

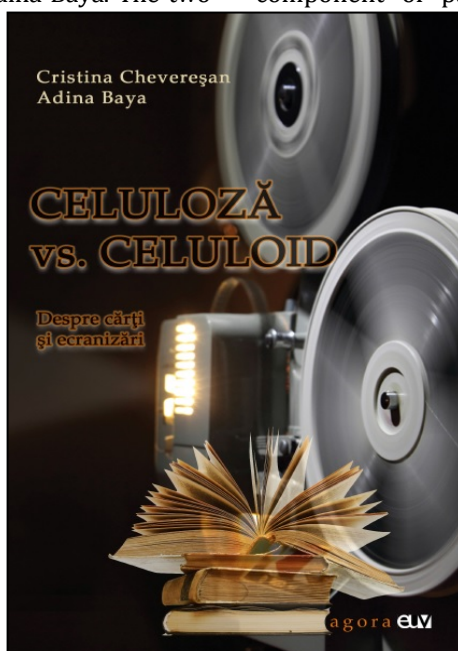
## BOOKS

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### **Cristina Chevereșan, Adina Baya. *Celuloză vs. Celuloid – Despre cărți și ecranizări*. Timișoara: Editura Universității de Vest, 2015, 240 p.**

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*Celuloză vs. Celuloid – Despre cărți și ecranizări* is a collaborative effort by Cristina Chevereșan and Adina Baya. The two authors come from different backgrounds: Chevereșan's main research interests include American studies, while Baya's academic formation revolves around media studies. Both of them, however, show interest in a comparative approach. In an interview with Richard Martin for the British Association for American Studies, Chevereșan describes her own teaching method for American studies as interdisciplinary, which means she applies varied tools to understand American literature and culture. Baya focuses on the intersections of journalism, cinematography, and literature. Her article titled "*Relax and Enjoy These Disasters*": *News Media Consumption and Family Life in Don DeLillo's White Noise* (Neohelicon, June 2013) examines representations of media in a work of fiction. The collaboration between the two authors results in a special synthesis of different perspectives.



The book's title pits against each other two materials: cellulose, the main component of paper, and celluloid, a compound used to create film rolls. Similarly, the authors examine the cinematic adaptations of various works of literature. The book is divided into four chapters, each focusing on a particular style or niche of literature. With a view to an even more integral view of the source materials, Chevereșan and Baya discuss each literary piece and its adaptation separately. This arrangement is particularly interesting because the reader has the opportunity to view the authors' perspectives independently, *ergo* he may view the literary expert's opinions on film and the cinema expert's thoughts on the written text. Although film and literature are separate media, they share many common traits: telling a story, showcasing emotions, creating a coherent narrative are all prominent in both.

In the "Preface", the two Romanian scholars explain that most of the es-

says included in the volume appeared first in the *Orizont* journal. Placing them next to each other gives an even more layered view of the films and their hypotexts. As these analyses previously appeared in a cultural journal, the authors keep a more personal and affable tone. They recommend the book to both expert and amateur book and movie lovers. The reviews are, indeed, easy to read and give concise and clear opinions about the films, but they are also meticulously researched and offer refined views about the source materials. With the book's smart concept the writers also attempt to answer the ongoing debate: how should film critics review adaptations?

Anne Wollenberg suggests that adaptations should have two reviews: one which takes into consideration its hypotext and one which only focuses on the movie as a stand-alone piece of art. Chevereșan and Baya go down a different path: the two reviews of the same movie work in tandem; one offers a look at the literature, the other focuses more on the movie.

The volume is divided into four chapters which feature movies selected by theme. The first one, "Embroidery, Lace, Elegance" ("Broderii, dantele, finețuri") showcases adaptations of works by classic authors such as George Orwell, Leo Tolstoy, Ian McEwan etc, the theme shared by each movie is that of the upper-class citizens and their struggles (*Anna Karenina*, *An Education*, *Atonement*, etc.). The second chapter titled "Marginal Spaces" (Spații marginale) includes films about marginalized groups such as black Americans (*The Help*), members of the LGBTQ community (*Brokeback Mountain*)

or the lower classes (*Factotum*), etc. The third chapter includes movies such as *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, *Les Misérables*, *Lincoln* and *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*. Many of these works of fiction include either real historical events or historical figures, but the main plotline is fantastic or surreal. For this reason, the authors chose to name this chapter "Histories, Fictions, Imagination" (Istorii, ficțiuni, închipuiri). The fourth and final chapter, titled "America Through Hollywood's Spyglass" (America prin ochianul Hollywoodian) is possibly the most specific one. It includes films which depict American culture, the original books' writers are also American. T. S. Elliot's *The Great Gatsby*, Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, Paul Thomas Anderson's *There Will Be Blood*, etc.

The book contains discussions about forty-four films, however, in many cases, the films themselves receive less attention than their source material. Most of Chevereșan's reviews focus more on literature than on cinema, while Baya takes time to reintroduce the same work. For example, Chevereșan's *Anna Karenina*-review serves as an ode to Leo Tolstoy's masterpiece. Baya also stresses the importance of the novel before shifting her attention to the movie itself. In her *Factotum*-review, Baya also takes time to establish Charles Bukowski's ambivalent, controversial, and fetishized personality in literature, thus helping the moviegoer who is unfamiliar with the writer's life and work to understand the biopic's cultural and historical background. So, *Celuloză vs. Celuloid* does not just contain movie reviews, it showcas-

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es well-researched and concise opinions about the films while underlining the important fact that these are interpretations of another art form. The book also serves as a great exercise in mediality as the authors explore the way literature can be transposed into a different

media. The films tell at least partially the same story, but they rework it to fit into the two-hour frame of films. Chevereşan and Baya expertly analyze these changes and help the reader understand the two art forms and their connections

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