English and American Literature into Film

Lecture Series

Sponsored by

The Department of English and American Studies

Tel Aviv University
Following the success of the lecture series of the past two years on the classics of English literature, we are offering a series on a variety of English and American literary classics in relation to their adaptations into film. We would be delighted to see you with us!

Encounters with the great works of English and American literature tend to leave their mark on the hearts and souls of each one of us. Who does not recall the thrill of curling up with an engrossing Dickens novel at the heart of winter, of the wonder of the first experience of the poetic wonder of Shakespeare's words, of the gripping power of grand *dramatis personae* such as Othello or Hamlet? Who can forget the passions of the soul stirred to turmoil by the turbulations of the masterpieces of the Gothic such as *Wuthering Heights*?

It is not only generations of readers who have been so affected by the grandeur and genius of literary works written in the English language. From the very beginnings of the art of cinema, some of the greatest film makers have repeatedly turned to these works as sources for inspiration, producing works for the screen which became classics in their own right: Sir Lawrence Olivier's *Henry V*, David Lean's *Oliver Twist*, David O. Selznick and Victor Fleming's *Gone with the Wind*, Elia Kazan's *East of Eden* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Mike Nichols's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* with the unforgettable performance of Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton, Stephen Daldry's adaptation of Michael Cunningham's *The Hours* starring Nicole Kidman, Meryl Streep and Julianne Moore, up to this year's adaptation of Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*...

These adaptations where poetic genius is wedded to the creative spirit of cinematic visionaries have not only deepened our appreciation of the classics of English and American literature, bringing out hitherto undetected nuances able to emerge only in the visual field, heightening our identification with the characters and figures which captured our imagination as readers. They created an exciting dialogue of artistic minds, sometime across many centuries, What are the effects and specificities of these powerful dialogues? What are the hidden dimensions of the literary work that film adaptations help make emerge? What is added to the power of characterization by the persona of a film star? What has been the effect of these classical film adaptations on the culture of their times? How can they be related to ideological concerns of the last two centuries? What accounts for their profound psychological effects on us?

We invite you to experience or re-experience the magic of the cinematic masterpieces which came out of the encounter with classics of English and American literature, inseparable but different from the magic of these literary works themselves. Our professors who specialize in literature's inter-mediumal aspects will guide you through this journey, in lectures which will explore the intricacies and specificities of the encounters of the effect of the poetic word and the power of the screened image which make up the milestones of the history of English and American literature made film.
Join us for the lectures on the text and film adaptation to which you feel a most intimate connection or come to the entire lecture series to enjoy a lively and thought-provoking tour through fond memories given a fresh intellectual turn. You need not have read all the texts or have watched all the films slated for discussion but will undoubtedly be inspired to do so! Each meeting will offer a one-hour lecture accompanied by screenings of sections from the film in question followed by an informal discussion with the professor and light refreshments,

We would be delighted to have you as our guest!

Cordially,

Professor Shirley Sharon-Zisser  
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