

# The Early Modern in the Modern

The early modern period and its vast literary production became a point of departure both for literary analysis and theory as well as a source for adaptations and new narratives in German literature of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.



Walter Benjamin wrote his habilitation thesis on the baroque Truerspiel; Berthold Brecht used various early modern sources including Grimmelshausen's *Simplicius Simplicissimus* for his play *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*; and several literary works from East Germany are based on early modern texts such as Peter Hacks' *Das Volksbuch vom Herzog Ernst*, Thomas Brasch's *Vor den Vätern sterben die Söhne*, and Stefan Heyms' *Ahasver*. Early modern literary figures also play a role in recent books such as Ingo Schulze's *Peter Holtz* and Daniel Kehlmann's *Tyll*.

This seminar will focus on a selection of early modern texts and their modern interlocutors. It will discuss questions concerning the relationship of literature and politics, folly and society, utopia and dystopia, violence and freedom.