

PREFACE

Adaptation in Visual Culture: Images, Texts, and Their Multiple Worlds was conceived as a flagship volume for Palgrave Macmillan's *Adaptation and Visual Culture* book series, a project begun in 2015 to provide a forum for exploring new ways of thinking about adaptation and visual cultures. In the two years since the series was launched, we have commissioned fourteen titles, all of which push textual boundaries beyond familiar lines. Along the way, we also edited a special double issue of the journal *South Atlantic Review* on new directions in adaptation studies, several of whose essays are reworked and included in this collection. *Adaptation in Visual Culture* showcases the thinking of various leading scholars who address key theoretical, historical, and contextual issues raised by the overall remit of the series.

All of the essays in this volume question conventional habits of reading adaptations in one sense or another, as in Kamilla Elliott's contestation of the notion of "unfilmable books." Following the lead of adaptation scholars less interested these days in regulating judgments on discrete sources and texts, the chapters in *Adaptation in Visual Culture* eschew one-off analyses of well-trodden textual or filmic ground. They wish to spread the boundaries of how we approach textuality, adaptation, and visual culture, assuming a generative model of adaptation that seeks to understand how texts and images extend, fill in, reread, or reconceive other works in new ways. This book understands, along with Palmer (drawing on Genette), that "all texts are fragments in the sense that they await gestures of continuation that challenge the mirage

of self-containment in which they are mistakenly thought to naturally endure” (p. 76). Indeed, our own recent work has tried to articulate shifts in understanding the many intertextual and extratextual worlds of adaptations—in, for example, the notions of “elasTEXTity,” which imagines sources and adaptations as reaching beyond themselves as part of an expansive network of texts (Grossman 2015) and contexts, and “multiplicities,” how adaptations function within the larger textual mode of multiplicity, which is a key feature in its various forms for all visual media production (Klein and Palmer 2016).

In this volume, scholars explore multiple relations among texts and images in various contexts, including socio-economic histories in the repeated sequeling of Wall Street disasters (Boozler); the examination of multiple forms of modernism when we see the appropriation of Western avant-garde artistic practices into the Japanese *moga* (“modern girl”) (Petty); or the mashup of sources in the television series *Dickensian* drawn not just from texts but from informing visual cultures (Cardwell). The essays unfix staid oppositions between texts and films, or the verbal and the visual, as Christine Geraghty explores in her chapter on reworkings of *Tender is the Night*.

Understanding textuality as unfixed and multidirectional, the essays in this book articulate some future paths for the field, imagining adaptations themselves as proleptic rather than retrospective (“the task of the adaptation critic,” says Glenn Jellenik, is to “process adaptations forward, according to their contextual cultural engagements, not backward according to their source” [40]). With its lit doorway and a ladder leading out of the image, the shot from *The Last Tycoon* (discussed in Chap. 5) on the book’s cover may be said to represent these paths. If Mark Osteen’s essay discovers an adaptive thread that links Lewis Carroll’s Alice books to Hitchcock, Deborah Cartmell finds a “curiouser” dynamic in play in the case of female Hollywood stars of the 1930s playing historical queens. Reordering teleologies, Cartmell shows how publicity surrounding *Queen Christina* (directed by Rouben Mamoulian 1933), *The Scarlet Empress* (Josef von Sternberg 1934), *Mary of Scotland* (John Ford 1936) and *Marie Antoinette* (Van Dyke 1938) “adapt the historical queens to the stars” (144). Constantine Verevis demonstrates the significance of novelizations as hybrid forms of adaptations and serialization that challenge conventional sequencing and ideas surrounding the origins of adaptations. Far from fixed entities, the texts and adaptations treated in this volume are dynamic adaptive worlds, such as the extra-televisual

reading and rewriting practices associated with *Downton Abbey* or, in the FX television series *Fargo*, a richly constructed sublimation of the works of the Coen brothers, mediated by urban legend and an art film (*Kumiko, The Treasure Hunter*) that expands the fictional universe of “Fargo.”

It may seem to many scholars working in the fields of literature, film, and cultural studies that everything these days is adaptation. Laurence Raw might offer that this is because “adaptation, c’est moi,” his own essay wishing to expand adaptation studies to include the “acadapter,” whose affect in producing fan fiction becomes a crucial element of engaging textual worlds. Following the groundbreaking work done by Robert Stam, Linda Hutcheon, James Naremore and others, we see the possibilities for creative and critical engagement with the “gaps” Thomas Leitch identifies as characteristic of all texts. Drawing on Wolfgang Iser, Leitch argues in his essay that these gaps help us to understand why audiences are drawn to textual reworkings, since it is the omissions that audiences revel in, wonder about, and seek to fill or see filled. “[Minding]” such gaps, or, indeed, *mining* these gaps, is an activity that seems more and more to beckon not just scholars, but readers, viewers, audiences, and writers and artists generally, allowing us opportunities to take up multiple textual worlds with a rich and allusive understanding of their art, their contexts, and their continuities.

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