be achieved through "ever more sustained and complex inter- and intra-disciplinary engagements and encounters" (ix). The use of the term "encounter" gives also an interesting flavor of much recent adaptation criticism, which raises the readers' consciousness to that fact that whatever their own disciplinary locations and concerns, they may be co-opted into the business of adaptation studies even when they think they are doing something else.

As Voigts-Virchow points out, though, it is not just a question of mapping new paths, but an issue of language and cultural difference. The distinctions between intermediality and adaptation studies are not just about differing or incompatible theoretical roots, but also about intellectual traditions, the boundaries between different scholarly disciplines in different cultures, contradictory university policies and even the differing habits of academic and journal publishers across the globe. Maybe

translation theory is required to help us communicate more effectively across language, culture, and academic discursive formation? Lawrence Venuti argues the case for the contribution translation theory might make, observing that "in adaptation studies informed by the discourse of intertextuality, the film is not compared directly to the literary text, but rather to a version of it mediated by an ideological critique" (28). Venuti's comparison of adaptation to translation studies hinges on the fact that neither approach is governed by a simplified comparison to source text; he argues that"[j]ust as no translation can be judged through a simple comparison to the source text it translates because of the manifold losses and gains that necessarily result from the translation process, so no film adaptation can be judged merely through a comparison to its prior materials because of the extensive and complicated ways it processes them" (35). In emphasizing the significance of the mediation of ideological critique, we are encouraged to reflect upon whether the main barriers between intermedial and adaptation studies approaches is that of ideology, specifically ideologies about what constitutes "Theory" as the term has come to be deployed and constructed since the 1980s.

For some critics adaptation studies falls short because of the perception that it exists, in Timothy Corrigan's words, "in the gap" of established disciplines in the humanities and/or media studies,[1] so that it is conceived as piratically stealing such methods and process and concepts to suit its purpose. For Guerric DeBona in another recent volume, early adaptation critics were doing something akin to salvage work:

> Adaptation critics in those days must have viewed themselves as something like rescue workers sifting through what was left of a museum after it was hit by a great roaring tempest of mass culture: they had to sort through and pick up the well-known fragments in an effort to salvage what was left of precious cultural artifacts – the canonical author, the established text, the essential meaning of the literary source (2).

When he refers to the "great roaring tempest of mass culture" he is of course referring to the preoccupation of literary studies with so-called "canonical" texts, and adaptation's position as hybrid area doing the work that film studies and literary studies combined could or would not do in those early days. Talking of his own critical approach to adaptation and classical Hollywood film, DeBona expresses the wish to "enter more deeply into the new geography of literary adaptation by exploring this

[1] See Timothy Corrigan, "Literature on screen, a history: in the gap." *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen*. Eds. Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. 2007, 29-44.

territory through the lens of cultural politics" (1). Once more we are asked to reconsider adaptation studies' place on the critical map; beyond the crossroads adaptations studies might find its own possible *terra nullius* yet to be inhabited or appropriated. But this concept relies on the assumption that no one has been there before, or if they have, their cultural products carry no cultural significance, in disciplinary terms.

Returning momentarily to Voigts-Virchow's model of theoretical perspectives as buildings or businesses, Stephen Greenblatt provides a broader perspective on the virtues or otherwise of disciplinary integrity when he recalls being shown round his faculty building as a young academic, and understanding that the wider implications of the faculty space were that this building provided both physical and philosophical boundaries, and there was no need to travel beyond its four walls. In a preface to a collection on Interart poetics published in the late 1990s, he reflects upon the traditional alignment of humanities disciplines and remarks that "the boundary lines have faded, the frontier guards have all gone home, and the landscape somehow looks different. In some of my colleagues this change has produced disorientation and melancholy, but in others – and I will include myself – it feels more like liberation" (14). In recalling the rigidity of disciplinary boundaries at work in his early university career (which forestalled and even discouraged interdisciplinary liaisons), he sees cross-fertilization and the challenging of boundaries as a form of liberation. It is important for adaptation and intermedial critics to recall that for all of us there were older prison-houses from which, presumably, all kinds of inter- trans and cross- disciplinary exponents were busily tunneling away.

Both intermediality and adaptation studies critics made their escapes, then, but their routes took them in different directions, resulting in numerous discussions about their relative closeness or distinctiveness. While I think the potential for cross fertilization between the two is huge and already happening (particularly through the work of mainland European critics), for Irina Rajewsky, "intermediality may serve foremost as a generic term for all those phenomena that (as indicated by the prefix *inter*) in some way take place *between* media. 'Intermedial' therefore designates those configurations which have to do with a crossing of borders between media, and which thereby can be differentiated from *intra*medial phenomena as well as from *trans*medial phenomena" (46). For Rajewsky, it seems, intermediality is the umbrella term that embraces adaptation, and this may well have been the case in previous decades. But adaptation studies has traveled further, and certainly beyond the formal discourses of mediality, or any pure focus on film versions of literary

works. The "sociological" strain (to evoke Dudley Andrew's sense of what was missing in adaptation) emerges more powerfully and the process of adaptation itself as a source of disruption, consumption, revision and cultural reinvention takes on more urgent focus.

Exploring the territory of adaptation studies, as De Bona puts it, necessitates a reconsideration of existing theoretical frameworks. There are a number of critics who complain about what they identify as adaptation studies' "absences." Kathleen Murray declares that: "There is no satisfying general theory about adaptation" (93). The yearning for a model theoretical approach is usually disingenuous, since many, like DeBona, luxuriate in the spaces on its vast terrain to set up their shop (or pub). Adaptation studies offers countless opportunities for further blending and adapting, just as breaking free of disciplinary integrity and watching its symbolic power fade was for Greenblatt a career-defining opportunity. Dudley Andrew has recently suggested that adaptation studies has two incompatible strands–the "vertical" approaches of fidelity criticism which anchors an adaptation to its sources; and the "horizontal" approach (now considered more common and productive) of cultural contextual criticism (MacCabe et al., 27-39). This model gives us another visual image to toy with–that of fidelity critics (if indeed there are any left) building possibly rather shaky towers of fidelity critiques, versus the viral spread of perspectives which are beginning to yield approaches and responses to adaptation which far extend the outer reaches of film and literary studies (as found in Hopton et. al.'s *Pockets of Change*, for instance).

Both critics new to the debates, and seasoned commentators on adaptation argue that adaptation studies lacks some crucial critical or theoretical component that might complete or correct, and that therefore this perception of "lack" might benefit from further exploration. Thomas Leitch, one of adaptation studies' resident metacritics, complained in 2003 that "despite its venerable history, widespread practice, and apparent influence, adaptation theory has remained tangential to the thrust of film study because it has never been undertaken with conviction and theoretical rigor" (149). Of course, the fact that adaptation studies is tangential to film studies (and literary studies) may well be the key to its success and continuing development. Although the conviction that adaptation criticism is fundamentally anchored to literary studies with some kind of tap root is a persistent one, it is scarcely an accurate reflection of the work being done in the field. Rainer Emig and Pascal Nicklas observe that when academics criticize the pre-eminence of literature in adaptation studies, there is a tendency to simply reverse old value-laden hierarchies (119). Robert Stam's assertion that cinema is multi-track, whereas literature is a

"single track medium" retains the sense that disciplinary conflict and tension are at the heart of adaptation studies problems (56). Emig and Nicklas ponder that:

> these [theoretical positions] might be the teething troubles of an emerging new discipline. If this is the case, then careful and regular dental care might be in order to ensure that Adaptation Studies continue to retain their bite when it comes to productively challenging established disciplines, readings, viewings, hearings, feelings, etc. then they might indeed demonstrate the potential to bring about what is so frequently demanded of scholars in the Humanities, but what they generally find very hard to achieve: a true interdisciplinarity. (119)

True interdisciplinarity would be very hard to achieve for adaptation studies, given that it thrives as the outsider, offering challenges to the established disciplines and, in occupying this position, suggests the space in between – "inter" – might be all that is left. For others, adaptation studies is simply built on shaky foundations; for Krämer, "The lashing out against fidelity criticism in Adaptation Studies is an attempt to distinguish the field as an academic discipline by constructing a categorical difference from other forms of reflecting on adaptations and thus claiming an authority beyond that bestowed by the mere social sanctioning of academic work" (175). This assertion is underpinned by more assumptions – principally that adaptation studies has yet to prove its mettle as a "real" academic discipline because it is implied that the distinctions between its practices and those of, say, broadsheet newspaper reviewers are insufficiently supported by disciplinary credibility, as well as characterized by what Krämer sees as the "excessive subjectivity" and foundationless assertions found in many case studies (175). So it seems that for adaptation studies to find itself out of the impasse it needs to seek "authority" in the most conventional way possible – to construct a "disciplinary" integrity that can effectively mark out its own territory.

As already noted, Krämer believes that adaptation studies is principally concerned with the rejection of the centrality of fidelity as the basis for critical judgment of an adaptation that distinguishes it from mainstream broadsheet reviews. Similarly J. D. Connor critiques adaptation studies' need to restate the rejection of fidelity critiques, and argues that this restatement of aims fails to account for the persistence of fidelity in popular discourses of adaptation, so that adaptation studies "must account for its own blind spot: What has the campaign against fidelity failed to get at? And given this consistent failure to achieve its goals, why do critics persist in calling for an end to fidelity?" (Connor) For me this construction

is a more useful one; if we return to fidelity debates, what we also find are all the negative associations of adaptation studies with its perceived literariness, obsession with origins, reinstatements of cultural hierarchy and its seeming critical naivety; whereas intermediality as a term suggests a ready engagement across media and less tolerance towards traditional cultural hierarchies, whether true or not. At the moment adaptation studies is attracting interesting refugees from many disciplines, and adaptation critics are plundering diverse critical tools for their own ends, even when those disciplines seem far removed from each other, with only a shared use of the term "adaptation."

In a recent article linking adaptations in culture with those in biology, Gary Bortolotti and Linda Hutcheon assert that:

> What the recognition of the homology between cultural and biological evolution can provide is an alternative means of deciding what we could consider the success of an adaptation – that is, not a simply faithful (aka good or bad) in relation to a "source." Instead the "source" could perhaps be more productively viewed as the "ancestor" from which adaptations derive directly by descent. As in biological evolution, descent with modification is essential. (446)

Adaptation studies itself remains dogged by its on origins and inspires some curious assertions even now. Fredric Jameson in his afterword to the collection *True to the Spirit* (2011) asserts: "I propose the following law: the novel and its film adaptation must not be of equal quality. A great film can be made from a mediocre novel; most great novels only yield second-rate movie versions. I omit the logical possibility of films being novelized for obvious reasons, although it exists" (217). Assiduous scholars of adaptation reading these words will recognize here a similar proposition ventured by Joy Gould Boyum in 1985, and it is with some irony that we read in MacCabe's introduction to the same volume that "adaptation studies, rather like Don Quixote, continue to fight the day before yesterday's battles" (7).

In my determination not to fight yesterday's battles I have taken you on a rather circuitous tour of recent tendencies in adaptation studies. I am sure you realized that despite my title I was not going to answer the question "where are we," but rather niggle away at what others have also noticed – a tendency to look for directions or to want to plant one's own flag on an empty-looking piece of ground. It may well be as Laura Mulvey asserts, echoing James Naremore, that adaptation studies will one day become part of a general theory of repetition (78), but happily it seems to me that adaptation studies in practice is still advancing in several directions at