

ECOLOGIES OF THE
NEW:
MATTER, MIND & BODY

Volume 1

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Cinema v/s Literature

Abstract

The study analyzes how literary texts are adapted or transformed into scripts for films. Literary adaptations are considered as a better method to introduce the literary classics of a period to the common masses. Often a text will contain a lot of complex ideas and phrases that may not be comprehensible to the public. Ordinary people may not be able to comprehend many of the linguistic, cultural complexities discussed in a work of fiction. If the concepts discussed in the text are not pertaining to the knowledge and experience of the readers, they may find the text beyond the level of their comprehension. One of the methods to make the text easily understandable is to substitute these unfamiliar terms with common terms and make use of familiar cultural situations by the adaptation of a literary text to a film. Readers decipher codes of texts they encounter. For any communication to be effective, the idea that is conveyed should be understood clearly. For this, communication should take place effectively between the book and the reader. Only a few will be able to assimilate or enjoy what has been read. The rest, who are not serious readers, will find the technical terms, literary concepts, etc. explained in the book, a bit difficult to assimilate. For these categories of people, a good adaptation will be helpful. The key factors involved in the process of adaptation are an agent, a source text and the adapted text. Adaptation is a form of cultural translation also. Interpretation of texts always entails interactions with the text.

Full Paper

Cinema or film was not considered as a creative entity; or as something inferior, not even as a product of art. In reality, we know that it is very difficult to realize a film, as it is a cultural product also. Commoners were not that familiar with the literary classics of the time; not to mention the popular literatures. Cinema began to gain popular attention once it started to introduce the so called 'untouchable' or 'impregnable' classics to the general public. Till then, those belonging to the elite class only could enjoy the literatures of the time. Cinema began to introduce those works to the common people using language and situations familiar to them. They could blend the story to the scenario that was familiar to the general public. So, more and more people became familiar with the literary works of the period. Thus gradually, films attained the status of a popular medium of art.

Today, among the Academy Awards, there is a category for adapted works, celebrating the writers who have taken a novel, play or even other films and have made them their own by awarding them the Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay. One of the most recent nominees in that category was "Inherent Vice," originally a novel by Thomas Pynchon. This is actually a token of recognition we impart to these adapted movies.

For years together, scholars, especially those of literature, confront this problem of analysing a text with its various nuances. Breaking or questioning a text; thereby 'restructuring' it helps them to assimilate a text better.

Writing was the product of a multitude of social and cultural forces; and had countless influences. So a good adaptation had to gratify or please the audience or readers.