Lorna Fitzsimmons and Michael Denner, ed. *Tolstoy on Screen*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 2015. Illustrations. Index. iv + 344 pp. $89.95 (cloth); $39.95 (paper); $89.95 (e-book).

In the classroom and in their research, literary scholars increasingly turn to transmedia theory to enhance students' appreciation of literary texts, as well as to experiment with new theoretical approaches to canonical classics. The volume under review offers an illustrative example of film adaptation studies—both its strengths and its theoretical insufficiencies—applied to one of the world's most media-adapted writers, Lev Tolstoy.

Tolstoy on Screen comprises fourteen chapters (articles) distributed over eight parts, each dedicated to a Tolstoy title ("Father Sergius," *Resurrection*, *A Living Corpse*, *War and Peace*, "The Kreutzer Sonata," "The Death of Ivan Ilich," "A Prisoner of the Caucasus," and *Anna Karenina*). Grouped around literary originals, the collection's organization, as Michael Denner notes in his "Introduction," simultaneously "traces the arc of the history of international cinema [...] over the past hundred years" (11). Thus, "Father Sergius," published in 1911, but the first of Tolstoy's works to be adapted for the screen, tops the list.

Readers will be struck by the sparse and rather selective apparatus of *Tolstoy on Screen*—two pages for 337 pages of articles with impressive citations and bibliographies. The index duplicates information already available in the table of contents: it cites directors and their work(s)—e.g., Sergei Bodrov, *The Prisoner of the Mountains* (*Kavkazskii plennik*), lists Tolstoy's works as adapted for cinema all under "Tolstoy," and includes selected writers (e.g., Pushkin, Gogol) who made the cut over Baudelaire, Flaubert, Mazzoni, and others mentioned within, presumably because they are Tolstoy's compatriots. Oddly, while most of the volume's contributors relied on and cited major theoreticians of film analysis (e.g., Rick Altman, André Bazin, David Bordwell) and of film adaptations (Linda Hutcheon, James Naremore, and Robert Stam), no references to film analysis or to theories of adaptation appear in the index. Instead we find themes, largely irrelevant to the subject of Tolstoy or adaptations: "Moscow," "Leonid Brezhnev," and "World War I." No explanation of indexing principles is provided.

Questions raised by the index continue with Michael Denner's brief "Introduction." Denner offers a wonderful overview on Tolstoy and the moving image, and he provides concise thumbnails of the collection's articles. But he writes little about the theories of adaptation that inform his contributors' articles, except for passing mention of Linda Hutcheon's *A Theory of Adaptation* (Routledge, 2006) and that "[the adaptations analyzed herein] draw *primarily* but not exclusively from their literary sources and enter into dialogue with them" (12, emphasis mine—DNI), which in fact contradicts Hutcheon and backhandedly reinforces the (by 2015 theoretically retrograde) criterion of "fidelity to the original" valorized by George Bluestone in his (regrettably still too) influential *Novels into Film* (U of California P, 1968). Caveat emptor: *Tolstoy on Screen* aims principally at what Hutcheon would call the "storytelling" mode of engaging audiences; it is organized by "what" the films adapt, not "how" they adapt.

The articles in *Tolstoy on Screen* do not echo Denner's implied doubt that the films under analysis are worthy of the originals. But some share a tendency to talk *around* the films rather than *about* them, suggesting a hesitancy to force the question of the films' artistic worth through close formal analysis (à la Bordwell). As a result, readers sometimes are presented with information that displaces or obfuscates the fundamentals of film analysis, which adaptation analysis is, first and foremost, all about. For example, William Nickell's "When We Dead Awaken: *A Living Corpse* as a Moving Picture"—the longest piece in the collection and for the specialist who can appreciate Nickell's erudition an impressive overview of the multilayered cultural considerations involved in transmedia analysis—addresses three film adaptations of Tolstoy's play. To find Nickell's thesis, however, the non-specialist needs to read through six pages of background material, mostly on theatrical staging issues, without really knowing why. Then, centering his analysis on the use (or absence) of sound (critical for the 1929 silent adaptation), Nickell homes in on the films' Gypsy scenes, devoting four pages to Masha's (actress Svetlana

Toma's) lip-synced "Nevecherniaia" ("Unfading") in Vladimir Vengerov's 1968 film. But, for all this background on staging, Gypsy music, and citations from Tolstoy's own journals, and though he earlier mentions that Tolstoy had revised the play to include this particular song, Nickell neither provides the words of the song nor addresses how the lyrics inform the visuals—a lacuna in a book aimed at readers unable to access the original Russian. He also neglects to discuss Vengerov's handling of mise-en-scène and camera to underscore the dilemma faced by Protasov, played out against the background of the music, with Protasov's wedding ring conspicuously displayed on actor Aleksei Batalov's folded hands captured in mid-close-up.

A similar drift away from the subject of adaptation occurs in Stephen Norris's "Tolstoy's Comrades: Sergei Bondarchuk's *War and Peace* (1966–1967) and the Origins of Brezhnev Culture." Basing his argument largely on production press releases and official critical reception, not film analysis, Norris argues that Bondarchuk "succeeded in making a new type of Soviet film, one that ushered in Brezhnev-era culture and one that combined the attributes of both a film adaptation and the historical film" (155). Norris clearly devoted considerable effort to studying the climate for filmmaking in the Brezhnev era and to documenting the nuanced criteria Soviet film moguls and critics applied to Bondarchuk's epic. But his concern for the film's reception by officialdom may have swayed his own assessment of the film's importance in the context of film history and film adaptation history. As documented by the other articles in this volume, Russian and Soviet filmmakers had combined "film adaptation with the historical film" long before Bondarchuk conceived his *War and Peace*. Bondarchuk is continuing a tradition, not inventing one. As for being "the first in a wave of Brezhnev-era cultural products that celebrated patriotism through collective labor" (173), the only film Norris cites as influenced by Bondarchuk's—Iurii Ozerov's *Osvobozhdenie* (*Liberation*)—was a box-office failure. How did Bondarchuk's epic "blaze new paths" for such box-office successes (https://www.kinopoisk.ru/top/year/1970/) of the 1970s as *Ivan Vasil'evich meniaet professiiu* (*Ivan Vasil'vevich Changes Profession*, 1973), *V boi idut odni "stariki"* (*Only Old Men are Going to Battle*, 1973), *Dzhentel'meny udachi* (*Gentlemen of Fortune*, 1971), *A zori zdes' tikhie* (*The Dawns Here Are Quiet*, 1972), or *Moskva slezam ne verit* (*Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears*, 1979)?

As apparent from the criticisms above, reading *Tolstoy on Screen*, this reviewer concerned herself principally with the non-specialist reader, with how these articles would serve students or film specialists with little knowledge of Tolstoy, with what they could learn about Tolstoy and the processes through which literary texts metamorphose into films. Rie Karatsu's "Beyond the Melodrama of *Kachūsha-mono*" stands out for its accessible treatment of Mizoguchi Kenji's 1937 *Straits of Love and Hate* (*Aien kyō*)—a Japanese classic off the beaten track of Tolstoy studies—as film first and adaptation second. Though very different in approach and not without literary biases, the three articles comprising the *Anna Karenina* section—by Irina Makoveeva, Alyssa DeBlasio, and the late Catharine Theimer Nepomnyashchy, respectively—similarly all attempt to deal with cinema within the context of cinematic and/or performance history and are very accessible to students. Finally, Amy Mandelker's "Out of Breath: Bernard Rose's *ivans xtc*. (2000) and Tolstoy's 'The Death of Ivan Il'ich'" deserves special mention as a meticulously researched, unabashed celebration of the differences between originals and their adaptations: "There is little to be gained by subjecting Rose's *ivans xtc*. to any measure for fidelity" (217).

True to the tradition of Northwestern University Press books, *Tolstoy on Screen* has been scrupulously copyedited and handsomely formatted. Lorna Simmons and Michael Denner should be commended for bringing together a collection of diverse articles that raise a range of questions about the study of film adaptation.

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