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NOVEL TO FILM ADAPTATION AND THE PROBLEMATIC OF TRANSPOSITION IN ADAPTATION DISCOURSE

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Abstract
In cinema discourse, adaptation serves the purpose of visual translation from any genre of literature to film adaptation. This research paper looks at process, the problems affecting this process, and the elements that survive it. In this guise, the paper investigates the mechanisms put in place by the filmmakers in transmitting the messages which the novelist sought to transmit. While some of these adaptations have been considered successful many of them are met with the same pattern of criticism by the audience members when comparing it with the novel. The question raised here is whether a film's fidelity to the book that it is based on has any effect on its success, or if it impacts the film in other ways. This research therefore seeks to uncover how fidelity and infidelity can both create a successful film adaptation. In essence, a film is rooted in the communication and promotion of ideas, and ideas serve as veritable instruments of enlightenment and education. Based on an intertextual analysis of the novel and the adaptation, it is revealed that the films transform all subjects and objects into new signs which communicate to the audience in a better way as compared to the novel.

Keywords: A*daptation, visual narrative, textual narrative, fidelity, film, novel*

Introduction

Arts exist in many forms of which literature and film are two. The examination of the relationship between literature and film necessarily involves a consideration of the issue of adaptation as it is the focus of this paper to discuss the problems affecting adaptation,

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the elements that survive a novel to film adaptation, and the problematic of transposition in adaptation discourse. Morris Beja observes in *Film & Literature*, that "Ever since film arose as a story-telling art, there has been a tendency by filmmakers, writers, critics, and audiences alike to associate it with literature, as well as an insistence by many people that the associating is false or perhaps deceptive" (104).

Many critics and theoreticians have argued that film shares a closer relationship to prose fiction, particularly the novel, than to drama. D. W. Griffith, for example, flatly states that "movies are picture stories; not so different from novels" (1). Robert Nathan makes a similar argument when he claims that the film "is like a novel, but a novel to be seen instead of told" (5). The first theoretician, who drew parallels between film technique and literary technique, was Sergei Eisenstein. His famous essay, "Dickens, Griffith, and the Film Today," examines the influence of the novels of Charles Dickens on early film, and argues that the movies of D. W. Griffith owe a debt to Dickens. Eisenstein insists that "Griffith has [. . .] as much as Dickens sequel sharpness and clarity as Dickens, on his part, had cinematic 'optical quality,' 'frame composition, 'close up,' and the alteration of the emphasis by special lenses," (125). The essay even claims that Griffith, who is usually seen as a discoverer of one of the most important principles in film composition – montage – "arrived at montage through the method of parallel action, and he was led to the idea of parallel action by Dickens" (125).

Later scholars have developed a comparative method even further by making numerous analogies between film and literature. Joy Gould Boyum, for instance, sees film as "a variety of literature" (30). She examines the similarities between cinematic and literary languages and concludes that "film's mode of communication may be virtually identical with that of literature" (23). Film, Boyum argues, can make generalized statements, such as the following example from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife" (7) as easily as literature can and more importantly, film can do so through the very same means; that is, through words, whether spoken or written. Literature, in the manner of film, does not articulate themes, but instead encourages us to come to an understanding of them through character and action. Thus, Boyum concludes, the most

crucial likeness between the two languages is "their very special capacity to create those characters and actions, to situate them in time and place, and ultimately then to bring us into fictional worlds…" (30). Beja makes a similar argument when he states in his introduction:

> This book concentrates on the art of *narrative*, the realm in which written literature and film are most intimately connected. Indeed, it will examine the possibility that written stories (for example novels) and filmed stories (what people mean by 'the movies') are really two forms of a single art - the art of narrative literature" (xiv). Beja defines the novel as "a long fictitious written narrative in prose" (22) and "the type of films we concentrate in this book" as "a long fictitious narrative on film"(23). He rejects the argument that film is exclusively a "visual" art and claims that it is also "an art of words". (54)

Robert Richardson in *Literature and Film* explores some literary parallels for the film's most characteristic devices, and goes as far as to argue that "of the techniques which the film is accustomed to regarding as exclusively filmic are in fact not new, nor are they confined to film" (64). Richardson uses Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun* to support his claim that "the technique of characterizing by pictures or images is not new with the movies" (57). Literature, he points out, "had already achieved some unusual and purely visual effects before film even arrived" (60). What Richardson puts in offers endless material for a discussion of visual effects in literature since the literary writer creates imaginary images before putting into writing.

Even the technique to manipulate sound is not only cinematic as Richardson maintains that, "it is part of the literary experience" (60). The matching of an actual sound with the word describing that sound – words like buzz, chirp, and hiss, for example – is one way literary artists have affected readers' imagination. Richardson examines the fourteenth century works, such as Gawain and The Green Knight as "a splendid use of sound for major dramatic effect" (61), and concludes that experiencing a literary work "is in large part the experiencing of imagined images and sounds" and that "the literary artist must work harder to stir the imagination, to create pictures and sounds that the reader will actually experience, but the very fact that he must work to achieve such an effect gives him a self-consciousness about what he is doing that many filmmakers never reach, simply because it is so easy to provide actual images and sounds" (64).

Scholars who stress the similarities between film and literature have made a valuable contribution to film studies; yet they have overlooked the codes and elements that are specifically and uniquely cinematic. In their analysis, they trivialize fundamental differences in the organization of the two very different mediums' respective composition practices. Some of these differences include creation, production and distribution, as well as perception and appreciation of the two art forms. These are significant distinctions and worth pointing out here. A novel has a single author, who, to quote the artist-hero of James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, is "like the God of the creation." A film, on the other hand, is a group endeavor, which depends upon numerous people, each doing a specific task. As Beja observes, the role of a screenwriter is "nowhere nearly absolutely controlling as the role of the writer in the production of a novel or a book of poems" (62).

The Relation between Literature and Film

The examination of the relationship between film and literature necessarily involves a consideration of the issue of adaptation. As Brian McFarlane observes in *The Theory of Adaptation, Novel to Film*, "as soon as the cinema began to see itself as a narrative entertainment, the idea of ransacking the novel -that already established repository of narrative fiction - for source material got underway" (7). The issue of adaptation has attracted critical attention from the very outset. Critics wrote about it as early as 1911. Stephen Bush, for instance, regarded motion pictures as a promising means of introducing the literary classics to the masses: "It is the business of the moving picture to make [classic novels] known to all" (4). Bush's view of cinema as having educational potential was not shared by most academics, writers, and theorists who saw the adaptation as destructive to literature. Vachel Lindsay and Virginia Woolf, for example, both writing in the silent film days, railed against the adaptation. Lindsay claimed that the adaptation went against the uniqueness of the film medium. Woolf, on the other hand thought that, books were the "prey" and "unfortunate victims" of "parasite" movies" (26). In her article "The Movies and Reality" Woolf asserts:

> All the famous novels of the world, with their well-known characters, and their famous scenes, only asked, it seemed, to be put on the films. What could be easier

> and simpler? The cinema fell upon its prey with immense rapacity, and to this moment largely subsists upon the body of its unfortunate victim. But the results are disastrous to both, the alliance is unnatural. Eye and brain are torn asunder ruthlessly as they try vainly to work in coupes. (26)

Lindsay's and Woolf's arguments against adaptation were echoed by later critics. Hannah Arendt, for example, lamented that filmmakers destroyed works of "great authors of the past" by altering them in order to make them more entertaining for the mass media. There are many great authors of the past who have survived centuries of oblivion and neglect, but it is still an open question whether they will be able to survive an entertaining version of what they have to say. Even Eisenstein mocks the idea that the film is an autonomous, independent art form when he writes:

> It is only very thoughtless and presumptuous people who can erect laws and an aesthetic for cinema, proceeding from premises of some incredible virgin-birth of this art! Let Dickens and the whole ancestral array, going back as far as the Greeks and Shakespeare, be superfluous reminders that both Griffith and our cinema prove our origins to be not solely as of Edison and his fellow inventors, but as based on an enormous cultured past; each part of this past in its own moment of world history has moved forward the great art of cinematography. Let this past be a reproach to those thoughtless people who have displayed arrogance in reference to literature, which has contributed so much to this apparently unprecedented art and is, in the first and most important place, the art of viewing. (136)

Andre Bazin, one of the most influential and important writers on cinema, forcefully declared that it was a filmmaker's responsibility to give a faithful rendering of a text. Unlike his predecessors, Bazin does not find the relationship between film and literature damaging:

> It is nonsense to wax wroth about the indignities practiced on literary works on the screen, at least in the name of literature. After all, they cannot harm the original in the eyes of those who know it, however little they approximate to it. As for those who are unacquainted with the original, one of two things may happen; either they will be satisfied with the film which is as good as most, or they will want to know the original, with the resulting gain for literature. [. . .] The truth is that culture in general and literature in particular have nothing to lose from such enterprise. (19)

However, Bazin highly values faithfulness to an original source, arguing that "the filmmaker has everything to gain from fidelity" (19). The novel, Bazin maintains is "already much more highly developed, and catering to a relatively cultured and exacting

public." Thus, it offers the cinema "characters that are much more complex" (19). Infidelity to an original text, in Bazin's view, is a betrayal of both literature and cinema. "[. . .] those who care the least for fidelity in the name of the so-called demands of the screen [. . .] betray and the same time both literature and the cinema" (21).

Such favoring of literature over cinema, Robert Mayer observes in *Eighteenth-Century Fiction on Screen*, "seems almost inescapable in discussion of adaptation; the very word, after all, suggests alteration or adjustment in order to make something fit its new context or environment without, however, changing that something into something else – one 'adapts,' that is, one does not 'transform' or 'metamorphose'." (56). Indeed, some filmmakers have rejected the very idea of adaptation. The French director Alain Resnais, for example, once stated that for him adapting a novel for one of his own films would seem- since the writer of the book has already completely expressedd himself - "a little like re-heating a meal" (qtd. in Beja 79). For Resnais, the written fiction brings a pre-existent weight to the cinema which burdens the process of filmmaking. Ingmar Bergman, on the other hand, who always writes his own scripts, declares firmly that "film has nothing to do with literature" (225) and that "we should avoid making films out of books" (226). Bergman connects literature with words, and argues that while words interact with the intellect, film interacts with the imagination. He argues that, "The two art forms are usually in conflict," (225). "The irrational dimension of a literary work, the germ of its existence, is often untranslatable into visual terms – and it, in turn, destroys the special, irrational dimension of the film" (226).

Horton Foote, an Academy Award winning screenwriter who did film adaptations of Steinbeck, Faulkner, Harper Lee, and O'Connor, states that adapting the work of other writers to the screen is "the most difficult and painful process imaginable" (7) and that he does "anything [he] can to avoid it" (7). Foote observes that, "When you're dealing with your own work, you inhabit a familiar world, and you can move around with some confidence and freedom" (9). He adds that, "when you try to get inside the world of another writer, you're under constant tension not to violate this person's vision" (7). In Foote's view, to be really successful adapting another writer's work, a filmmaker must like the original. Foote points out. "I don't have to always understand it, but I have to like

it and be willing to try to understand it and go through the painful process of entering someone else's creative world. And each time, I find that entrance into that world is different" (7).

Bela Balazs, another distinguished early theorist of cinema as well as a scenarist and a director, denies the possibility of any transfer, or transposition from literature to film. Balazs argues that although an adaptation takes the subject of another work, it achieves both content and form very different from the original narrative: "[. . .] while the subject, or story, of both works is identical," he accentuates, "their content is nevertheless different. It is this different content that is adequately expressed in the changed form resulting from the adaptation" (7-8). To Balazs, every "serious and intelligent adaptation," is "a re-interpretation" (11). The original book is a "raw material" for a filmmaker, rather than a sacred text: "[a filmmaker] may use the existing work of art merely as raw material, regard it from the specific angle of his own art form as if it were raw reality, and pay no attention to the form once already given to the material" (10).

George Bluestone, whose *Novels into Film* is still considered to be one of the foundational texts on fiction-to-film problematic, sees adaptation from a perspective similar to that of Bela Balazs. Bluestone argues that although novels and films of a certain kind do reveal a number of similarities, the two media "are marked by such essentially different traits that they belong to separate artistic genera" (viii), as different from each other as "ballet is from architecture" (5). The novel, Bluestone maintains, is "a linguistic medium," whereas "the film is essentially visual" (viii). Each medium is autonomous, with its own unique and specific properties.

Bluestone outlines the differences in origins, audiences, modes of production, and censorship requirements that, he believes, reinforce the autonomy of each medium. If the reputable novel has been supported by small, literate audience, has been produced by an individual writer, and has remained relatively free of rigid censorship, Bluestone observes, the film has been supported by a mass audience, produced cooperatively under industrial conditions, and restricted by a self-imposed Production Code. Because of these differences, "what is peculiarly filmic and what is peculiarly novelistic cannot be converted without destroying an integral part of each. [. . .] An art whose limits depend

on a moving image, mass audience, and industrial production is bound to differ from an art whose limits depend on language, a limited audience and individual creation" (63-64).

There is, then, an "inevitable abandonment of 'novelistic' elements" (viii) in films based on novels, according to Bluestone. This abandonment of language as its sole and primary element "is so severe that, in a strict sense, the new creation has little resemblance to the original" (viii). Thus, when the filmmaker undertakes the adaptation of a novel, Bluestone argues, "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. He looks not to the organic novel, whose language is inseparable from its theme, but to characters and incidents which have somehow detached themselves from language and, […] have achieved a mythic life of their own" (62). For Bluestone, then, "there is no necessary correspondence between the excellence of a novel and the quality of the film in which the novel is recorded" (62). The filmmaker, he concludes "becomes not a translator for an established author, but a new author in his own right" (62).

Scholars like Sarah Cardwell have criticized Bluestone's "medium-specific approach" as "quite astounding evidence of a 'lack of fit' between Bluestone's conceptual principles and intentions, and his attempts to apply his theories to real case studies" (47). Novels into Film disallows almost any similarity between novels and film texts, and thus, between novels and adaptations. Yet, Bluestone analyzes specific adaptations in relation to their source novels. The method calls for viewing the film with a shooting-script a hand. He states, "During the viewing, notations of any final changes in the editing were entered on the script. After the script had become an accurate account of the movie's final print, it was then superimposed on the novel. [. . .] Before each critical evaluation, I was able to hold before me an accurate and reasonably objective record of how the film differed from its model" (xi). If, as Bluestone has argued, the differences between the two media are as vast as "Wright's Johnson's Wax Building [and] Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake" (6), how are we to understand such comparison? The very existence of adapted texts defies the laws of "medium specificity."

Later theorists rejected notions of "medium specificity" by concentrating not on the question of if, but, rather, how adaptation happens. Beja puts together the most debatable and challenging questions critics have been trying to confront:

> How should a filmmaker go about the process of adapting a work of written literature? Are there guiding principles that we can discover or devise? What relationship should a film have to the original source? Should it be 'faithful'? Can it be? To what? Which should be uppermost in a filmmaker's mind: the integrity of the original work, or the integrity of the film to be based on that work? Is there a necessary conflict? What types of changes are permissible? Desirable? Inevitable? Are some types of works more adaptable than others? (80-81)

Scholars who take "the comparative approach" to adaptation emphasize on looking for the ways in which the same narrative is told using different conventions. McFarlane, whose *Novel to Film* is one of the most influential works within what Cardwell refers to as "the comparative" tradition, criticizes the notion that "a film is a film and there is no point in considering it as an adaptation" (194). His aim, McFarlane states, "is to offer and test a methodology for studying the process of transposition from novel to film, with a view not to evaluating one in relation to the other but to establishing the kind of relation a film might bear to the novel it is based on" (vii). In pursuing this goal, he attempts to distinguish "between that which can be transferred from one medium to another (essentially, narrative) and that which, being dependent on different signifying systems, cannot be transferred (essentially, enunciation)" (vii).

It is important to emphasize here that in raising the issues of intertextuality, McFarlane affirms "how powerfully formative the source work is in shaping the response of many people to the film version" (22). He, thus, proposes two lines of investigation: "(a) in the transposition process just what is it possible to transfer or adapt from novel to film; and (b) what key factors other than the source novel have exercised an influence on the film version of the novel?" (22). However, although McFarlane recognizes the importance of intertextuality, the analysis he offers in his book does not incorporate the examination of a film's intertextual space. McFarlane thinks that it is important "to assess the kind of adaptation the film aims to be" (22). Many adaptations, he observes, "have chosen paths other than that of the literal-minded visualization of the original or even of 'spiritual fidelity,' making quite obvious departures from the original" (22). Such departures, McFarlane emphasizes, may be seen as a "commentary on", or even "a deconstruction"

of the original evaluating the film version of a novel from the viewpoint of a filmmaker's aim would eliminate the use of such terms as "violation," "distortion," "travesty" and negate the implied sense of the novel's supremacy.

McFarlane observes that, "fidelity to the original loses some of its privileged position" (10). Geoffrey Wagner, for example, suggests three following group headings: "transposition," in which "a novel is given directly on the screen with a minimum of apparent interference" (222). "Commentary," or "re-emphasis," or "re-structure," where "an original is taken and either purposely or inadvertently altered in some respect [. . .] when there has been a different intention on the part of the filmmaker, rather than infidelity or outright violation" (224); and finally, "analogy," which "must represent a fairly considerable departure for the sake of making another work of art" (226). In a similar vein, Dudley Andrew categorizes adaptations into "borrowing, intersection, and fidelity of transformation" (98). "Borrowing" – the most frequent mode of adaptation – is when the artist employs the material, idea, or form of an earlier, usually successful narrative.

Finally, "fidelity of transformation" is a kind of adaptation where film tries to measure up to a literary work, or of an audience expecting to make such a comparison. Here it is assumed that the task of adaptation is the reproduction in cinema of something essential about an original text.

Some scholars view adaptation as essentially an act of literary criticism. Neil Sinyard in his book, *Filming Literature. The Art of Screen Adaptation*, argues that filmmakers use the camera to interpret, not simply illustrate the original text. "A leitmotif of this book," Sinyard accentuates, is "the proposition that the best adaptations of books for film can often best be approached as an activity of literary criticism, not a pictorialisation of the complete novel" (117). Sinyard compares a film to a critical essay, arguing that like a critical essay, a film stresses what it sees as the main theme of the original source. The adaptation selects some episodes, and excludes others; it offers alternatives, and "in the process, like the best criticism, it can throw new light on the original" (117). The best film adaptations, then, as Sinyard sees it, "provide a critical gloss on the novels" (117).

Adaptation: From Literary Narrative to Screen Narrative

Nde Tene in *Adaptation Cinematographique de la Piece Family Saga de Bole Butake*, explains, "The term refers to the complex operations carried with the aim of transforming a work of literature into a work of cinema" (22). On the same line with Tene's notion of adaptation, Tidang Larisa in her dissertation, *Exploration de la Technic Narrativo-Dramatique dans la L' adaptation Theathrale de "Les Crocodile de Botswanga De Fabrice Eboue et Lionel Stekete* posits that, "adaptation is the transfer of a work from its artistic form and expressions to another, with possibility of modifying, while respecting its contents" (15). Adaptation in other words is a form of translation that is, translating information from one genre of arts into another art form, such as literature into film. Khalid Alqadi affirms this in *From Novel to Screen: Literary Adaptation in Cinema* as he puts "Adaptation is the translation of a novel so that it fits a new destination, a new target and a new audience" (17). This explains why film has many audiences than literature. From this premise, it would not be wrong to say that, the filmmaker's aim is to help extend the mission of the literary writer to the world view.

The above discussions on film adaptation, are relatively related to the focal point of this study that adaptation can be the making of a film or movie inspired from any written work not just literature. History, sociology or even anthropological works can also act as a primary source of adaptation or a popular existing story that has created impact in the glob as the case of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* which has inspired many adaptations of the same name, Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, and many others though differ in points of focus thereby highlighting adaptation shift, leading to infidelity.

Problems Affecting Adaptation

In other words, adaptation can also be termed as a process. This process in the study of cinema has difficulties that can be on the choice of the novel to be adapted, author and director's agreement, the analyses and interpretation of the novel, the desire to remain faithful to the source text and even the film production.

The author and Director Agreement

The author of every work has the right of his or her novel (book) and the ideas contained in it. For a filmmaker to make a film based on the novel (book), he has to buy the right

from the author, that is, the literary writer and or publishers of the book. This right usually done legally, gives the filmmaker the permission to rewrite and do a film on the novel (book). At this point, the filmmaker has the right to maintain the storyline or modify it. The filmmaker can be authorized to do a film without obtaining this copyright if the book has entered the public domain, if he, the filmmaker is doing it as an academic work or if the author is one of the producers of the film thereby, owning parts of the turnout of the end product. A work can go into public domain if it has existed for a number of years. Here, everyone is permitted to use it. On the other hand, negotiation becomes problematic especially when the author does not own full right over a work. Here, the publishers have to sit with the author(s) to decide on the sale of rights and procedure.

Interpretation of the Literary Text by the Filmmaker

The filmmaker who is interested in making a film based on a book will have to read the book and interpret it in order to get the meaning. This meaning serves as the idea behind his work, (adaptation). Multiple meanings and interpretations of a single text are only possible when different people analyze it. This explains why many different film versions of the same novel exist. As a result of this, many film critics and scholars argue about fidelity but are unable to give a clear-cut definition of it. When there are two different interpretations of the same novel, certainty is that, there will be two different films based on the same novel.

Fidelity Discourse on Film Adaptation

As soon as filmmakers produce films based on books, film critics emerge with the issue of fidelity. Fidelity in film discourse can be defined as the degree of closeness that exists between the source novel and its filmic counterpart. Kristin Spooner in *This is not Dickens: Fidelity, Nostalgia, and Adaptation* asserts that:

> Fidelity discourse has long been the most widespread mode of analysis in the field of adaptation studies, as both professional critics and casual filmgoers often evaluate an adaptation's worth based on its degree of faithfulness to it source text, usually a work of literature (novel). (27)

While some critics believe that film done from literature (novels) should be evaluated on the degree of its closeness to the novel, other think that the director's or filmmaker's creativity in retelling the same story in his perspective is very important. Looking

critically at the meaning of adaptation as a move from one medium to another, it will not be wrong to say that, the act of adaptation existed before cinema and did not pose any problem of fidelity. For instance, the works of Shakespeare were transferred from book to stage but those who did similar task from book to screen met with lot of criticism in terms of fidelity. In the article, "On the Origins of Adaptation: Rethinking Fidelity Discourse" Gary R. Bortolitti and Linda Hutcheon explain that:

> Shakespeare transferred his culture's narratives from page to stage and made them available to the whole new audience; we did not begrudge him his creative borrowing. Baz Luhrmann transferred one of these, Romeo and Juliet, from page to screen updating in the process arguably making it available for whole new teen audience; the critics excoriated him for his irreverence and nerve. His film, Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet was deemed unfaithful to the source despite using most of the text and action. (13)

The issue of fidelity in adaptation is a major concern. This problem is aggravated by the fact that, there are no defined criteria for judging fidelity. Two viewers of a film who have read the same book which the film is based on are likely to give different judgments on fidelity on the same work. The act of judging films based on literary narratives (novels) by their degree of faithfulness has raised endless debates on the subject. It is so because some critics seem to pay more attention to what has been left out while others are more interested in seeing the degree of creativity of the second author in the new arts form (film). While the former goes for fidelity as a criterion for judgment, the latter believes that fidelity is of no primal importance when it comes to evaluation. John Desmond and Peter Hawkes in *Adaptation: Studying Film and Literature* discuss that, "Fidelity no longer seems a compulsory criterion, given that, they have not agreed upon a method to compare the literary text and the film text, and no standard method, no matter of fidelity is indeed overrated" (35). To expound on this, Gary R. Bortolitti and Linda Hutcheon in "On the Origins of Adaptation: Rethinking Fidelity Discourse" further stress on Desmond's and Hawkes' stance by saying:

> While we acknowledge that part of the manifest pleasure (and risk) of adaptations lies in their relation of proximity to their adapted text in order to provoke discussion we want to take a strong stance here and suggest that fidelity to the "original" could in fact, be seen as irrelevant to the actual evolution of the "success" of an adaptation for two very important reasons. On the one hand, an adaptation stands on its own as an independent work, separate from the "source" and can be judged accordingly… On the other hand, the impact of adaptation can

> far exceed anything measurable only by its degree of proximity to the adapted work. (17)

The mentioned critics debunk fidelity as a criterion for judging adaptation in different terms. They believe that, there exist many elements both technical and artistic that can be evaluated to determine the degree of success in a given work of adaptation and how the second author, adapter uses these elements to portray aesthetics and creativity in the second texts (film). Another issue that complicates fidelity discourse is on what elements a work should be faithful to. The novel as a narrative genre of literature has multiple elements such as the plot, style, character, setting and décor that are transferred to the film narrative (film medium) and it is mostly very difficult or impossible to bring all these elements to film with exactitude. Holland affirms with the above premise when he says:

> If a film is not faithful to the original, we want to reason why. As many authors note, the question of fidelity is complicated by our notion of what, exactly, an adaptation should be faithful to every detail of the following; the plot, the author's apparent arguments, style Character, setting or perhaps the mysterious "spirit" of the original. Critics such as Joy Gould Boyum would add that each individual creates his or her own version of the novel and film and as such, adaptation perceived as faithful by the wide population becomes impossible. The debate becomes difficult to analyze, especially when the writer holds different implicit assumptions about "fidelity". (43)

It is explicit from the above discourse that, the notion of fidelity in adaptation is complex, that is, it varies from person to person which gives the reason why different writers give implicit assumptions about fidelity in the discourse of fidelity.

Surviving elements in the process of Novel to Film Adaptation

This process of adaptation of a novel to a film entails a re-writing of the story. While doing this, some elements which the novelist might have judged important to be included in the novel might be left out while others might be added by the filmmaker. In this section, we shall examine some of the important elements in the adaptation discourse so as to create closeness between the source novel text and the film text.

Plot

The plot of a novel is one of the elements that have to be restrained if the filmmaker has to remain faithful to the story. A viewer who has read the book might be expecting to see the order of events appear on the screen just as it is in the book. Most filmmakers like to modify plot in the process of adaptation. They might decide to start the film where the writer ended the novel. Sometimes the filmmaker might decide to bring in new events in the middle of the story or end it with different ways from the original story. In the case of Crusoe's narrative, the different filmmakers maintain the plot as the novelist though in the course of the process, some of them bring in new events per their interpretations of the story.

Dialogue

Dialogue in literature to film adaptation goes through metamorphosis. In the process of recreation, there is modification. This process takes place because cinema deals more with images and action than words. This explains why, cinema operates on the code of showing than speaking. There are rules to be respected when constructing cinematic dialogue. These rules are meant to use fewer words and more action to facilitate comprehension and development of plot (storyline). Sara Rauma in her dissertation, *Cinematic Dialogue, Literary Dialogue and The Art of Adaptation* attests that film dialogue is more about speaking less to mean more in the words as she puts "film dialogue is about compression and economy. This however does not mean that short lines for the sake of short lines. Rather, there are significant reasons for preferring compact dialogue" (26). These rules do not exist in the mind of the book writer who decides when, what the characters of a novel should speak. For this reason, the filmmaker works to reduce the dialogue while retaining the message of the first writer (the writer of the source novel). In our case study, the dialogues in Crusoe narrative are more about speaking less. The few dialogues we find in Crusoe's story are those between Crusoe and Friday.

Characters

Characterization in a novel is usually different from that of film because cinema works might have a reduced number of characters due to cost and management. Too many characters in the film will increase the cost of production and since film making is a business, there is a need to work with fewer characters. In most adaptations, that is, from

literature to film, a great reduction in the numbers of characters in the film. In some cases, one character in the film incarnates multiple roles in the novel. Characters with minor roles are completely wiped out in the film. This is seen in the adaptations of *Robinson Crusoe* as the filmmakers focus on the characters, Crusoe, Friday and his tribe people in order to show savagery and primitive nature of the people, though in *Man Friday* the filmmaker shows the opposite as Friday ridicules Crusoe's way as primitive.

Setting (time and place)

Setting in most literature to film adaptation is usually altered because the filmmaker is working with a vision based on two perspectives; the source material and his own inspiration. A western novel, adapted by an African filmmaker will pose a problem to the filmmaker in terms of place because the African society will differ from the west in terms of climate and infrastructure. An author might describe a scene in the sea and during the making of the film; the artistic director will find it difficult because of technology and finance. Setting can be altered because of the filmmaker's vision and style. However, filmmakers can manage technical issues of setting depending on the expertise or rewrite the scene to suit their environmental context. In Crusoe's narratives, the settings reflect the time and space as it is in the novel. In this point, we can say that the filmmaker stay to the source novel.

The Problematic of Transposition in the Adaptation Discourse

The major positions on adaptation outlined in this paper demonstrate that the novel to film problematic continues to be a debatable topic of inquiry among critics of both cinema and literature. As Mayer observes, the various approaches scholars take on the issue of adaptation "are far from being mutually exclusive" (13). The analysis here is based on some films adapted from renowned novels of the world. Some of these novels have many adaptations and an example is Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe.* It is important to mention here that *Robinson Crusoe's* adaptations are not unique in their imaginative rendering of the original text. The relationship between Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and the films is based on how the different filmmakers present the Crusoe myth in the different films. These filmmakers of *Robinson Crusoe* approach the Crusoe myth differently, personally, partially, individually, and critically. Instead of replicating Defoe's text, contemporary

filmmakers interpret while critiques interrogate it. In the process, the novel loses its status of distinctive privilege, and becomes subject to overtly ideological rereading, encompassing a seemingly inexhaustible variety of instances of film genres, including drama, comedy, fantasy and science fiction, and ranging from Bunuel's *Robinson Crusoe* to Keiser's Blue Lagoon and Haskin's *Robinson Crusoe on Mars*.

There are many adaptations of other writers' fictional works, that, similar to the cinematic *Robinson Crusoe* do not aim at fidelity to the original source, and take great freedom with the source novels. For example, Alfonso Cuaron's 1998 Great Expectations makes no attempts to seem authentically Dickensian. Although it retains the story's original title and the bare outline of the plot, it rewrites the original narrative entirely: the movie is set in modern-day Florida and New York; the filmmaker simplifies the story radically, and changes the names of most of the characters. Roland Joffe's 1995 The Scarlet Letter also transforms Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel of the same title into something entirely different. Joffe's film, Paul Niemeyer states, "grafts 1990s attitudes and ideas on to both Hawthorne's novel and on-to the colonial era in which it is set" (40). The end results are a radical change in storyline, and a very different ending. A 1995 film Clueless is an imaginative rendering of Jane Austen's novel Emma. Although loosely adapted, it is nonetheless recognizable. The film is set in the late 1990s California and imagines what Austen's heroine would be like if she lived in the twentieth century America.

The various versions of these classical texts mark the significantly multiple ways in which contemporary world conceives and recreates these narratives. Alterations of these works, as a famous Italian film director Franco Zeffirelli points out, may be justified because of the centuries that stand between these authors and ourselves. It is the "responsibility" of filmmakers to bridge a gap to the classics, Zeffirelli accentuates, and to capture the imagination, desire and expectations of modern audiences. For instance, *Robinson Crusoe* adaptations demonstrate the particular cultural "solutions" and frustrations tied to the era of their production. Although many themes of Defoe's novel are readily adaptable to film, there are certain aspects that automatically create tension between the original text and the films that adapt or employ that text. Filmmakers alter Defoe's eighteenth-century novel in order to tell and sell a story more amenable and relatable to contemporary viewers.

Some films retain a deep engagement with the original text, while others use just the main idea to focus on the issues pertinent and significant for contemporary viewers. Even the most "faithful" and "literal" adaptations of novels do more than simply respond to the original text. All these films are subject to the cultural and ideological preconceptions of their time. They are filmed in accordance with the codes and conventions familiar to the modern audiences. Such cultural factors affect adaptations in significant ways. It may mean simplifying, clarifying, or romanticizing the story line.

Conclusion

This paper sought to examine adaptation from novel to film and the approaches in the process of adapting an already existing novel into a film. It furthers looked at some key elements of film which must be taken into consideration when adapting a novel or any literary work into a film. Some of these elements discussed are: plot, characters, dialogue, and setting.

It has also discussed (fidelity and infidelity) of film adaptation in relation to novel and film. This problem resulted due to the recent surge in very popular books being adapted into films in the past few years. While some adaptations had been considered successful, a lot of film adaptations are met with the same pattern of criticism that it: *wasn't like the book* or *wasn't as good as the book*. So the question was raised whether a film's fidelity to the book that it is based on has any effect on its success, or if it impacts the film in other ways.

This study portrays that, novel to film adaptation is a rewriting, and at the same identifies some challenges which filmmakers may face in the process such as infidelity. It also reveals surviving elements in the process of Novel to Film Adaptation. On the same light, it illustrates that with the differences in the artists' ideologies and aesthetics; there should be the need for adaptation shift in novel and film adaptation. Hopefully from our results obtained, we are optimistic that this study will enhance the 21st century filmmaker who is interested in novel to film adaptation thereby serving the purpose of rewriting existing story from the novel form to the film form.

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