

## ADAPTATIONAL INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, until my illness this autumn that kept me at home fulltime (and continues to do so for another month at least, I had become conscious of a fissure opening up in adaptation studies. There were colleagues who rigidly maintained that the focus of critical attention should be confined to literary and media studies, even though there are encouraging critical moves in the direction of transnationality and transmediality. Other groups are more preoccupied by issues of perception insofar as they relate to audiences in a movie theater or theatrical performance space.

While such approaches are undoubtedly fascinating, I find that most of my recent work in the discipline has focused on psychological issues. Inspired by educationalists such as Piaget and clinical workers such as D. W. Winnicott, I have treated adaptation as a larger process of accommodating oneself to new experiences and new life-situations. As my piece in this issue explains it, this objective was inspired – if one can call it inspired – by a serious operation in 2013 that quite literally changed my life and my approach to issues of pedagogy and research. Three years later another illness has put me *hors de combat* for four months, during which time I have had time to reflect on adaptation as a psychological process. More than ever I believe it is psychologically determined – we should only do what we believe we can do, rather than striving for the impossible. Adaptation is a form of compromise between the self and the world we inhabit, which not only leads to greater self-awareness, but makes us aware of our limitations.

This issue of LINGUACULTURE is not designed to prove or disprove such notions. Rather its intention is to promote some of the variety of interventions currently appearing under the name of ‘adaptation.’ Lisa Morrow’s piece on the Republic of Turkey, inspired by the Gezi Park disturbances in Istanbul in 2013, shows how difficult it can be for local citizens to choose their lifestyle in a culture where secular and religious issues have been in perpetual conflict. The founding of the Republic in 1923 brought these issues to the public gaze as they had seldom done before; but the conflict between the two belief-systems is centuries old.

The next two contributions look at Hollywood products, one from the early Seventies, the other from 2014. They suggest that the process of adapting to texts is as complex as adapting to the outside world, especially when directors are consciously inviting us to reconsider basic tenets that we have harbored since childhood. It is this quality that renders the television version of *Fargo* so fascinating as it challenges out entire concept of what a “story” represents.

Betty Latham's piece revisits a seminal event in the US and shows how it has been reworked by Stephen King. I especially admire this piece for its personal resonances, as Latham recalls what she was doing on that fateful day in 1963 when JFK was assassinated. I remember nothing about that day (I was only 4 when it happened) but I do remember the extensive media coverage devoted to the fiftieth anniversary. Latham's piece shows how King reworks the event to make a powerful statement on the importance of history and the necessity to adapt to it.

The final pieces are based on interviews I did in 2016 with two scholars whose work in adaptation I find especially interesting, and worthy of a wider readership. Jarrod Bolin, a high school educator, has achieved the remarkable feat of persuading high school learners to give academic papers at full-scale conferences devoted to popular culture. By doing so he has proved a familiar educational adage, but one that frequently gets forgotten in the hurly-burly of contemporary pedagogical life – it is possible to inspire anyone, so long as you have the enthusiasm and the commitment to do it. What is remarkable about Bolin's achievement is the way he managed to overcome familiar educational constraints in the state sector to produce a project with a bunch of working class learners that was quite simply revelatory. In a context devoted to numerical modes of educational assessment, he proved that true learning was something immeasurable.

Jillian Saint Jacques's piece is a remarkable form of autobiography that functions as an admirable piece of research. I do not want to go into it too deeply here, but would rather encourage readers to engage with the issues it raises. Its treatment of sexualities is both moving and pragmatic. Saint Jacques manages to use autobiography as a means of encouraging readers to reflect on their own lives, which is precisely what I believe adaptation should do.

Readers might dismiss this issue as just another bran-tub full of articles on different subjects. I am not going to disagree with them, but will still insist that they are all governed by the umbrella concept of "adaptation". It might seem far-fetched to compare an analysis of an early George Lucas movie with a pedagogic account of a scheme of work in a high school; but both encourage us to reflect on past lives and contemplate the possibilities for transformation. This, I believe, is what lies at the heart of all acts of adaptation.

I am grateful to everyone for permitting their pieces to be submitted and evaluated. This is the first piece of academic work I have completed in three months owing to my ailment. I should like to thank Rodica Dimitriu for her patience and support in allowing me to complete it.

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