Twelve Fallacies in Contemporary Adaptation Theory

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T H O M A S   L E I T C H

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Contemporary Adaptation Theory

WHAT COULD BE MORE AUDACIOUS than to argue that the study of moving images
as adaptations of literary works, one of the very first shelters under which cin-
ema studies originally entered the academy, has been neglected? Yet that is ex-
actly what this essay will argue: that despite its venerable history, widespread
practice, and apparent influence, adaptation theory has remained tangential to
the thrust of film study because it has never been undertaken with conviction
and theoretical rigor. By examining a dozen interlinked fallacies that have kept
adaptation theory from fulfilling its analytical promise, I hope to claim for ad-
aptation theory more of the power it deserves.

   1. There is such a thing as contemporary adaptation theory. This is the found-
ing fallacy of adaptation studies, and the most important reason they have
been so largely ineffectual—because they have been practiced in a theoretical
vacuum, without the benefit of what Robert B. Ray has called "a presiding po-
etics."[1] There is, as the preceding sentence acknowledges, such a thing as ad-
aptation studies. It is pursued in dozens of books and hundreds of articles in
Literature/Film Quarterly and in classrooms across the country, from high
school to graduate school, in courses with names like "Dickens and Film" and
"From Page to Screen." But this flood of study of individual adaptations pro-
ceeds on the whole without the support of any more general theoretical ac-
count of what actually happens, or what ought to happen, when a group of
filmmakers set out to adapt a literary text. As Brian McFarlane has recently
observed: "In view of the nearly sixty years of writing about the adaptation of
novels into film . . . it is depressing to find at what a limited, tentative stage
the discourse has remained."[2] Despite the appearance of more recent method-
ologies from the empiricism of Morris Beja to the neo-Aristotelianism of James
Griffith, the most influential general account of cinema's relation to literature
continues to be George Bluestone's tendentious *Novels into Film,* now nearly
half a century old. Bluestone's categorical and essentialist treatment of the rela-
tions between movies and the books they are based on neglects or begs many

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crucial questions, and more recent commentators, even when they are as sharp as McFarlane (who will therefore claim particularly close attention in this essay) in taking exception to Bluestone, have largely allowed him to frame the terms of the debate.

Hence several fundamental questions in adaptation theory remain unasked, let alone unanswered. Everyone knows, for example, that movies are a collaborative medium, but is adaptation similarly collaborative, or is it the work of a single agent—the screenwriter or director—with the cast and crew behaving the same way as if their film were based on an original screenplay? Since virtually all feature films work from a pre-existing written text, the screenplay, how is a film's relation to its literary source different from its relation to its screenplay? Why has the novel, rather than the stage play or the short story, come to serve as the paradigm for cinematic adaptations of every kind? Given the myriad differences, not only between literary and cinematic texts, but between successive cinematic adaptations of a given literary text, or for that matter between different versions of a given story in the same medium, what exactly is it that film adaptations adapt, or are supposed to adapt? Finally, how does the relation between an adaptation and the text it is explicitly adapting compare to its intertextual relationships with scores of other precursor texts?

The institutional matrix of adaptation study—the fact that movies are so often used in courses like "Shakespeare and Film" as heuristic intertexts, the spoonful of sugar that helps the Bard's own text go down; the fact that studies of particular literary texts and their cinematic adaptations greatly outnumber more general considerations of what is at stake in adapting a text from one medium to another; the fact that even most general studies of adaptation are shaped by the case studies they seem designed mainly to illuminate—guarantees the operation of adaptation studies on a severe economy of theoretical principles which have ossified into a series of unvoiced and fallacious bromides most often taking the form of "binary oppositions that poststructuralist theory has taught us to deconstruct: literature versus cinema, high culture versus mass culture, original versus copy."[3] Precisely because these bromides are rarely articulated, they have retained the insidious power of Ibsen's ghosts: the power to direct discussion even among analysts who ought to know better.

2. *Differences between literary and cinematic texts are rooted in essential properties of their respective media.* This fallacy was first promulgated by Bluestone and by Siegfried Kracauer's roughly contemporaneous *Theory of Film,* which opens with the sweeping statement, "This study rests upon the assumption that each medium has a specific nature which invites certain kinds of communications while obstructing others."[4] More recently, it has been one of the rare articles of faith that has actually come under such general debate that few theorists would probably admit to subscribing to it these days. Nonetheless, it has been given new impetus in the past ten years by the reprinting in the last two

editions of the Oxford anthology *Film Theory and Criticism* of Seymour Chatman's accurately but fallaciously entitled essay, "What Novels Can Do That Films Can't (and Vice Versa)."[5] The most influential attacks on the essentialist view that novels and films are suited to fundamentally different tasks—in Chatman's view, assertion and depiction respectively—because of the features specific to their media have taken two forms. One is the empirical argument advanced by F. E. Sparshott and V. F. Perkins[6] that many films and not a few novels break the rules the essential qualities of their media apparently prescribe. The other is the more general attack Noël Carroll has mounted against what he calls Rudolf Arnheim's "specificity thesis" on the grounds of its philosophical gratuitousness: "There is no rationale for the system [of arts], for in truth it is only a collection. Thus, we have no need for the specificity thesis, for the question it answers—'Why is there a system of different arts?'—is not really an admissible question at all."[7] But these attacks can be usefully supplemented by a closer consideration of the alleged specifics of film and fiction.

Chatman, for instance, dismisses explicitly descriptive voiceover commentary in movies as uncinematic on the grounds that "it is not cinematic description but merely description by literary assertion transferred to film."[8] Would anybody writing today argue that the highly assertive and descriptive voiceover commentary by the murdered Joe Gillis in *Sunset Boulevard,* a film not adapted from a literary source, was inessential to the film's effect because, as McFarlane notes, voiceover narration by its nature "cannot be more than intermittent as distinct from the continuing nature of the novelistic first-person narration"—or, in Chatman's terms, that it was uncinematic *because* it was literary?[9] Chatman argues that such "arguably descriptive" closeups as Professor Jordan's amputated finger in *The 39 Steps,* the poisoned coffee cup in *Notorious,* and Marion Crane's staring dead eye in *Psycho* are actually hermeneutic rather than descriptive because "for all their capacity to arrest our attention, these close-ups in no way invite aesthetic contemplation."[10] But a generation of Hitchcock commentary has disagreed. These shots *do* invite aesthetic contemplation because they *are* descriptive and assertive.

In arguing from the other side that the camera's essential function of depicting without describing is confirmed by the use of terms like "the *camera eye* style"[11] to characterize passages of neutral, Hemingwayesque detail in novels that approach the condition of cinema, Chatman is again beguiled by his essentialism into mistaking how both novels and films work.

Consider one the most famous "camera eye" passages in fiction, this description of Sam Spade awakened in *The Maltese Falcon* by the news that Miles Archer, his partner, has been shot to death:

> Spade's thick fingers made a cigarette with deliberate care, sifting a
> measured quantity of tan flakes down into curved paper, spreading the

flakes so that they lay equal at the ends with a slight depression in the
middle, thumbs rolling the paper's inner edge down and up under the
outer edge as forefingers pressed it over, thumbs and fingers sliding to
the paper cylinder's ends to hold it even while tongue licked the flap,
left forefinger and thumb pinching their end while right forefinger and
thumb smoothed the damp seam, right forefinger and thumb twisting
their end and lifting the other to Spade's mouth.[12]

According to Chatman, this depiction of Spade rolling a cigarette should be
utterly neutral rather than assertive. But it is not only not neutral; it is much
less neutral, much more assertive, than it would be if it had been included,
for instance, in John Huston's 1941 film version of *The Maltese Falcon,* which
substitutes a brief but highly revealing telephone call Spade makes to his sec-
retary Effie Perrine ("You'll have to break the news to Iva. I'd fry first") before
dissolving to Spade's arrival at Bush and Stockton Streets. The perspective of
aesthetic history has offered several ways to read this passage. It is first of all
a stylistic tour de force, an imitation of the dogged routines Nick Adams fol-
lows in pitching camp and making pancakes in Hemingway's "Big Two-
Hearted River." In addition, its apparent neutrality can be read as a commen-
tary on Spade's mechanical coldness, the emotional detachment from his part-
ner's murder that will make him Archer's ironically perfect avenger. What it
figures most powerfully, however, is Spade's remoteness, not from Archer, but
from us. Like Nick Adams, Spade is presumably in the grip of powerful emo-
tions during this scene. Not only are the emotions not described; the resolute
eschewing of psychological description makes the suppression of these emo-
tions, whether it is Spade's or Dashiell Hammett's, the scene's leading issue.
Pauline Kael once remarked that "Huston was a good enough screenwriter to
see that Hammett had already written the scenario."[13] But Hammett's novel,
though it suppresses any explicit indication of Spade's thoughts or feelings as
completely as Huston's film, is much more disturbing, and most disturbing in
its most apparently 'cinematic' passages, because readers of novels, unlike
viewers of movies, *expect* a certain amount of psychological description and
are troubled, even if they do not know why, if it is suppressed.

This line of reasoning might seem to substitute one essentialist argument
for another. Novels are not assertive and descriptive, as Chatman claims, in
contradistinction to films; instead novels are the medium that gravitates
toward psychological analysis, so that the absence of such analysis becomes a
highly marked, non-novelistic or cinematic device. It would be more accurate,
however, to consider all Chatman's arguments together and conclude that they
apply not to essential properties of novels and films, but to specific reading
habits that are grounded in the history of fashion, taste, and analysis rather
than in any specific technical properties of novels and films.

Hence voiceover commentary has come to seem less uncinematic because of the perceptive analysis of its salient effects by J. P. Telotte and Sarah Kozloff. Hitchcock's closeups seem more worthy of aesthetic contemplation because commentators have refashioned Hitchcock the storyteller into Hitchcock the artist. Hammett's silence about Sam Spade's thought seems more disturbing at least in part because Huston's film has shown by contrast how such silence can be naturalized instead of emphasized. Contemporary film scholars are much more likely to mine movies for assertions, from economic subtexts to gender politics, as if they were novels, but that only means that film analysis, not films themselves, has become, as Chatman might say, more novelistic—or, to be fair, more effective. Though novels and films may seem at any given moment in the history of narrative theory to have essentially distinctive properties, those properties are functions of their historical moments and not of the media themselves.

3. Literary texts are verbal, films visual. Of all the explicitly stated fallacies that have substituted for theoretical principles in adaptation study, this is the most enduring and pernicious. Although the more general principle that literature and film are distinguished by essential properties of their presentational media has at least come in for lively debate by theorists ever since Sparshott and Perkins, film scholars have been much less inclined to reconsider the implications of this more specific bromide. Yet it is obviously untrue, not because literary texts are not verbal, but because films are not strictly speaking visual. At least they have not been purely visual for at least seventy-five years—most of film history. Films since the coming of synchronized sound, and perhaps even before, have been audio-visual, not visual, depending as they do on soundtracks as well as image tracks for their effects. Commentators who continue to brush aside synchronized sound as a mere appendage to the visual essence of cinema are overlooking several powerful developments in film history. Movies like *Citizen Kane* have introduced sound-driven radio aesthetics into cinema; even stripped of its spectacular visuals, Orson Welles's landmark film makes perfect sense because of the radio-shaped continuity of its soundtrack. More recent filmmaking has overlapped increasingly with television, a medium whose narratives are so largely driven by their soundtracks rather than their image tracks that Welles called television "illustrated radio."[14] In an even more recent move toward greater synergy, movies have been marketed through their musical soundtracks as well as vice-versa.

Cinema since the silent era has been an audio-visual medium that depends on engaging exactly two of its audience's five senses as if they were sufficient to constitute the sensory envelope of an entire world. It would make more sense to define cinema as a non-olfactory medium—that is, a medium that has the technological capacity to incorporate smells but chooses not to do so—than to define it as a visual medium. Anyone who doubts the dependence

of contemporary cinema on the complex interrelations of visual and auditory stimulation should teach a course on silent melodrama, whose visual track requires viewing habits quite as foreign as those of Sanskrit interpreters from modern audiences' acculturated dependence on a finely-calculated series of combinations of sounds and images. But movies as we know them are not simply an audio-visual medium, since, as McFarlane observes, "the novel draws on a wholly *verbal* sign system, the film variously, and sometimes simultaneously, on *visual, aural,* and *verbal* signifiers."[15] Fifty years ago, Laurence Olivier recognized that in bringing *Henry V* and *Hamlet* to the screen, he was not merely responsible for translating Shakespeare's poetry into cinematic images; he was equally responsible for staging poetic set-pieces his audience would have come to the movies specifically to hear, speeches like "To be or not to be" and "Once more into the breach, my friends." Movies cannot therefore legitimately be contrasted with literary texts on the grounds of their visual signifying system, because their actual signifying system, combining images and sounds and excluding information that might be processed by the other three senses, is a great deal more subtle and complex than visual iconicity.

Instead of saying that literary texts are verbal and movies aren't, it would be more accurate to say that movies depend on prescribed, unalterable visual and verbal *performances* in a way literary texts don't.[16] Cary Grant, James Stewart, John Wayne, even Marilyn Monroe are as well-remembered for their distinctive voices as for their distinctive looks. This is not necessarily a good thing. An audience watching a film version of *The Importance of Being Earnest* is constrained to hear Oscar Wilde's epigrams in exactly the way the performers are delivering them, whereas the audience reading Wilde's play can imagine them paced and inflected any way they like. One of the often-remarked differences between movies and plays, in fact, is that the iterative, interactive nature of dramatic performance allows performers to adjust their performances from night to night so that there will never be a single definitive performance of *Everybody Comes to Rick's* in the way there is a definitive performance of *Casablanca,* at least in the absence of a film remake that might threaten the original's primacy.

Because films depend on screenplays which in turn often depend on literary source material, in fact, they are doubly performative. Actors and actresses are translating into performance a written script which is itself an adaptation of a prior literary source, with the important difference that the script is a performance text—a text that requires interpretation first by its performers and then by its audience for completion—whereas a literary text requires only interpretation by its readers.

4. Novels are better than films. I have specified novels rather than literary texts here for two reasons. Using the term "literary texts" instead would already beg the question because "literature" carries an honorific charge "cinema" does not. Since even the term "classic cinema" is a long way from having

the same implication as "literary classic," written texts themselves, unlike films, would seem to fall into two distinct orders, and any film that sought to adapt a work of literature could only hope to fall into a category of films that does not yet have a name. Although theater critics have always condescended to the canned nature of cinema, which freezes a single performance text forever instead of allowing retakes every night, the more general assumption that literary texts are richer, subtler, or more sophisticated than cinematic texts is confined largely to the novel. No critic to my knowledge has claimed that short stories are better than movies.

The tenacity of the prejudice in favor of novels and against films is due no doubt in part to the impossibility of refuting it. Though it takes less time for most audiences to sit through most feature films than it does for them to read most novels, films, as many commentators realized long ago, can contain quite as many telling details as novels. If their stories are unlikely to be as intricate, they can register behavioral traits and background details more fully, and during their more limited running time they are capable of commanding closer attention from a mass audience, even though they will still be comprehensible to less attentive viewers. The old saw that movies can be read in fewer different ways than novels because their critical history is shorter becomes for better or worse less relevant every year, as the flood of Internet commentary on *Pulp Fiction* and *Memento* does its best to make up for the hundred years' head start that has made "The Turn of the Screw" a classic of interpretive debate.

Since there is no prima facie reason why novels should be assumed to be better than movies, the question to ask is not why this assumption is wrong but why it is so stoutly, albeit tacitly, maintained. Entrenched representational forms have always greeted new rivals with a suspicion amounting to hostility, especially if economic power is at stake, as it was in the rise of the novel as the predominant mode of entertainment for the rising middle class two centuries ago. So the snobbery opera lovers feel for devotees of Broadway musicals is echoed by the snobbery with which fans of Rodgers and Hammerstein dismiss their cinematic incarnations. It is possible, in addition, that the reason that "once there may have been little debate about the fact that a theatrical performance of Shakespeare was far superior to a filmic reproduction" was simply that in the bad old days before Olivier and Welles, movies were worse than plays. In these more enlightened times, however, "the cinema now demands equal time and attention when we argue the relative value and meaning of movies and literature"[17] because the arguments against cinema concern "film-as-it-was" under the Hollywood moguls, the star system, and the undifferentiated target audience rather than "film-as-it-is"[18] in the age of quasi-independent production and niche marketing. Even now, of course, movies remain notoriously a mass medium that seeks as broad an audience as possible. A film like *Titanic* is disdained because it tries to provide something for everyone—

historical re-creation, epic sweep, class warfare, adolescent romance, hissable villains, state-of-the-art visual effects, broken china—even though Shakespeare is praised for the corresponding reason. And of course cinema is a capital-intensive, publicity-intensive medium whose overhyped failures, unlike the failed novels that sink in merciful silence, become negative media events in their own right. How could a medium that produced *Heaven's Gate, Ishtar,* and *Mom and Dad Save the World* ever compete with the great tradition of the novel, the vast majority of whose exemplars have long faded from memory? Beyond all these prejudices, however, there is one final fallacious assumption that must be examined in closer detail.

5. Novels deal in concepts, films in percepts. These terms are derived from Bluestone's observation that "where the moving image comes to us directly through perception, language must be filtered through the screen of conceptual apprehension. And the conceptual process, though allied to and often taking its point of departure from the precept, represents a different mode of experience, a different way of apprehending the universe."[19] On its own terms this observation seems unexceptionable. The visual markers films use for dogs, for instance, including such different markers as Rin Tin Tin, Lassie, and Huckleberry Hound, are all iconic rather than indexical, like the words *dog, hound,* and *pooch.* The auditory markers films uses for dogs—barking, whining, growling—are so much more obviously iconic that most audiences cannot distinguish these recorded sounds from their sources. Fallacies enter only when the conceptual is defined in contradistinction to the perceptual, as an exclusive property of verbal texts, and the pleasures movies offer their audiences are defined in terms that privilege the perceptual.

Such steps have often been taken both by ontologists and apologists for movies. In reserving the notion of "conceptual process"[20] for readers of prose fiction, for example, Gerald Mast evidently assumes that the kind of competence required to make sense of a fictional film is non-conceptual and that moviegoers watch films only for their kinesthetic images, not for their conceptual implications. But this argument overlooks the fact that virtually all films screened for the purpose of entertainment are fictional narratives which invoke not only visual codes but auditory codes, narrative codes, fictional codes, and a rhetoric of figuration. Interpreting and integrating these codes into the single signifying system of a given film surely requires as much conceptual initiative and agility as interpreting the verbal (and narrative and fictional and figural) signifying system of a given novel. Images may be percepts, but the fictional narratives that overwhelmingly draw audiences into movie theaters are not.

Nor are cinematic images as neutral and innocent as Bluestone and Mast assume. In "A Future for the Novel" (1956), Alain Robbe-Grillet contrasted novels and their film adaptations by arguing that

in the initial novel, the objects and gestures forming the very fabric
of the plot disappeared completely, leaving behind only their *signifi-
cations:* the empty chair became only absence or expectation, the
hand placed on a shoulder became a sign of friendliness, the bars on
the window became only the impossibility of leaving. . . . But in the
cinema, one *sees* the chair, the movement of the hand, the shape of
the bars. What they signify remains obvious, but instead of monopo-
lizing our attention, it becomes something added, even something in
excess . . . because what affects us . . . are the gestures themselves . . .
to which the cinema has suddenly (and unintentionally) restored
their *reality.*[21]

But it would be impossible to maintain such a distinction today in view not
only of novels like Robbe-Grillet's own, which seeks to restore the "reality" to
objects and gestures by frustrating any definitive account of their significa-
tions, but of the digitized dinosaurs of *Jurassic Park* and the impossible acro-
batics of *Spider-Man* and *Minority Report,* which depend not on their intimacy
with the pre-existing physical reality they misleadingly imply but on produc-
ing a reality effect quite as loaded as Robbe-Grillet's empty chair.

Even though "concept" versus 'percept,'" as James Griffith has pointed
out, "offers critical certainty and shuts off discussion,"[22] the dichotomy has
proved lamentably tenacious. Brian McFarlane, in the most acute recent gen-
eral study of adaptation, follows Bluestone in arguing that "the verbal sign,
with its low iconicity and high symbolic function, works *conceptually,* whereas
the cinematic sign, with its high iconicity and uncertain symbolic function,
works directly, sensuously, *perceptually.*"[23] The implication McFarlane draws
from this contrast is that adaptation study should not rest content with "im-
pressionistic" comparisons that emphasize films' alleged "fail[ure] to find satis-
factory visual representations of key verbal signs," but should "consider to
what extent the film-maker has picked up visual suggestions from the novel
in his representations of key verbal signs—and how the visual representation
affects one's 'reading' of the film text."[24] McFarlane goes on to argue that at
several crucial points in the 1946 *Great Expectations,* David Lean succeeds not
only in capturing a sense of Pip's first-person narrative voice but in grounding
symbolic functions in a realistic mise-en-scène rather than imposing them by
fiat. The result is that "the realistic meaning of the action seems to me to melt
into the symbolic. . . . The symbolic is a function of the mise-en-scène, inextri-
cably interwoven into the realist texture."[25] McFarlane acknowledges, how-
ever, that "as one very familiar with the film, I find it hard to be sure how far
on a single or first viewing a spectator might be aware of the symbolic func-
tions I now discern"[26] in Magwitch's floundering in the mud, Jagger's towering
over Pip and Estella, and the stormy night sky that heralds Magwitch's return.

The difference between percept and concept may well be more properly a function of rereading, and of a specifically analytical kind of rereading, than of a difference between movies, which are commonly assumed against mounting evidence to be watched only once, and novels, which are assumed to be endlessly rereadable, with each rereading converting more percepts to concepts.

6. *Novels create more complex characters than movies because they offer more immediate and complete access to characters' psychological states.* The ability to enter the minds of fictional characters directly is of course one of the glories, as it is one of the constitutive distinctions, of prose fiction—the only medium whose conventions allow third-person sentences beginning "she thought"— and it is indeed hard for movies to compete with novels in this regard. But it is just as hard for other media whose representation of complex characters has long been accepted. Since most novels take longer to read than two hours, it stands to reason that they have more leisure to develop characters who change over time. But I have never read an argument that long novels create more compelling characters than shorter novels, or even than short stories. The stricture against brevity seems to condemn movies alone.

Nor will the argument that cinema's characters are limited by its inability to present thought directly stand up to analysis. When Bluestone notes that "the film, having only arrangements of space to work with, cannot render thought, for the moment thought is externalized it is no longer thought,"[27] his observation is equally apt to drama as to film. Yet no one questions the ability of playwrights from Euripides to Chekhov to create complex characters. It is true, of course, that Shakespeare's dramaturgy allows him soliloquies and asides that make it easier to dramatize thought, but Hamlet's thoughts are still necessarily externalized. The conclusion that follows is not that externalized thought is no longer thought, but that the pleasures of many non-novelistic media are based to a large extent in the invitation they extend to audiences to infer what characters are thinking on the basis of their speech and behavior, and that thoughts that are inferred can be just as subtle and profound as thoughts that are presented directly.

This last point deserves closer consideration. Novels, plays, and movies can each hardly help leaving out many details from their discourse. Wolfgang Iser, calling these omissions "gaps" or "blanks," has analyzed at length the processes by which readers are encouraged to fill them in, the freedom they have in choosing from among alternative possibilities, and the limitations on that freedom that define "failure" as "filling the blank exclusively with one's own projections."[28] What Iser does not consider is the necessity of gaps, not as an inevitable corollary of a given story's incompleteness, but as the very basis of its appeal. For it is precisely the business of fictional narratives to create a field in which audiences are invited to make inferences about what the characters are feeling or planning, where the story is going, what particular

details will mean, and how everything will turn out. Such inferences are the product of the same increasingly educated guesswork that derives concepts from percepts. These inferences confer both the sense of intimacy with fictional characters that makes them more memorable than most real people and the assurance that the fictional field at hand comprises a world more satisfyingly coherent than the world outside. Novels and plays and movies might be said paradoxically to display their gaps in the sense that they depend for the pleasures they provide on audiences noticing and choosing to fill some of them but not others.[29]

The importance of this invitation to the audience is confirmed by the fact that few moviegoers read screenplays for pleasure—not because screenplays have no gaps (they specify many fewer details than either the literary texts they are based on or the movies that are based on them), but because their gaps are designed to be filled once and for all by the cast and crew, not displayed as an invitation to nonprofessional audiences' active participation. It is one of Shakespeare's most underappreciated gifts that the plays generations of readers have revered are nothing more than performance texts whose verbal texture happens to support an incomparably richer sense of reality than that of any screenplay to date.

Novels and movies, to stick with the two media most often contrasted in this regard, typically depend for their effects on different kinds of gaps. Because Jane Austen's novels, for example, though exceptionally precise in revealing the thoughts of each of their fictional heroines, limit themselves to exactly one such heroine per novel, cinematic adaptations of her work typically narrow the gap between the intimacy viewers feel with her heroines and the corresponding lack of intimacy they feel with other characters. Leo Braudy has contended that "the basic nature of character in film is omission. . . . Film character achieves complexity by its emphasis on incomplete knowledge, by its conscious play with the limits a physical, external medium imposes upon it."[30] But Sam Spade's disturbingly unreadable rolling of a cigarette in Hammett's novel raises the possibility that the basis of *all* character may well be incompleteness and omission—that characters are by definition figures whose gaps allow readers or viewers to project for them a life that seems more vivid, realistic, and complex than their explicitly specified thoughts and actions. At the very least, it does not follow either that novels and movies are condemned to certain kinds of gaps that are specific to their media, or that one sort of gap is better than another. What determines the success of a given work is neither the decision to withhold nor the decision to specify a character's thoughts, but the subtlety, maturity, and fullness of the pattern that emerges from thoughts and actions specified or inferred. These are not criteria on which any particular medium has a monopoly.

7. *Cinema's visual specification usurps its audience's imagination.* Perhaps

dismayed that television has killed the novel-reading tastes of a generation of students who lack the patience to appreciate psychological fiction or to wait for a slow payoff, commentators like McFarlane have often concluded more generally that "because of its high iconicity, the cinema has left no scope for the imaginative activity necessary to the reader's visualization of what he reads."[31] This assumption amusingly manages to invert the assumption that novels' ability to present thought directly makes their characters potentially deeper and richer than movie characters while still condemning movies as inferior. In fact, the argument often urged against cinema's overspecification would make more sense if it were directed against novelists like Henry James, since the details movies are compelled to specify—the shape of the settee on which two lovers are sitting, the distance between them, the color of the wallpaper behind them—are often inconsequential, whereas the thoughts going through their minds, which novels are much more likely than films to specify with great precision, are crucial.

Despite this logical contradiction, the argument against cinema's over-specification is in important ways consistent with the argument against its lack of direct access to characters' minds. The basis of the charge in both cases is that films are incapable of translating the unique properties of verbal texts without transforming, diminishing, or otherwise betraying them. Hence McFarlane notes the impossibility of translating Dickens's descriptions to the screen despite their apparent wealth of visual detail, as in Pip's first description of Wemmick as

> a dry man, rather short in stature, with a square wooden face whose
> expression seemed to have been imperfectly chipped out with a dull-
> edged chisel. There were some marks in it that might have been dim-
> ples, if the material had been softer and the instrument finer, but
> which, as it was, were only dints. The chisel had made three or four
> of these attempts at embellishment over his nose, but had given them
> up without any effort to smooth them off.[32]

McFarlane aptly notes that such a passage, which "may seem like a rich visual invitation to a film-maker," in truth "offer[s] little in the way of actual physical detail and a good deal of purely verbal energy working toward a sense of the grotesque."[33] The fallacy lies in two assumptions about the nature of imagery in prose fiction, the first of which McFarlane partly identifies himself. When Dickens describes Wemmick's face as carved out of wood, or when he describes Scrooge's home in *A Christmas Carol* as "a gloomy suite of rooms, in a lowering pile of building up a yard, where it had so little business to be, that one could scarcely help fancying it must have run there when it was a young house, playing at hide-and-seek with other houses, and have forgotten the way out again,"[34] his imagery depends more on fanciful ideas and rhythmically

stylized rhetoric than on any set of images. It is not the reader's job to translate such passages into visually realized or narrativized images of Wemmick's face under the chisel (how broad a chisel, and how long did the operation take?) or Scrooge's house playing hide-and-seek with other houses (how many other houses? was Scrooge's house the smallest? how long did the other houses look for it before they gave up?) but to enjoy them as concepts whose sensory appeal is at least as much to the ear as to the eye. The dauntingly rich visual field of films does not inhibit viewers' imagination, because imagining, as Chatman has pointed out, cannot legitimately be reduced to "picturing."[35]

The deeper fallacy, which McFarlane does not identify, is the assumption that it would be an advantage to a film adaptation if Dickens were to specify Wemmick's visual reality more closely because the fewer gaps the novelist leaves, the easier it is to fill them without transgressing.[36] On this analysis, it would be a hopeless endeavor to adapt Austen's novels to film because their visual texture is so remarkably thin that adapters are compelled to draw on ancillary historical accounts to dress all the characters and furnish their rooms. Austen's novels would be much better suited to radio, which would emphasize her subtlety in distinguishing her characters' voices without the necessity of supplying extraneous visual details. But even the most deferential film adapters commonly approach such gaps not with trepidation but with a sense of opportunity to supply their own details because they assume that films will differ from their sources in myriad ways and are eager to invent details whenever the novel's discourse gives them leave to do so. Just as gaps are the engine of narrative engagement for the audience, they are the license for the kinds of filmmaking inventions that elevate adaptations above servile transcriptions. Even to talk of the inventiveness of deferential adapters, however, anticipates the next fallacy.

8. *Fidelity is the most appropriate criterion to use in analyzing adaptations.* McFarlane's restive description of "the near-fixation with the issue of fidelity" that has "inhibited and blurred" adaptation study since its inception is all too accurate.[37] Fidelity to its source text—whether it is conceived as success in re-creating specific textual details or the effect of the whole—is a hopelessly fallacious measure of a given adaptation's value because it is unattainable, undesirable, and theoretically possible only in a trivial sense. Like translations to a new language, adaptations will always reveal their sources' superiority because whatever their faults, the source texts will always be better at being themselves. Even if the adaptations are remakes in the same medium, their most conscientious attempts to replicate the original will betray their differences, and thus their inferiority, all the more plainly—a point made particularly clear in the critical discourse on Gus Van Sant's instructive 1998 remake of Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*. Van Sant's film prompted critics across the country to complain not only that Vince Vaughn and Anne Heche were inadequate

substitutes for Anthony Perkins and Janet Leigh but that it didn't matter that Julianne Moore was a better actress than Vera Miles because her performance was *different,* and every departure from Hitchcock's text, which Van Sant had promised to follow line by line and shot by shot, was by definition a betrayal. The only remake that would have maintained perfect fidelity to the original text would have been a re-release of that text. But as McFarlane broadly implies in his discussion of Martin Scorses's *Cape Fear* (1991) as a remake and commentary on J. Lee-Thompson's 1961 version, even a re-release of the original film might well have a profoundly different effect on audiences influenced by thirty years of changes in social mores, generic prestige, family values, and industry self-censorship.[38]

Given the indefensibility of fidelity as a criterion for the analysis of adaptations, why has it maintained such a stifling grip on adaptation study? The likely reasons seem less theoretical than institutional. The assumption of fidelity is really an appeal to anteriority, the primacy of classic over modern texts which are likely to come under suspicion by exactly the teachers trained in literary studies—for example, the Shakespeareans giving courses in "Shakespeare on Film" or using the Kenneth Branagh and Mel Gibson *Hamlets* as classroom anodynes—who are most likely to be interested in adaptations.[39] At least until the infant study of novelizations adapted from cinematic originals becomes a full-fledged discipline, the valorization of fidelity amounts to a valorization of literature as such in the face of the insurgent challenge of cinema studies. And the theoretical poverty of fidelity as a touchstone of value, which begs analytical questions that might bedevil other approaches, is no stumbling block to commentators who are suspicious of theory in the first place.

These explanations, however, still leave unquestioned the more general assumption that the main business of commentators who are considering film adaptations is evaluating them, whether vis-à-vis their source texts or on their own merits. The peculiarity of this assumption can hardly be overstated. Evaluation may well be "one of the most venerable, central, theoretically significant, and pragmatically inescapable set of problems" in criticism.[40] Yet the whole tendency of cinema studies since universities first took it up thirty years ago has been away from evaluation as a critical project—except in the area of adaptation study. The Top Ten lists that so roiled readers of *Sight and Sound* in the years before cinema studies made it into the academy have now lost the headlines to newspaper reviewers' annual roundups and the American Film Institute, freeing film scholars to focus on analytical and theoretical problems. Only adaptation study, whether or not it uses the source text as a touchstone, remains obsessed with asking whether a given film is any good as a preliminary, a precondition, or a substitute for asking how it works.

9. Source texts are more original than adaptations. A primary reason that adaptation study remains obsessed with fidelity as a criterion for evaluation is

that adaptations raise questions about the nature of authorship that would be difficult to answer without the bulwark of fidelity. It is much easier to dismiss adaptations as inevitably blurred mechanical reproductions of original works of art than to grapple with the thorny questions of just what constitutes originality and in what sense Robert James Waller's phenomenally popular novels are themselves less mechanically reproduced than Clint Eastwood's film version of *The Bridges of Madison County*.

The basis for the assumption that literary texts are to be valued for an originality that adaptations lack is clarified by considering the apparently exceptional case of William Shakespeare, nearly all of whose plays are adaptations, often to a new medium, of earlier material from sources as diverse as Holinshed's *Chronicles* and Greene's *Pandosto*. The originality of Shakespeare, his defenders asseverate, depends precisely on his seeing the artistic potential of inert source materials; he is an alchemist, not an adapter, as one can see by comparing any of his plays with its base original. But this defense demonstrates only that some adaptations are better than others, not that the best adaptations aren't really adaptations at all. Nor does it demonstrate that only writers can escape the label of adapter, since there are several noted film adapters sanctified by the name of auteur. Orson Welles wrote most of his own screenplays, typically based on earlier source material. Stanley Kubrick's films, all of them similarly adaptations of literary source texts, are universally recognized as distinctively his. Perhaps most startling of all are Walt Disney's animated versions of children's classics (*Alice in Wonderland*), folk classics (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*), demi-classics (*Bambi*), and non-classics (*101 Dalmations*), in which the producer continues his successful career as auteur some forty years after his death.

Perhaps the best illustration of the slippery nature of originality in adaptation is the critical reception of Hitchcock, who emerged as an auteur in France in the 1950s and in America ten years later precisely to the extent that his champions were able to make a case for thematic affinities among his many films that ran deeper than recycled genre formulas. The further Hitchcock's star rose as the only begetter of his films, the less "a film criticism centred on directors" was "concerned to follow up Hitchcock's statements . . . of indebtedness to English literary figures,"[41] even though only a handful of Hitchcock films—*The Ring, Champagne, Saboteur, North by Northwest, Torn Curtain*—are based on original screenplays.[42] Only with the decline of auteurism as a critical framework did critics like Charles Barr turn to a closer examination of Hitchcock's sources.

The moral implicit in the shifting fortunes of writers and directors as creative artists seems to be the enduring appeal of *someone's* originality as an artistic value and the need commentators continually feel to identify a single shaping intelligence as a given work's creator. The reason that originality

maintains a central position in adaptation study but not cinema studies gener-
ally is that cinema studies has long rejected aesthetics as its leading methodol-
ogy in favor of analytical and theoretical critique. The antipathetic tendencies
of cinema studies and adaptation study have so exacerbated each other that
adaptation study is now the safest refuge for film scholars unsympathetic to
the prevailing currents in cinema studies today, whose discourse, if it took any
notice of adaptation at all, would no doubt dismiss it with the observation that
all texts are intertexts. That is, all texts quote or embed fragments of earlier
texts, in Mikhail Bakhtin's terms, typically without explicit acknowledgment,
often without conscious intention, and never with any attempt at straightfor-
ward replication of the original's force. Indeed, the novel, which Bakhtin
hailed as the dialogic mode par excellence because in "the rich soil of novelis-
tic prose," the "internally dialogized discourse" Bakhtin describes as double-
voiced or heteroglot "sinks its roots deep into a fundamental, socio-linguistic
speech diversity and multi-languaged-ness,"[43] has long been eclipsed by the
junkyard aesthetics of the cinema. Movies are a mode whose elastic form, by
turns comic, ironic, and parodic, can tolerate heteroglossia that would wreck
more narrowly defined forms. Indeed, movies themselves may already in turn
have been eclipsed by television series like *The Simpsons,* surely the most carni-
valistic work of fiction enjoyed by a large contemporary audience—except of
course for the World Wide Web in its entirety.

    10. Adaptations are adapting exactly one text apiece. It might seem com-
monsensical to assume a one-to-one correspondence between film adaptations
and their literary sources. But just as a novel like *Frankenstein* may serve as the
vehicle for over a hundred adaptations, each individual adaptation invokes
many precursor texts besides the one whose title it usually borrows. When
McFarlane begins his disapproving discussion of the criterion of fidelity by
asking satirically, "Is it really 'Jamesian'? Is it 'true to Lawrence'? Does it 'cap-
ture the spirit of Dickens'?","[44] he is invoking authorial intention as a possible
regulatory function. But the phrases he chooses, especially "Jamesian" and
"capture the spirit of Dickens," are reminders that adaptations of the works of
famous and prolific novelists are customarily measured not only against the
novels they explicitly adapt but against the distinctive world or style or tone
associated with the author in general. Adaptations of *Great Expectations* invoke
not only textual particulars of Dickens's novel but more general conventions of
the Dickens world: genial satire, sentimental benevolence, comically grotesque
minor characters, happy endings. Hence the "more buoyant ending" tacked
onto David Lean's *Great Expectations,* an ending McFarlane finds so charm-
ingly redolent of British aspirations at the end of World War II that "one is led
to have more in mind than the famous novel whose title Lean's film bears,"[45]
is arguably more Dickensian than the uncharacteristically downbeat ending
Dickens himself supplied.

Nor is the world or style or career of the author the only precursor text that competes with the particular novel or play or story for attention. Hollywood adaptations of foreign novels invariably foreground their particular nationalities and historical moments in ways their source novels rarely do. American adaptations make much more of the Surrey of *Emma* and the London of *The Picture of Dorian Gray,* and the innumerable adaptations of Agatha Christie beginning with *Murder on the Orient Express* mark their historical period more emphatically than their forerunners do. Dozens of adaptations that open with screens showing copies of the books on which they are based, from *A Christmas Carol* to *The Postman Always Rings Twice,* invoke not only their specific precursor texts but the aura of literature as such to confer a sense of authority. And as McFarlane himself points out, films as different as *Great Expectations* and *Cape Fear* inevitably comment on their own cultural and historical contexts. Nor will it do to argue that the author, a collection of national characteristics or historical periods, or the institutions of literature and cultural history themselves are not textualized in the same way novels and plays are, since even if they were not textualized before their adaptation, the adaptations confer a specifically textual status on them by the mode of their reference, which can borrow only the authority it grants its subjects. Hence Imelda Whelehan has observed that "when . . . we study a text such as *Hamlet* which has been subjected to countless adaptations . . . [we] recognize that in untangling one adaptation from another, we have recourse to many sources outside both the play and subsequent films."[46]

Commentators on adaptations like McFarlane often recognize the richness of their heteroglossia but rarely pursue its leading implication: that no intertextual model, however careful, can be adequate to the study of adaptation if it limits each intertext to a single precursor. As Bakhtin argues of the novel:

> The real task of stylistic analysis consists in uncovering all the available orchestrating languages in the composition of the novel, grasping the precise degree of distancing that separates each language from its most immediate semantic instantiation in the work as a whole, and the varying angles of refraction of intentions within it, understanding their dialogic interrelationship and—finally—if there *is* direct authorial discourse, determining the heteroglot background outside the work that dialogizes it.[47]

Adaptation study requires as sensitive and rigorous attention to the widest possible array of a film's precursor texts as McFarlane devotes to the novels the films he considers adapt.

11. Adaptations are intertexts, their precursor texts simply texts. This is the assumption that underlies the last two assumptions about originality and the

one-to-one congruence adaptations are widely held to betray. An adaptation is assumed to be a window into a text on which it depends for its authority, and the business of viewers and analysts is to look through the window for signs of the original text. But texts themselves are assumed to be not windows but paintings that invite readers to look at or into them than through them. This assumption vitiates even so perceptive an analysis as Seymour Chatman's discussion of Harold Pinter's adaptation of John Fowles's novel *The French Lieutenant's Woman* for Karel Reisz's 1981 film, which focuses on a single question: "How do intelligent film adaptations grapple with the overtly prominent narrator, the expositor, describer, investigator of characters' states of mind, commentator, philosophizer?"[48] His answer is that despite the film's much more narrow and limited focus—its "only real theme is love" compared to the novel's broadly discursive treatment of its exotic Victorian "panorama"—and its "simpler and less determinate" treatment of its characters' psychology, it doubles the novel's Victorian narrative with a highly original modern frame tale of the relationship between a pair of contemporary actors who are filming the story that "attempts to dramatize the novel's *commentary*.[49]

Chatman's analysis is so sensitive and acute that it is easy to overlook the reductive terms that frame it. Since he is considering Reisz's film strictly as a case study in the successful adaptation of a highly resistant text, he naturally measures its success against the success of the novel, which plays the text to the film's intertext. This parasitism does not require the film to stick to the novel's thematic material any more than it requires the film to stick to the actions the novel represents. Indeed Chatman, who is warmly appreciative of the film's presentation of "the impossible search for a fictional woman out of a bygone era . . . not a subject proposed by the novel, which handles the modern repercussions of Victorian thought only in the expository-argumentative mode," notes approvingly that "the film is less sanguine than the novel about the progress of evolution in the emotional sphere."[50] But his project requires him to accept the novel as establishing a criterion of value for the film. Hence he dismisses Joy Gould Boyum's attack on the "coyness" of Fowles's often tiresomely "chatty" narrator as "a narrow Lubbockian view"[51] because if the narrator's ruminative commentary were in any way flawed, there would be no toilsome need to find a cinematic equivalent for it. When adapters approach source texts, he seems to suggest, they should assume that whatever is, is right.

More generally, Chatman contends that "film cannot reproduce many of the pleasures of reading novels, but it can produce other experiences of parallel value."[52] The key word here is "parallel," which absolves the adaptation from the responsibility of slavish imitation to its source even as it invokes the source's regulatory function in setting the standard for those parallel experiences. My point is not to ask whether a film labeled *The French Lieutenant's Woman* has an intertextual responsibility to its source novel, but to ask why

the novel itself should be treated so uncritically as a criterion of value that ad-
aptations seek to create non-parallel experiences at their peril. Although it is
certainly true that adaptations are intertexts, it is equally true that their precur-
sors are intertexts, because every text is an intertext that depends for its inter-
pretation on shared assumptions about language, culture, narrative, and other
presentational conventions.

     Chatman might well object here that the constitutive difference between
adaptations and their originals is that adaptations invite the consideration of a
single precursor text as primary whereas their originals combine many influ-
ences into a new synthesis that does not privilege any one of them. Adapta-
tions imitate novels, novels imitate life, or at least Victorian life, itself. But this
distinction cannot be seriously maintained in an age that abounds in such
ironic, parodic, or heteroglot adaptations as *The Birds, The Three Musketeers*
(and *The Four Musketeers*), *Batman, Clueless,* and *Everything You Always Wanted
to Know about Sex (But Were Afraid to Ask)*. The most capacious novels, to the
extent that they choose subjects more specific than life—the First Reform Bill,
the intrigue Cardinal Richelieu provoked at the court of Louis XIII, the effects
of Napoleon's campaign against Russia—take on the responsibility of illumi-
nating those particular subjects. Even the *Aeneid,* whose avowed subject is
arms and the man, and *Tom Jones,* whose subject Fielding grandly announces
as "HUMAN NATURE,"[53] approach their forbiddingly general subjects in terms of
far more specific historical narratives and behavioral types. As Deborah Cart-
mell points out, "instead of worrying about whether a film is 'faithful' to the
original literary text (founded in the logocentric belief that there is a single
meaning), we read adaptations for their generation of a plurality of meanings.
Thus the intertextuality of the adaptation is our primary concern."[54]

     12. Adaptation study is a marginal enterprise. This is the only one of my
twelve fallacies that is actually true. Adaptation study has indeed for many
years been marginal to the study of moving images in general. But does it need
to be marginal? Dudley Andrew, describing adaptation study as "frequently the
most narrow and provincial area of film theory," called for the integration of
adaptation study into cinema studies by noting that "its distinctive feature, the
matching of the cinematic sign system to prior achievement in some other sys-
tem, can be shown to be distinctive of all representational cinema."[55] Andrew
called for a generalizing of adaptation study to cover all the varieties of signi-
fication, quotation, and reference that make cinema possible and an analysis
of connotation and a sociology of adaptation to complement its aesthetic as-
sumptions about fidelity. Nothing like this has happened in the twenty years
since Andrew wrote. Even acute contemporary analysts like McFarlane and
Chatman who have deplored the crippling dependence of adaptation study on
concepts like fidelity and monistic claims of literature's superiority to film (or

vice versa) have retained an unhelpful emphasis on notions of essentialism, originality, and cinematic equivalents to literary techniques.

The broad implication of this essay is that adaptation study has sought a separate peace less for aesthetic or theoretical than for institutional reasons: to defend literary works and literature against the mass popularity of cinema, to valorize authorial agency and originality in a critical climate increasingly opposed to either, and to escape from the current orientation of film theory and from theoretical problems in general. In other words, adaptation study has been marginalized because it wishes to be. Just as the apparently essential properties of novels and films stipulated by Chatman turn out on closer analysis to be functions of specific historical contexts, however, institutional battles can be resolved in the same ways they arose, by changing the way the institution does business. Adaptation study will emerge from its ghetto not when cinema studies accepts the institutional claims that would make cinema a poor relation of literature or succeeds in refashioning analysts of adaptation into loyal citizens of cinema studies, but in some larger synthesis that might well be called Textual Studies—a discipline incorporating adaptation study, cinema studies in general, and literary studies, now housed in departments of English, and much of cultural studies as well.

This is not to suggest that this omnivorous new field would take its marching orders from adaptation study. The question adaptation study has most persistently asked—in what ways does and should an intertext resemble its precursor text in another medium?—could more usefully be configured in dialogic terms: How and why does any one particular precursor text or set of texts come to be privileged above all others in the analysis of a given intertext? What gives some intertexts but not others the aura of texts? More generally, in what ways are precursor texts rewritten, as they always are whenever they are read? Such questions, though not subsuming dialogism to adaptation, would extend both dialogism and adaptation study in vitally important ways. If they don't watch out, analysts of adaptation who are willing to trade their historical valorization of literature for broader theoretical range and greater theoretical rigor are apt to find themselves in a most unlikely place: at the very center of intertextual—that is, of textual—studies.

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Notes

1. Robert B. Ray, "The Field of 'Literature and Films,'" in James Naremore, ed., *Film Adaptation* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 44.
2. Brian McFarlane, *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 194.
3. James Naremore, Introduction to *Film Adaptation*, 2.

4. Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), 1. For a later version of the essentialist argument, see Geoffrey Wager, *The Novel and the Cinema* (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1975): "Language is a completion, an entelechy, and film is not. By its nature it cannot be. Film is a diffusion" (12).

5. See Seymour Chatman, "What Novels Can Do That Films Can't (and Vice Versa)," *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1980–81): 121–40. Chatman's view of adaptation is better represented by his more recent and subtle discussion of the topic in *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), about which I will have more to say later on.

6. See F. E. Sparshott, "Basic Film Aesthetics," in Gerald Mast and Marshall Cohen, eds., *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings,* 3rd edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 286–87, and V. F. Perkins, *Film as Film: Understanding and Judging Movies* (1972; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), 59. For more recent empirically based attacks on the essentialist argument, see Morris Beja, *Film and Literature: An Introduction* (New York: Longman, 1979), 54–59, and James Griffith, *Adaptations as Imitations* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1997), 30–35.

7. Noël Carroll, *Philosophical Problems of Classical Film Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 88.

8. Chatman, "What Novels Can Do," 128.

9. McFarlane, 16. In "Jane Campion and the Limits of Literary Cinema," Ken Gelder has attacked this essentialist argument by noting that commentators on Jane Campion and Kate Pullinger's novelization of Campion's film *The Piano* have consistently identified it "as somehow *less* literary than the film: as if the film was more of a novel than the novel itself" (Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan, eds., *Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text* [London: Routledge, 1999], 157).

10. Chatman, "What Novels Can Do," 128–29.

11. Ibid., 128.

12. Dashiell Hammett, *Complete Novels* (New York: Library of America, 1999), 398.

13. Pauline Kael, *5001 Nights at the Movies* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982), 355.

14. André Bazin, *Orson Welles: A Critical View,* trans. Jonathan Rosenbaum (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 133.

15. McFarlane, 26.

16. In *Made into Movies: From Literature to Film* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1985), James Y. McDougal, who is practically alone among analysts of adaptation in noting that "casting . . . considerably shapes the process of adaptation," avers that casting is "extrinsic to the medium of film" (6).

17. Timothy Corrigan, *Film and Literature: An Introduction and Reader* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1999), 3.

18. Joy Gould Boyum, *Double Exposure: Fiction into Film* (New York: New American Library, 1985), 21.

19. George Bluestone, *Novels into Film* (1957; rpt. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), 20.

20. Gerald Mast, *Film/Cinema/Movie: A Theory of Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 64.

21. Alain Robbe-Grillet, *For a New Novel: Essays on Fiction,* trans. Richard Howard (New York: Grove, 1965), 20.

22. Griffith, 229, 230.

23. McFarlane, 26–27.

24. Ibid., 27.

25. Ibid., 132.

26. Idem.

27. Bluestone, 47–48.

28. Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 167.

29. Boyum goes so far as to argue that since readers cannot read novels without visualizing them as films, they "inevitably expect . . . the movie projected on the screen to be a shadow reflection of the movie . . . [they] have imagined" (60).

30. Leo Braudy, *The World in a Frame: What We See in Films* (Garden City: Anchor/Doubleday, 1976), 184.

31. McFarlane, 27.

32. Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), 161.

33. McFarlane, 133.

34. Dickens, *Christmas Novels* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), 14.

35. Chatman, *Coming to Terms,* 162.

36. Compare Chatman: "The central problem for film adapters is to transform narrative features that come easily to language but hard to a medium that operates in 'real time' and whose natural focus is the surface appearance of things" (*Coming to Terms,* 162). The fallacy is not only in the explicitly stated essentialist assumption that film has "a natural focus" but also in the implied assumption that exemplary narratives in any medium concentrate on exploiting the features that "come easily" to that medium, marginalizing departures from those features as a "problem." Hence Chatman, in continuing his general rejection of voiceover commentary, observes that "historically, the best filmmakers have preferred purely visual solutions" to the problems of narratorial commentary (163).

37. McFarlane, 194.

38. See McFarlane, 187–93.

39. Imelda Whelehan has suggested that "it is possibly the 'literariness' of the fictional text which itself appears to give credence to the study of adaptations at all" (Cartmell and Whelehan, 17).

40. Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Contingencies of Value: Alternative Perspectives for Critical Theory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), 17. For a contrasting view, see for example Northrop Frye, who asserts in *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957) that "the demonstrable value-judgment is the donkey's carrot of literary criticism" (20).

41. Charles Barr, *English Hitchcock* (Moffat: Cameron & Hollis, 1999), 8.

42. To be sure, *Shadow of a Doubt* and *Lifeboat* are based on unpublished stories, and many other Hitchcock films, from *The Man Who Knew Too Much* to *Foreign Correspondent, Spellbound,* and *The Birds,* have only a nominal connection to the sources they credit.

43. M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays,* trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 324, 325–36.

44. McFarlane, 8.

45. McFarlane, 111.

46. Cartmell and Whelehan, 16.

47. Bakhtin, 416.

48. Chatman, *Coming to Terms,* 163–64.
49. Ibid., 169, 168, 173, 174.
50. Ibid., 180.
51. Ibid., 172. See Boyum, 107.
52. Ibid., 163.
53. Henry Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling,* ed. Fredson Bowers (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1975), 32.
54. Cartmell and Whelehan, 28.
55. Dudley Andrew, *Concepts in Film Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 96.