

## Foreword

Specialists and non-specialists alike show a keen interest in the ambiguous, rich relationship between Film and Literature. Although this topic is one of the main inspirations for the volume you have now in your hands, *Word and Screen* - issue number 6 of *Links & Letters* - wants to look beyond the book and the silver screen. Scholars all over the world have been invited to consider not just how literary and film texts interact, but - more generally - how words and screens reciprocate. Reaching researchers mostly through the main screen in our work life - the computer screen - the call for papers (words on a screen) challenged scholars to find new directions to think about Film and Literature and also to discuss new areas of contact between words and screens still largely unexplored.

The result are the seven articles and the two interviews included here, which have been selected from a large number of contributions certainly surpassing the wildest expectations of the editor. Five of these seven essays discuss Literature and Film, but they do so from a cultural studies perspective that avoids tedious comparisons between the original literary text and the final result on the screen. Thom D. Chesney's essay on E.M. Forster looks at the writer rather than the text in order to consider an interesting paradox: why one of the literary authors whose work has been best adapted for the screen after his death distrusted film in his own lifetime. The work of Mireia Aragay, Tatjana Jukic, Sharon Cumberland and Luca Prono shares a preoccupation with the way in which the screen adaptation articulates a new message relying on a cultural perspective and an ideology that may not coincide with those of the original literary text.

Aragay looks at Branagh's *Henry V*, noting how the director's interest in what she calls the psychology of power significantly modifies Shakespeare's study of politics to adapt it to current debates on the nature of political power. Tatjana Jukic analyses the way in which the visualisation of the body in the adaptation of one of Austen's novels forces her own muted discourse on the body out of the darkness of past literary conventions and into the full glare of the TV screen. Sharon Cumberland also explores the film adaptation as a symptom of changing cultural discourses focusing on the body, exoticism (and eroticism) and cultural stereotypes. By looking at diverse adaptations of the same novel by Blasco Ibáñez, Cumberland concludes that the adaptation bears a more important relationship to the public it addresses than to the lit-

erary text it adapts. In his essay, Prono denounces how the artistic fame of a valued adapter, such as film director Otto Preminger, can be used to mask the replacement of the unconventional, 'inconvenient' content of a valuable popular novel by a more innocuous message.

The essays by Miguel Mera and David Starkey explore other relevant areas of interaction between word and screen. Mera focuses on dubbing and subtitling in film and television, a subject that deserves much more attention as it conditions the way we receive foreign language fiction for the screen, including literary adaptations. Starkey's unconventional essay explores the predicament of the literary writer and of the literature of creation in the Internet, offering an enticing definition of the Net's literary patterns.

Exceptionally, this volume contains not one but two interviews. Beverley Curran interviews Adriene Jenik on her CD-ROM adaptation/translation of Nicole Brossard's novel *Le désert mauve*. The idea of a CD-ROM translation opens up new possibilities for interaction with the literary text and justifies our wish to look beyond film and TV in search of new relationships between word and screen. In the second interview, the reputed Irish novelist Roddy Doyle discusses with the editor of the volume his role in the making of the three films based on the novels of *The Barrytown trilogy*, disclosing aspects of the relationship of the original writer with the screen adaptation which should become a major research subject in the near future.

The bibliography provides those readers interested in Literature and Film with a comprehensive reading list and some comments on the state of current research in the field. The five reviews examine new books dealing with screen adaptations, but also include a review of a book on text and hypertext and - a novelty in *Links & Letters* - the review of a very stimulating example of the new links between Literature and the (computer) screen: a website devoted to Walter Scott.

The editor hopes that this volume will enrich the non-specialists' approach to the screen adaptation and will make them consider the importance of the old and the new interaction between printed fiction and the various screens in our lives. As for the specialists in Literature and Film, it is hoped that they will feel challenged to continue research in the new, already fruitful directions pointed out here.

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