

Anja Hartl

Adaptation as Border-Crossing Practice in Ali Smith's *Autumn*

Ali Smith's *Autumn* (2016) is preoccupied with the phenomenon of the border both thematically and formally speaking, as these concerns are negotiated through the novel's specific approach to adaptation. Creating a complex adaptive network, the novel interrogates aesthetic 'borders' between different texts, genres and media, eclectically combining references to and citations from canonical fictional works ranging from Shakespeare to Dickens to Achebe and boldly crossing the boundaries between literature and the visual arts as well as fiction and reality through the device of ekphrasis. Critically examining the implications of the novel's adaptive approach, this article investigates how *Autumn* creates a kaleidoscopic perspective on British history and culture as well as an experience of openness, fluidity and connectedness within the literary and cultural imaginary as an antidote to current sensibilities of narrowness and exclusivity exposed by the novel. Erasing rather than erecting epistemological and aesthetic borders, *Autumn* demonstrates that adaptation may represent a privileged cultural practice for the post-Brexit moment.