

Dr. Wieland Schwanebeck

Adaptation // Appropriation // Colonisation

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Adaptation is not only the simple process of ‘putting literature on screen’, it also designates strategies of survival and ensures the longevity of narratives across space and time. This seminar will examine the phenomenon of adaptation from a variety of perspectives, and ask how adaptations contribute to the enduring appeal of classical literary texts, how they celebrate, critically revise, and often ‘colonise’ existing pre-texts, how changing a text’s plot structure and *dramatis personae* affects the reception, and what we mean when we talk about the ‘adaptation industry’ (Simone Murray).

This will also entail debates which are not limited to the context of literary studies, but which are of a wider political nature: Who determines meaning? How problematic are the notions of authenticity and fidelity? What ideological pitfalls are linked to the concept of authorship, and what is the relation between adaptation and (forceful) appropriation, particularly when adaptations cross cultural boundaries?

Drawing upon the work of adaptation scholars like Linda Hutcheon, Thomas Leitch, or Robert Stam, we will put various theoretical concepts into practice, studying William Shakespeare’s classic twin farce, *The Comedy of Errors* (1594), throughout the semester. In addition to discussing the play’s particular status within the Shakespearean oeuvre, we will examine its adaptation history across several centuries and include its ancient pre-text (Plautus’s *Menaechmi*, 200 B.C.), subsequent ‘cleared-up’ versions of the play (Thomas Hull’s *The Comedy of Errors*, 1793), Hollywood films (*Our Relations*, 1936; *Big Business*, 1988), Bollywood cinema (*Angoor*, 1982), and musicals (*The Bomb-itty of Errors*, 1999).

In addition to participating in the seminar, students will have a chance to attend the international workshop *Transcultural Adaptation*, which will take place at TU Dresden in November, and which will bring together adaptation scholars from various countries.

Please buy:

Shakespeare, William (1594/2008). *The Comedy of Errors*. Oxford: OUP (Oxford World’s Classics). [ISBN 978-0199536146]