Adaptation Studies: New Approaches. Christa Albrecht-Crane and Dennis Cutchins (eds.). Madison and Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson UP., 2010. h/bk 306 pp. ISBN 978-08386-4262-7. Price $68.50.

No adaptation can possibly achieve a one-to-one correspondence from one form to another. No book can be completely captured in a film adaptation, for example. From the beginning of the discipline of adaptation studies, the editors here tell us, critical comment has tended to focus on the unavoidable differences between source and adaptation, with much being made of the gaps and perceived shortcomings of the latter. "A stubborn insistence on fidelity" has kept the discipline in a too narrow course. Albrecht-Crane and Cutchins assembled this collection of "new approaches" in the hope of prompting a more general turn, of moving the discipline toward more open, more theoretical approaches, a shift in many ways reminiscent of the revolution in literary studies that occurred with the arrival of poststructural and other more self-reflective theories on American shores. Much more important work, these writers believe, can be done through an acceptance of the value of the differences between source and adaptation, which can open up new critical and theoretical spaces.

The editors point out that while the concept of "adaptation" can be seen at work in any situation where there is "creation" followed by "reaction" (and much more might be made of this widening of the basic definition of the discipline than is made here), the vast majority of adaptation studies concern themselves with works from Anglo-American culture. This is the case in this anthology: most contributions concern themselves with American and British films. The first section - "Fidelity, Ethics and Intertextuality" is the most theoretically dense. Brett Westbrook takes on the question of why adaptation studies has resisted incorporating larger theoretical frameworks. He understands that some unavoidable questions make such a change intellectually difficult; if modern literary theory holds that no texts stand "gloriously alone" how do critics make sense of a field that has traditionally seen adaptation as "text dependent" (26). Westbrook clearly feels that this very problem should show critics that an expanded, more flexible, critical approach is necessary if the field is not to stagnate.

There are a number of interesting essays in the other sections of the book; some that seem to take novel approaches, others that seem little different from adaptation studies as it has been. In the "Literature, Film

Adaptions, and Beyond" section Dennis Cutchins looks into the rethinking of the classic western film *Shane* in the 2004 Denzel Washington / Dakota Fanning vehicle *Man On Fire.* Cutchins convincingly refutes the common view of the film as a "revenge movie," opening it up, via *Shane,* into something much larger. Other essays look at *Brokeback Mountain,* at adaptations of Joyce's *Ulysses* and at George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead.* There are entertaining explications-in-passing in a number of essays of such tangential subjects as the Hays Code and Edison's early legal fights over copyright matters.

One of the most interesting takes on a chain of adaptations — from play to film to remake "based on"—is Nancy Steffen-Fluhr's look at director Ernst Lubitsch's 1940 Jimmy Stewart vehicle *The Shop Around the Corner* (this film was the source-text for the much less interesting *You've Got Mail* (1998) with Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan). Steffen-Fluhr suggests Lubitsch's film can most profitably be viewed as a "readymade." By this she means the film is a collage or assemblage of pieces from a 1937 Hungarian play and other sources she identifies. She points out how the film is generally seen as a simple "holiday film" (it concludes at Christmas), and as being dialogue-driven in a way close to the "screwball comedy" style of the time. She then goes on to show how the most significant communication in the film is done by way of the "languages" of objects and of music —flowers, a musical cigar / candy box, more — with the dialogue actually being of only secondary significance to the emotional impact of the film: "Lubitsch's style in *Shop* is to be expressive without being communicative" (206). Viewers, to a great degree, need to assemble the subtle parts for themselves if they are to receive the full emotional message. Steffen-Fluhr also points out how the film achieves its stylized air by way of refusing to adapt the source too completely: the sets and even the camera work suggest a stage play, for example, when a more realistic approach would have been easier to take.

Some of the contributions here do seem to make real, if somewhat tentative, moves toward a more theoretically muscular approach to this field, but even those that fail to venture too far from more traditional approaches provide much in the way of insight and even, with their new looks at fascinating American films, genuine entertainment.

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