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***TEACHING ADAPTATIONS,  
D. CARTMELL, I. WHELEHAN (EDS.)  
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2014. 195 PP.  
ISBN 978-1-137-31112-3***

The volume reviewed herein has been published within the Palgrave MacMillan TEACHING THE NEW ENGLISH SERIES, which is aimed at a discussion of new and developing areas of the curriculum of English degree courses taught at universities, or presenting those more traditional avenues in a new context. *Teaching Adaptations* is a collection of ten essays authored by scholars coming from different parts of the world, who have taught Adaptation Studies and decided to share with the readers both their theoretical reflection and practical experience.

The publication is aimed at providing evidence that a course/class on adaptations can go far beyond a comparative analysis of a source text and its audio-visual counterpart. It is a valuable source of inspirations for inclusion of adaptations into the curriculum, providing at the same time certain theoretical insights. The introductory chapter “A Short History of Adaptation Studies in the Classroom” authored by the editors, Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan, focuses on the evolving inclusion of film adaptations in English courses, and the way in which courses on adaptations have been gradually introduced into the English studies curricula at De Montfort University in Leicester, which at present hosts the Centre for Adaptations and offers a number of courses on adaptations at both Bachelor’s and Master’s levels.

For those in search of some practical solutions for teaching film and literature courses three articles in particular can be recommended: Shelley Cobb’s “Canons, Critical Approaches, and Contexts,” Kamilla Elliott’s “Doing Adaptation: The Adaptation as Critic” and Rachel Carroll’s “Coming soon . . . Teaching the Contemporaneous Adaptation.”

Cobb presents the results of her research into the canon of adaptation studies which seems to have emerged at those universities in the US, UK and Australia, where such courses are taught. Some of the courses are structured around one literary author (e.g. Shakespeare or Austen), but most include a varied selection of texts and their adaptations, always with at least one classic novel adaptation, while up to 50 percent of the course content are contemporary novel adaptations. The sample syllabi indicate the dominance of the formalist and aesthetic approach in adaptation analysis, which Cobb seems to find quite limiting, suggesting that one of the goals of teaching a course on adaptations should be making students realise that adaptations *use the source texts to speak to its own cultural-historical moment* (2014:23). She illustrates her point referring to the course she herself teaches.

Elliott refers to her experience of teaching a film and literature course at the University of California, Berkley in 1996. Finding the students surprisingly conservative about literary adaptations, she introduced a creative-critical project which proved inspirational for everybody involved. The project consisted in doing one's own adaptation of a literary text and writing an essay containing a critical reflection that the process of adaptation and its final result led the adaptor to. The media in which the students worked were multiple and the reflections were insightful. Elliott provides a number of examples, including a three-tier cake being an adaptation of three chapters of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and a unwinnable board game to which *Gone with the Wind* was adapted, and what is also particularly valuable, she provides her instructions for the project as well as the marking descriptors in the appendixes. The project taught the students a great deal about the very process of adaptation, let them present their own aesthetics and represent their own values, while the critical essay made them place their own efforts in a certain theoretical context. Elliott's article, besides providing certain ideas which can be applied in the classroom, does one more thing – reminds us that we, as teachers, can learn a lot from our students and be surprised by their creativity.

Carroll's discusses an active learning strategy which she applied in the classroom and which she called "Adaptation Watch." Students involved were monitoring the discourses of publicity and reception surrounding the launching of a film or television adaptation which took place during the period of time in which the course was taught. The students were to focus on the critical, televisual or cinematic contexts in which those adaptations functioned. The three examples provided include *Brideshead Revisited* (2008) evoking in the viewers nostalgia for the 1981 television serial, *Wuthering Heights* (2011) featuring a black actor as Heathcliff, and *Life of Pi* (2012) being an adaptation of a contemporary "unfilmable" novel awarded with the Man Booker Prize. Carroll argues that by focusing on the public discourse surrounding the adaptations students could learn a great deal about the construction of cultural values, about the process of opinion shaping and about the way in which cultural industries work.

Another article which refers directly to the author's teaching experience is Ariane Hudelet's "Avoiding 'Compare and Contrast': Applied Theory as a Way to Circumvent the 'Fidelity Issue,'" in which the author refers to the place of teaching adaptations in the education of future teachers in France and to her own experience of teaching an adaptation class at Paris Diderot University. The class consisted in analyses of case studies (multiple adaptations of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and *Apocalypse Now* versus Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*) and in some theoretical reflection based on the students' reading of Robert Stam's introduction to *A Companion to Film Adaptation*. Hudelet discusses in detail the way in which her students related to the theoretical ideas and what practical illustration they found in the film clips of their own selection. Again, similarly to Kamilla Elliott's experience, the scope of the students' reflection and the richness of conclusions proved Hudelet's approach to teaching adaptations worthwhile and the experience she shares with the readers might lead to finding solutions applicable in other academic environments.

In "'Adapting' from School to University: Adaptations in the Transition" Natalie Hayton refers to her experience of teaching a course on children's literature and their adaptations at De Montfort University, enriched by her former research into fairy-tales. She discusses the way in which her students were encouraged to trace intertextual appropriation of fairy tales in children's literature, and – consequently – in adaptations of such works, using as one of the examples two of *Harry Potter* books and films and finding "Cinderella" elements in them. Hayton rightly concludes that fairy tales are perfect examples for explaining to the students the idea of recycling, rewriting, remaking, and circulation of texts in the cultural memory.

Laurence Raw, who teaches at Başkent University in Ankara, Turkey in his article "The Paragogy of Adaptation in an EFL Context" shares with his readers the experience of teaching an EFL course with a strong adaptation element as well as an American Drama course focusing on the issue of adaptation. The course participants, after reading a selection of plays, were preparing their own student-generated version, which turned out to be insightful and provided the teacher with a wealth of information about Turkish culture and the system of values held by the students. The students' adapting the texts (e.g. *Detective Story*, *Glengarry Glen Ross* or even "The Fall of the House of Usher") and relating them – reflectively – to their own background turned out to be illuminating for them, and frequently helped them immensely *negotiate what they perceived as linguistic difficulties presented by the texts* (2014:33).

Although the remaining four articles do not focus on specific examples of courses taught, they do refer to the academic context in which Adaptation Studies function. "Learning to Share: Adaptation Studies and Open Education Resources" by Imelda Whelehan and David Sadler is an account of the project the authors led through the calendar year 2012, titled "Bridging the Gap: Teaching adaptations across the disciplines and sharing content for curriculum renewal," funded by the

Australian government's Office for Learning and Teaching. The project – which turned out to be quite utopian in nature – was aimed at inter-institutional sharing of information pertaining to the ways in which adaptations are being taught across the country, which all sides involved could have benefited from. The project, despite its theoretical usefulness, did not really meet its leaders' expectations, as multiple problems, ranging from restrictions imposed by Australian property law, through certain cultural barriers, to simple lack of willingness to share materials, prevented the newly created Open Educational Resource from attaining the applicability it could have.

In "Teaching Adapting Screenwriters: Adaptation Theory through Creative Practice" Jamie Sherry draws from his own experience of teaching screenwriting, stressing the extent to which learning to write an adapted screenplay contributes to the students' awareness of the complexity of the adaptation process, while Alessandra Raengo's "Out of the Literary Comfort Zone: Adaptation, Embodiment, and Assimilation" discusses two adaptations, *The Jackie Robinson Story* (1950) and *Precious: Based on the Novel "Push" by Sapphire* (2009), the reception of which made her conclude that the commentators focused on the African American actors' bodies' "fidelity" in the two productions rather than on the relationship between the films and the source texts. As she argues, in the two films *the protagonists' body image overdetermines the perception of the adaptive process* (2014:109).

The volume closes with Deborah Cartmell's "Teaching Adaptations Through Marketing: Adaptations and the Language of Advertising in the 1930s" in which the author discusses the language of film advertising with reference to F.R. Leavis and Denys Thompson's 1933 *Culture and Environment*. Cartmell finishes her chapter with a reflection upon the significance of advertising material in "reading" adaptations, which might be useful in the classroom context. She suggests a number of questions concerning the advertising campaign of a given adaptation which can lead students into deeper understanding of how and why the source text got adapted, e.g.: about the way in which the poster refers to the source text, or about the explicit and implicit messages contained in the poster. Cartmell provides her own examples from the 1930s, *Little Women* (1933), among others.

The final section of *Teaching Adaptations* includes a three-page chronology of key events and publications in Adaptation Studies, since 1915 to the present, which is helpful in systematising the field.

The articles vary in their style and clarity of argumentation, as is always the case in multi-author collections. The volume leaves its readers with at least one main impression – teaching adaptations is worthwhile. It is so, because it enables the students to find new ways of understanding both literary and film texts, awakens them to the rich cultural, social and even political contexts in which decisions about making adaptations are made and stimulates their creativity and critical thinking, while the students' responses can be pleasantly surprising and insightful to the teachers.