

Disturbing Adaptations

The 8th Annual Conference of the Association
of Adaptation Studies

Linnæus University, Växjö, Sweden, 26-27 September, 2013

Confirmed keynote speakers:

Kamilla Elliott, Lancaster University

Nikolaj Lübecker, Oxford University

Irina Rajewsky, Freie Universität, Berlin



At this conference we will address the question of adaptation as *disturbance*. Adaptations are, or can be, disturbing, because they disrupt and interfere with well-established categories and functions, and shake our understanding of media characteristics and the boundaries between different disciplines. Adaptations are also often viewed as disturbing in an experiential way, for particular audiences or readers. Even critics tend to react strongly and emotionally when identifying changes that have taken place in the transfer from one media type to another, raising objections relating to both the aesthetic and the ethical. However, the fact that adaptations create a certain amount of familiarity, as well as commercial expectations of success, should not be overlooked.

Adaptation studies has by now been established as a vital academic field with its own traditions, margins and conventions. By focusing on questions of disturbance, and that this may in fact be something that is inherent in the phenomenon of adaptation itself, this conference poses several challenges to the field, in the hope of opening up new directions and broadening the possible perspectives on the topic.

Disturbing adaptation studies

If adaptations can be identified within all medial forms, as Linda Hutcheon has claimed, why is the study of transfers from novel to film still so dominant within the field? What theoretical and methodological consequences would a broader perspective on cultural adaptations have for the field in general? Should, for instance, novels, video games and art installations based on films be considered adaptations? What about films 'based on a true story'? Or the process from screenwriting to a finished film? How do we separate the notion of adaptation from intermediality, intertextuality, and remediation? What would happen if adaptation studies were to incorporate theories and concepts from intermediality studies to a greater extent than it does today? And what is the role of adaptation studies in pedagogical theory and practice?

Disturbing media borders

Although adaptation scholars usually problematize questions of fidelity and normative media essentialism, there is still something disturbing about the transfer of material across media borders. All adap-

tations seem to involve important things being lost or distorted, medium specificities are mixed and perhaps contaminated. Acknowledging these disturbances might open up for a broader discussion of media borders and media transfer, one that might be fruitful for the field.

Disturbing experiences

What role does the reception of adaptations play in the study of the phenomenon – the experiences of audiences, spectators, readers, fans? How do adaptations provoke and disturb? What happens when controversial subject matter (sex, violence, ideology) is transferred to a new medium – or removed entirely in the adaptation process? Should adaptation studies engage more in questions of production and distribution, as opposed to focusing solely on critical or popular reception?

We welcome papers within (but not restricted to) the topics mentioned above.

200-word abstracts of suggested papers (20 minutes) plus a short biographical note should be submitted by March 1, 2013, to disturbing.adaptations@lnu.se

Only paid-up members of the Association of Adaptation Studies are eligible to give papers at this conference. Membership subscription will be possible during the conference.

Linnæus University is situated in southern Sweden and can be reached easily and affordably with major airlines via Copenhagen Airport, from where direct trains commute to Växjö several times a day (2 ½ hour journey time).

Conference organizers

Jørgen Bruhn, Linnæus University, Växjö Sweden

Eirik Frisvold Hanssen, Norwegian University of Technology, Trondheim Norway

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With the participation of Lars Elleström and Anna Sofia Rossholm, Linnæus University