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Introduction

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Introduction

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Special issue Introduction

This special issue 'Adaptations and History' has its origins in the Association of Adaptation Studies conference on this theme, held at St. Anne's College, Oxford in 2016. A hot topic in the field in recent years - with important contributions from *inter alia,* Tom Leitch, Dudley Andrew, Lawrence Raw, and Defne Ersin Tutan – the deliberate conjunction of adaptation and history not only promises fresh interventions in such domains as period drama, heritage film, the biopic, adapting history, and the adaptation of historical novels, but also opens onto wider questions such as whether history is itself a type of adaptation. The essays gathered here represent significant contributions in all these areas as well as new work on adaptation in the particular context of television, a recurring interest in the place of historical revisionism in adaptation, and the wider history of adaptation.

Tomas Elliott's essay 'Shakespearean Seriality: The 'Hollow Crown', the 'Wooden O', and the 'Circle in the Water' of History' examines the BBC television mini-series *The Hollow Crown* (2012) and *The Wars of the Roses* (2016). Focusing in particular on the question of seriality by considering how the three plays are adapted into two mini-series, he argues that the new texts disrupt the conventional, linear, mode of figuring temporality and history. Rather, they present an account of history as mutable and contested, in a fashion that – as Elliott charts – has ramifications for how we understand both the storytelling at work in serialized television and the equivalent operations in Shakespeare's history plays. '"You Think You Know a Story…": Reframing the Tudors on Television in the Twenty-First Century' by Romano Mullin also addresses the representation of British history on 'quality' television. Focusing on *The Tudors* (2007–2010) and *Wolf Hall* (2015), Mullin investigates how both series reject traditional approaches to understanding the period and its key figures in favour of a reimagined Tudor era that reveals the overlapping narrative preoccupations of historiography and history-as-entertainment. By problematizing the nature of history itself, and dealing with a time that Mullin describes as 'central to an Anglocentric cultural identity', the paper argues that the adaptations not only present the past in a significantly revised fashion but also resonate with present concerns.

Frans Weiser's essay 'Contextualizing History-as-Adaptation: An Interdisciplinary Comparison of Historical Revisionism' centres on the relatively recent idea of history-as-adaptation and considers it alongside the broader trend for postmodern historical revisionism which began to prevail in literary and film studies in the 1980s. He notes that, from this period, scholars in these fields were contending that the writing of history had much in common with the writing of fiction, notwithstanding history's conventional positioning as empirical and scientific. Although most history departments and professional historians have not engaged positively with such a perspective, Weiser observes how, across many other disciplines, an 'adaptive turn' – in which the comparative dimension of adaptation studies is centrally important - has taken place in which historical claims, and history itself, may fruitfully be re-evaluated. Annabelle Doherty considers a relatively under-examined period of French history in her paper 'A Cinematic Cultural Memory of Courtship, Weddings, Marriage, and Adultery in July Monarchy France through Heritage Films Claude Chabrol's *Madame Bovary*, Jean-Paul Rappeneau's *The Horseman on the Roof*, and Catherine Breillat's *The Last Mistress*.' Addressing the capacity of film to evoke the past in a manner that has a profound sensory and corporeal dimension, she charts how these effects act in tandem with authorial/directorial sensibilities in ways that have implications for realism, for questions of authenticity - including the relationship to the source texts – and especially for the cultural memory of the era that the films create. Paying close attention to cinematic space, including landscapes and more intimate settings, the films' relationship to the 'Heritage' grouping is discussed, as well as the significance of their directors' place in the history of French *Auteurs.*

For Peer Review

Television moves to the foreground again in the essay 'Performing the Identity of the Medium: Adaptation and Television Historiography' by Jonathan Bignell. Bignell considers how television adaptations may differ both from their source texts as well as from other media. Arguing that adaptation became an important mode for television to establish its particular identity through the use of medium-specific means, he pays particular attention to the role of the BBC in creating what we understand as television adaptation and shaping audiences' expectations. With a sustained attention to the development of adaptive approaches in line with the affordances of available technology, as well as the over-arching landscape of cultural institutions, policy, and ways of viewing, the essay considers the relationship of British television adaptations to their source material, to theatre, film, and international dissemination. Finally, Jeremy Strong's essay 'Straight to the source? Where adaptations, artworks, historical films and novels connect' commences with a consideration of the shared 'doubled' nature of adaptations and screen texts that address history, always at least partly defined by a relationship to an anterior work or works. Strong examines how the two fields are linked by an overlapping set of terms and concepts, and both face the challenge of striking a balance between incorporating or respecting original material versus inventing and adapting to serve a new medium, time, or purpose. In particular, and using the work of Tracy Chevalier as an example, he considers how artworks are employed to offer new narratives – here termed 'origin stories'-- historically 'validated' by the recreation of famous works of art and/or literature. Focusing on the historical film and the historical novel, he considers the place of adaptation in both, framing them in terms of relevant concepts and figures such as re-enactment and bringing-to-life.

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