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**One Day Multidisciplinary National Conference on  
Research Methodology,  
Use of ICT in Teaching Learning and Research,  
and Environmental Consciousness**

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### Film Adaptations and In/fidelity

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#### Abstract

*The relationship between film and fiction has often resulted in increased recognition for novels. Films contextualize books in a visible and audible atmosphere and invite us to discover their relationship to explore issue on multicultural perspectives. Novels are the important source for film adaptation. The basic act of adaptation has a dilemma at its heart. If an adaptation can maintain fidelity to the original, it will be criticized for being unoriginal. If it attempts to interpret the earlier work or provide a new twist, it will be criticized for violating the integrity of the original. The present paper tries to find parameters of Fidelity and infidelity in film adaptations. While analyzing and interpreting fidelity and changes Narration, Theme, Setting, and Characterization will be considered. Comparing the relationship between literary texts and cinema and studying fidelity and infidelity will certainly open new domains in the field of literature*

Literature forms a part of one of the six classical arts and Cinema is the seventh art as it derives from all the six arts to become the sum total of all of them and more. Although both the genres of film and literature are different and cannot evoke parallel responses, yet there are certain characteristics that they both share as both are participatory rituals that primarily aim at imparting aesthetic pleasure to the participant (readers/viewers). They both are works of art and share the common field of imagination and creativity on the part of the creators.

Novels are an older form, and as such, the authority behind the books has been stronger. Literature has been seen as an art, film as mass medium. Film critics often side with the novels as well, keeping their own literary roots. The major difference between books and films is that visual images stimulate our perceptions directly, while written words can do this indirectly. Film is more sensory experience than reading. Beside verbal language, there is also color, movement and sound. A book has a moral and a social responsibility. Film also

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has a social responsibility. It is not just about raising questions but also about finding answers.

The genres of literature and film explore the nuances associated with the aspect of cross-cultural crisis by their own means and strategies. Both the genres are different, but as both are the works of Art, they aim at achieving the common purpose of providing aesthetic pleasures to the readers/viewers. Both create illusion of reality and tried to provide a sort of message for the ethical development of the audience through the depiction of a well-developed story using their respective techniques. Writer of the novel uses his creative imagination in words and develops the story whereas the film uses the techniques of cinematography, sound and editing to do the same.

Film studies are the study of the production, aesthetics and history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most important visual medium- the cinema. The cinema can create world of magic, fantasy and romance just as early as it can expose the dim reality of actually lived life. Film Adaptations are very popular in the present time as almost every third movie in the film industry is an adaptation of a popular novel mainly because of the appeal it provides in terms of its popularity and its story line to the makers.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines Adaptation as "the action or process of adapting or being adapted." To adapt a works means to adjust, to alter, to make suitable. However in media context, adaptation is defined as a movie, television drama. Or stage play that has been adapted from written work, typically a novel. Adaptation includes various elements such as narration, time and temporality, themes, setting and characterization using media techniques.

Films adapted from novels are often invite comparison with the original literary works from reviewers, critics and common movie goers. Critics might think that such films have an inherit flaw as they are not original compositions meant for a cinematic experiences. The audience might react unfavorably to some of the superficial differences. They might regret the inevitable compression of the novel which might leave out their favorite scene or they might also disapprove of the casting for the different characters. Novel might have many different readings of its narrative as there are readers, like that film adaptation might be regarded in the same light.

Films adapted from novels are considered to be inferior to the original literary work. People who have read a classic novel feel that the film was not faithful to the original work. George Bluestone, who is famous for his pioneering work in this field believed that, ' a Filmiest doesn't convert a novel at all, he uses a paraphrases of the novel'. Many other critics

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and even the common viewers believe that films cannot treat the original classics with the kind of respect they deserve. The issue of fidelity has been discussed a lot. How faithful a film is to its original source is many times considered to be the only criterion to judge it. The meaning of the film is shaped and what they profess is depend on a number of factors like the location and nationality of the filmmaker, budget, film techniques at the disposal of the filmmaker, and target audience.

Fidelity means following truthful representation of the original work and infidelity means making changes according to his own imagination. Infidelity in certain places is creative. There are certain reasons of infidelity. The fidelity debate is vital to the adaptation question. Fidelity is a starting point for consideration of adaptations from consumers to critics.

Dudley Andrew offers three kinds of fidelity *Borrowing* in which 'the artist employs more or less extensively, the material idea, or form of an earlier text', *Intersecting* in which the original is "preserved to such an extent that it is intentionally left unassimilated in adaptation,,," and *transforming* where it is assumed that the task of adaptation is the reproduction in cinema of something essential about an original text.

Sometimes filmmakers make changes in themes and characters because they want to focus on themes that are not given prominence in the original work. They also want to emphasis different traits in a character as characters affect the tone and structure of the narrative.

The time or period in which the novel was filmed will also affect the way the film portrays the original narrative. A film maker many times tries to cater to the norms prevalent in a particular era and may consequently have to change the details of the original narratives.

Films and literature have their different ways of manipulating the structure of the narrative. A novel might show the change in time and place by starting a new chapter, while a movie will use techniques like flash back, dissolves etc. some works are very difficult to adapt because they pose the challenge of changing narratives that are often more about ideas than events and making them dramatic for the screen.

The point of view used by the film maker may be different from the writer. There is also change in language used in novel and language used in film. The screenplay writer makes necessary changes according to situation and need.

Some changes are inspired by a desire to make the original story interesting and relevant to a contemporary audience. The film versions of a classic novel may bear almost no

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resemblance to the original in setting and language, yet it may still be a faithful translation of the characters and themes.

How the mind of the characters is revealed is also important. A novelist can describe the mental process that a character experience or the psychology of the character in great details. The novelist can use pages to describe all the minute changes in the psyche of his characters. It is also important for a filmmaker that he explain s the mental processes of the characters he is presenting on screen. only then we understand the motives behind the actions and decisions of the characters. But a film maker has to deal with the audio-visual medium of films which makes it very difficult for him to show the abstract mental processes.

The study of fidelity and infidelity in these various factors that affect movie interpretations of classic novels will bring to light the techniques of adapting fiction to film. Researcher think that the study of fidelity and infidelity in film adaptation is new way of studying film. Film theory and studies is emerging area of literary research. This informative paper will give insight into the art of adaptation.

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