

Make It New, Make It Now: Adaptations

Zachary Scalzo

@zjscalzo

www.azachofalltrades.com

Metropolitan Library

Lit Fest 2025



LitFest

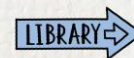
for writers of all ages & genres

Saturday, August 23rd, 10-4pm



Make It New, Make It Now (Adaptations)

Adaptation continues to be the next (and current!) big thing in writing, so why not try it out for yourself? This workshop will talk you through some brainstorming exercises to get you ready to adapt an existing work into your own. (Location: Classroom AB, 1-1:50 PM)



Downtown Library, 300 Park Avenue, 405-231-8650

Plan for this Workshop

1. Introductions
2. What is Adaptation? What is *an* Adaptation?
3. “Make It New, Make It Now”
4. Questions to Ask a Possible Adaptation
5. Recap and Discussion

Introductions

- Introduce yourself to two or three writers close to you. Be sure to include:
 - Name
 - Pronouns
 - Your preferred genre to write in
 - What brings you to LitFest 2025?

What is Adaptation? What is *an* Adaptation?

- What comes to mind when you think of “adaptation”?
- Some general thoughts
 - Adaptation is a “product,” but also a *process*
 - Adaptation is admiration
 - Adaptation is (re-)creation
 - Adaptation is difference
 - Adaptations are *necessary*.
- Adaptations are new and now.

Basic Terms (For Today!)

- Source Text (*Hamlet*, 1623)
 - The extant version of a story.
- Adapted Text (*The Lion King*, 1994)
 - The new version (“adaptation”) of a story.
- Genre (mystery, drama, romance...)
 - The “category” of a work.
- Medium (prose fiction, poetry, stage drama, film...)
 - The way a work is delivered to its audience
- Public Domain and Copyright

Make It New

- The balance between expectation and novelty, the “traditional” and the “new”
 - A scale, not an equation
- Remember: Adaptation is a process that is *new*.
 - Often re: medium and/or genre!
 - But, remember! Being new can (and should!) honor the source text.
- Some guiding principles:
 - What still resonates with us today in this piece?
 - How does this resonate with us?

Make It Now

- We encounter the adaptation in its time, with its audience – *not* the audience of the source material.
 - So, the work should speak to us as much as it did to its source audience!
- A word of cautious(?) advice: Be strong and be intentional.
 - “adapted from,” “inspired by,” “a take on...”
- Some guiding principles:
 - What does your adaptation have to say about the world that is going to encounter it?
 - How does the story you’re adapting help support your perspective?
 - What can’t that story do that you are able to? (Genre, context, period, etc.)

Example: Make It New, Make It Now

- *Romeo and Juliet*
(Shakespeare)
- 5-act play
- 1597/1623

JULIET

Ay me.

ROMEO, 「*aside*」

She speaks.

O, speak again, bright angel, for thou art
As glorious to this night, being o'er my head,
As is a wingèd messenger of heaven
Unto the white-upturnèd wond'ring eyes
Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him
When he bestrides the lazy puffing clouds
And sails upon the bosom of the air.

JULIET

O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name,
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

ROMEO, 「*aside*」

Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

Example: Make It New, Make It Now

- *West Side Story* (1957)
 - Music: Leonard Bernstein
 - Lyrics: Stephen Sondheim
 - Book: Arthur Laurents
 - Concept: Jerome Robbins

Trailer (2021 Spielberg film):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A5GJLwWiYSg>

- *Gnomeo and Juliet* (2011)
 - Director: Kelly Asbury

Trailer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qllr2aR-xVhk>

Example: Make It New, Make It Now



Things to Consider:

- What is retained/familiar from the source text?
- What is *new* in these adapted texts?
- How does each respond to the context (or the *now*) of when it was made?



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Exercise: Questions to Ask an Adaptation

- List out your source text's title (what you're adapting), its genre (mystery, drama, romance...), and its medium (prose fiction, poetry, stage drama, film...)
- List out your proposed adaptation's title, its genre, and its medium

Source Text	Adaptation
<u>Hamlet</u> (Shakespeare)	<u>Hamlet but with Animals</u>
tragedy, family/political drama, history	musical comedy, cautionary tale/fable
drama/play (stage)	film, animated film?

Exercise: Questions to Ask an Adaptation

- Under your Source Text, make a quick list of what you admire about it. What inspires you in this work?

Hamlet (Shakespeare)

- The “Alas, poor Yorick” moment
- The ghost!
- The family drama of it all
- Ophelia and Hamlet as characters
- Royalty

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Exercise: Questions to Ask an Adaptation

- Choose 2-3 of these items and free write a little bit about why those are so inspiring to you (and important to the source text).

Hamlet (Shakespeare)

- The “Alas, poor Yorick” moment is nice. Comedy is important, even in tragedy! And maybe as a way to deal with tragedy...? Also, the value of a working person.
- The ghost! It’s a love story, political intrigue, and also supernatural. The idea that our choices outlive us—right, because the ghost is still there even if he’s dead?
- Is Hamlet kind of the first emo? And Ophelia, poor Ophelia. She’s just trying to get a

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Exercise: Questions to Ask an Adaptation

- Now, consider your adapted text. Write about one (or more!) of the following:
 - Do any of the things that inspire you in the text “match up” with any of the opportunities your adapted text presents? (An inspiring emotional scene turning into a song in a musical, a character coming of age turning into an animated protagonist, ...)
 - What about your possible adapted text is most different from the source material? What is the way your adapted text could be the *biggest* version of that?
 - What is there going to be of *you* in this script? Where are you taking the reins and where are you walking alongside the source author?

Exercise: Questions to Ask an Adaptation

- Last question! (For now!)

Why this story now?

Recap and Discussion

- What are you going to take forward with you as you consider adapting your own work?
- What had you already been thinking about? What's something new to keep in mind?
- *If we got to the exercise(, Zach...):* What was it like to ask these questions? What did you learn through the questions—and your answers?

Stay in Touch!

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 - Includes a Contact tab! Don't be afraid to drop me a line!
- Most social media sites: [@zjscalzo](https://www.instagram.com/zjscalzo)
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