

Shaping an Identity: Adapting, Rewriting and Remaking Italian Literature

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KEYNOTES SPEAKERS:

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Since its first formulation as “intersemiotic translation” by Roman Jakobson in 1959, the notion of adaptation has inspired various theoretical and critical approaches. Adaptations of literary works, whether for the stage, for the screen or for other visual media, together with remakes within the same medium, tell us much about the destination culture’s appropriation of earlier forms. Adapting a text is also a way of re-reading it, thereby expanding its possible meanings: this form of intertextuality is represented, for example, in the late-modernist and post-modernist aesthetics of parody. In more recent years, aspects of this concept can be found in the popular notion of “transmedia storytelling” (Jenkins 2006) and in the category of “miramaxing” proposed by Jim Collins (2010) to identify the complex interplay between the screening of literary masterpieces, the representation of reading pleasures, and the taste of popular cinema. Considering these and other conceptions of adaptation in the Italian context leads to critical questions. Perhaps most importantly, how do these forms of re-writing affect the core of Italian culture? Is Italian literature “transposing” itself through a variety of tastes, media and techniques?

Our conference will investigate this conceptual node by exploring modes and problems of adaptations, including many different media (theatre, literature, cinema, comics, and traditional artistic iconography) in post-Unification Italian culture. In particular, we wish to explore the ways in which the poetics of adaptation have influenced the historical construction of Italian identity and the founding of a nation-wide spoken Italian.

Possible topics will include, but will not be limited to:

- problems in page-to-stage and page-to-screen adapting;
- adaptation between different visual cultures, or from narratives to iconography and vice versa;
- aspects of adaptation and rewriting implicit in translation;
- mass-media appropriation of traditional narratives in the present day, including political aspects of television adaptation;
- linguistic aspects of inter-media adaptation;
- political and ideological frames orienting the adaptations of traditional mythologies or narrations.

Both graduate students and faculty are encouraged to submit proposals. Contributions from other disciplines are welcome, provided that their primary focus is Italian culture or literature. The conference languages are English and Italian. Please circulate widely.

Please send a maximum 300 word abstract and a short biography (100 words max) by 3 December 2010 to kathleen.gaudet@utoronto.ca.

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