

Neil Hollands. Adaptation of Novels into Film – a Comprehensive New Framework for Media Consumers and Those Who Serve Them. A Master's paper for the M.S. in L.S. degree. April, 2002. 75 pages. Advisor: David W. Carr

This study tests the correlation of consumer reviews of novels and the films adapted from them to determine whether the rating of one media form can predict the rating of its partner film or novel. A data set of 1470 movie adaptations released between 1981 and 2000, and the novels from which they came is utilized, employing information from the Internet Movie Database and Amazon.

The study finds a significant correlation between the two ratings, but a limited ability of that correlation to explain the full difference between the scores. Analysis of results defines a framework of 14 personal, creative, formal, and environmental differences between novel and film, and three key commonalities: narrative core, symbiotic effect, and comparative act. Related actions and recommendations for further research, particularly for librarians, are suggested.

Headings:

Film and television adaptations

Film and television adaptations – Evaluation

ADAPTATION OF NOVELS INTO FILM – A COMPREHENSIVE NEW FRAMEWORK
FOR MEDIA CONSUMERS AND THOSE WHO SERVE THEM

by
Neil Hollands

A Master's paper submitted to the faculty
of the School of Information and Library Science
of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Science in Library Science.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

April, 2002

Approved by:

David W. Carr, Advisor

Introduction

Browsing in my local public library, I discovered a display entitled “Don’t Judge a Book by Its Movie.” Beneath the rack were rows of classic fiction. Since the film adaptations of many of these novels were not obviously terrible films, the implication was that adaptation generally fails – that the book is by its very nature superior to the resulting film.

On a lower floor of the same library, in the video section, a conflicting story is told. Here, a majority of the available films have been adapted from books. This is not coincidental. The library has few funds for video purchases and selections are made carefully. It looks as though those who select videos believe that films from well-known books will be popular, non-controversial selections. Unless they intentionally collect substandard films, one must assume that on this floor, adapted films are desirable.

This upstairs-downstairs tale of two collections is not limited to one public library. Instead, it reflects the conflicting views with which creators, critics, information professionals, and media consumers approach adaptations. On one hand, there is a bias toward novels – a tendency to treat them as the deeper, more legitimate form. On the other, we not only enjoy adapted films, but even go so far as to assume that if we have experienced a particular title in one form, that we are qualified to speak about the other: *“Have you read the book?” “No, but I’ve seen the movie.”*

To some degree, this tension emanates from an ongoing battle between those who love the book and those prefer film. Literary critics and authors have sided against

film scholars and auteurs in a war of cultural elitism. Early battles have gone to the side of literature. Novels are an older form, and as such, the authority behind the book has been stronger. Literature has been seen as an art, film as a mass medium. Film critics often side with the novels as well, keeping to their own literary roots. Even movie studios have traded on literature's higher esteem in exchange for greater respectability.

But as filmmaking has matured, the competition has become more evenly matched. With the advent of television, film no longer occupies the low rung on the culture ladder. "Art" films and serious cinema journals have provided stronger arguments for the intellectual, aesthetic, and cultural validity of film. The appearance of media conglomerates that own both publishing houses and movie studios has further leveled the field.

It would be misconstruing this conflict, however, to say that it is entirely external, a battle of opposing forces. The conflict is also strong inside the head of the average consumer. This is because the basic act of adaptation has a dilemma at its heart. If an adaptation can maintain fidelity to the original, it will be criticized for being unoriginal. If, conversely, it attempts to interpret the earlier work or provide a new twist, it will be criticized for violating the integrity of the original.

So what are we to do? Clearly, there is demand; adaptation of novels into film will continue. How can filmmakers adapt novels without making critics and consumers angry or disappointed? And what about librarians and others who select books and films for collections, who advise users and make media recommendations, who lead book and film discussions, and who try to foster an appreciation for all forms of information? It is fine for writers, directors, and critics to engage in aesthetic debate about each adaptation, if that debate results in improved work, but librarians are not in

the perfection business. They have (hopefully) overcome the early snobbery that attempted to “protect” the public from novels when they too, were viewed as a morally problematic form. Are they willing to do the same for films? Just as most librarians tried in the mid-20th century to balance the desire to educate with the populist approach of giving the public the books they want, librarians may now need to mediate their approach to “popular” films. This will require respect for how an aesthetically imperfect film can still serve strong needs for users. Part of gaining that respect is to understand how these films, when adapted from beloved books, are similar to those books and how the two forms are different.

I will examine these conflicts and questions in the pages that follow. I’ll begin with a review of the literature about adaptation, particularly literature on the fidelity question. With that as groundwork, I’ll introduce new research on the connection between novels and their adaptations – research which shows that while a significant correlation can be shown between how people view the two forms, that correlation only explains a small part of the larger story of how we think about these novels and films. I will analyze the many differences between the two forms and what remains to compare between them. Finally, I’ll look at the implications of these findings for librarians, critics, and consumers and suggest some courses of action and further research.

Literature Review

Bluestone and Before

Adaptation of novels into film began almost immediately after the development of film. Georges Méliès film *A Trip to the Moon*, loosely based on a Jules Verne work, appeared in 1902.¹ Vitagraph made one-reel adaptations of scenes from Shakespeare and Dante for play in nickelodeon machines as early as 1908. In Europe at the same time, feature length versions of Dickens and Goethe were made.² In fact, the advent of the feature-length film – the narrative – as the primary mode of filmmaking may owe much to the adaptation of books to film.

Later, the advent of talkies and massive need for content in the early days of filmmaking continued to drive adaptation. Talking pictures enabled more natural use of dialogue from novels. In the studio system, more films were made in less production time than now typical. Content was needed to keep this factory and its many contract employees busy. Novels were a source of this quick content. Until television appeared on the scene to replace film at the bottom of many aesthetes' lists of cultural forms, filmmakers also used adaptation in the conscious attempt to give film a touch of class.

As the adaptation of novels began, the aesthetic debate about adaptation also commenced, with strong views on either side of the question. Early filmmakers like Sergei Eisenstein and D.W. Griffith expressed their fondness for particular writers.

¹ Gould Boyum, 3.

² Naremore, 4.

Virginia Woolf disliked films, especially adaptations, vehemently, arguing that the “Eye and brain are torn asunder ruthlessly as they try vainly to work in couples.”³ Other writers, such as Tolstoy, expressed interest in the new medium.

Early discussion of the topic was limited to a few brief essays and pithy quotes. The literature of adaptation, especially in America, became serious with the 1957 publication of George Bluestone’s *Novels Into Film*. This seminal work introduced many important concepts to the debate, and much of the literature is still essentially a defense or attempted refutation of his ideas. Bluestone begins by creating a dichotomy:

I have assumed, and attempted to demonstrate, that the two media are marked by such essentially different traits that they belong to separate artistic genera. Although novels and films of a certain kind do reveal a number of similarities...one finds the differentia more startling. More important, one finds the differentia infinitely more problematic to the film-maker. These distinguishing traits follow primarily from the fact that the novel is a linguistic medium, the film essentially visual.⁴

Bluestone believes that “Where the moving picture comes to us directly through perception, language must be filtered through the screen of conceptual apprehension.”⁵ This results in “an inevitable abandonment of ‘novelistic’ elements” to the point where the “new creation has little resemblance to the original.” Among his famous arguments are that even the simplest linguistic tropes are difficult to transfer to film⁶, that externalization of literary characters is dissatisfying⁷, that mental states cannot be as adequately represented by film as by language⁸, and that the novel has three tenses, the film only one⁹.

³ Woolf, in Harrington, 265.

⁴ Bluestone, vi.

⁵ *ibid*, 20.

⁶ *ibid*, 21.

⁷ *ibid*, 23.

⁸ *ibid*, 47.

⁹ Bluestone, 48.

Bluestone thus concludes that:

What happens therefore, when the filmist undertakes the adaptation of a novel, given the inevitable mutation, is that he does not convert the novel at all. What he adapts is a kind of paraphrase of the novel—the novel viewed as raw material...That is why there is no necessary correspondence between the excellence of a novel and the quality of the film in which the novel is recorded...In film criticism, it has always been easy to recognize how a poor film “destroys” a superior novel. What has not been sufficiently recognized is that such a destruction is inevitable.¹⁰

It is important to keep this early criticism in context. The early studio system was often guilty of execrable adaptations that turned masterworks into hackneyed romance and adventure movies, intentionally discarding most of the content of the original. When faced with such films, it would be easy to draw extreme conclusions. However, this pilfering of titles became much less common with the demise of the studio system and the growing status of directors and others who do technical work on films¹¹. It would be difficult to argue that the average adaptation is not more considerate of its source now than it was then.

Bluestone remains the critical touchstone, however. Despite his now dated opinions about the limitations of film, his case studies are still notably balanced and his approach difficult to pigeonhole. Writers with very different views claim Bluestone as their forerunner, while others with equally opposing arguments regard him as an opponent. He is notable in that he introduces 1) the difficulty of fidelity, 2) the “conceptuality” of literature vs. the “perceptuality” of film, and 3) the attempt to identify aspects of novel and film that are not easily interchangeable. In this section, I will examine the literature on the fidelity question. The other two topics will be handled later, in analysis of my research.

¹⁰ Bluestone, 62.

The Fidelity Debate

The fidelity debate is vital to the adaptation question. From consumers to critics, fidelity is a starting point for consideration of adaptations. A *New Yorker* cartoon once showed two goats eating a pile of film cans. “Personally,” says one goat to the other, “I liked the book better.”¹² Robert Stam has noted that the moral language in which we cast this discussion—*fidelity, faithfulness, betrayal, violation, and desecration*—indicates our strong feelings on the subject.¹³

The centrality of fidelity to criticism of adaptations, however, is also overclaimed. Almost every writer on adaptation begins by claiming that other critics are stuck in an overly simple discourse that requires absolute fidelity. When one goes looking, however, it is difficult to find a modern critic who actively espouses the belief that fidelity is mandatory. Perhaps this opinion creeps into conversation or newspaper reviews, but for the most part, neither contemporary critics nor consumers seem to require absolute faith in adaptation. While we may start our discussion with fidelity, we do not usually end there. We are ultimately more interested in how and why differences in the source and adaptation occur. If a film is not faithful to the original, we want a reason why.¹⁴

As many authors note¹⁵, the question of fidelity is complicated by our notion of what, exactly, an adaptation should be faithful to. Every detail? The

¹¹ Gould Boyum, 18.

¹² Naremore, 2.

¹³ In Naremore, 54.

¹⁴ An exception to this occurs in debate about movies based on historical fact. Recent imbroglios over the accuracy of *Seven Years in Tibet* and *A Beautiful Mind* are prime examples. Here, there may be more arguments for the importance of fidelity.

¹⁵ Stam, 57; Beja, 80 for two.

plot? The author's apparent arguments? Style? Character? Setting? Or perhaps the mysterious "spirit" of the original? Reader/response critics¹⁶ such as Joy Gould Boyum would add that each individual creates her own version of the novel and the film, and as such, an adaptation perceived as faithful by a wide population becomes impossible. The debate becomes difficult to analyze, especially when writers hold different implicit assumptions about "fidelity."

Between extremes of disregard for and belief in fidelity are those who wish to categorize films by level of fidelity. Many have proposed classification systems. Dudley Andrew offers three kinds of fidelity: *borrowing*, in which "the artist employs more or less extensively, the material, idea, or form of an earlier text;" *intersecting*, in which the original is "preserved to such an extent that it is intentionally left unassimilated in adaptation;" and *transforming* where "it is assumed that the task of adaptation is the reproduction in cinema of something essential about an original text."¹⁷ It is difficult however, to classify films into Andrew's categories. His system gives little guidance for how one can approach films that treat the original as raw material and do not attempt strong fidelity.

Geoffrey Wagner suggests *transposition*, "in which a novel is directly given on the screen with minimum apparent interference;" *commentary*, "where an original is taken and either purposely or inadvertently altered in some respect;" and *analogy*, which uses "considerable departure for the sake of another work of art."¹⁸ Michael Klein and Gillian Parker offer a similar classification.¹⁹

¹⁶ Or as they should also be labeled in this case, viewer/response critics, Gould Boyum 67.

¹⁷ Andrew, 98-101.

¹⁸ Wagner, 222-227.

¹⁹ Klein and Parker, 9-10.

These systems are clearer than Andrew's. While films can still not easily be sorted into the categories in any of the classification schemes, they do provide a useful tool for us in thinking about adaptation.

Perhaps instead of categorizing, we should place adaptations on a continuum between most and least faithful. Gould Boyum takes this one step further, suggesting that what is important to remember is that "there is no single type of correspondence between films and their literary sources."²⁰

Beyond attempts to categorize, some basic schools of thought can be identified. Many hold that novel and film are simply too different, that fidelity is not possible. Some critics seem to imply that because of this adaptation should not happen, or that at best, we must accept that films will almost always be of lesser quality than the novels from which they are adapted. Ingmar Bergman²¹ claims, "Film has nothing to do with literature; the character and substance of the two art forms are usually in conflict." Norman Mailer argues, "film and literature are as far apart as, say, cave painting and a song." Director Alain Resnais has said that adapting a novel for him would seem "a little like re-heating a meal."²²

This strict denial of adaptation, however, is not convincing. Clearly, some of the films resulting from adaptation are successful. Even more important, there is plainly interest in the adaptive act. As Ginette Vincendeau argues, "the books and films themselves, the publicity around them, statements by filmmakers and

²⁰ Gould Boyum, 70.

²¹ Beja, 51.

²² Beja, 79

our own experience as readers and spectators, all compel us, if not to pass comparative judgment, at least to see one in the light of the other.”²³

Others hold that since fidelity is not possible, then if adaptations must occur, filmmakers should use the novel only as raw material, using the strengths of film to tell a new story. Those biased toward film as a form often defend this position. Béla Balázs, a film theorist, posits that a filmmaker, if not a “botcher,” may “use the existing work of art merely as raw material...as if it were raw reality, and pay no attention to the form already given to the material.”²⁴ The French New Wave developed as a reaction to what Francois Truffaut called the “Tradition of Quality” – the attempt to create highly faithful adaptations from literature of the Victorian period and earlier.²⁵ They argue for auteur over author. Others follow that lead. German director Rainer Maria Fassbinder writes that “maximal realization of images from the literature” is a “preposterous” goal.²⁶

This emphasis on making something new is still prominent in Europe, where the faithful Masterpiece Theater, Merchant/Ivory sort of adaptation – labeled “heritage cinema,” – is held in lower esteem by many critics than such works are held in America.²⁷ The desire for fidelity, especially to older novels, has been labeled as reactionary and tied to elitism, and in Britain, the rise of Thatcher conservatism.²⁸ While interesting, such arguments are too reductive. Experience tells us that some adaptations do not attempt more than accurate portrayal of the original narrative, and many of these succeed.

²³ Vincendeau, xi.

²⁴ Balázs, in Harrington, 10, originally published in 1970.

²⁵ Naremore, 6.

²⁶ *ibid*, 12.

²⁷ Vincendeau, xvii-xxi.

A related, but less extreme, view is that adaptations should come from less-known works and treat the novel more as launching pad than lodestone. An often-repeated aphorism is that great literature makes bad movies but good pulp fiction or even mediocre novels make good films.²⁹ This claim may have some validity, as the style and size of many less “literary” novels makes them easily adaptable, while many “great” books are more interior and nuanced, and thus more difficult. However, this is also a generalization, often accompanied by the opinion that anything published in a genre or after World War I is not great fiction³⁰, so the position should be taken with a grain of salt. A correlate to this belief is that a successful book deserves more faithful adaptation.

At the other end of the spectrum from these arguments that deny or reduce the range of adaptation are those that maintain that some level of fidelity is both possible and desirable. This group follows the lead of André Bazin, a French writer who held that “faithfulness to a form is illusory: what matters is the equivalence of meaning in the forms.” Bazin believed that “it is those who care the least for fidelity in the name of the so-called demands of the screen that betray at one and the same time both literature and cinema.”³¹ The director John Huston said “I don’t seek to interpret, to put my own stamp on the material. I try to be as faithful to the original as I can. In fact, it’s the fascination that I feel for the original that makes me want to make the film.”

²⁸ Craig, in Vincendeau, 3.

²⁹ See, for instance, Griffith, 17, Beja, 85, or Burnham, 581, O’Brien and Borden, 114.

³⁰ For example, see Linden’s list of “mediocre” literary works in Harrington, 162.

³¹ In Naremore, 20; originally published in 1948.

Another group of critics does not require fidelity as the central goal of adaptation, but does believe in its possibility. Joy Gould Boyum, while arguing for the possibility of many different responses to the same novel, and thus many possible adaptations, also believes that only certain adaptations are valid – those that recognize the “organic wholeness” of the originals and themselves have “a coherence and inner consistency.”³² Often, those with this approach emphasize enhancements in filmmaking that improve the degree to which film can convey the details of the novel. Charles Eidsvik, who admits that he sneers at bad adaptations, believes that “adaptations frequently provide major advances in the art of film,” that they “force film-makers into attempting original solutions.”³³

An even more neutral variation comes from writers who instead of categorizing films, want to catalogue elements that can and cannot be adapted. Brian McFarlane, for instance, aims to “set up procedures for distinguishing between that which can be transferred (essentially narrative) and that which, being dependent on different signifying systems, cannot.”³⁴ This approach, which prefers the term *translation* to *adaptation*, is perhaps the most prominent in the recent literature. The goal, to this group, is to translate different elements of the original as well as possible. This view recognizes that novels can have several different readings, thus explaining the varying quality of different adaptations.

³² Gould Boyum, 73. She later further qualifies this view by adding that in the case of well known works, fidelity to widely held views of the interpretive community should also be expected.

³³ Eidsvik, in Harrington, 28.

³⁴ McFarlane, vii.

Adaptation as translation is related to the school of thought that emphasizes *intertextuality*—the way in which all works interact with each other.³⁵ These writers focus on the comparison, not the resulting differences. They argue that every representational artifact is an adaptation of many earlier artifacts. As James Naremore argues, remaking is at the center of modern life.³⁶ Further, when remaking does occur, the selection of source materials and interpretation of those sources are important, often revealing ideological and aesthetic beliefs.

The intertextuality school is significant in that it most strongly recognizes that although novel may always precede film, an individual may encounter the film first. In fact, intertextuality is not linear, but runs in many different directions. For those who espouse this view, the key question is which other texts and factors are invoked by a given work. A film adaptation, for instance, may interact with not just a single source novel, but other novels, earlier adaptations, and a variety of works in other media. Intertextualists are thus interested in all convergence among arts. Since film includes elements from literature, music, dance, and visual arts, they find it particularly interesting. Intertextuality also recognizes reactions with other beliefs, policies, and occurrences in the world.

Whatever one's opinion about fidelity, the complexity of the above discussion puts the lie to the myth that the majority of writers about adaptation are obsessed with a simple demand for absolute faithfulness. When treated with full subtlety, faith to an original remains a complex subject. Fidelity of

³⁵ Andre Bazin was the first to advocate this view clearly. Other examples include Robert Stam, James Naremore,

³⁶ Naremore, 15.

adaptation, in its broad sense, involves making a staggering number of comparisons, any of which can lead to fruitful discussion.

Problems with the Literature

Several problems limit the literature of adaptation to date. The first is that very little of it is quantitative. Bluestone argued that “quantitative analyses have very little to do with qualitative changes. They tell us nothing about the mutational process, let alone how to judge it. In the case of film versions of novels, such analyses are even less helpful.”³⁷ Others have followed this lead and stayed away from even the most basic quantitative research.

While Bluestone is right that any study that focuses on film and literature cannot be solely quantitative, his dismissal of such research is too broad. Accurate figures on how many novels of which kind are adapted to film would ground the debate. Lester Asheim’s 1949 Ph.D. dissertation attempts to enumerate both the quantity of adaptations and the frequency of particular kinds of changes. This technique has not been tried since Asheim and could prove enlightening if applied to recent films. Instead, writers on adaptation simply pass along the same very limited and outdated statistics.³⁸

Second, the literature on adaptation relies heavily on faulty induction. As McFarlane argues, little sustained, systematic attention has been given to the process of adaptation despite 60 years of critical attention to the issue.³⁹ This is related to the reliance on qualitative studies of a few works at a time. Books on the subject almost inevitably start with a tiny overview, and then try to induce universal truths through

³⁷ Bluestone, 5.

³⁸ Examples of this will be given in analysis of my research later in this paper.

short articles on the films of particular novels.⁴⁰ Jeffrey Egan Welch's bibliography of literature on adaptation between 1909 and 1977 identified 1235 entries, the large majority of which depend on individual case studies.⁴¹ Depending on which works are examined, and who is performing the examination, results vary tremendously and are often contradictory.⁴²

Even worse, large portions of the picture are scarcely examined at all. The great bulk of the literature focuses on adaptation of the classics, but these are only a fraction of the subject—a fraction that may be atypical. Focus on films from classic novels skews the debate by training attention on situations where the adaptation has difficulty in living up to the source, while ignoring occasions where forgotten, mediocre books are made into great films. Also, analysis of films from genre literature, children's and young adult's works, and other popular fiction is exceedingly rare,⁴³ although adaptation of these works may well encompass different challenges than filming a classic. Elitism, habit, and the pressures of academia are the likely causes of inattention to adaptations other than the classics. As a starting point, a broad, deductive approach to the field is needed.

A third limitation of the adaptation literature is that it comes almost entirely from the academic fields of literary criticism and film studies. This is good for the aesthetic debate, but results in limited applicability of results. Regular consumers may not approach selection and analysis of books and films as critics do, especially academic

³⁹ McFarlane, 3.

⁴⁰ Bluestone, Gould Boyum, McFarlane, and Naremore are the rare exceptions, although even these rely heavily on examples from a few films.

⁴¹ As reported by Ray, in Naremore, 44.

⁴² This tendency is aggravated by academic practices that strongly encourage the frequent production of 10 to 20 page articles instead of larger, more complex studies, as noted by Ray in Naremore, 47.

critics. It is unlikely that philosophical questions on semiotics and intertextuality are on the mind of the average consumer as she selects a book from the library or a DVD at the video store.

Consumers and those who serve them (such as librarians) need information that reflects consumer, not critical, needs and preferences. Unfortunately, such information is sadly lacking. Journals for libraries, educators, and the publishing industry have been quiet on this subject. Reviews for consumers discuss individual instances, but not the broader field of adaptation. Only a few reference works exist, and these are devoted almost entirely to adaptation of classics. A framework useful to consumers, educators, librarians, and other media advisors is not available.

In the end, as James Naremore argues⁴⁴, too much of the critical literature reduces the debate to simple dichotomies: literature versus cinema, high culture versus mass culture, and original versus copy. In the early literature, especially, these dichotomies are interpreted in favor of the older form of literature and to the detriment of film. The recent literature expands these dichotomies into more subtle discussions, but still fails to give us a general framework in which to think of adaptations. It is this need for a deductive, statistically grounded, consumer-oriented framework for thinking of adaptations that I will attempt to fill.

⁴³ A cursory glance at the list of adaptations in Appendix A shows that classics are only a small portion of the novels adapted for the screen.

⁴⁴ Naremore, 2.

Research

Methodology

So for media consumers and those who serve them, a new approach to adaptation is needed. To avoid some of the bias created in previous studies by focusing on films based on a certain kind of book, a broad, deductive analysis is needed, not another attempt to induce the truth about adaptation from one writer's consideration of a movie or two at a time. This analysis should be grounded in statistical work, and then extended to qualitative analysis, not grounded in qualitative analysis then extended to adaptations as a whole.

Until recently, such a study would have been difficult, maybe impossible. Critical opinion on films and books has been plentiful, but does not always reflect the views of the average consumer. Media consumers, for their part, have many opinions, but these had not been collected in a publicly available form. A survey to measure opinion of novels and their adaptations that covered enough works to be broadly representative would have been unworkably extensive. One could look at sales and attendance figures, but it is not clear whether these represent opinion, advertising power, or the relative availability of different works. Now however, new tools have become available for studying consumer opinion. The genesis, in the last five years, of new Internet sites that collect media ratings from the public has opened new research possibilities. Some of these sites cover the full gamut of novels in print or the complete

catalogue of movies released in recent years. The results are publicly available in a way that makes unobtrusive research uniquely possible.

This study represents an attempt at such research. I will attempt to answer the question, *When novels are adapted into films, is there a meaningful correlation between how consumers rate the two products such that how much people like the novel will significantly indicate how much they like the resulting film?*

In this study, *novels adapted into films* are operationally defined as films released between 1981 and 2000 and the novels from which they were adapted. The list of films is taken from the Internet Movie Database (IMDB), <http://www.imdb.com>. The IMDB is extensive, containing over 36,000 titles available in English for the years in question, including both television movies and theatrical and video releases. For each title, the IMDB includes a credit list that clearly labels all films adapted from novels. Search capabilities make it possible to quickly identify all adaptations, and most of these films have received many rating votes from users of the site.

To reduce the likelihood of inaccurate data, adapted films were limited to those available in English. This is because 1) the IMDB has less complete coverage of non-English language films; and 2) translation of a novel into a film of another language presents an additional difficulty not addressed by this study. Films were only included if adapted from novels, not nonfiction, short stories, the theater, television scripts, or comic books. Considering adaptation of these other sources would confuse the question, and also be less authoritative, as such adaptations are less consistently noted.

In addition, films that had not received at least 15 ratings from IMDB users at the time of the study were excluded, since films with fewer ratings are more likely to have a skewed median score that cannot be generalized to the broader population of all

consumers. The date range of 1981 to 2000 was chosen to 1) keep the sample size reasonable; 2) focus on current trends; and 3) minimize the number of source novels that have gone out of print, and are thus less frequently rated at Amazon.

After application of these qualifications, information on 1470 adaptations was identified, making the study the broadest by far ever made on the subject. For each, the film's title, year of release, mean rating score, number of votes, and a designation of *theatrical* or *television* release were recorded. The author of the adapted novel and the title of the book, if different than that of the film, were also collected.⁴⁵

Once data was collected on the films, Amazon, <http://www.amazon.com>, was searched for information on corresponding novel and video releases. The Amazon site was also selected for the completeness of its database, particularly its listing of novels. Many libraries use Amazon as a primary tool for collection development, as it has more information about books in print than any other source, certainly any free source. Here, additional user-rating data was collected on the films (as videocassette releases) identified at the IMDB and novels from which they were adapted.

Next, the sample was further restricted to novels and films that had received at least four user votes at Amazon, again to avoid median user scores skewed by one or two atypical ratings. The number of votes required for inclusion was lower here, as Amazon ratings tend to derive from fewer total votes than IMDB ratings. Requiring more votes would have been counterproductive, shrinking the sample too much.

The mean rating scores assigned to the novels at Amazon were then compared to the mean scores assigned to the film, first to ratings assigned at the IMDB, and second to

ratings of the video at Amazon. This was done with a chi-square test using Pearson correlations. Before results were calculated, it was decided that the null hypothesis of no significant relationship could be rejected if the results reflected a significance (p) of less than .01, a level of correlation typically required for large samples of social science data.

The data was then subjected to regression techniques to determine the magnitude of a correlation (r), whether such a correlation was negative or positive, and the degree to which the independent variable of book rating can account for the dependent variable of film rating (measured as r^2). In regressions, the Amazon book rating was treated as the independent variable and the IMDB or Amazon video rating the dependent variable, since the films are adapted from the novels.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Data Set

The lack of quantitative or deductive study of novels and their adaptations most likely stems from past difficulties in obtaining widespread data. As noted, to obtain a significant number of rating votes, a survey would have to be distributed to a gigantic group of people to find enough individuals who had experienced the works in question.

As such, the first major advantage of using data from the IMDB and Amazon comes from its quantity. Over 5000 individual ratings of a single film are not unusual for the IMDB, and even obscure films often receive over 100 ratings. Amazon voters are less prolific in quantity, as inclusion of a rating in Amazon's mean score for any item also requires submission of a brief review, but the great majority of books and films, especially those which remain in print, still get multiple reviews.

⁴⁵ For the sake of interest and future study, a selection of the data collected on 400 of the best known and most interesting novel/film pairs is provided as Appendix A. These 400 films and novels cover the gamut

The second advantage of this data is completeness. The IMDB's list of films and Amazon's list of books are as complete as those available from any source. Even obscure films and books are included. As a result, the study includes movies not normally considered such as made-for-television films and films based on genre novels.

The third advantage is that data is from consumers, not experts. Although there may be some question about how well these Internet users represent typical consumers, it can at minimum be said that the data comes mainly from those who are not professional reviewers or evaluators of media. Since we are curious about consumer preferences, not those of experts, this is important. This data will be more applicable to regular people and the information professionals who serve them.

The fourth major advantage of this data comes from its easy and unobtrusive availability. This data was freely given over major Internet sites. The sites could be searched and sorted in various manners, simplifying collection. No surveys needed to be distributed or collected. Consumers gave information voluntarily, both to help others predict their likely enjoyment of a given item and as a means of personal entertainment. As such, there was little pressure to distort ratings to meet the perceived needs of a survey. The easy availability of the data provides for potential replicability of this study in future years (although results may shift as more people provide ratings and reviews).

There are four potential disadvantages to the use of this data set. First, at Amazon, only a mean score is available. This prevented the use of other central measures such as mode or median to try to limit the influence of outlying opinions. However, the data is only on a scale from 1 to 5, so outlying opinions should not have skewed mean scores greatly. At the IMDB, the mode and median are available, but the

mean was also used for the sake of consistency. At IMDB, ratings are provided on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high).

The second potential disadvantage is that the data may not completely represent consumers as a whole. This could be the case for several reasons. First, since the data is from the Internet, it tends to skew more toward young, affluent, male respondents. We have no particular reason to believe that this group takes a different general approach to comparing novels and movies than older, less wealthy, or female respondents, but it is possible that adverse statistical effects exists.

Also, respondents were self-selected. As such, they may have been motivated by stronger feelings than the average consumer to take the time to submit a score. However, one would expect this potential distortion to distribute equally over both books and films, both positive and negative reviews, so the effect should be minimal.

Third, the data could include some exaggerated or false reports. Those who submit scores can see the average given by others, so there may be a tendency for later ratings to gravitate toward the previous median. Or conversely, later users might give more extreme ratings to try to move the average in a desired direction. Although one must register with the sites to submit ratings, it is still technically possible to register under multiple names and thus submit multiple ratings for the same work. Still, submission of false ratings seems unlikely to occur on a broad scale, or to move scores in a particular direction, and thus is not likely to skew the data as a whole.

Last, the act of removing items from consideration which have fewer than four votes at Amazon, a method designed to reduce the risk of atypical reviewers greatly affecting the final mean for a given item, could also get a problematic side effect. If out-of-print books receive fewer consumer ratings on the average, and if these books go out

of print because on the whole they are of lower quality than those that remain available, the net effect might be that removal of books with fewer ratings resulted in a final data set containing a higher proportion of well-liked books than normal. This, however, is quite speculative; it was judged that the benefit of removing items with too few votes outweighed the potential risk.

In the end, the convenience and sheer size of this data set overshadows potential flaws, especially for this study, which establishes a statistical baseline where none has previously existed. The public availability of the data makes repeatability of these measures or further fine-tuning with new analysis easy and cost-effective.

Results

Search of the IMDB for films adapted from novels located 1470 cases where the film was released between 1981 and 2000, available in English, and had received at least 15 user ratings. 982 of these are theatrical or video releases, while 488 are made-for-television movies. As shown in Appendix B,⁴⁶ this means that according to the IMDB, 10.8% of all films, 9.7% of all theatrical and video releases, and 14.2% of all television movies are adapted from novels. Since the IMDB is extremely inclusive for the period measured, and the number of films counted higher than in any previous study, these figures can be reported with great confidence.

These numbers differ from earlier projections. Bluestone reports 17 to 50% of movies coming from novels, a range so broad as to be almost useless.⁴⁷ He cites Lester

⁴⁶ Appendix B shows that the IMDB contains 13589 movies that met the criteria, 1470 of which are adaptations. Of those 13589, 10155 were theatrical or video releases and 3434 were television movies. The Appendix also contains a year-by-year breakdown of adaptation numbers.

⁴⁷ Bluestone, 3.

Asheim's study of major studios from 1935 to 1945, which found that 17.2% of films were adapted from novels. He also quotes Hortense Powdermaker's 1947 report that of screenplays in production or awaiting release, 40% came from novels, and Thomas Pryor's 1955 *New York Times* article arguing that only 51.8% of screenplays were original.

More recent attempts at quantifying the number of adaptations are even less realistic. Dudley Andrew estimates that more than half of commercial movies come from novels. Morris Beja claims the proportion of American movies based on novels is "around 30 percent—sometimes higher and rarely under 20%."⁴⁸ John Harrington guesses one-third.⁴⁹ A 1985 *New York Times* article claims that one of 50 novels published in the US was optioned by Hollywood, but even if such a claim was substantiated, the great majority of those films are never made. A more reasonable claim was made by *Variety*, which published statistics indicating that in 1997, 20% of films came from books and 20% more came from other adapted sources such as plays, comics, sequels, remakes, and television shows.⁵⁰ My study, however, which includes virtually all English-language adaptations over a 20-year period, indicates that all of these figures are exaggerated, and that the true number is closer to 10%.⁵¹

Of 1470 films that meet the criteria, 916 are adapted from novels that received at least four votes at Amazon. Of these, 576, or 62.9%, are theatrical or video releases and 340, or 37.1%, are television movies. This set of 916 items was used for comparison of

⁴⁸ Beja, 78.

⁴⁹ Harrington, 117.

⁵⁰ As reported by Naremore, 10.

⁵¹ This number appears to be decreasing slightly, as seen in trends shown in Appendix B. Difference in my figures cannot be attributed to inclusion of television movies, as these are actually from novels more often than theatrical releases. Another widely repeated, but incorrect, statistic is the claim that three-fourths of Academy Award Best Pictures have been adaptations. A similar incorrect claim is that a great majority of the all-time box-office successes have been adaptations.

Amazon novel ratings and IMDB movie ratings. For this set, the mean IMDB rating is 6.344 (on a scale of 10) and the mean Amazon novel rating is 4.277 (on a scale of 5).

Comparison of novel ratings to IMDB movie ratings with a chi-square test finds a value for p of .000. The Pearson correlation value is .150. In a regression with the independent variable of novel rating and dependent variable of IMDB film rating, r is .150 and r^2 is .023. The value of t for this regression is 4.598.

Of the items with four Amazon novel votes, 539 also receive at least four video votes. Of these, 430, or 79.8%, are theatrical or video releases, while 109, or 20.2% are television movies. This data set of 539 items was used to compare Amazon novel ratings with Amazon video ratings. For these, the mean Amazon novel rating is 4.312, while the mean Amazon video rating is 4.002. The mean IMDB rating for this set is 6.359.

When chi-square is applied to this data set, another significant p result of .000 is recorded. Regression with Amazon novel rating as independent variable and Amazon video rating as dependent variable finds a value for r of .235 and r^2 of .055. The value of t in the regression coefficient is 5.610.

Analysis of these results produces three main findings. First, in comparison with both IMDB movie rating and Amazon video rating, *there is indeed a significant positive relationship* with Amazon ratings for the novels from which these films came. In both measures, chi square tests find significance of .000, clearly less than the .01 required. The value of t in regressions is well above the level of 2.0 often used as a benchmark, also indicating a significant relationship. These two measures allow rejection of the null hypothesis of no connection between the variables. Novels that are liked more than average, when adapted, become films that, on the whole, are also better liked. Novels that are liked less become films that, on the whole, are liked less.

Second, while a significant relationship can be identified, regression analysis shows that *this relationship explains very little of the difference between the ratings for books and novels*. For the book-IMDB rating comparison, r^2 is .023, indicating that only 2.3% of the difference in ratings can be explained by relation of one work to the other. For the book-video comparison, the relation can explain 5.5% of the difference. In both cases, this number is small, suggesting that other intervening phenomena exist such that our appreciation (as measured by rating) of a novel is explained in only a small way by our appreciation of a movie adapted from that novel. This corresponds with both common intuition and the theoretical view that adapted films do not obtain absolute fidelity, as factors other than how much we like the book are required to explain most of how much we like the resulting film.

Third, a simple comparison of mean values cannot be done for Amazon book ratings as compared to IMDB movie ratings, as these are on different scales, but Amazon book and video ratings can be compared, since both are on a scale of one to five.⁵² The resulting comparison confirms the intuition that people—or at least Amazon users—prefer book to film, giving a mean rating of 4.312 to the novels and 4.002 for the videos. While not vast, this difference is meaningful. It indicates that as we look for other factors that explain the bulk of the difference between how a book and its adapted film are rated, we should pay special attention to factors that limit the film's ability to recreate all of the positive feelings we have toward the novel.

Finally, the same measures were applied separately to theatrical releases and television movies, to see if the two categories varied. Since this is the first study to

⁵² These scores both come from users of the same web site as well, which makes it likely that users bring a common approach to rating both novels and videos.

explicitly consider made-for-television adaptations, I wanted to make sure that consumers do not view the two kinds of movies in significantly different terms. For theatrical releases, comparison of novel and IMDB rating finds p of .001, r of 1.32, r^2 of .017, and t of 3.193 (for book rating as independent and IMDB rating as dependent variable). Comparison of novel and video rating finds p of .000, r of .250, r^2 of .062, and a t variable of 5.336 (book rating as independent and video rating as dependent variable.)

For television movies, comparison of IMDB rating with novel rating produces a value for p of .000, an r of .200 and r^2 of .040. The t value, with novel as independent and film rating as dependent, is 3.743. When novel rating is compared with video rating, p is .075, r is .171, and r^2 is .029. The t value for the coefficient (with book rating as independent and video rating as dependent variable) is 1.798.

These results are somewhat contradictory. Comparison of novel and IMDB ratings finds significant correlation for both theatrical and television movies, but a stronger regression relation for television movies. Comparison of novel with video rating, on the other hand, does not find a significant relationship between the novel and television movies, but does identify a relationship between scores for the novel and adapted films given a theatrical release. So one measure finds a closer relation for television movies, while the other finds more of a relation for theatrical releases. In any case, the difference between these scores and those of movies as a whole is not large. It appears that the difference between television and theatrical release is not crucial to how we relate a film adaptation to its source.

Analysis

If how we view a source novel explains so little about how we view a movie adapted from that book, what next? A significant correlation between book and film has been shown, but this connection is limited as a factor for explaining different ratings of the two media. The next step is to explore why the connection is small – what other factors intervene. As we discover ways in which novel and film differ, and conversely, ways in which they remain attached, we will begin to understand why adaptation intrigues us and why it often disappoints us. By listing factors that create divergence and convergence between the two forms, a framework in which to view adaptations is created. From this, those who create media, who collect and recommend it, and who consume it can learn how adaptation affects experience of the narrative.

With this in mind, the rest of this paper builds from the statistical base provided by the research findings. First, I will try to list the major reasons why novel and film may differ. Then, after tearing down much of the connection between the two forms, I will identify elements that produce the significant, but small correlation that remains.

The attempt to identify major differences and remaining commonalities between novels and adapted films is not original. Theoreticians have explored this ground before. However, there has been a general tendency for writers to overclaim the importance of particular kinds of difference or similarity while ignoring other equally compelling points of comparison. There has also been a lack of structure in the resulting positions. In short, different sources have provided different pieces of the puzzle. Continuing my

attempt to provide a broad view of the subject, I will attempt to assemble that larger picture. I will also continue to emphasize the perceptions of consumers and those who serve them in selecting media.

Reasons for Minimal Correlation Between Novels and their Adaptations

On first glance, a correlation between how we view novels and adaptations is not surprising. They are, after all, different tokens of the same type. They share common ancestors of at least a title, and in most cases, character, story, and setting. They may even share many of the same words. While some adaptation pairs seem to be identical twins, and many others only fraternal, the fact remains that on some level they are twins; they share a kind of genetic stock – the original narrative.

Yet despite this, most observers are probably surprised to find that a significant statistical correlation indeed exists. Discussion of adaptation has been so fixated on the differences between novel and film, between one teller's version of the story and another's, that it is easier to list reasons why consumers rate the two forms differently. My goal is not just to identify those elements of difference, but also to place them in a structure useful in further discussion and helpful when consumers and those who serve them select materials.

I will designate four categories: 1) *personal* differences vary from consumer to consumer; 2) *creative* differences are active choices made by those who create the novel and film; 3) *formal* differences stem from the nature of the traditional forms of novel and feature film; and 4) *environmental* differences come from conditions in the external world. I will discuss three personal reasons for difference in ratings, one creative difference, six formal differences, and four environmental differences, for a total of 14

categories of difference between the two forms that might account for the remaining 95 to 97% of divergence between ratings that the regression in my study cannot explain.⁵³

Personal Differences

Personal differences are the simplest explanation of divergent ratings for novels and films. Intuitively (collective statistics give no guidance in this matter), they seem the most likely reason for the bulk of difference between ratings. It is troublesome then, that these differences do not merit mention in most of the literature about adaptation.

The first factor that should be noted is that 1) *in the majority of individual situations, there is no comparison of book with film because an individual only experiences one of the two forms*. The statistics in this study, for instance, are the comparison of collective averages, not individuals making direct comparisons. In these cases, if any comparison takes place, it is because of second-hand accounts from the media or other individuals.

What does this *non*-experience mean for consumers and information providers? On one hand, it reminds us that education is needed. We must work to inform people of other versions of works they enjoy or find intriguing. On the other, we must remember that individuals are entitled to opinions of works that do not stem from relation to other versions that we might consider superior. They may not even wish to experience our preferred version. Many consumers avoid a film if they enjoyed the book or vice versa.

In addition, the prevalence of situations in which we cannot compare a work with its adaptation partner also requires care in our discourse. If one party has only read

⁵³ The list that follows is not meant to be exclusive. Other differences could certainly be identified and those listed could be split in finer ways. However, taken collectively, the differences provided should account for the bulk of separation between novel and film ratings. The 14 differences are summarized in Appendix C.

the book while the other has only seen the film, discussion should focus on discovery, not ignorant criticism or the assumption that both parties share a common experience.

A second kind of personal difference—previously noted—is that 2) *some users have a broad bias for or against a particular form*. This can stem from cultural elitism, general preference for reading or viewing, availability of access, pressure to use each media in one's social environment, better education about one kind of media, inability to use one media or the other, or simply unexamined habit.

A third kind of personal difference we encounter may come from our own expectations. It comes from 3) *dissonance between our fantasy version of the work and the second version of the work we experience*. As Charles Eidsvik notes:

Not only are our expectations higher for adaptations; what we are willing to put up with is radically less. If adaptations reached the level we expected—not wanted, but expected—they would all be masterpieces.⁵⁴

The second version we encounter must compete in our minds and hearts with the fantasy version⁵⁵ that earlier, as readers or viewers, we created for ourselves. This is especially true when we read the book first and create mental pictures of some of the characters that significantly differ from those later encountered in a film. Despite, for instance, the fact that the film version of the character was more interesting, Meryl Streep's Francesca in *Bridges of Madison County* was difficult for some viewers to take because of her extreme physical difference from the novel's description of the character.

Even when we see a film first however, we respond to particular aspects more strongly than others, and may be disappointed if upon later reading the book, we discover that these aspects are changed or less central to the novel. Those who saw *The*

⁵⁴ Eidsvik, in Harrington, 27.

⁵⁵ Borrowing from Stam through Christian Metz and others—in Naremore, 54-55.

Bridges of Madison County before reading the book, for instance, and admired the strong portrayal of Francesca and the realistic dilemma of her difficult choice to stay with her husband, were probably vastly disappointed by the melodramatic, sexist novel.

Creative Differences

Although it was largely discussed in the literature review of the fidelity question, it bears repeating that another large contributor to the difference between novel and film ratings is that 4) *fidelity is not always the intention of the adaptor*. Thus, a lot of difference between novel and film ratings is that often the two works are simply not similar. This can result from a cynical attempt to use the title of a novel for the economic benefit of a film, but perhaps more common in the modern context is a filmmaker's desire to go a different direction with the film. This, in turn, may stem from the kind of formal reasons that will be discussed in the next section, socio-political reasons that will be discussed in the section on environmental differences, or from aesthetic or intellectual reasons: desire to emphasize a different part of the story or take a different stylistic bent.

A good example is *The English Patient*.⁵⁶ Michael Ondaatje's novel and Anthony Minghella's film are very different. In the novel, the emphasis is on Hana, a Canadian nurse; her lover Kip, an Indian bomb sapper; and her life at an Italian villa while nursing her own psyche; Caravaggio, a spy and thief; and the English patient, a severely burned Count de Almásy.

In the movie, all this is background to Almásy's love affair with Katherine Clinton and the events that led him to the villa. In addition, the novel uses a complicated structure, jumping across subplots and time. The film makes fewer shifts and uses the

narration of the Count/English patient to tie together the different parts. The location of the desert is much more strongly used in the film, almost becoming a character, while the book includes less of the desert, but a broader range of locations overall.

Despite these differences and many more, both the novel and the film work. Both convey the fragility of their characters in a tense world of barely controlled chaos. A creative director, in a way that is very different, but still maintains the same themes and tones, has brought an “unfilmable” novel to the screen.

While *The English Patient* provides a positive example, other attempts at creative filmmaking result in adaptations that fail, and thus receive vastly different receptions from critics and the public. As noted earlier, a successful creative adaptation may also be poorly received simply because the public expects something closer to the original. Finally, in some cases a creative approach will make a film better than its source.

Consumers and those who serve them can still compare a source and adaptation with significant creative differences, but should be made aware when fidelity is not the intention. Condemning a film for nothing more than lack of faith to the original is an empty gesture if fidelity was not a goal. Those who publish, market, and recommend books and movies should take care not to emphasize relation of the two products when the film takes a significantly different approach. Activities of comparison should begin with an understanding of intended difference.

Formal Differences

Formal differences – those that stem from disparity in the traditional forms of novel and film – are by far the largest focus of the literature of adaptation. As such, these

⁵⁶ See Thomas, 197-229, for a detailed account of film and movie.

differences are well documented, but also controversial. Outlining these differences is largely a matter of citing the appropriate prior research.

The foundation of formal difference is that 5) *literature and film have different signifying systems*. Novels deal in words, films in images. This hearkens back to Bluestone's edict that the novel is conceptual and film perceptual. Siegfried Kracauer argued that film "is uniquely equipped to record and reveal physical reality, and hence, gravitates to it."⁵⁷ To some this means novels demand active imagination of scenes and characters, while movies require only passive openness to details of image and sound.

Another way of phrasing this argument is to claim that movies are immediate and emotionally powerful while novels are more intellectual. As W.R. Robinson puts it, "Whereas the word is mysterious, the image is evident," resulting in a situation where in movies "intellectual reflections follows on the emotion, whereas in literature the emotions follows upon the word after the mind has made the initial encounter."⁵⁸

Different stylistic devices are available to the two forms. Where literature uses metaphor, assonance, alliteration, phrasing, and even grammar and punctuation; film uses camera angle, editing, special effects, lighting effects, music, and sound. The question then becomes whether or not these different sets of devices, along with shared devices like symbol, can be used to create works with a common effect.

This argument demands attention. If this gap between signifying systems is universally broad, then novel and film are irrevocably different in a strong sense. However, many writers argue that the two semiotic systems are not as different as first seems apparent. There are many reasons why this is so. First, although words are

⁵⁷ Quoted in Harrington, 26.

⁵⁸ Robinson, in Harrington, 271.

certainly more abstract than images, any good writer will argue that writing should “show, not tell,” meaning that it should depict clear images, not just abstract ideas. This puts the semiotic goals of literature closer to those of film. Characters in a novel, just as we do in life, should experience feelings and ideas, not just talk and think about them.

Second, film may not be as direct as claimed. When I see Russell Crowe on screen as James Ellroy’s Bud White in *L.A. Confidential*, or Meryl Streep in the title role of *Sophie’s Choice*, no matter how fine the performances, I still know I am not in Hollywood in the 1950s or a Polish concentration camp. Part of me still understands I am watching a movie. What’s more, I’m not watching real characters--I’m watching celluloid images of actors pretending to be imaginary characters created by writers. Thanks to the wonder of perpetual vision, I overlook that 40% of what passes before me is actually black space between frames. While I might be drawn in deeply, I am doing mental gymnastics to maintain the illusion. In addition, a multitude of readers are capable of the same level of involvement through their own mental leaps.

In fact, a third response to the argument of different signifying systems is to note that it is gross simplification to say that the medium of film is only images. As Stam notes,⁵⁹ film has at least five tracks: moving image, phonetic sound, music, noises, and written materials. This complexity indicates that film is a synthetic, or as Susan Sonntag has called it “pan-art” that may share semiotic ground with many of the other arts.

Fourth, in a pragmatic sense, humans seem to have the capability of overcoming semiotic gaps. E.H. Gombrich argues that humans have the capacity to adapt systems with different traditions to the purpose of a common objective.⁶⁰ This can be done by

⁵⁹ In Naremore, 59.

⁶⁰ In Andrew, 102.

finding filmic equivalents of devices or tropes used by writers. Consumers, with a little practice, become adept at recognizing the equivalencies. For examples, see the sections on point of view and tense that follow under the category of formal differences.

Further, Keith Cohen notes that both book's text and film's images are processed largely in a context of connotation, that their place in the narrative is key to meaning.⁶¹ In the end what we care about is not the signifying but what is signified. If the two forms use different means but still achieve this end, then most media consumers will have no complaints.

Consider *Tom Jones*. Fielding's novel uses broad characters, exaggeration, simile, parody, and other literary devices to create an epic comic morality tale. At its center is his omniscient narrator, whose droll, ironic humor and unconventional morality drive the book. Tony Richardson's 1963 film gets the same effect, but does so with devices and tropes of film, not literature. A mock-silent film opens proceedings, condensing a long exposition and setting a comic tone. Characters are acted broadly and frequently break the fourth wall to shrug or wink at the camera. Camera moves, editing tricks, and slapstick humor toss us gleefully from scene to scene. Michaél MacLiammóir's narration matches the book through verbal, not written stylings: deadpan humor, mock heroicism, dripping sarcasm, and many other techniques. Despite employing different tropes, the two works achieve a common effect.⁶² In both cases, the reader/viewer is drawn into the story as an active participant, learning moral lessons in a humorous milieu.

The second formal difference is that of 6) *length, and correspondingly, capacity of novels and films*. An average novel is 400 pages long while a screenplay runs 120 pages.

⁶¹ Cohen, 4.

⁶² For a more detailed account, see Battestin, in Harrington, 38-67.

While pictures greatly condense descriptions, a paragraph of sequential events can take several minutes to portray on screen. Only so much condensation is possible. Beyond that, the film must cut scenes and subtlety to fit the time span allotted most features. As Stam puts it, films make a kind of “Sophie’s Choice” about which characters will live or die.⁶³ It took multiple attempts, for instance, before Kitty and Levin received equivalent screen time with Anna and Count Vronsky in an English language adaptation of *Anna Karenina*, even though both couples are equally important to the novel. Even then, in Bernard Rose’s 1997 film, the sheer scope of the novel could not begin to be included.

A book that deals in digression is thus also disappointing on film. When Clint Eastwood made John Berendt’s creative nonfiction, *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*, into a film, the location of Savannah was well used, the acting was excellent, and the central murder mystery was intriguing. Lost, however, were Berendt’s hundreds of gossipy digressions that depicted the city of Savannah, perhaps the most important “character” in the book.

Volker Schlöndorff’s film of Grass’s, *The Tin Drum* is a successful condensation. This novel, with hundreds of scenes, a protagonist with a child’s body but adult mind and adult experiences, strong political and religious content, and shifts between first-person and third-person point of view, seems as impossible to film as a novel could be.⁶⁴ The director finds a way however, by cutting the last half of the book – avoiding years when Oscar’s adult behavior, in his child’s body, would have been especially offensive if shown on film – and toning down the religion and politics. While the film succeeds, even all of these cuts did not prevent it from becoming a target of censors.

⁶³ In Naremore, 71.

⁶⁴ Kilborn, in Orr and Nicholson, 28-37.

An interesting exception is the ability of television movies to serialize a long novel and maintain all of the plot details. The popularity of adaptation into television mini-series is thus explained. Even here however, it is hard to imagine a series that could match the scope of *The Brothers Karamazov* or *Ulysses*.

Trimming that takes place when novel is adapted into film also need not always be a negative factor. Some critics, for instance, argue that films of Mario Puzo's *The Godfather*, Jim Thompson's *The Grifters*, and Ellroy's *L.A. Confidential* are improved by tightening the books. A director or screenwriter has the advantage of viewing consumer and critical response to the novel and can thus remove elements that fail or offend.

A third formal difference is that 7) *novels are mostly an individual creation, while films are created by an industry*. Linden compares filmmaking to building a cathedral, an activity that requires the coordinated interplay of many specialists.⁶⁵ Auteur claims notwithstanding, films require skills of directing, screenwriting, acting, cinematography, costume and set design, makeup, lighting, sound, music, and others to succeed. Any of these elements can greatly enhance or detract from the experience. This is especially true in adaptation, when we are also comparing the new work to an original. A miscast part, a botched accent, an overdramatic score, or any of thousands of other elements can spoil the effect. The modern California dude presence of actor Keanu Reeves, for instance, is damaging to historical adaptations of *Dangerous Liaisons* and *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Of course, the many contributors to a film can produce the opposite effect, especially if we see the film first: we may miss a standout element of the film when we turn to the novel. While I missed some of Tolkein's sense of character, for instance, when viewing Peter Jackson's recent adaptation of *The Fellowship of the Ring*, the visual power

of the stunning special effects created a feeling of real danger that was stronger than that perceived while reading action sequences in the book.

While the collaborative nature of film can both help and hinder, in one sense it is a continuing obstacle for adaptation. This is in terms of consistency of vision. A superior novel often reflects an integrated wholeness and the unique style of its author. Only a few directors, such as Hitchcock and Kubrick,⁶⁶ achieve this unity of style. In particular, this unity may be a quality we miss when we compare the film to its predecessor.

The fourth major formal difference is that 8) *novel and film handle point of view differently*. In literature, point of view can range from first to third person, from limited consciousness to omniscience. Film, it is argued,⁶⁷ because the camera can only point in one direction at a time, and because it cannot reveal the inner thoughts or dreams of characters, is restricted to a generic limited omniscience. As John Orr puts it succinctly, "The cinema cannot be Tolstoy, and it cannot be Joyce."⁶⁸ It cannot be Tolstoy because it cannot cope with the multitude of major characters, panoramic social world, or narrative omniscience of a novel like *War and Peace*. It cannot be Joyce because it cannot portray the tumbling inner stream-of-consciousness or the verbal intricacy of *Ulysses*.

While film theoretically has a limited range of points of view, again, we should not underestimate its resources. While the only known attempt at pure first person storytelling--1946's *The Lady in the Lake*—was an aesthetic failure, film has many ways of showing us the perspective of a character. Bluestone's claim that "the camera is always

⁶⁵ In Harrington, 164-165.

⁶⁶ It is interesting to note that these are also two of our most skilled adapters, although others who could be put in this category, such as Ingmar Bergman, Woody Allen, and Charlie Chaplin avoided adaptation.

⁶⁷ Bluestone, 47, for instance, takes a hard line on this subject.

⁶⁸ Orr & Nicholson, 2.

the narrator”⁶⁹ is simply wrong. Point of view in film can come from many sources. In *Citizen Kane*, camera angles, subjective focus, and movement are used to help us view Kane from particular perspectives.⁷⁰ Presence of a character in every scene in a movie, particularly one that goes through many trials, enables viewers to identify with that character’s perspective, even if it isn’t sympathetic. So will scenes of one character alone. These are just a few of the many tropes that filmmakers use to create point of view

Likewise, there are resources for filming inner states. This can be done through voiceover narration, as we hear one description of the scene while viewing something different. It can be done in a dialogue of thoughts spoken aloud, monologue when a character talks to the camera, title cards in silent movies, or even song lyrics. An editor can dissolve from a close-up of a character’s face, indicating that the scene that follows is from her memory. If the camera shows the character’s face and a diversion of the eyes, then follows that glance to an object, we know the character is thinking of that object. A close-up of a physical gesture or an actor’s facial change can portray an emotional state. Music can describe the interior emotions of characters to great effect.

While cinematic devices might not find subtle ways to re-create every point of view or inner state exactly, they can come quite close. The point is that film has creative options that give it more flexibility than simple edicts about point of view recognize.

Another formal difference occurs in 9) *the different way novel and film handle tense*. This has been reduced to aphorism, such as George Linden’s claim that “A novel is a remembrance of things past; a film is a remembrance of things present”⁷¹ or Bluestone’s

⁶⁹ Bluestone, 49.

⁷⁰ Beja, 40-42.

⁷¹ Linden, in Harrington, 157.

flat “The novel has three tenses; the film has only one.”⁷² The basic argument is that the immediacy of watching film makes it impossible to take the experience as anything but one of the present, while the distance of the reading act puts experience of the novel consistently in the recorded past. The novel, of course, can use the abstract device of verb tense to put time into multiple tenses, but the film, the argument goes, cannot.

Those who see this difference in tense as absolute again underestimate the devices available to film for creating equivalencies. More to the point, they take too lightly the ability of consumers to learn these tropes and recognize shifts in time in film. Those who watch Chris Nolan’s *Memento*,⁷³ for instance, follow a narrative that plays out in reverse, beginning in the present tense and working backward in time. These viewers not only follow a steady descent into the past, but also, because of the memory disorder of the protagonist, do so without the benefit of a reliable narrator.

Experienced filmgoers can interpret a variety of edits and camera moves used to convey tense. They can get tense from voiceover narration, from the costumes and setting, from archaic or futuristic dialogue, or makeup used to show the relative age of characters from scene to scene. With viewing experience, they recognize the cinematic vocabulary of tense. Films that jump freely through time, such as the adaptation of Kurt Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse-5*, confirm that movies can indeed employ various tenses.

Joy Gould Boyum provides another response to this question. She notes that even if we experience every film image as present tense, we do the same with text. As we read, if we use past tense verbs as a cue on how to construct the scene, our mental

⁷² Bluestone, 48.

⁷³ *Memento* is not adapted, but makes an interesting example of the point.

image of that past is like the film image – something we experience here and now. So if, in effect, film indeed only has one tense, the same is true of novels as well.⁷⁴

Finally, there are 10) *formal differences in the methods we use to experience novel and film*. In addition to their varying levels of immediacy, we can contrast the absolute control we have while reading a book – the ability to stop or start at will on any page⁷⁵-- with the less flexible film environment, where we usually experience the work in one sitting⁷⁶. Although it need not be so, for adults film is also more often experienced in groups than literature. In groups, the viewer watches movies in a setting beyond much control, while readers seek out private and familiar surroundings.

These different experiences affect our feelings. Many novels provide a more meaningful intellectual experience when taken in at the slow pace of reading, while others might benefit from a fast-paced, perceptually overpowering film treatment. Similarly, some narratives, such as harrowing dramas, are uncomfortable to process in a group setting while others, such as comedies, may benefit from a group reaction.

For some consumers, formal differences might not be as interesting as they are for critics and creators of novels and films. Adaptation literature is dominated by this discussion, but many people prefer that formal matters remain transparent to them. More emphasis on the other categories of difference might make for a more fruitful discussion for this group.

On a positive note, formal differences can be viewed as a gateway to education about how novels and films work. Formal aspects such as point of view, length, and

⁷⁴ Gould Boyum, 33-34.

⁷⁵ Although not, perhaps, the absolute ability to quit processing the book in our minds.

⁷⁶ Although videocassette and DVD, with their pause, rewind, fast-forward, and stop controls, have changed our capabilities in this area to some degree.

semiotic systems are discussed in education institutions, but are rarely used as points of exploration for reader's advisory, library programming, mass media film reviews, or bookselling. Education in these elements may improve our selection and enjoyment of books and films, and thus deserve more attention.

Environmental Differences

The last category of difference includes environmental factors—conditions in media industries or the world that lead to difference in resulting works or appreciation of those works. This sort of difference is noted in the literature of adaptation, but not always recognized to be as critical to the equation as it is.

First, economics require that 11) *most films aim at a mass audience, while books can be targeted at a demographic group*. A novel, after all, can make a modest profit if it sells a few thousand volumes, while a film must reach millions. Unfortunate situations result, where for instance, young adult works are made into films no longer developmentally appropriate while adult works are drastically simplified to attract youth demographics.

The expense of funding a movie, created by need for a mass audience, also forces many filmmakers to give up control of a project. When this happens, reasonable adaptations can take on strange changes imposed by those fronting the money. Woody Allen's *Bullets Over Broadway* features a humorous depiction of this scenario in which a mobster forces his girlfriend on a reluctant theatrical producer. This lack of creative control, while present in publishing, particularly for some genres, is much less common.

For instance, Instrell's analysis of Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*,⁷⁷ adapted from Phillip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, notes changes in title, removal of scenes and special effects, addition of a happy ending, and oversimplification through a reductive narration. These changes were made for economic, not aesthetic reasons. Dick's novel, although only remotely related to the resulting film, was retitled *Blade Runner* and re-released. After all that, the film still lost money in original release.

The second environmental difference is that 12) *on the whole films are happier and more glamorous than novels*. O'Brien and Borden derive four principles of adaptation:⁷⁸

1. Simplify the plot.
2. Glamorize the characters.
3. Optimize the premise.
4. Romanticize the ending.

While the first point can be accounted for by the formal constraint of the two-hour film, the remaining three are driven by personal and environmental differences. It could be that glamorous characters and romantic endings are more visual, but more likely such changes come from current bias about what consumers of different media want. Where readers enjoy satire, irony, and realism, conventional wisdom says, filmgoers prefer glamour, excitement, and happy endings. These are environmental rather than formal differences because the relative tastes of readers and filmgoers can switch over time.

John Ford's version of *The Grapes of Wrath* is the best-known example of a dark novel given an upbeat ending by Hollywood, but other examples abound. The film of *The Firm* ends with the young hero outwitting both the mob and FBI to save his career. In John Grisham's book, he becomes a fugitive for life.⁷⁹ In *The Chocolate War*, protagonist

⁷⁷ Instrell, in Orr & Nicholson, 160-169.

⁷⁸ O'Brien and Borden, 114-115.

⁷⁹ O'Brien and Borden, 115.

Jerry Renault is tricked into a cruel public fight with the thuggish Janza and beaten severely to end the novel. In the adaptation, Jerry instead fights his real enemy – manipulative gang leader Archie. Jerry wins and Archie is deposed. While the film does not end happy, it certainly flinches from Robert Cormier's dark vision. Winston Groom's *Forrest Gump*, after eight script drafts, lost its sarcastic tone, complex lead character, and satirical look at America. In place of these, viewers got a romantic epic with a simple, heartfelt lead and a conservative take on American politics.⁸⁰

The third environmental difference is that 13) *conditions in the publishing or film industries can affect adaptations*. During the reign of the Hays Office, censors removed elements from many novels in translation to film.⁸¹ In some cases, this was so extreme that "adaptation" was really only purchase of a title. Often, a potential adaptation simply was not allowed to be made. This practice continues less extremely, with self-censorship for purpose of obtaining a rating that will make the film available to a wider audience now perhaps more common.

The search for profit has also resulted in major differences in many adaptations. This can take the form of cost cutting, where important elements are left out to reduce the budget of a film; casting of an inappropriate star to boost ticket sales; or plot changes added to make the film more exciting.

A recent trend is conglomeration of publishing and film companies in gigantic media firms. This has led to more novelizations of films, coordinated effort to simultaneously release books and films, and more books with covers featuring movie stars in the roles of novel characters. In one interesting twist, for instance, Disney has

⁸⁰ *ibid*, 116-118.

announced film adaptation of popular amusement park rides that don't yet have a film tie-in, such as *The Country Bears*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, and *The Haunted Mansion*.

Other industry elements that cause differing approaches to and welcomes for adaptations include trends in the popularity of genres, a rush of adaptations of a particular author, current conventions of style, similarities of a work to recently popular or unpopular works, time of year of release, competing projects, and levels of competition from other media.

A fourth environmental difference comes from 14) *conditions in the socio-political environment that affect the content and acceptance of adaptations*. This relates closely to the previous point, as often industry perception of the socio-political environment controls adaptation more than that actual environment. Again, examples are numerous. In *Fried Green Tomatoes*, the explicitly lesbian relationship of Idgie and Ruth in Fannie Flagg's book is made cryptic in the film, apparently to avoid offending conservative audiences. When Denzel Washington was cast in *The Pelican Brief*, his character's romance with the Julia Roberts character was changed to friendship, as producers apparently did not believe audiences were ready for interracial romance filmed casually, without political comment. Conversely, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Little Women*, and *Portrait of a Lady* all saw liberalizing 1990s remakes that clarified vaguely feminist leanings in the novels.⁸²

Kubrick's *Lolita* ages the title character from pre-teen to teen. Much of the eroticism of the novel is left out. When Adrian Lyne made Nabokov's novel into film again 35 years later, some eroticism was back, but *Lolita* still seems older and the story still plays more straightly in the novel, despite a strong performance by Jeremy Irons.

⁸¹ Maltby, in Naremore, 79-100 documents this, noting that film censors went so far as to combat the morals of writers directly.

Indeed, it is hard to imagine a socio-political environment that would allow a dark comic novel about obsession and pedophilia to be adapted without significant changes.

Roland Joffé's 1995 adaptation of *The Scarlet Letter* was bad on many levels, but an important component of the failure was the imposition of late 20th century values, (and conflicting values at that) on Hawthorne's story. On one hand, the film adds a dose of sexuality, the kind that focuses on voyeuristic leering over a woman. In case you only saw the movie, the sponge bath sequence is not in the book, nor are several others. On the other hand, Joffé grafts an odd politically correct ending to the story, where the local Native Americans save Hester at the last minute.

Consumers and those who serve them should have special awareness of environmental differences, as these differences may limit what is available to them or how institutions such as media industries and information agencies work. It may take economic or political activism to change the resulting patterns in adaptation.

The Correlation – What Remains

So 14 major kinds of difference have been identified that may account for divergence between consumer ratings of novels and films adapted from them. Most of these can be subdivided into finer categories of variation. After considering this catalogue of difference, it is easy to see why the critical literature has been dominated by the position that a lack of fidelity, or even similarity, is the likely result of adaptation.

Yet interest in adaptation continues unabated. Despite all the potential differences, a significant correlation between how we rate novels and resulting films remains, and can be statistically documented. Do the statistics merely represent perverse

⁸² Vincendeau, xx.

nostalgia, a desire for connection between forms retained in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary? I will argue that this is not so, that in most cases, a meaningful connection between book and film remains. This enduring link has three components, which I will call the *narrative core*, the *symbiotic effect*, and the *comparative act*.

In writing about adaptations, there is a tendency to focus on difference. After all, how interesting is it to list all of the ways in which a novel and film are alike? Unless similarity is achieved through varying methods, as in *The English Patient*, this shared ground hardly seems worth mentioning. Yet all of the potential differences do not appear in every novel-film pair, they are merely possible points of divergence.

If one were to condense the story of a novel or film into a five minute presentation, (as, not coincidentally, one would do if “pitching” an idea to a movie studio) one would get a description, that if adapted, would probably not be subjected to strong tampering. While this description would definitely lose many qualities of the original work, it would retain the majority of the plot, and in that plot, most of the story’s mythic elements. These remaining similarities are what I call the *narrative core*.

In most modern adaptations, this core is not compromised. Filmmakers have learned that in many cases, an attempt to make strong changes to the narrative will be received with frustration by the audience. They might forgive a few omissions, but will not usually approve of major differences in plot. Other than a major change in a beloved character, this is perhaps the fastest way to raise an audience’s ire.

The narrative core is significant. In most cases, it remains strong enough that we clearly recognize the original in the adaptation. While we may focus on and be distracted by points of difference, we can usually still appreciate elements of the narrative on the same level as we did in the original. As my findings indicate, we

apparently reach this appreciation of similarity frequently enough that there is a demonstrable relationship between how we evaluate the two works.

Beyond the relative content of the works is a second component, the *symbiotic effect*. This is the mutual benefit that novel and film gain from each other's existence. This symbiotic effect, in turn, has several components. The most frequently noticed is economic benefit. We know that using a "tested product" adds value. A popular novel has a built-in audience who will line up to see the film. This was confirmed again in 2001 with the enormous business done by the first films in the *Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter* adaptation franchises, the top two grossing films of the year.

Sometimes forgotten is that adaptation is also lucrative for source novels. After release of the film *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the novel sold 200,000 copies in two months.⁸³ Novels such as *The English Patient*, *Tom Jones*, *The Good Earth*, *David Copperfield*, and *Wuthering Heights* returned to bestseller lists (or in some cases, made them for the first time) after film releases.⁸⁴ An adaptation that is *not* accompanied by a new book with the star's picture on the cover is unheard of, even for a very loose adaptation⁸⁵.

Beyond sheer profit is the light of attention the works shine on each other. This can be measured in more than economics. The legitimacy film has gained (especially in its early days) by using well-liked novels has been well documented, but literature benefits as well. Robert Ray, following Derrida, argues that an adaptation is not just a "faded imitation," but also a "citation grafted into a new context" that "disseminates"

⁸³ Maltby, in Naremore, 84.

⁸⁴ Burnham, 579 and Bluestone, 4.

⁸⁵ The re-release edition of *I Know What You Did Last Summer* had a man with a hook on the cover, even though this character was made up for the film. The young adult book *Freak the Mighty* was renamed to match the movie, and featured a large picture of Sharon Stone on the cover, even though the movie bombed and Stone played a minor character.

the original in a “democratizing” process.⁸⁶ Often, the film helps the book find new demographics or an audience in a new generation. The cross-pollination of film and book can help guarantee that a text, film, or writer becomes a long-term part of the cultural scene. The many adaptations of Jane Austen, Henry James, E.M. Forster, and Charles Dickens guarantee that those writers will always have current readers. A film can revive current readership for an author in a way that no other phenomenon can, then maintain that readership through video and television showings.

Film treatments also raise recognition of previously under-appreciated writers. While Jim Thompson, Elmore Leonard, and Patricia Highsmith all had readership before many of their novels were made into film, they have made it onto the critical map due to attention from adaptations.⁸⁷ Contemporary writers as well, may find a broader audience due to adaptation of their works.

Adaptations provide a point of entry into appreciation of literature and film in a more general sense as well. Those who normally limit media consumption to novels may be drawn into film by adaptations. Those who prefer film might attempt a book.

Finally, adaptation may have positive effects on general practice in the media industries that spawn them. The movies still benefit tremendously from the regular infusion of strong narratives that literature provides. While great original screenplays are available as well, the steady stream of literature to the screen makes a difference. Those who prefer the joys of the art house or Oscar-season cinema to the special effects of summer blockbusters can especially attest to this difference.

⁸⁶ Ray, in Naremore, 45.

⁸⁷ Vincendeau, xxii.

The quest to find equivalencies that make literature work on screen has led to many advances in film. Sound pictures, advances in editing, non-linear screenplays, and use of metaphor and symbolism in films are just a few of the advances that have come from the attempt to adapt books well. In turn, the competition of film has pushed authors to attempt new literary devices and forms. One common argument is that movies have strongly influenced the 20th century novel to become more visual, less linear, and more tightly condensed. The modern and post-modern novel is often episodic like a film.⁸⁸

The third component of the connection is the value of engaging in the *comparative act*. By learning to understand the varying methods and devices that film and literature use, we become more savvy consumers of media. This is an educational benefit that reaches beyond bounds of profit and fame. The value of the comparative act is a portion of the connection equation that resides in consumers of the media.

One benefit of comparison is that it increases meaningful communication about media. Adaptation enables interaction between those whose media consuming habits would not otherwise provide common interests. In particular, this is useful in education, where the less educated may find it easier to experience and talk about film. On a simple level, as well, adaptations greatly increase the number of people who encounter some version of a particular narrative core, making the likelihood of shared media more common. In a world with as many media choices as ours, this is not trivial.

Comparison also helps us to identify what it is about a literary or cinematic work that we like or do not like. Without something to compare with, these likes or dislikes

⁸⁸ See for example, Cohen, x. If true, this point is interesting, because the resulting novels of Joyce, Faulkner, DeLillo, Pynchon and others are especially difficult to film.

often manifest as vague anomalous states that we cannot quite define. For instance, secondary analysis of the terrible film that resulted from Tom Wolfe's *The Bonfire of the Vanities* led to blame not only for the filmmakers, but for reconsideration of problematic, even racist elements in the book.

We may originally experience the difference between a novel and film as nothing more than a vague dissonance – dissatisfaction with the comparison that we cannot identify. This induces critical thinking, pushing us toward clarification through closer comparison. Through this critical thinking, we are likely to get a better understanding than we had before of both works and the media that convey them.

Because they are highly likely to contain both similarities and differences, adaptations make an ideal training ground for the fledgling media critic to try out comparison skills. Tolkein fans, especially those on the Internet, have had a field day identifying minute elements of the book that they wish had made it into the film. Indeed, the critical arguments that adaptations inspire are often based on very fine points. When even casual critics can engage in this level of discourse, something important is happening.

Implications and Suggestions

Both the differences and connections between novels and their adaptations suggest courses of further research and action. As I noted earlier, my research design was intended to fill a hole in the literature, focusing on the experience of adaptation for consumers and those who serve their information and education needs. I will hold to that theme in my conclusion and try to focus suggestions on the audience of consumers, librarians, and educators.

As a start, both academic and media professionals could work to remedy some of the problems with the current literature on adaptation that are identified in this paper. In particular, more study needs to be made of adaptations from works outside the canon of classics. Difference in adapting genre books, young adult books, popular history and biography, and graphic works like comic books deserves special attention, as these topics are rarely mentioned although adaptation of these works is increasing.

Second, we must resist the urge to confound the two forms. A novel and adapted film need to be viewed as two separate media objects, not one and the same. Librarians, in particular, need to recognize when a film adaptation does not share enough common ground with the original to deserve promotional efforts based on an assumption of similarity. When we discuss adapted works with each other or consumers who we serve, we must avoid the tendency to assume that we know one work if we know the other.

Third, librarians and educators should work to eradicate our own stereotypes and biases about media forms. Movies and audio books are in high demand at the

libraries that offer them. We need to recognize that improving collections in these areas is likely to help the circulation of literature, not hurt it. For this to happen, however, “media” librarians must work to educate themselves about corresponding literature and book lovers must know about corresponding films. We need an understanding of the devices and tropes used in both book and film that is sophisticated enough that we can avoid some of the biased and uneducated judgments that have been made in the past. We can follow the lead of reader-response critics and try to think about the many possible adaptations of works, not “the” adaptation.

Improved statistical work is in order. My limited statistical skills yielded a variety of interesting information for this paper, information that has never before been collected. In the hands of more skilled statisticians, the available data could provide a plethora of information.

For instance, my data indicates significant correlation between novel and movie rating scores, but a particular portion of the full set of films may account for this correlation. For instance, novels with a high rating could show even stronger correlation, while novels with medium and low ratings do not have a measurable correlation to films that result from them. An attempt to isolate portions of the data where correlation is especially strong could be made by dividing data into thirds, quartiles or quintiles by novel rating or film rating and running the same tests on each resulting group.

Further research might examine the impact of the various kinds of difference in explaining correlation between film and novel ratings. This could be done by identifying novel-film pairs that exhibit particular kinds of difference, and repeating correlation tests on the resulting subsets. In this way, we might be able to discover which kinds of difference have the greatest impact on our statistical view of the resulting art.

Other kinds of analysis will also be important. Instead of writing more single movie case studies, those who are interested in qualitative analysis might, for instance, focus their attention on content analysis of the ways mass media objects like newspaper and magazine reviews or movie trailers view adaptations. We know little about these sources, which have significant influence on media consumers.

An important step will be to develop new reference tools that enable less subjective comparison of novel and film. Standard reviews need to be accompanied by more structured materials. A good start would be a standardized list of adapted films, including movies and the works from which they are adapted. The adaptations documented in this study form the recent core of such a list. Recognizing intertextuality, we could also list works that less directly contribute to a film's form.

Another useful tool would be a reference that lists major points of difference between a novel and adaptation in a concise format. Case studies in Brian McFarlane's book *Novel to Film* provide a promising model. He begins each with a short description of basic structural patterns in the novel and film. He lists "cardinal functions" of the narrative of each work as short numbered sentences, then compares the two lists, noting deletions, adjustments, and additions. He lists major functional differences characters play in each narrative. He compares narrative modes employed by each work. Finally, he offers a short essay on other aspects of interest within the particular adaptation.

This is much more useful than the standard review essay. A weakness of the format is that it would reveal details of a book or film, but it could still be used in many ways. Consumers could use such a reference to find out if a particular partner work contained changes that would offend their sensibilities. Librarians and other media advisors could use it to organize discussions, aid advisory, or identify high quality pairs.

Lester Asheim's 1949 research provides another model. Asheim makes counts of particular kinds of change or difference in adaptations, and then uses the counts to project trends in adaptations. Modern use of this approach, if applied to enough works, would give us a better picture of what is truly typical in adaptation than the multitude of single-film case studies that try to induce universal truths about adaptation.

We can try to recognize effects of the industrial and socio-political context on adaptation.⁸⁹ Education on this topic would benefit consumers and media alike. This might involve displays of works that follow a common industry practice or relate to a current socio-political belief. Most gross failures in adaptation come from inappropriate industry or environmental pressures. When we do not like industry practices, we can complain about or boycott certain adaptations. Media industries rely heavily on public opinion, and appropriate feedback or pressure to end bad adaptation practices, especially if it has economic impact, will result in changes in corporate behavior.

Library and education journals need to recognize the potential of adaptations for raising interest, media literacy, and circulation. Reviews in *Library Journal* and *Publishers Weekly* occasionally mention the potential impact of an adaptation, but this should be done regularly and comprehensively. Lists of upcoming adaptations, posted far enough in advance to aid collection developers, display makers, and curriculum developers would be a start. Adding a guess at the impact⁹⁰ of the film and a corresponding list of tie-in book editions, audio books, and video release dates would enhance the package.

Librarians should use the symbiotic effect to find better ways to exhibit and cross-reference adaptations. This could include an increase in displays that mix films,

⁸⁹ As suggested by Dudley Andrew.

⁹⁰ Projections of this kind are available on many popular Internet sites.

books, and audio recordings together, instead of scattering them across multiple departments. Availability of new adapted films is a good occasion to remind users of the original work or assemble a retrospective on the collective works of author, director, or screenwriter. Cross-referencing of different works adapted from a common source, even if these works do not share a title, should be consistently included in catalogues.

The display called “Don’t Judge a Book by its Movie” is a success according to my local librarians, but adding videos with “Don’t Judge a Movie by its Book” to the other side of the display, would make it better. Such a display would introduce users to a part of the library that they might not be using. It might also spark that most rare and valuable of commodities, interaction between librarians and users about content.

Finally, library programming and educational events should emphasize the comparative act. Book and film groups will get better attendance and discussion if they combine efforts at times. Discussions or presentations can catalogue the differences and similarities between works. An event can focus on adaptations of a particular author or genre. Events or instruction that improve media literacy while providing entertainment can be based on a particular kind of difference, for instance, what is cut from long books, what is changed due to social pressure, or how book and film handle point of view.

In the end, we are left with an open field. Adaptation has been studied for many years, but this study has been put to use mostly by those who create media content and those who profit from that content. Consumers benefit from adaptation, but only because it is naturally interesting to them, not because analysis of the phenomenon has been employed in any organized way by those who serve them. It is time to change this practice. With a little creativity, we can use adaptations as a gateway to higher use and understanding of all media forms.

Works Cited

- Andrew, Dudley. *Concepts in film theory*. NY: Oxford University Press, 1984.
- Asheim, Lester. *From book to film*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1949.
- Balàzs, Béla. "Art form and material" in *Film and/as literature*, ed. John Harrington, Prentice Hall, 1977.
- Battestin, Martin C. "Osborne's *Tom Jones*: adapting a classic" in *Film and/as literature*, ed. John Harrington, Prentice Hall, 1977.
- Beja, Morris. *Film & literature: an introduction*. NY: Longman, 1979.
- Bluestone, George. *Novels into film*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1957.
- Burnham, Alexander. "Cinema lit," *Virginia Quarterly Review* (73:4), 1997.
- Cartmell, Deborah, I.Q. Hunter, Heidi Kaye, and Imelda Whelehan. *Classics in film and fiction*. Sterling, Virginia: Pluto Press, 2000.
- Cohen, Keith. *Film and fiction: the dynamics of exchange*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.
- Craig, Cairns. "Rooms without a view" in *Film/heritage/literature*, ed. Ginette Vincendeau, British Film Institute Publishing, 2001.
- Eidsvik, Charles. "Toward a 'politique des adaptations'" in *Film and/as literature*, ed. John Harrington, Prentice Hall, 1977.
- Ferrell, William K. *Literature and film as modern mythology*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2000.
- Gould Boyum, Joy. *Double exposure: fiction into film*. NY: Universe Books, 1985.
- Griffith, James. *Adaptations as imitations: films from novels*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1997.
- Harrington, John, ed. *Film and/as literature*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1977.

Instrell, Rick. "Blade Runner: the economic shaping of a film, in *Cinema & Fiction*, eds.

John Orr and Colin Nicholson, Edinburgh University Press, 1992.

Kilborn, Richard. "Filming the unfilmable: Volker Schlöndorff and *The Tin Drum*" in

Cinema & Fiction, eds. John Orr and Colin Nicholson, Edinburgh University Press, 1992.

Klein, Michael, and Gillian Parker, eds. *The English novel and the movies*. NY: Frederick

Ungar Publishing, 1981.

Linden, George W. "The storied world," 1970, reprinted in *Film and/as literature*, ed. John

Harrington, Prentice Hall, 1977.

Maltby, Richard. "'To prevent the prevalent type of book': censorship and adaptation in

Hollywood, 1924-1934," in *Film adaptation*, ed. James Naremore, Rutgers University Press, 2000.

McFarlane, Brian. *Novel to film: an introduction to the theory of adaptation*. Oxford:

Clarendon Press, 1996.

Naremore, James, ed. *Film adaptation*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press,

2000.

O'Brien, James, and Ned Borden. "From picaro to saint: the evolution of *Forrest Gump*

from novel to film" in *Film and literature: points of intersection*, ed. Phebe

Davidson, Edwin Mellen Press, 1997.

Orr, John, and Colin Nicholson, eds. *Cinema and fiction: new modes of adapting, 1950-1990*.

Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992.

Ray, Robert B. "The field of literature and film" in *Film adaptation*, ed. James Naremore,

Rutgers University Press, 2000.

- Robinson, W.R. "The movies, too, will make you free," 1967, reprinted in *Film and/as literature*, ed. John Harrington, Prentice Hall, 1977.
- Stam, Robert. "Beyond fidelity: the dialogics of adaptation" in *Film adaptation*, ed. James Naremore, Rutgers University Press, 2000.
- Thomas, Bronwen. "'Piecing together a mirage': adapting *The English Patient* for the screen" in *The classic novel: from page to screen*, eds. Robert Giddings and Erica Sheen, Manchester University Press, 2000.
- Vincendeau, Ginette, ed. *Film/literature/heritage*. London: British Film Institute, 2001.
- Wagner, Geoffrey. *The novel and the cinema*. Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1975.
- Woolf, Virginia. "The movies and reality." *New Republic*, August 1926; reprinted in *Film and/as literature*, ed. John Harrington, Prentice Hall, 1977.

Appendix A: 400 prominent novel-to-film adaptations, 1981-2000

Chosen, The	1981	Chaim Potok		6.8	4.3	4.5
Endless Love	1981	Scott Spencer		3.6	4.7	3.8
French Lieutenant's Woman, The	1981	John Fowles		6.6	4.4	4.4
Ghost Story	1981	Peter Straub		6.1	4.4	3.7
Neighbors	1981	Thomas Berger		4.9	4.0	4.5
Of Mice and Men	1981	John Steinbeck		7.1	4.2	4.0
Postman Always Rings Twice, The	1981	James M. Cain		6.3	4.4	3.1
Ragtime	1981	E.L. Doctorow		7.2	4.2	4.7
Sharky's Machine	1981	William Diehl		5.8	4.0	4.6
Some Kind of Hero	1981	James Kirkwood Jr.		5.4	5.0	3.0
Taps	1981	Devery Freeman	Father Sky	6.3	5.0	4.0
Wolfen	1981	Whitley Strieber	The Wolfen	6.2	4.5	4.5
Blade Runner	1982	Phillip K. Dick	Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?	8.3	4.2	4.0
Evil Under the Sun	1982	Agatha Christie		6.3	4.5	4.3
Fast Times at Ridgemont High	1982	Cameron Crowe		7.0	4.7	4.1
First Blood	1982	David Morrell		6.6	4.4	4.6
Last Unicorn, The	1982	Peter Beagle		6.7	4.7	4.8
Oliver Twist	1982	Charles Dickens		7.1	4.0	3.0
Plague Dogs, The	1982	Richard Adams		7.3	4.3	3.0
Sophie's Choice	1982	William Styron		7.6	4.5	4.5
Tex	1982	S.E. Hinton		6.4	4.6	5.0
Verdict, The	1982	Barry Reed		7.5	5.0	5.0
World According to Garp, The	1982	John Irving		7.0	4.5	4.0
Year of Living Dangerously, The	1982	C.J. Koch		7.2	4.4	4.7
Black Stallion Returns, The	1983	Walter Farley		5.5	4.9	4.7
Christine	1983	Stephen King		5.9	4.5	4.2
Christmas Story, A	1983	Jean Shepherd	In God We Trust, All Others Pay Cash	8.1	4.7	4.4
Cujo	1983	Stephen King		5.2	4.1	3.0
Daniel	1983	E.L. Doctorow	The Book of Daniel	6.1	4.2	4.0
Dead Zone, The	1983	Stephen King		7.2	4.6	4.4
Gorky Park	1983	Martin Cruz Smith		6.5	4.5	4.6
Hunger, The	1983	Whitley Strieber		6.2	3.8	3.8
I Am the Cheese	1983	Robert Cormier		6.8	3.7	3.3
Lonely Lady, The	1983	Harold Robbins		2.5	5.0	3.0
Lords of Discipline, The	1983	Pat Conroy		6.3	4.8	3.1
Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence	1983	Laurens Van Der Post	The Seed and the Sower	6.9	5.0	5.0
Outsiders, The	1983	S.E. Hinton		6.8	4.6	4.5

Appendix A: 400 prominent novel-to-film adaptations, 1981-2000

Rumble Fish	1983	S.E. Hinton		6.7	4.0	4.7
Something Wicked This Way Comes	1983	Ray Bradbury		6.5	4.4	4.2
Terms of Endearment	1983	Larry McMurtry		7.3	4.2	4.3
To the Lighthouse	1983	Virginia Woolf		6.6	4.1	2.5
2010	1984	Arthur C. Clarke		6.4	4.3	3.9
Birdy	1984	William Wharton		7.2	4.8	4.8
Dune	1984	Frank Herbert		6.2	4.6	3.6
Firestarter	1984	Stephen King		5.6	4.5	4.0
Greystoke: the Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes	1984	Edgar Rice Burroughs	Tarzan of the Apes	5.9	4.6	4.3
Hotel New Hampshire, The	1984	John Irving		5.8	4.1	not rated
Little Drummer Girl, The	1984	John Le Carre		6.2	4.6	4.3
Natural, The	1984	Bernard Malamud		7.2	4.2	4.6
Never Ending Story	1984	Michael Ende		7.0	4.8	4.4
Nineteen Eighty-Four	1984	George Orwell		6.7	4.6	3.8
Passage to India, A	1984	E.M. Forster		7.1	3.9	4.4
Pope of Greenwich Village, The	1984	Vincent Patrick		6.0	4.0	4.7
Razor's Edge, The	1984	Somerset Maugham		6.0	4.7	4.2
Swann in Love	1984	Marcel Proust	Swann's Way	5.2	4.6	2.5
Under the Volcano	1984	Malcolm Lowry		6.5	4.2	5.0
Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, The	1985	Mark Twain		7.1	4.2	4.3
Anna Karenina	1985	Leo Tolstoy		5.6	4.4	4.5
Anne of Green Gables	1985	Lucy Maud Montgomery		7.6	4.9	4.9
Arch of Triumph	1985	Erich Maria Remarque		7.2	5.0	3.0
Black Cauldron, The	1985	Lloyd Alexander		6.2	4.9	3.4
Bliss	1985	Peter Carey		6.8	4.4	4.7
Bridge to Terabithia	1985	Katherine Paterson		6.5	4.5	3.6
Color Purple, The	1985	Alice Walker		7.5	4.3	4.5
Compromising Positions	1985	Susan Isaacs		5.5	4.2	4.0
Fletch	1985	Gregory McDonald		6.4	5.0	4.8
Holcroft Covenant, The	1985	Robert Ludlum		5.3	3.5	1.6
King Solomon's Mines	1985	H. Rider Haggard		4.0	4.4	2.7
Kiss of the Spider Woman	1985	Manuel Puig		7.3	4.6	4.6
Long Hot Summer, The	1985	William Faulkner	The Hamlet	6.7	4.4	4.7
Prizzi's Honor	1985	Richard Condon		7.0	5.0	3.9
Sense and Sensibility	1985	Jane Austen		8.0	4.1	3.8
Silas Marner: the Weaver of Raveloe	1985	George Eliot	Silas Marner	7.4	3.6	4.3

Appendix A: 400 prominent novel-to-film adaptations, 1981-2000

Silver Bullet	1985	Stephen King	Cycle of the Werewolf	5.5	3.8	4.1
Stick	1985	Elmore Leonard		4.8	4.8	4.0
That Was Then... This is Now	1985	S.E. Hinton		5.4	4.4	3.8
To Live and Die in L.A.	1985	Gerald Petievich		6.7	5.0	4.7
Vision Quest	1985	Terry Davis		5.6	4.8	4.5
52 Pick-Up	1986	Elmore Leonard		5.9	4.2	4.8
8 Million Ways to Die	1986	Lawrence Block		4.8	4.6	3.8
Absolute Beginners	1986	Colin MacInnes		5.1	5.0	4.0
Clan of the Cave Bear, The	1986	Jean Auel		4.9	4.7	3.8
Cobra	1986	Paula Gosling	Fair Game	3.9	5.0	3.1
Color of Money, The	1986	Walter Tevis		6.7	5.0	4.0
Half Moon Street	1986	Paul Theroux	Doctor Slaughter	4.7	4.0	not rated
Heartburn	1986	Nora Ephron		5.3	4.4	3.5
Manhunter	1986	Thomas Harris	Red Dragon	7.2	4.4	3.6
Mosquito Coast, The	1986	Paul Theroux		6.3	4.5	4.0
Name of the Rose, The	1986	Umberto Eco		7.5	4.7	4.4
Native Son	1986	Richard Wright		5.2	4.4	1.7
Northanger Abbey	1986	Jane Austen		6.6	4.2	2.6
Room With a View, A	1986	E.M. Forster		7.4	4.4	4.3
Seize the Day	1986	Saul Bellow		5.7	4.1	4.3
Tai-Pan	1986	James Clavell		4.4	4.7	2.8
Angel Heart	1987	William Hjortsberg	Falling Angel	6.9	4.6	4.6
Anne of Avonlea	1987	Lucy Maud Montgomery		7.8	4.8	4.8
Burglar	1987	Lawrence Block	Burglars Can't Be Choosers	4.3	4.8	2.3
Empire of the Sun	1987	J.G. Ballard		7.3	4.8	4.6
Flowers in the Attic	1987	V.C. Andrews		4.5	4.3	3.1
Full Metal Jacket	1987	Gustav Hasford	The Short Timers	8.1	4.7	4.3
Gathering of Old Men, A	1987	Ernest J. Gaines		5.6	3.7	not found
Hellraiser	1987	Clive Barker	The Hellbound Heart	6.4	4.6	4.2
Housekeeping	1987	Marilynne Robinson		7.1	4.5	4.9
Ironweed	1987	William Kennedy		6.3	4.5	4.3
Less than Zero	1987	Bret Easton Ellis		5.3	3.5	3.6
Man Who Fell to Earth, The	1987	Walter Tevis		6.2	4.6	4.0
Maurice	1987	E.M. Forster		7.2	4.7	4.9
Princess Bride, The	1987	William Goldman		8.2	4.7	4.7
Quick and the Dead, The	1987	Louis L'Amour		7.0	4.6	4.0
Running Man, The	1987	Richard Bachman		6.1	4.5	3.7
Secret Garden, The	1987	Frances Hodgson Burnett		7.6	4.6	3.4

Appendix A: 400 prominent novel-to-film adaptations, 1981-2000

Tough Guys Don't Dance	1987	Norman Mailer		5.2	2.7	1.8
Uncle Tom's Cabin	1987	Harriet Beecher Stowe		6.6	4.1	3.6
White Mischief	1987	James Fox		5.9	4.5	5.0
Witches of Eastwick, The	1987	John Updike		6.3	3.3	4.3
Accidental Tourist, The	1988	Anne Tyler		6.7	4.1	4.2
Beaches	1988	Iris Rainer Dart		6.0	5.0	4.9
Bourne Identity, The	1988	Robert Ludlum		6.7	4.6	4.0
Caine Mutiny Court-Martial, The	1988	Herman Wouk	The Caine Mutiny	7.1	4.7	5.0
Chocolate War, The	1988	Robert Cormier		6.6	3.8	5.0
Crusoe	1988	Daniel Defoe	Robinson Crusoe	5.9	3.8	1.0
Cry in the Dark, A	1988	John Bryson	Evil Angels	6.8	5.0	4.7
Dangerous Liaisons	1988	Choderlos de Laclos	Les Liaisons Dangereuses	7.7	4.7	4.7
Dead Ringers	1988	Bari Wood & Jack Geasland	Twins	7.0	3.0	4.2
Die Hard	1988	Roderick Thorp	Nothing Lasts Forever	7.9	4.8	4.8
Funny Farm	1988	Jay Cronley		5.2	3.0	3.7
Handful of Dust, A	1988	Evelyn Waugh		6.9	4.1	4.5
Last Temptation of Christ, The	1988	Nikos Kazantzakis		7.3	4.5	4.2
Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, The	1988	C.S. Lewis		7.3	5.0	4.2
Little Dorrit	1988	Charles Dickens		6.2	4.2	3.7
Milagro Beanfield War, The	1988	John Nichols		6.6	4.8	4.9
Scrooged	1988	Charles Dickens	A Christmas Carol	6.4	4.6	4.3
Soldier's Tale, A	1988	M.K. Joseph		5.3	not rated	5.0
Tenth Man, The	1988	Graham Greene		7.2	3.8	4.0
Unbearable Lightness of Being, The	1988	Milan Kundera		7.3	4.1	4.3
Who Framed Roger Rabbit?	1988	Gary K. Wolf	Who Censored Roger Rabbit?	7.3	4.5	4.0
Dad	1989	William Wharton		5.8	5.0	5.0
Dead Calm	1989	Charles Williams		6.9	4.4	4.4
Drugstore Cowboy	1989	James Fogle		7.5	5.0	4.6
Dry White Season, A	1989	Andre Brink		6.7	4.8	4.0
Eat a Bowl of Tea	1989	Louis Chu		5.9	5.0	3.5
In Country	1989	Bobbie Ann Mason		5.8	3.6	4.3
Pet Semetary	1989	Stephen King		5.5	4.6	4.2
Rachel Papers, The	1989	Martin Amis		5.9	3.8	not rated
Rainbow, The	1989	D.H. Lawrence		6.8	4.0	not rated

Appendix A: 400 prominent novel-to-film adaptations, 1981-2000

Shell Seekers, The	1989	Rosamund Pilcher		7.7	4.8	4.0
Valmont	1989	Choderlos de Laclos		6.7	4.7	4.3
War of the Roses, The	1989	Warren Adler		6.4	5.0	4.5
Women of Brewster Place, The	1989	Gloria Naylor		6.5	4.2	4.0
After Dark, My Sweet	1990	Jim Thompson		6.4	4.0	4.3
Bonfire of the Vanities, The	1990	Tom Wolfe		4.7	4.3	2.7
Comfort of Strangers, The	1990	Ian McEwan		6.0	3.3	5.0
Cry in the Wild, A	1990	Gary Paulsen	Hatchet	5.9	4.3	3.3
Dances with Wolves	1990	Michael Blake		7.6	3.8	4.3
Die Hard 2	1990	Walter Wager	58 Minutes	6.7	3.7	4.1
Green Man, The	1990	Kingsley Amis		7.6	5.0	4.0
Grifters, The	1990	Jim Thompson		7.2	4.2	4.3
Handmaid's Tale, The	1990	Margaret Atwood		5.7	4.2	3.1
Hunt for Red October, The	1990	Tom Clancy		7.5	4.5	4.3
Lord of the Flies	1990	William Golding		5.7	4.0	3.1
Miami Blues	1990	Charles Willeford		6.3	5.0	5.0
Misery	1990	Stephen King		7.4	4.5	4.6
Mister Johnson	1990	Joyce Cary		6.5	3.0	2.5
Mr. and Mrs. Bridge	1990	Evan S. Connell	Mr. Bridge, Mrs. Bridge	6.4	5.0	4.8
Presumed Innocent	1990	Scott Turow		6.9	4.5	4.5
Quick Change	1990	Jay Cronley		6.6	5.0	4.5
Russia House, The	1990	John Le Carre		6.0	4.6	4.3
Sheltering Sky, The	1990	Paul Bowles		6.3	4.5	3.7
Stanley & Iris	1990	Pat Barker	Union Street	5.8	4.0	3.0
Texasville	1990	Larry McMurtry		5.5	3.5	4.3
Tune in Tomorrow...	1990	Mario Vargas Llosa	Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter	6.2	4.0	4.5
White Hunter, Black Heart	1990	Peter Viertel		6.6	4.0	4.8
White Palace	1990	Glenn Savan		6.3	5.0	4.6
Wild at Heart	1990	Barry Gifford		6.9	4.5	4.3
At Play in the Fields of the Lord	1991	Peter Matthiessen		6.3	4.9	4.0
Billy Bathgate	1991	E.L. Doctorow		5.7	4.5	3.0
Black Robe	1991	Brian Moore		7.2	4.2	4.6
Cape Fear	1991	John D. MacDonald		7.0	4.3	4.1
Commitments, The	1991	Roddy Doyle		7.3	4.3	4.2
Dying Young	1991	Marti Leimbach		5.1	4.0	4.0
Fried Green Tomatoes	1991	Fanny Flagg	Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café	7.3	4.8	4.8
Grapes of Wrath, The	1991	John Steinbeck		7.8	4.3	4.7
Midnight Clear, A	1991	William Wharton		7.5	4.8	4.5
Naked Lunch	1991	William S. Burroughs		6.3	4.0	4.3

Appendix A: 400 prominent novel-to-film adaptations, 1981-2000

Paris Trout	1991	Pete Dexter		6.7	4.0	1.0
Rage in Harlem, A	1991	Chester Himes		5.4	4.5	4.0
Rambling Rose	1991	Calder Willingham		6.7	5.0	3.8
Silence of the Lambs, The	1991	Thomas Harris		8.5	4.6	4.5
Sleeping with the Enemy	1991	Nancy Price		5.7	5.0	3.8
White Fang	1991	Jack London		6.6	4.3	4.1
Burden of Proof, The	1992	Scott Turow		4.8	3.6	5.0
Dracula	1992	Bram Stoker		6.9	4.4	3.9
Enchanted April	1992	Elizabeth von Arnim		7.2	5.0	4.8
Howard's End	1992	E.M. Forster		7.3	4.5	4.2
Lapse of Memory	1992	Robert Cormier	I Am the Cheese	8.4	3.7	3.3
Last of the Mohicans, The	1992	James Fenimore Cooper		7.3	3.7	4.2
Mambo Kings, The	1992	Oscar Hijuelos	The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love	6.2	3.4	4.1
Mirror Crack'd, The	1992	Agatha Christie		6.0	4.2	4.6
Of Mice and Men	1992	John Steinbeck		7.5	4.2	4.6
Orlando	1992	Virginia Woolf		6.5	4.4	4.2
Patriot Games	1992	Tom Clancy		6.8	4.2	4.1
Player, The	1992	Michael Tolkin		7.8	5.0	4.1
Rich in Love	1992	Josephine Humphreys		5.6	4.2	4.3
River Runs Through It, A	1992	Norman Maclean		7.0	4.6	4.6
Waterland	1992	Graham Swift		6.4	4.6	4.3
Wuthering Heights	1992	Emily Bronte		6.5	4.0	4.0
Adventures of Huck Finn, The	1993	Mark Twain	The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn	6.1	4.2	4.3
Age of Innocence, The	1993	Edith Wharton		7.0	4.2	4.3
Carlito's Way	1993	Edwin Torres		7.3	5.0	4.6
Dangerous Woman, A	1993	Mary McGarry Morris		5.8	4.7	2.0
Ethan Frome	1993	Edith Wharton		5.9	3.6	4.5
Even Cowgirls Get the Blues	1993	Tom Robbins		3.8	3.9	2.4
Fearless	1993	Rafael Yglesias		7.1	4.0	4.3
Firm, The	1993	John Grisham		6.6	4.2	3.1
Gettysburg	1993	Michael Shaara	Killer Angels	7.4	4.7	4.6
House of the Spirits, The	1993	Isabel Allende		6.1	4.2	3.2
Indecent Proposal	1993	Jack Engelhard		5.1	5.0	3.2
Joy Luck Club, The	1993	Amy Tan		7.3	4.2	4.2
Jurassic Park	1993	Michael Crichton		7.2	4.6	4.1
Man Without a Face, The	1993	Isabelle Holland		6.4	4.0	4.8
Mrs. Doubtfire	1993	Anne Fine	Alias Madame Doubtfire	6.4	3.0	4.4
Music of Chance	1993	Paul Auster		6.8	4.0	4.7
Pelican Brief, The	1993	John Grisham		6.2	3.5	3.9

Appendix A: 400 prominent novel-to-film adaptations, 1981-2000

Remains of the Day, The	1993	Kazuo Ishiguro		7.8	4.6	4.7
Rising Sun	1993	Michael Crichton		6.0	3.8	3.1
Schindler's List	1993	Thomas Keneally		8.8	4.5	4.4
Secret Garden, The	1993	Frances Hodgson Burnett		7.1	4.6	4.8
Sliver	1993	Ira Levin		4.5	2.9	4.1
Snapper, The	1993	Roddy Doyle		7.0	3.7	3.9
Three Musketeers, The	1993	Alexandre Dumas pere		5.9	4.6	3.9
Trial, The	1993	Franz Kafka		5.7	4.5	3.1
Vanishing, The	1993	Tim Krabbe		5.9	4.0	3.3
What's Eating Gilbert Grape	1993	Peter Hedges		7.5	4.8	4.7
Wide Sargasso Sea	1993	Jean Rhys		5.2	3.9	4.0
Breathing Lessons	1994	Anne Tyler		6.4	3.4	4.0
Clear and Present Danger	1994	Tom Clancy		7.8	4.2	4.1
Client, The	1994	John Grisham		6.4	4.0	4.3
Exit to Eden	1994	Anne Rice		3.8	3.7	3.2
Fatherland	1994	Robert Harris		6.5	4.3	3.1
Forrest Gump	1994	Winston Groom		7.9	3.9	4.3
Frankenstein	1994	Mary Shelley		5.9	4.1	3.3
Getaway, The	1994	Jim Thompson		5.5	4.5	3.2
Heart of Darkness	1994	Joseph Conrad		5.6	4.3	2.2
Interview with a Vampire	1994	Anne Rice		6.9	4.3	4.4
Legends of the Fall	1994	Jim Harrison		6.5	4.4	4.2
Little Women	1994	Louisa May Alcott		7.0	4.5	4.4
Nobody's Fool	1994	Richard Russo		7.2	4.8	4.9
Oldest Living Confederate Widow Tells All, The	1994	Allen Gurganus		5.7	4.1	not rated
Return of the Native, The	1994	Thomas Hardy		5.4	4.3	3.3
Road to Wellville, The	1994	T. Coraghessan Boyle		5.0	4.2	3.2
Secret Garden, The	1994	Frances Hodgson Burnett		6.5	4.6	3.0
Simple Twist of Fate, A	1994	George Eliot	Silas Marner	6.1	3.6	3.9
Yearling, The	1994	Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings		6.6	4.6	3.0
Angels and Insects	1995	A.S. Byatt		7.0	4.2	4.5
Babe	1995	Dick King-Smith	The Sheep Pig	7.5	4.0	4.5
Basketball Diaries, The	1995	Jim Carroll		6.7	4.8	4.4
Bridges of Madison County, The	1995	Robert James Waller		6.7	2.6	4.0
Circle of Friends	1995	Maeve Binchy		6.7	4.7	3.3
Clockers	1995	Richard Price		6.8	4.4	4.8
Clueless	1995	Jane Austen	Emma	6.7	4.2	3.9
Cold Comfort Farm	1995	Stella Gibbons		7.3	4.8	4.4

Appendix A: 400 prominent novel-to-film adaptations, 1981-2000

Cry, the Beloved Country	1995	Alan Paton		6.2	4.3	4.9
Devil in a Blue Dress	1995	Walter Mosley		6.6	4.3	4.0
Dolores Claiborne	1995	Stephen King		7.1	4.2	4.6
Get Shorty	1995	Elmore Leonard		7.0	3.5	4.3
How to Make an American Quilt	1995	Whitney Otto		5.9	3.4	4.1
Indian in the Cupboard, The	1995	Lynne Reid Banks		6.2	4.4	3.8
Leaving Las Vegas	1995	John O'Brien		7.5	4.8	4.1
Little Princess, A	1995	Frances Hodgson Burnett		7.3	4.8	4.4
My Antonia	1995	Willa Cather		7.3	4.0	3.3
Rob Roy	1995	Sir Walter Scott		6.8	4.6	4.3
Scarlet Letter, The	1995	Nathaniel Hawthorne		4.3	5.0	3.4
Sense and Sensibility	1995	Jane Austen		7.7	4.1	4.7
To Die For	1995	Joyce Maynard		6.7	3.6	4.2
Village of the Damned	1995	John Wyndham	The Midwich Cuckoos	5.0	4.3	3.3
Waiting to Exhale	1995	Terry McMillan		5.0	4.1	3.8
Bastard Out of Carolina	1996	Dorothy Allison		7.3	4.2	4.4
Chamber, The	1996	John Grisham		5.6	3.5	2.7
Crash	1996	J.G. Ballard		5.6	3.3	3.4
Emma	1996	Jane Austen		6.9	4.2	4.3
English Patient, The	1996	Michael Ondaatje		7.1	4.0	3.7
Evening Star, The	1996	Larry McMurtry		5.4	5.0	3.6
Extreme Measures	1996	Michael Palmer		6.0	4.8	3.8
First Wives Club, The	1996	Olivia Goldsmith		5.5	3.5	3.7
Fortunes and Misfortunes of Moll Flanders, The	1996	Daniel Defoe	Moll Flanders	7.9	4.0	4.3
Gulliver's Travels	1996	Jonathan Swift		7.1	4.4	5.0
Harriet the Spy	1996	Louise Fitzhugh		5.8	4.6	3.6
James and the Giant Peach	1996	Roald Dahl		6.8	4.7	3.6
Jane Eyre	1996	Charlotte Bronte		6.5	4.3	3.5
Jude	1996	Thomas Hardy	Jude the Obscure	6.8	4.2	4.1
Mary Reilly	1996	Valerie Martin		5.4	4.2	4.0
Matilda	1996	Roald Dahl		6.7	4.8	4.6
Moll Flanders	1996	Daniel Defoe		5.7	4.0	3.8
Moonstone, The	1996	Wilkie Collins		7.1	4.0	4.5
Mother Night	1996	Kurt Vonnegut		7.2	4.8	4.6
Portrait of a Lady, The	1996	Henry James		5.9	4.2	3.7
Primal Fear	1996	William Diehl		7.3	4.7	4.3
Striptease	1996	Carl Hiaasen	Strip Tease	3.8	4.2	2.9
Thinner	1996	Stephen King		4.9	3.4	3.6
Trainspotting	1996	Irvine Welsh		7.9	4.6	4.4
Van, The	1996	Roddy Doyle		6.5	3.9	3.6

Appendix A: 400 prominent novel-to-film adaptations, 1981-2000

Affliction	1997	Russell Banks		7.0	4.5	4.0
Anna Karenina	1997	Leo Tolstoy		5.6	4.4	3.6
Assistant, The	1997	Bernard Malamud		4.9	4.5	not found
Contact	1997	Carl Sagan		7.4	4.5	4.3
Devil's Advocate, The	1997	Andrew Neiderman		7.0	2.7	4.2
Education of Little Tree, The	1997	Forrest Carter		7.0	4.3	4.7
Ellen Foster	1997	Kaye Gibbons		7.6	4.0	4.3
I Know What You Did Last Summer	1997	Lois Duncan		5.2	4.4	3.8
Ice Storm, The	1997	Rick Moody		7.5	3.7	4.3
Jackie Brown	1997	Elmore Leonard	Rum Punch	7.3	4.2	4.2
Jane Eyre	1997	Charlotte Bronte		7.5	4.3	3.7
Kiss the Girls	1997	James Patterson		6.3	4.1	3.6
L.A. Confidential	1997	James Ellroy		8.4	4.4	4.6
Little Men	1997	Louisa May Alcott		5.7	4.5	4.1
Lolita	1997	Vladimir Nabokov		6.8	4.6	4.4
Lost World, The	1997	Michael Crichton		5.3	3.7	2.8
Member of the Wedding, The	1997	Carson McCullers		6.7	3.3	3.0
Mrs. Dalloway	1997	Virginia Woolf		6.4	4.2	4.5
Oliver Twist	1997	Charles Dickens		6.4	4.0	4.1
Oscar and Lucinda	1997	Peter Carey		6.7	4.7	4.6
Postman, The	1997	David Brin		5.3	4.0	3.3
Rainmaker, The	1997	John Grisham		6.8	4.3	4.1
Smilla's Sense of Snow	1997	Peter Hoeg		6.2	3.7	4.0
Starship Troopers	1997	Robert Heinlein		6.6	4.4	3.4
Sweet Hereafter, The	1997	Russell Banks		8.0	4.1	4.2
Thousand Acres, A	1997	Jane Smiley		5.7	3.7	3.3
Wag the Dog	1997	Larry Beinhart	American Hero	6.9	3.7	3.6
Washington Square	1997	Henry James		6.5	3.9	4.0
Wings of the Dove, The	1997	Henry James		6.9	4.0	4.4
American, The	1998	Henry James		6.2	4.5	not rated
Apt Pupil	1998	Stephen King		6.4	4.4	3.7
Beloved	1998	Toni Morrison		5.7	3.7	3.7
Brave New World	1998	Aldous Huxley		4.8	4.2	not found
Cousin Bette	1998	Honore de Balzac		6.4	4.5	4.4
Crime and Punishment	1998	Fyodor Dostoyevsky		6.5	4.5	2.2
Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas	1998	Hunter S. Thompson		6.7	4.6	4.2
Gods and Monsters	1998	Christopher Bram	Father of Frankenstein	7.7	4.6	4.3
Great Expectations	1998	Charles Dickens		6.2	4.0	4.1

Appendix A: 400 prominent novel-to-film adaptations, 1981-2000

Hideous Kinky	1998	Esther Freud		6.1	4.5	3.6
Hi-Lo Country, The	1998	Max Evans		6.0	4.7	4.3
Horse Whisperer, The	1998	Nick Evans		6.3	3.2	4.2
How Stella Got Her Groove Back	1998	Terry McMillan		5.0	3.3	3.9
Les Miserables	1998	Victor Hugo		7.1	4.7	3.8
Madeline	1998	Ludwig Bemelmans		6.1	4.7	4.5
Man in the Iron Mask, The	1998	Alexandre Dumas pere	Twenty Years After	6.5	4.9	3.0
Moby Dick	1998	Herman Melville		6.7	4.0	2.8
Object of My Affection, The	1998	Stephen McCauley		6.0	4.5	4.1
One True Thing	1998	Anna Quindlen		7.1	4.3	4.3
Out of Sight	1998	Elmore Leonard		7.5	3.7	4.1
Practical Magic	1998	Alice Hoffman		5.4	4.0	4.2
Primary Colors	1998	Joe Klein		6.8	3.9	4.0
Simon Birch	1998	John Irving	A Prayer for Owen Meany	7.0	4.6	4.6
Simple Plan, A	1998	Scott B. Smith		7.6	3.9	4.0
Thin Red Line, The	1998	James Jones		7.1	4.5	3.6
13th Warrior, The	1999	Michael Crichton	Eaters of the Dead	6.1	4.0	3.6
Animal Farm	1999	George Orwell		6.8	4.4	3.0
Breakfast of Champions	1999	Kurt Vonnegut		4.0	4.5	2.8
Bringing Out the Dead	1999	Joe Connelly		6.8	4.3	3.6
Cider House Rules	1999	John Irving		7.6	4.3	4.0
Cruel Intentions	1999	Choderlos de Laclos	Les Liaisons Dangereuses	6.5	4.7	4.1
David Copperfield	1999	Charles Dickens		8.2	4.8	4.6
Deep End of the Ocean, The	1999	Jacquelyn Mitchard		6.1	3.3	3.8
Eyes Wide Shut	1999	Arthur Schnitzler	Traumnovelle	7.1	3.9	3.7
Fight Club	1999	Chuck Palahniuk		8.5	4.5	4.5
General's Daughter, The	1999	Nelson DeMille		6.2	4.1	3.2
Great Expectations	1999	Charles Dickens		8.5	4.0	4.8
Green Mile, The	1999	Stephen King		8.2	4.7	4.4
Haunting, The	1999	Shirley Jackson	The Haunting of Hill House	4.6	4.1	2.7
Iron Giant, The	1999	Ted Hughes	The Iron Man	8.1	4.7	4.8
Jakob the Liar	1999	Jurek Becker		5.8	4.8	3.5
Mansfield Park	1999	Jane Austen		7.4	4.1	3.3
Map of the World, A	1999	Jane Hamilton		6.8	3.2	3.6
Message in a Bottle	1999	Nicholas Sparks		5.6	3.5	3.9
Snow Falling on Cedars	1999	David Guterson		6.9	3.7	3.7
Stuart Little	1999	E.B. White		6.2	4.2	4.0
Talented Mr. Ripley, The	1999	Patricia Highsmith		7.1	4.3	3.5

Appendix A: 400 prominent novel-to-film adaptations, 1981-2000

Turn of the Screw, The	1999	Henry James		5.1	3.7	4.7
Virgin Suicides, The	1999	Jeffrey Eugenides		7.2	4.2	3.9
Wuthering Heights	1999	Emily Bronte		7.3	4.0	3.5
All the Pretty Horses	2000	Cormac McCarthy		6.0	4.0	2.8
American Psycho	2000	Bret Easton Ellis		6.7	3.5	3.5
Battlefield Earth	2000	L. Ron Hubbard		2.3	3.6	2.6
Beach, The	2000	Alex Garland		5.7	3.9	3.2
Chocolat	2000	Joanne Harris		7.5	3.9	4.1
Claim, The	2000	Thomas Hardy	The Mayor of Casterbridge	6.6	4.1	2.8
Golden Bowl, The	2000	Henry James		5.9	4.0	3.5
High Fidelity	2000	Nick Hornby		7.7	4.4	4.0
House of Mirth, The	2000	Edith Wharton		7.2	4.5	3.8
Left Behind: the Movie	2000	Tim LaHaye & Jerry B. Jenkins	Left Behind	4.8	4.0	4.0
Legend of Bagger Vance, The	2000	Steven Pressfield		6.5	4.2	3.4
Luzhin Defence, The	2000	Vladimir Nabokov	Defence	7.5	4.0	3.9
Madame Bovary	2000	Gustave Flaubert		6.6	4.3	4.0
My Dog Skip	2000	Willie Morris		7.4	4.8	4.6
Requiem for a Dream	2000	Hubert Selby Jr.		8.6	4.9	4.4
Where the Heart Is	2000	Billie Letts		6.6	4.2	4.3
Wonder Boys	2000	Michael Chabon		7.7	4.2	3.9

Appendix B: Film Adaptations by Year

Year	All Films	All Adaptations	Percentage Adapted	All Theatrical & Video Releases	Theatrical & Video Adaptations	Percentage Adapted	All TV Releases	TV Adaptations	Percentage Adapted
1981	334	40	0.120	264	38	0.144	70	2	0.029
1982	321	45	0.140	258	35	0.136	63	10	0.159
1983	311	55	0.177	235	41	0.174	76	14	0.184
1984	385	49	0.127	302	39	0.129	83	10	0.120
1985	463	63	0.136	354	42	0.119	109	21	0.193
1986	473	51	0.108	366	36	0.098	107	15	0.140
1987	558	69	0.124	435	46	0.106	123	23	0.187
1988	562	71	0.126	455	54	0.119	107	17	0.159
1989	556	65	0.117	430	45	0.105	126	20	0.159
1990	614	82	0.134	434	53	0.122	180	29	0.161
1991	638	67	0.105	460	40	0.087	178	27	0.152
1992	651	58	0.089	469	42	0.090	182	16	0.088
1993	721	81	0.112	516	52	0.101	205	29	0.141
1994	851	77	0.090	602	41	0.068	249	36	0.145
1995	955	107	0.112	686	62	0.090	269	45	0.167
1996	963	97	0.101	687	60	0.087	276	37	0.134
1997	1019	102	0.100	768	62	0.081	251	40	0.159
1998	1092	122	0.112	821	82	0.100	271	40	0.148
1999	1096	91	0.083	831	63	0.076	265	28	0.106
2000	1026	78	0.076	782	49	0.063	244	29	0.119
TOTALS	13589	1470		10155	982		3434	488	
AVERAGES			0.114			0.105			0.142

Appendix C: Summary Framework of Difference and Similarity in Novels and Films

Personal Differences

- 1) In the majority of individual situations, there is no comparison of book with film because an individual only experiences one of the two forms.
- 2) Some consumers have a broad bias for or against a particular form.
- 3) Dissonance between one's fantasy version of the work and the second version of the work one experiences changes the view of the second work.

Creative Differences

- 4) Fidelity is not always the intention of the adaptor.

Formal Differences

- 5) Literature and film have different signifying systems.
- 6) Novels and films have different lengths and therefore different capacities.
- 7) Novels are mostly an individual creation, while films are created by an industry.
- 8) Novel and film handle point of view differently.
- 9) Novel and film handle tense differently.
- 10) Novel and film are experienced in different ways.

Environmental Differences

- 11) Most films are aimed at a mass audience, while books can be aimed at a targeted demographic.
- 12) On the whole films are happier and more glamorous than novels.
- 13) Conditions in the publishing or film industries can affect adaptations.
- 14) Conditions in the socio-political environment that affect the content and acceptance of adaptations.

What Remains of the Correlation

- 1) The narrative core: unchanged elements in the basic story
- 2) The symbiotic effect: mutual benefit that novel and film gain from each other's existence
- 3) The comparative act: the benefit consumers get from comparing novel with adapted film