



1 Decembrie 1918 University of Alba Iulia Centre for the research of the imaginary *SPECULUM*
1 Decembrie 1918 University of Alba Iulia

Invites you to participate in the conference

LITERARY ADAPTATIONS AND THE IMAGINARY

Venue: Online or at *1 Decembrie 1918 University of Alba Iulia, Romania*

Date: **June 19th –21th, 2025**

Since ancient times, artists have transformed, reinterpreted, and reimagined folk tales and myths in a variety of forms, genres, and media. From the seemingly straightforward adaptation of a text into a film, a play, or a new literary work to the more subtle appropriation of style or meaning, one could argue that all texts are, in some way, part of a broader ensemble of already established texts and artistic forms. In the contemporary era, the cinematic adaptation of literary works stands as the most popular and widely recognized expression of this process.

Studies on cinematic adaptation have experienced significant development in the early 21st century, building on the contributions of scholars such as Brian McFarlane (1996), Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan (1999), James Naremore (2000), Robert Stam (2000), Sarah Cardwell (2002), and Kamilla Elliott (2003). These researchers have introduced new perspectives in the analysis of film adaptations, moving beyond traditional discussions centred on fidelity to the original text.

The filmmaker's central motivation for adapting a literary text stems from the profound impact it has on them as a reader. Thus, the filmmaker is driven to unlock the latent meanings of the work, respond to its calls, and fill the intentional gaps of ambiguity left open by the original text. In this process, the pleasure of cinematic adaptation arises from the ability to visually transpose the mental representations evoked through reading.

The filmmaker's creative freedom manifests in the unique way they refract the literary work, shaping an imaginative construct that emerges from the interplay of their own sensory, cognitive, and cultural experiences. Consequently, the notion of absolute

fidelity becomes an unattainable ideal, as adaptation does not merely seek to mirror the literary text but rather to offer a personal interpretation shaped by the filmmaker's artistic sensibility and tradition. However, this act of creation carries a dual responsibility: to engage with the intentions of the literary text and respond to its cues, while also producing a comparable effect on the audience. The filmmaker must guide the viewer's reception, anticipating their emotional and cognitive responses in the process of meaning-making.

Julie Sanders has made a significant contribution to the field of literary adaptation studies through her monograph *Adaptation and Appropriation* (2005), in which she redefined the traditional fidelity-based approach. Her emphasis on intertextuality and the palimpsestic nature of adaptations has provided a fresh perspective on the creative process, highlighting the dynamic transformation of a source text into a different artistic medium or register.

Today, both literature and film are analysed through the lens of related disciplines such as psychoanalysis, anthropology, history, linguistics, and semiotics. Within this interdisciplinary context, the adaptation of literary texts can be examined through four fundamental approaches: romanticism, reflectionism, materialism, and language (Pasopati et al., 2024, pp. 393–395).

Firstly, romanticism is based on the idea that no artistic form is fixed or immutable but is instead in a state of continuous transformation. In art, romanticism manifests through the exploration and expression of existential essence, which explains why certain artistic forms are consistently adapted and reinterpreted, regardless of their aesthetic classification as good or bad (Osborne & Charles, 2015).

Secondly, reflectionism involves a process of thought that encompasses both critique and self-critique, using literary adaptation in film as a means of conveying social messages. No form of art exists solely for itself but rather for society. This tradition includes both normative and critical thinking. Under normal circumstances, artistic adaptation aims to communicate moral messages about everyday life. For instance, cinematic and theatrical adaptations of works such as *Cinderella* or *Hamlet* seek to convey ideas about love, madness, despair, or oppression. In more critical contexts, artistic messages become provocative, awakening public awareness or even inciting resistance against certain social events (Wartenberg, 2015). These adaptations not only convey social messages but also deconstruct established semantic structures, compelling audiences to listen, understand, and reassess their perceptions of both the past and the present.

Materialism, as a school of thought, is founded on the principles of empiricism, emphasising the importance of matter and perceptible reality. Empiricism, often associated with realism, underscores the correspondence between concept and reality, becoming apparent in the contrast between transformation and imagination, on the one hand, and adaptation and originality, on the other. Within this framework, adaptation involves the translation of conceptual ideas into perceptible forms—a process that today ranges from printed texts to digital formats and from traditional film reels to digital cinematic projects (Wartenberg, 2015). As empiricism has evolved into pragmatism, artistic performance has taken centre stage, with artists creating works that reach audiences through new technologies and communication platforms. For example, Shakespeare has been adapted into numerous operatic performances, musicians and bands have incorporated literary

works into film soundtracks, and paintings have been influenced by the textual conditions of their respective eras. In this pragmatic era, artistic adaptation is not merely a performative act but also a form of conceptual and perceptual expansion for writers, directors, and spectators alike (Snyder, 2011, p. 206).

Today, materialism is associated more with quantitative rather than qualitative aspects. Films based on bestselling novels, sci-fi productions designed to materialise collective imagination, and the transformation of artists into celebrities exemplify this trend. Financial profit and box office success have become the primary criteria for evaluating artistic material, often at the expense of aesthetic values. This phenomenon reflects an increasing homogenisation of art, shaped by the dynamics of market demand and supply (Snyder, 2011, p. 201).

Finally, another fundamental dimension of artistic adaptation is linked to linguistic tradition, understood as a means of communication and cultural expression. Language is an essential component of any form of art, possessing the ability to transform concepts into images and other artistic expressions (Rahmoun, 2020). In the adaptation process, language plays a crucial role in transposing a literary text into a cinematic work. However, adaptations sometimes sacrifice fidelity to the original text in favour of a stronger emotional impact, employing exaggerated dramatization to captivate the audience's attention (Oza, 2024).

Thus, the adaptation of literary texts is not merely the straightforward transfer of a work from one medium to another, but rather a complex process of reinterpretation, shaped by aesthetic, economic, and cultural factors. Whether in mainstream cinema or independent productions, each adaptation leaves its mark on how audiences perceive and understand art.

Your papers may fall under the following sections:

Definitions and Practices in Literary Text Adaptation

Global and Local Dimensions of Literary Text Adaptation

Cultural Policies and Aesthetic Expressions in Literary Text Adaptation

The Impact of New Technologies on Concepts of Creation and Originality

The Influence of Theoretical Currents on Adaptation Processes

The Adaptation of Canonical Texts and Literary Archetypes Over Time

From Other Arts to Literature

Referințe:

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GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

Scholars interested in presenting papers (not exceeding 25 minutes in duration) are invited to submit **the registration form** via email **no later than April 1st, 2025**. Confirmation of participation will be communicated via email by **April 15th, 2025**.

Prior to publication, all submissions, written in English, French, Spanish, or Romanian, will undergo an evaluation process conducted by the editorial committee. **The selection will be rigorous, as each paper will be subject to a double-blind peer review and an anti-plagiarism detection.** Following this process, the accepted papers will be published in *Incursiuni în imaginar*, the official journal of the Speculum Center, based in Alba Iulia, Romania (indexed in ERIH+, EBSCO, MLA, CEEOL, DOAJ, and Index Copernicus).

Abstracts should be submitted via email to Maria Mureșan at: elimuresan@gmail.com

Participation Fee – A fee of 100 lei must be transferred to the following account:
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