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**Film Narratives and
Their Adaptation**
Psycho: A Case Study

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my father, who has always believed in the value of education, and to my mother, who has always believed in me.

Abstract

In 1878, even though there was not a definition for it yet, the concept of cinema appeared for the first time with the motion picture entitled *The Horse in Motion*. Ten years later, in 1888, the *Roundhay Garden Scene* was released and in 1895 the *Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat* by the Lumière brothers was released and became one of the most popular footages ever. In 1896 the first movie adapted from a novel was published. It is surprising and very significant that adaptation appeared so early in the history of cinema, and from that year on adaptation was not only a chance to find a story as a plot for the new movies, but it actually became a subject of study. The aim of this thesis is to understand what is an adaptation, even though it is impossible to give a clear definition of it; in fact we can only try to shed some light on it. The thesis will also discuss why and how novel adaptation became so popular, the various theories related to this subject matter, and the thoughts and opinions of cinema enthusiasts as well as of literary critics about novel adapted into films. In the second part of this work we shall focus on Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* as case study, with the aim of understanding why the director choose to adapt a literary text for his movie, his opinion on adaptation and how he did not only adapt the novel *Psycho* by Robert Bloch, but how he also gave it a new identity by making it look like almost an original work without losing all the characteristics of an adaptation.

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Introduction

Adaptation studies are not yet a clear-cut field of study, however it is essential to try to understand what an adaptation is. The most reasonable way to do that is by tracking the principal definitions of adaptation and see whether they are right once applied to a specific case of study.

The first part of this thesis focuses on the birth of cinema in the late 19th century and highlights how film adaptation was very common in those years. But adaptation remained very popular also in the 20th century and, since it is impossible to keep track of every adaptation, the focus will be on the relationship between literature and cinema, the media of film adaptation. In order to define what an adaptation is, I find it necessary to discuss the possible existence of a film narrative. I believe we have compare it to literary narrative and theatre narrative, which have a way longer tradition than cinema. But if adaptation exists, what are the reasons according to which an adapter chooses to adapt a text? As Linda Hutcheon identifies certain reasons why something should be adapted, we should also try to define what an adaptation is.

In the second part of this thesis we will see that a universal definition of adaptation has not been given yet and, because of this, we will follow Thomas Leitch's nine accounts of adaptation, which are not presented as definitions, but rather try to identify the limits that we should pay attention to when we analyse an adaptation.

The third and fourth chapters are dedicated to Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*: the first part with a focus on the screenplay, the second one with a focus on the movie itself and the economical decisions of the director. In these two chapters the analyses will not be about the plot differences between the novel and the movie, but it will rather pay attention to the decisional process that brought the movie to its result.

Chapter 1

Film Adaptation in the 19th and 20th Centuries

1.1 The Debate on Movies and Novels Adaptation and Its Importance

It is impossible to expect to understand adaptation only working within the framework of novels adapted into movies, because adaptation exists in a broader sense and context. For example: aren't, after all, theatre and theatrical representations adaptations too? Plays are texts which are intentionally written to be adapted into a verbal and visual language. Moreover, we can also consider many religious paintings as adaptations, since they visually narrate a well-known written passage from the Bible or the gospels; they adapt a well-known language into another one.

The reason why I think it productive to focus on novels and movies adaptation is that this pair has always caused a big debate, and adapted movies — but, in general, adapted art — most of the time are considered not as good as the original piece of art. At the same time cinema is considered to be an important form of art, although it was born only at the end of the 19th century and has a shorter tradition than the literary one. My interest in adapted novels into movies is caused by the popularity of cinema and the frequent phenomena of denigration of adapted movies, whereas adapted movies that are not promoted as such may be considered as masterpieces. Adaptation may seem such a natural process, and film adaptation was born almost together with the birth of cinema, so why do we still perceive an adapted movie as something that will never fully satisfy our expectations?

1.2 Film Adaptation at the End of the 19th Century

The *Horse in Motion* (1878) can be considered as the breakthrough in the field of photography, the turning point that forerun the birth of cinema. This peculiar footage was accomplished using multiple cameras and assembling the individual pictures into a single motion picture, and the reason why it was made was scientific, not so artistic as we may think: in fact the debate was whether all four of a horse's hooves should be off the ground at the same time while the horse was galloping or not. Ten years later, in 1888, the world's earliest surviving motion-picture film was released with the title of *Roundhay Garden Scene* and in 1895 the famous *Arrival of a Train* was released.

Given these premises it is surprising to acknowledge that the first movie to be adapted from a novel came out in 1896. The movie was adapted from the novel *Trilby*, by George du Maurier, and was published with the title of *Trilby and Little Billee*, produced by the American Mutoscope Company. It was a 45-second scene that correspond to a part in the novel where Trilby sits at a table, eating cake and talking to her friend Little Billee. The footage, however, has since been lost and there is no record of the cast and crew (*IMDb, Internet Movie Database*). From that year on many other adaptations were released: *The Death of Nancy Sykes* (1897) taken from the novel *Oliver Twist* (1838) and *Mr. Bumble the Beadle* (1898) also taken from *Oliver Twist*; *Cinderella* (1898), directed by George Albert Smith, although the *Cinderella* version of 1899, directed by Georges Méliès, became way more famous; *King John* (1899), the first Shakespearean cinematographic adaptation of the same titled play *King John* (1623), even though it was made as an advertisement for a stage production; *Sherlock Holmes Baffled* (1900) the first recorded detective film and the first of many adaptation of the Sherlock Holmes series; *A Trip to the Moon* (1902),

directed by Méliès and based on the novel *From the Earth to the Moon* (1865), a “trick film”, a term for films made with special effects, which is also considered as the first sci-fi film; *Snow White* (1902), the very first adaptation of the same titled fairy tale, released by S. Lubin Productions; *Alice in Wonderland* (1903) which only copy is nowadays preserved at the British Film Institute and became known at the time for its special effects; *Esmeralda* (1905) adapted by Alice Guy from the novel *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1831).

What were the reasons for which directors drew inspiration from works of literature in the early stages of the history of cinema? The main reasons are two: first of all filmmakers in the silent period turned to literature for their plot lines, since those stories were well known and allow them not to depend too much on dialogue for their explanation. Secondly, adaptations were a way of bringing the great works of literature to the masses. Some filmmakers were of the view that a dependency on literature or “great art” would also elevate the status of the film (Cartmell, 2012, 2): it is important not to forget that in the early years of the 19th century cinema was perceived as entertainment for the masses. The crowds in fact were amused by this new form of entertainment and appreciated both the original works and the adapted works. However, on the other hand, film enthusiasts and literary critics did not approve it: the former for wanting films to develop as an original form of art without depending on literature, the latter for regarding films as something cheapening and a potential threat to the literary tradition (Corrigan, 2007: 29).

1.3 Film Adaptation in the 20th Century

As cinema grew bigger and became more popular, adaptations became a common way of writing the plot for a film. It is impossible to keep track of all the movies

that were adapted in the 20th century and make a list of them. It is more logical to analyse the debates on adaptation and its relationship with literature.

In 1926 Virginia Woolf, in one of the most famous attacks on movie adaptation, gives her opinion about the relationship between cinema and literature and describes it as an unnatural alliance:

“So many arts seemed to stand by ready to offer their help. For example, there was literature. 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.”

(Woolf, 1950: 168)

However, although this was only the top of the iceberg, Woolf perfectly describes what was the intellectuals' thought on a debate that actually was way much more complex.

In 1915 Vachel Lindsay rejected film adaptation of literary texts because “these films were seen to proclaim cinema's dependency on literature” (Cartmell, Whelehan, 2010: 41), but on the other hand literary scholars disliked even more the adaptation of canonical texts.

At the same time, modernist writers, and Woolf herself, absorbed cinema techniques into their style of writing: in 1937 Charles Davy imagines screening a passage from Woolf's *The Years* in order to show how her work evokes the visual cinematic methods (Cartmell, Whelehan, 2010: 42). At this point it is impossible to deny that cinema had a great impact on literature thus we can possibly understand why many writers considered cinema as a threat to literature: of course the strong influence of the newborn form of art already started to contaminate all other forms, literature included, which had a way longer tradition, and the threat was that it would have lost its role and its importance.

William Hunter, in an essay entitled “The Art Form of Democracy?”, explains how the terms “art” and “democracy” are in conflict with each other: art should not be aimed to the masses, and it cannot be mass produced. The subject that Hunter brings up in this essay will exclude film and film adaptation to literary studies for most of the twentieth century. One of the reasons why it is not easy to shed light upon this matter is because adaptation studies have been considered as a field of studies of little relevance. Hunter goes on by echoing the words of Plato and affirming that “the extent to which second-hand experience of such a gross kind is replacing ordinary life is a danger which does not seem to have yet been realised, and against which certainly no steps have been taken. But can steps be taken?” (Hunter, 1932: 10). As Plato was worried that the invention of writing would have destroyed the oral tradition and the art of memory, many writers and literary critics alike were afraid that cinema would substitute and destroy the form of art of literature.

According to McCabe, in response to Hunter, steps were taken in the sense that there have been “a valorisation of literature against popular culture in general and film in particular” (McCabe, 2011; 7), later followed by a suspension of any serious study of adaptations. As he observes, literary criticism “was largely designed by Eliot and Richards in the late 1920s to render the elephant [in the room: film] invisible” (McCabe, 2007: x). Even today there seem to be a certain level of denigration of film adaptations, which is particularly clear in the tendency for academics to apologise for expressing their enjoyment of a literary adaptation, and for critics of adaptation to apologise for their analysis stating that they were fans and considering their works almost as a guilty pleasure. The reason behind this way of perceiving adapted movies as something that will never be as good as the original literary text is that “adaptation, in particular, is damned with praise in its ‘democratizing’ effect: it brings literature to the masses

but it also brings the masses to literature, diluting, simplifying, and therefore appealing to the many rather than the few.” (Cartmell, 2012: 3)

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, literature has adapted itself to film techniques and cinematic genres creating new types of fiction, but for some the influence of cinema had actually damaged literature rather than improve it. Alan Spiegel compares the relationship between literature and cinema to the one between painting and photography and asserts that “the contemporary novel at its most advanced now consorts with the coldness and passivity of the photographic plate. Just as photography seemed to release painting from its representational functions, so perhaps the film was always meant to appropriate the mimetic tradition in literature and thus leave literature itself free to – well, to do what? Self-destruct?” (Spiegel, 1976: 197).

This concern is directly linked to the fact that some novels look as if they were written not only as novels but as future movies. It is the case of the Harry Potter saga written by J. K. Rowling: it has been argued that the experience of reading the book is similar to that of watching a movie (Cartmell and Whelehan, 2010: 73–83) especially because of Harry’s control of the gaze through the emphasis on the glasses, and the obligatory action sequences that remind those of a blockbuster movie. But how did this happen? Was the writer who intentionally tried to emulate the style of narration of a movie — or write a book that could have been adapted in future —, or was it that we are so accustomed to movies that it is impossible for us to take distance from them so that our language inevitably becomes similar to the visual language of movies?

However, what is peculiar is that, in spite of an adverse environment in which film adaptations of literary texts were banned from literary studies and film studies as well, adapted movies kept on increasing each year and the Oscars have repeatedly chosen adaptation as best pictures. Furthermore The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences decided to mark a difference between original

screenplay and adapted ones, and in 1928 it created a category for Best Story (now eliminated in favour of the Best Original Screenplay one) and one category for Best Adapted Screenplay.

Up until recently this is how film adaptation was perceived by the majority of the literary and film critics, and it was only in the last years that adaptation studies have finally begun to celebrate its own nature. Most of the theories that we are going to analyse in the next paragraphs are all in fact very recent. This is not due to a lack of interest in the field of study, but the main reason is that adaptation studies were fractured into many different fields of studies: an adapted movie, for example, has always been examined principally by cinema studies and literary studies; only recently critics started to discuss it within the framework of the newborn adaptation studies.

1.4 Film Narrative: a Comparison to Theatre Narrative

André Gaudreault, in the opening part of the first chapter of his book *Du littéraire au filmique*, quotes Méliès who stated that “with the cinematograph too [you have to tell stories]. And these stories can be much more lavish, much more wonderful than stories told in the theatre” (Méliès, 1973: 166).

What emerges are two issues: the former is that he assumes that narrative is an intrinsic part of films, and the latter is that it is inevitable to compare cinema to theatre. This reference is significant because it stresses how the film narrative somehow is considered stronger, more wonderful, than the theatre narrative; and it immediately poses a question on why such apparently similar vehicles of stories are considered in a totally different way to the point that many denies the possibility of a theatre narrative.

It is also important to notice that theatre has a way longer and much more respectable tradition compared to cinema, which has been reduced in importance for most part of the first half of the twentieth century. Somehow, in the second part of the century, as adaptation studies started to be considered as a solid field of research, cinema also started to be considered stronger than theatre in regard to its narrative nature.

André Gaudreault of course starts his book asking if it is possible to analyse narrative with regard to theatrical works — a statement which gives it for granted that it is possible to talk about narrative as regarding to cinema and which brings cinema a little bit closer to literature and prepare the context for a discourse on film adaptation.

Gaudreault finds it necessary to first try to work within the framework of theatrical narrative since the theatrical one is a weak and blind spot of narratological theories: he believes it is important to conclude a discourse upon it since it could bring to a deeper reflection about the narrative system of cinema.

The problematic nature of theatre, however, does not have a modern origin: the debate has ancient roots. Plato and Aristotle did not consider theatre in the same way, and Gaudreault makes a clarification between the two philosophers' different standpoints on the subject. In fact, if Plato was able to accept tragedy as a form of *diegesis* (and its theatrical representation as *mimesis*) and therefore would have been able to accept the expression *theatrical narrative*; Aristotle, on the other hand, gave no theatrical status to theatre.

Nowadays, it is still not possible to come up with a solution with regard to the nature of theatre, and things perhaps have got even more complicated with the arrival of the cinema. In fact, Gaudreault underlines that contemporary narratologists, who refuse the concept of *theatrical narratives*, at the same time, are also willing to accept the *film narrative*, although both these forms of art use

flesh and blood actors on a stage to present a series of events (Gaudreault, 1988: 21).

The reasons why it is not possible to identify both forms of art as also a form of narrative is because, *de facto*, it is easier to find connections between *film narrative* and *literary narrative* rather than between *film narrative* and *theatre narrative*. First of all Gaudreault denotes that both films and novels rely upon a “prerecorded” device which confronts the auditor with a *fait accompli*, while the theatre unfolds in the present.

Secondly, cinema and novel share the artificial possibility of overthrowing the spatio-temporal constraints. Gaudreault concludes that both the cinema and novel rely on their transmission on a solid medium, the reel of film (or hard-disks most likely nowadays) and the book, which preserve them intact, whereas the theatre can not rely on such an object of transmission, and this denies the possibility of durability (Gaudreault, 1988: 21). In addition to these three points I’d like to introduce one more, which can probably be considered as part of the last one, but in its own peculiar way: books and film reels not only preserve the works not only physically but also artistically intact, whereas a theatrical performance would inevitably slightly change any time it is performed, and thus the theatre narrative (if we accept the idea of its existence) would not be kept intact.

I do not personally believe that a *theatre narrative* does not exist, and I also find this affirmation counter-productive to this thesis. But the fact that somebody saw the possibility of the lack of narrative in theatre — which has a longer tradition than cinema, and works in the same way in the sense that it relies on a written text to develop a performance which uses a visual language together with a verbal one — not only affirms the existence of a *film narrative*, but it also brings cinema to the same level of literature in terms of narrative.

1.5 Why Film Adaptation?

As we have already seen, Virginia Woolf was suspicious of the new invention of cinema and the possibility of adapting literary texts into movies, but at the same time she foresaw that cinema had the possibility to develop its own language: “cinema has within its grasp innumerable symbols for emotions that have so far failed to find expression” (Woolf, 1950: 168).

It is indeed true that when a novel that we have read is adapted into a movie we are curious to watch it. It does not matter if at the end we are not satisfied with the result — and that is only because we already had our idea about how it should have looked like — what matters is the fact that, in any case, we end up with having a new experience which differs from the one of having read the book.

In the view of film-semiotician Christian Metz, cinema “tells us continuous stories; it ‘says’ things that could be conveyed also in the language of words; yet it says them differently. There is a reason for the possibility as well as for the necessity of adaptations” (Metz, 1974: 44)

For some, as Robert Stam argues, literature will always have axiomatic superiority over any adaptation of it because of its seniority as an art form. But this hierarchy also involves what he calls *iconophobia* (a suspicion of the visual) and *logophilia* (love of the word as sacred) (Stam, 2000: 58).

We have seen that at the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century the reason why adaptations were considered as an inferior form of art, or “the art form of democracy”, was because it brought literature to the crowds. And we have seen how film enthusiasts wanted movies to develop their own form of art without directly depending to literature, while, on the other side, literary critics disliked cinema (and adaptations more in particular) because they consider it as a threat to literature.

So why did movie adaptations grow in popularity and why are they still so popular? Why would anyone want to become an adapter and create new adaptations?

Linda Hutcheon, in *A Theory of Adaptation*, identifies four motivations according to which adapters keep on working with adaptations: the economic lures, the legal constraints, cultural capital, and personal and political motives (Hutcheon, 2006: 85)

1.5.1 The Economic Lures

It is impossible to deny the fact that economic motives are a solid reason for adapting literature into movies. Films are often made out of Pulitzer Prize-winning books like Alice Walker's 1982 *The Color Purple* (in 1985) or Toni Morrison's 1987 *Beloved* (in 1998) in part because, as one handbook for screenwriters claims, "an adaptation is an *original screenplay* and, as such, is the sole property of the screenwriter" and thus a source of financial gain (Brady, 1994: xi).

Economically speaking there are also some challenges about writing an adaptation that has to be transposed into a movie; film and tv series have restricted budgets and Malcolm Bradbury summarise this issue in the following passage:

When you are writing a TV script, it is like sitting in a taxi; the meter is always running, and everything has to be paid for. You can always see the price turning over everywhere you go, or the difficulties of performance and production; that is the art of writing for the medium. But the novel has the meter switched off; you can write what you like, have Buenos Aires, have the moon, have whatever you want. That is part of the wonder of the novel, the wonder of being a novelist.

(Bradbury, 1994: 101)

Moreover, in film industry, there is a strict selection of the actors who are going to interpret the characters of the movie: that is because big stars — and big directors as well — bring in more money; and well known writers will make the movie earn more money because only their name alone sell more. For example a movie adapted from a J. K. Rowling’s book will definitely sell more than a movie adapted from an unknown author, since the spectator has the guarantee of watching a movie with a good *narrative* content.

There is also the case of novelists who adapt movies’ scripts into novels, but they are artistically considered inferior to writers who invent a story from their own imagination. Walter Benjamin’s idea about translation and translators could also be applied to adapters, which is not that surprising since there are some theories that compare adaptation to the process of translation, and Benjamin affirms that “the intention of the poet is spontaneous, primary, graphic; that of the translator is derivative, ultimate, ideational” (Benjamin, 1992: 77).

So it is not a surprise that economic motivations are an important aspect in the process of adaptation. In many cases novels — but more often, nowadays, comic books — are intentionally written to appeal the entertainment industry, so in this case it is better not to talk about cinema as art but as in fact an industry.

Given these considerations it is possible to affirm that cinema did not demolished literature, but rather that a part of the cinematic art shaped itself into an economic industry with the aim of facing the potential of literature.

1.5.2 The Legal Constraints

We have seen that the economic reason is a big appeal for adapters, but on the other hand this appeal is well balanced by possible legal consequences. Adapters have been defined as “raiders”: “they don’t copy, they steal what they want and leave the rest” (Abbott, 2002: 105) and in this specific case law can intervene to establish if an adaptation is legal or not.

It was the case of F. W. Murnau's adaptation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, which is the result of combination of money and the law. Murnau did not want to pay royalties for his adaptation so he changed the novel's plot introducing a love story, cutting the character of Van Helsing, changing how Dracula dies and changing the name of Dracula in *Nosferatu* and that of Lucy in *Mina*. Stoker's wife however sued Murnau for copyright infringement and copies of the film in England were ordered to be destroyed.

At this point it is natural to wonder how is that possible that adapters keep on adapting if it is such a problematic job in terms of copyright and authorship: adaptations are spawned by the capitalist desire for gain and at the same time are legally controlled by it, for they constitute a threat to the ownership of cultural and intellectual property. The remedy is that to absolve publishers or studios of any legal consequences of an adaptation.

According to the screenwriter Noel Baker:

The contract lets you know where you the writer stand in brutally frank legal language. You can be fired at any time. You are powerless and for the most part anonymous, unless you also happen to direct, produce, and/or act. Your credit can be taken away from you. Once your work is bought, it's like a house you've designed and sold. The new owners can do whatever they want to it, add mock-Tudor beams, Disneyland castle turrets, plastic fountains, pink flamingoes, garden gnomes, things that satisfy desires and contingencies that have nothing at all to do with you and your original intent for your material.

(Baker, 1997: 15)

So what does the law protect when it comes to adaptations? In the U.S. law, literary copyright infringement standards only cover the literal copying of words, whereas "substantial similarity" is harder to prove in court than one might think.

In the case of a novel adapted to film, the courts study the plot, mood, characters and character development, pace, setting, and sequence of events, but because so much has to be cut from a novel and because so many adapting agents are involved in a collaboratively produced film, the adaptation is rarely ever close enough to warrant prosecution (Y'Barbo, 1998: 368-9).

1.5.3 Cultural Capital

To explain this point Hutcheon compares literature and adaptation to those classical music performers who sometimes aspire to become popular entertainers: the same desire to shift cultural level can be found in the pedagogical impulse behind literary adaptations to film and television.

The possibility of working on an original source that has been largely praise is a way to gain respectability or increase the cultural capital. Film historians believe this may be one of the motivation behind the many early cinematic adaptations of Dante and Shakespeare: in this way the new author wish to become as important as the author of the original medium.

In this case adaptations also become study material as a support to the main subject, and surprisingly there is an entire secondary educational industry with the aim of helping teachers to teach and student to learn something through a different experience.

It is also important to highlight the fact that between 1930 and 1960 the Hollywood Production Code regulated the production of adaptation, stressing the importance of controlling the so called cultural capital, and specifically controlling the reception by the mass audience.

1.5.4 Personal and Political Motives

Behind the work of adapting there are also personal reasons for which the adapters first decide to make an adaptation and then decide what to adapt and the

medium to do it in. While interpreting the work they chose to adapt they inevitably take a position and put their point of view in it.

For instance, David Edgar's stage adaptation of Charles Dickens' *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838–39) for the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1980 has been called “a play about Dickens that critiqued his form of social morality, rather than a straight dramatisation of the novel” (Innis, 1993: 71).

This is also the case of postcolonial dramatists and anti-war television producers who had used adaptations to articulate their political positions. An adaptation, in fact, can be used to engage the audience in a larger social critique or, in other cases, it can be used to avoid it.

Some critics moreover go so far as to insist that a good adaptation *must* “subvert its original, perform a double and paradoxical job of masking and unveiling its source” (Cohen, 1977: 255)

Sometimes the only possible way to work with an adaptation is that to play homage to a certain work and its author, which means that it is impossible to freely change original work and that the adapters have to keep it as similar as possible to the original. It is the case of the 19 short film adaptations of works by Samuel Beckett, sponsored by the Irish Film Board in 2005, which were supervised by the Beckett estate which did not allow any changes to the texts.

1.6 What is an Adaptation?

In the previous paragraphs we have seen that some critics deny the existence of a theatre narrative and in doing so they affirm the existence of a cinema narrative, an aspect that brings literature and cinema closer to what may appear. Once established that there is a close connection between cinema narrative and literary narrative, we may affirm that adaptation comes to life when there is a specific

figure, an adapter, that for one or more reasons decides to work on a text and to adapt it into a new medium.

But what is exactly an adaptation? It definitely is more than what we have previously seen. First of all, according to Linda Hutcheon, an adaptation is an *adaptation* only when we perceive it as such, and when we consider a certain work an adaptation we openly announce its relationship to another work or works (Hutcheon, 2006: 6).

The Scottish poet and scholar Michael Alexander defines it as a inherently “palimpsestuous” works (Ermarth, 2011: 47). In fact, if we are conscious that the one that we are experiencing directly is an adapted work, and we also know the original work, we feel the shadowing presence of the original one.

The adaptation is also what Gérard Genette would call a text in the “second degree” (Genette, 1982: 5), which means a text created and then received in relation to a prior text. This is also why adaptation studies are so often considered as comparative studies (Cardwell, 2002: 9).

At this point it may seem that adaptations are not autonomous works since they rely on original sources and are also always perceived in relationship with them, but many scholars insist on the nature of the adapted works as autonomous ones. This is one of the reasons why an adaptation is perceived as something unique in the sense that it is linked to an original work, but it is also something different from that one. An adaptation has its own “presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be” (Benjamin 1968: 214).

Defining an adaptation as a work that relies on another work, however, does not imply that proximity and fidelity should be a criterion or focus of its analysis. “For a long time, ‘fidelity criticism’, as it came to be known, was the critical orthodoxy in adaptation studies, especially when dealing with canonical works such as those of Pushkin or Dante.” (Hutcheon, 2006: 6)

If the idea of fidelity should not be the framework into which we work while analysing an adaptation, how should we consider it in regard to the original work? If we search in the dictionary the meaning of the verb “to adapt” its meaning is to adjust, to alter, to make suitable.

Hutcheon gives a definition of adaptation by showing three distinct but interrelated perspectives.

First she considers adaptation as a formal entity or product, an announced and extensive transposition of a particular work or works. This “transcoding” can involve a shift of medium (a poem to a film) or genre (an epic to a novel), or a change of frame and therefore context. Transposition can also mean a shift in ontology from the real to the fictional, from the historical account or biography to a fictionalised narrative or drama.

Second, the act of adapting can be considered as a process of creation since it always involves both (re-)interpretation and then (re-)creation; so depending on somebody’s perspective this can also be defined as appropriation or salvaging.

Third, if we look at adaptation from the perspective of its process of reception, we may consider it a form of intertextuality: we experience adaptations (as adaptations) as palimpsests through our memory of other works that resonate through repletion with variation.

In short, adaptation can be described as following:

- An acknowledged transposition of a recognisable other work or works.
- A creative and an interpretative act of appropriation/salvaging.
- An extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work.

Hutcheon then defines adaptation as "a derivation that is not derivative — a work that is second without being secondary. It is its own palimpsestic thing." (Hutcheon, 2006: 9)

Adaptation is both a process and a product, which has not to be confused with plagiarisms, sequels and prequels, and fan fiction. It substantially differs from

never wanting a story to end — sequels and prequels — and wanting to retell the same story over and over in different ways is what characterise and adaptation.

We have seen how, at the end of the nineteenth century, adaptation from novels to movies was almost a natural consequence since it gave film-makers the possibility to experiment on the new cinematic techniques by re-proposing an already-known narrative to the audience in cinematic form. Moreover, it elevated the status of the cinema to the higher standard of literature, and although both literary critics and cinema enthusiasts did not seem to be happy about this and wanted the two form of arts to be well separated. However, as the years went by not only did cinema reach a higher status as as form of art but also cinematic techniques improved, adaptations did not disappear. The specific figure of the adapter was born and adaptations became so popular that there was the necessity of establishing copyrights and laws to preserve the original works; moreover the substantial reason for which adaptations were made changed: they were made for economic reasons and were also made because of personal and political motives.

Chapter 2

The Many Definitions of Adaptation

2.1 What Is not An Adaptation?

In the previous chapter we have seen that an adaptation, in order to exist, needs some prerequisites: it needs an adapter, it needs some sort of narrative to be adapted from one medium to another and it also needs a reason to be adapted. However these conditions are not enough to define what an adaptation is ontologically. In order to overcome the problem of giving a precise definition of adaptation Hutcheon does what is most logical, she asks what is not an adaptation. Following John Bryant's analysis in *The Fluid Text*, she argues that "no text is a fixed thing: there are always a variety of manuscript versions, revisions, and print editions", (Hutcheon, 2006: 170) just as there are many inevitable different variations in performances of *Hamlet*, *Turandot* or *Swan Lake*. She makes a distinction between the production process (writing, editing, publishing and performing) and the processes created by the reception, by the audience which censor, translate and adapt further (Hutcheon, 2006).

According to Thomas Leitch, Hutcheon's formulation is not enough and leaves several questions unresolved: why do adaptations have to be extended and announced as such? Is every performance an adaptation? What are the differences between adaptations and other forms of intertext? Thomas Leitch, aware of the fact that is impossible to answer to Hutcheon's question, decides to transform it into a series of questions. He begins with the axiom that adaptation is a subset of intertextuality — which means that all adaptations obviously are intertexts, whereas it is not obvious that all intertexts are adaptations — and compile nine different accounts that mostly depend on the relationship between

adaptations and intertextuality. These accounts of course are intended to be suggestive, and not exhaustive, but each of them offers an interesting point of view to the discourse on adaptation.

2.2 Thomas Leitch's Nine Accounts of Adaptation

2.2.1 Adaptations Are exclusively Cinematic, Involving Only Films that Are Based on Novels or Plays or Stories.

Leitch begins with this premise since it was the one that provided the dominant model in the field of adaptation studies for many years, from the publication of George Bluestone's *Novels into Film* in 1957 to the appearance of *Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text* in 1999 and edited by Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan. In the years, however, the range of what is considered an adaptation expanded to include television programs, film based on comic strips and video-games.

Cartmell and Wherehan argue against "the idea that literary adaptations are one-way translations from text — especially 'classic' texts — to screen" (Cartmell, 1999: 23). On the contrary the intertextual account of adaptation they provide is organised around articulations of and departures from a normative model that involves literary original works and audio-visual adaptations that recalls Bluestone's observation that "the novel...[is] a medium antithetical to film" (Bluestone, 1957: 23). This form of dualism was also well reflected by the *Association of Literature on Screen Studies*, which changed its name to *Association of Adaptation Studies* only in 2008. There are many reasons for which this dualistic point of view on adaptation has been taken into account so persistently: first of all because of its conceptual simplicity, and secondly because

its disciplinary neatness. And even if many scholars established their positions by quarrelling with these dualities none of them succeed in finding an alternative or decentering them. As McFarlane wrote a few years ago, even today the most common comment on literary adaptations is “it wasn’t like that in the book” (McFarlane, 2003).

This approach of course has a very obvious limitation, which is that in a time of explosive new media it excludes adaptation in all media from consideration. It means that operas, ballets, theatrical plays, but also web pages and YouTube videos based on earlier texts are eliminated from this field of study.

But not only is there a fallacy in the analysis of the new medias into which the original text is adapted, there are also conceptual fallacies in the page-to-screen — or novel-to-film — approach. Kamilla Elliott, in *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate*, points out that we commonly consider this dualism as a “designation of novels as ‘words’ and of films as ‘images’ [which] is neither empirically nor logically sustainable”, (Elliott, 2003: 14) since many novels rely on images, either implicitly or explicitly, and many movies depend on words, written as well as spoken.

Rochelle Hurst, on the other hand, has demonstrated that Bluestone’s iron binary of novel and film, according to which “fidelity [is an] impossible ideal” that “should thereby be excluded as a means of critical assessment,” ends up “paradoxically perpetuat[ing] the preoccupation with fidelity” because “the novel/film binary simultaneously bifurcates and hierarchies the binaric pair, locating the novel as superior, preferred locus in direct opposition to the film” (Hurst, 2008: 185)

What emerges is that theories of adaptation have their roots in the dualities between literary and cinematic texts, which implicates that they both carry the promises and the limitations of each field of study. The fact that it is substantially possible to provide two disciplinary tracks for adaptation studies — which are the

same subject of study also examined by both departments of literature and departments of cinema — means that adaptations studies will never be central or fully accepted by either one.

2.2.2 Adaptations Are Exclusively Intermedial, Involving the Transfer of Narrative Elements from One Medium to Another.

This definition of adaptation is way more generous than the first one since it does not define the two media as literature and film and therefore avoids the debate about the weight of two media with such controversial histories against each other. Moreover this definition subtly implies that an adaptation in order to exist needs a narrative which the adapter can work on, and as we have seen it is actually possible to talk about a film narrative.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences also seems to agree with this definition: since its 1958 awards ceremony, it has made a sharp distinction between films eligible for an *Oscar for Best Original Screenplay* and those eligible for an *Oscar for Best Screenplay Based on Material from Another Medium*. *Best Adapted Screenplays* can be based on novels, plays, stories, operas, ballets, comic books, video games, or popular songs. But at the same time the Academy does not require the story to have a specific narrative medium. It is the example of the early James Bond movies which were all eligible for the Best Adapted Screenplay Oscar because they were based on Ian Fleming's novels, whereas the later movies instead were based on a franchise character who had become free of any specific novelistic incarnation, but still prevented them from being considered Best Original Screenplays.

What actually makes the difference between this second definition and the first one is the approach through which theorists have the possibility of analysing an adaptation. Thomas Leitch defines it in the following passage:

“Two great advantages the intermedial model has over the page-to-screen model are the neutrality of its language and its corresponding freedom from the necessity of dogmatic evaluation. In principle, theorists of intermediality can be just as dogmatic in their value judgments as anyone else, but their terminology does not automatically imply such judgments, and their cultural studies approach generally waives evaluative questions. In addition, to the extent that its proponents remember that intermediality is not reducible to bimodality, this approach is free from the dualistic problems that beset page-to-screen theories of adaptation.”

(Leitch, 2012: 91)

So, this definition, as the Academy Awards does, includes all those media that are excluded from the discourse because of the focus only on novels and movies: oral storytelling, radio, television, and hypermedia. It would be interesting to see an emphasis on intermediality since it would probably unite adaptation studies to a disciplinary ally, one that could go far to promote the centrality of adaptation studies to education in media literacy.

One of the difficulties that an intermedial account of adaptation faces is the difficulty of differentiating between adaptation and other intermedial practices. Voigts-Virchow addresses this problem by making a distinction between “media combination, media transfer, and media contact”, and as he acknowledges all these activities “may appear together in an individual media product” (Voigts-Virchow, 2005: 86), which consequentially implies that he refers to relations and activities rather than texts. A complementary problem is the widespread existence of those adaptations that are intramedial rather than intermedial. An example of this peculiar problem can be seen in Chaucer stories of the *The Knight’s Tale*, *The Reeve’s Tale*, and *Troilus and Criseyde* which he borrowed from Boccaccio without changing the medium — unless we do not consider a change from prose to poetry, or from Italian to Middle English as a changing of medium.

Voigts-Virchow, who is aware of these examples and these possible intramedialities, focuses his attention on the discussion of monster movies to distinguish between their status as “transmedial myths...intramedial metafilms... [and] intermedial references” (Voigts-Virchow, 2005: 86)

What results from this second definition of adaptation and its analysis is that theorists have been parceling out adaptation among transmedial, intramedial, and intermedial operations instead of considering it as a unified set of texts. or textual operations, or a unified disciplinary field.

This may possibly be one of the most accurate way to define adaptation but, at the same time, the price of an intermedial account of adaptation is that it dissolves its operations into a more comprehensive study of intermediality, which sets itself against adaptation and considers it a distinctive practice. In other words, by following this approach we put emphasis in the so called intermediality so much that it almost takes distance from the account of adaptation itself.

2.2.3 Adaptations are counter-ekphrases.

The earliest accounts of ekphrasis define it as “an extended description... intrud[ing] upon the flow of discourse and, for its duration...suspend[ing] the argument of the rhetor or the action of the poet” (Krieger, 1992: 7).

This definition focuses on the representation of artworks in one medium by artworks in another one: it is the case of Rembrandt’s *Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer*, and also on literary representations of the plastic arts, or “*the verbal representation of visual representation*” (Heffernan, 1993: 3)

The history of commentary on ekphrasis is interesting and would be refreshing for adaptation theorists since it sounds like a long confession of literature’s perception of its own inferiority to the visual arts.

It is true that this definition portrays adaptations study's prejudice in favour of the original artwork's anteriority over the copy's belatedness, but it also inverts the common assumption of adaptation theory by contending that words have to struggle to capture the power of images, rather than the other way around.

Although according to the earlier and broader definition of 'artworks that imitate artworks' adaptation could be defined as ekphrasis, it is better to adopt the definition which has been prevalent since the Renaissance, and which considers adaptation as counter-ekphrasis instead.

If the analogy between adaptation and ekphrasis was one of the most striking contribution to adaptation studies — from which also derived an inversion of the hierarchy of representational modes — considering adaptation as an inversion of ekphrasis, as a counter-ekphrasis, raises other provocative implications.

Murray Krieger, interestingly highlights that neither Achille's shield nor Keats' urn exists, and so describes ekphrasis not as a mere representation of a representation, but goes further and defines it as "the illusionary representation of the unrepresentable, even while that representation is allowed to masquerade as a natural sign" (Krieger, 1992: xv).

The thing that mirrors ekphrasis the best in adaptation studies are those films that mark themselves as based on a true story, those that create nonexistent progenitor media through the gesture of invoking them (Leitch, 2005: 289-290). Even if these films do not label themselves as adaptations, what they suggest is that there may be certain sources that they textualize by identifying them with "a true story", which helps illuminate the process through which both adaptation and ekphrasis contests, and confirms the status of its source by identifying it as a source.

What ekphrasis express, even under semiotic analysis that both visual and verbal representations are conventionally coded, is "the dream of a return to the idyll of the natural sign" (Krieger, 1992: 22) and from this point it is a short step to

considering “the visual emblem and the verbal emblem...complementary languages for seeking the representation of the unrepresentable. Ekphrasis is the poet’s marriage of the two within the verbal art” (Krieger, 1992: 22). This account underlines what theorists have been considering, which is that the hybrid nature of adaptation, which adds one language to another one in an attempt to represent experiences, can only be invoked.

By the way it is not easy to fit adaptation into the idea of ekphrasis, or counter-ekphrasis. Ekphrasis involves representation in its own nature, not a point-by-point portrayal of an earlier original work that is coextensive with a later work.

James Heffernan asserts that ekphrasis “is the unruly antagonist of narrative, the ornamental digression that refuses to be merely ornamental” (Heffernan, 1993: 5): for example Homer’s description of Achilles’ shield is a well known model of ekphrasis, not only because it represents a visual image of a nonexistent object, but also because it is digressive in the sense that it stops the narration of the Iliad in order to make a detailed description of it. This refusal of narrative seems to be distant from the concept of adaptation, especially since we have seen that an adaptation, in order to exist, needs a narrative at its back.

So what are the benefits of comparing adaptation to ekphrasis? The reasons lie mostly in the past, in the form of a missed opportunity: ten years ago students of film adaptation would have benefited from it to attack the alleged superiority of literature as a representational medium. Ekphrasis is a useful means to proclaim the superiority of the natural visual sign “celebrat[ing] the incapacity of words to yield natural signs and, instead, relat[ing] poetry to the temporal condition of our inner life” (Krieger, 1992: 24).

Cinema arrived on the scene and theories of adaptation accepted the denigration of visual representation as permanent and immutable. On the other hand students of adaptation have spent so much time liberating the field from the assumption that verbal representations are superior to visual representations without any

apparent awareness of ekphrasis so that now it would be illogical to bring ekphrasis back into the discourse.

2.2.4 Adaptations Are Texts Whose Status Depends on the Audience's Acceptance of a Deliberate Invitation to Read Them as adaptation.

This is the definition that Hutcheon herself gives to adaptation, and its advantages are similar to those of the intermediate models to which it is opposed. Considering questions of fidelity and evaluation as irrelevant to a definition of adaptation frees adaptations from a great number of insidious questions that create confusion rather than clarify what an adaptation is. What is interesting is that by focusing on the practice of creating and interpreting adaptations, this process redirects attention from a medium-specific duality to the relations between different texts and different processes of reading and writing.

So it is possible to affirm that this account of adaptation would probably find a hospitable home, like intermedial studies, within the broader discipline of reception studies rather than adaptation studies.

The problems that originate from this definition of adaptation concern this account's double focus on both production and reception.

According to Hutcheon an adaptation exists only when it meets two conditions, which are: its creator (the adapter) must create it in such a way to perceive it as an adaptation; and its audience must perceive it as an adaptation as well.

By following this model, an unacknowledged adaptation like *Torrid Zone* (1940) and an unofficial remake of *His Girl Friday* (1940) become ambiguous. These examples may seem marginal but very few Hollywood remakes explicitly credit their cinematic original pieces from which they were taken.

Film remakes however raise one of the most persistent problems for this account: many remakes depend on what Leitch has called "a triangular notion of intertextuality" (Leitch, 2002: 54), a definition that makes them appear as re-

adaptations of a certain literary source while relying on the earlier version of the film. Hutcheon as well considers all remakes adaptations, but it is hard to understand if those movies that claim their status of remakes are still adaptations and who consider them so.

This last point raises a problem about adaptation and its perception from the audience: if a given audience misses the intertextual reference of a given adaptation that they are watching or have watched can we still consider that an adaptation? For that audience definitely not. So a particular adaptation counts as adaptation not because of its properties but in function of how the audience considers it — but we have just agreed on the fact that an adaptation is an adaptation when its creator decides to perceive it and make it perceive ad adaptation.

A particular example for this problematic is Gus Van Sant's shot-by-shot 1998 remake of *Psycho*. Nobody considers that as an adaption of Robert Bloch's novel *Psycho*; they all consider it as a remake of Alfred Hitchcock's 1960 adaptation of the novel although Gus Van Sant never mention Hitchcock in the credits (except from an acknowledgement to Hitchcock's daughter).

This probably confirms Hutcheon's position according to which what makes an adaptation an adaptation is that it is “seen *as an adaptation*” (Hutcheon, 2006: 6), since anyone who has seen the movie must have seen the shadow of Hitchcock's *Psycho* in it. On the other hand the critical consensus on Gus Van Sant's movie (which is considered as just an imitation of Hitchcock's movie) makes it appear as an exception to Hutcheon's rule that “an adaptation is a derivation that is not derivative — a work that is second without being secondary” (Hutcheon, 2006: 7).

2.2.5 Adaptations Are Examples of a Distinctive Mode of Transtextuality.

This account mirrors Gérard Genette's *Palimpsests*, which offers five different modes of transtextuality characteristics of "literature in the second degree": the first one is the intertextuality indicated by quotation and allusion; the second one is the paratextuality marked by "secondary signals" (Genette, 1997: 3) like titles, prefaces, epigraphs and so on; third is the metatextuality of commentary and allusion; the fourth is the architextuality, which is implicit in paratextual generic markers like John Donne's title *Songs and Sonnets*; and last the hypertextuality that links a given text to a hypotext in a manner that is not commentary. Of this five modes Robert Stam identifies hypertextuality as "perhaps the type most clearly relevant to adaptation" (Stam, 2005: 31).

But of course the fact that adaptation theorists paid attention to Genette's categories does not mean that there were no problems for adaptation studies. The most evident is that Genette actually never discusses adaptation as a transtextual mode nor does not make any connection to it neither. And when it comes to cinema Genette affirms that "this sort of 'stuff' is a bit out of my field" (Genette, 1997: 157). So, at this point, it is obvious that adaptation theorists who are looking to Genette for a model upon which building a system of classification that would make possible a distinction between adaptation and other modes of intertextuality — or 'transtextuality' using a word that Genette would use — are working in a framework that is nothing but solid. His *Palimpsests* provides a great help to find inspiration to adaptation theorists, but its author itself is the first to disclaim that his work is a valid system of classification to distinguish adaptation from anything else.

2.2.6 Adaptations Are Translations.

Linda Costanzo Cahir, the leading contemporary exponent of this account, follows the model that Bluestone offers and makes a distinction between adaptation and translation:

“While literature-based films are often, customarily and understandably, referred to as adaptations, the term “to adapt” means to alter the structure or function of an entity so that it is better fitted to survive and to multiply in its new environment. To adapt is to move *that same entity* into a new environment. In the process of adaptation, the same substantive entity which entered the process exits, even as it undergoes modification – sometimes radical mutation – in its efforts to *accommodate* itself to its new environment.

“To translate,” in contrast to “to adapt,” is to move a text from one language to another. It is a *process of language*, not a process of survival and generation. Through the process of translation a fully new text – *a materially different entity* – is made, one that simultaneously has a strong relationship with its original source, yet is fully independent from it. Simply put: we are able to read and appreciate the translation without reading the original source.”

(Cahir, 2006: 14)

What Chair means is not that adaptations are translations, instead she believes that the differences between the two are so pivotal that what we usually call adaptations are rather better described as translations.

This approach connects the earlier text to its later incarnation — the so called “translation” — and at the same time maintains its textual and aesthetic integrity.

The advantages of this approach are two:

1) The redefinition of adaptations as translations connects adaptations to the literal translation of Chaucer and Shakespeare and other intramedial adaptations that do not easily find a classification in the intermedial theorists of adaptation.

2) It inserts the question of fidelity in a new context that is familiar to translation students, who “have strong presumptions and predilections regarding the proper activities of translators” (Cahir, 2006: 14).

Cahir’s translation model works like the traditional criteria for translation from one language to another in the sense that it stresses the importance of an ethical imperative on fidelity but at the same time asks “to what...should the translator be *most* faithful? The question is not that of the translation’s faithfulness, but of its *faithfulness to what?*” (Cahir, 2006: 15)

Cahir notes that “[e]very act of translation is simultaneously an act of interpretation” (Cahir, 2006: 14). This definition, however, reveals a flaw in her account of adaptation. In fact it shows an “incompatibility with prevailing theories of translation, which are as concerned to break down the integrity of individual textual manifestations as her theory of adaptation is to maintain them.” (Leitch, 2012: 98)

George Steiner, for examples, in its study *After Babel* (1992) summarises what he considers a general postulate that, according to him, has ben widely accepted:

“Translation is formally and pragmatically implicit in every act of communication... To understand is to decipher. To hear significance is to translate. Thus the essential structural and executive means and problems of the act of translation are fully present in acts of speech, of writing, of pictorial encoding inside any given language. Translation between different languages is a particular application of a configuration and model fundamental to human speech even where it is monoglot”

(Steiner, 1975: xii)

But at the same time Steiner affirms that “translation is not only unnecessary but inconceivable” because “[w]ords rebel against man. They will shake off the servitude of meaning” (Steiner, 1975: 499).

This statement goes against the stability and integrity of texts that Cahir proposes as bearers of determinate meanings. Moreover her theory raises several problems that she is not able to resolve: if adaptation really is translation, then what is the link between linguistic and medium-specific (not just cinematic) coding and decoding? Considering adaptation as translation may be problematic since recent theories of translation, like that of Steiner’s suspicion of the unitary pre-translated text, seem to go against the conclusion that Cahir supports.

2.2.7 Adaptations Are Performances.

If Cahir affirms that all adaptations are interpretations — in the sense that they are translations — therefore why is not possible to argue that all adaptations are performances? This sounds illogical if we consider adaptations as texts of another sort, but it makes sense if we consider them as the realisation of texts. If we consider Robert Stam’s list of nineteen different synonyms for adaptation (Stam, 2005: 25) we may notice that the word “performance” is not included. The only one that gets closer to the definition of adaptations as performances is James Griffiths, who has argued that a given adaptation can be seen as “an imitation [that] tries to capture some qualities of the object without perversely trying to capture them all” (Griffiths, 1997: 41), otherwise no leading theorists have defined adaptation as performance. Even Hutcheon, who takes in exam “musical arrangements and song covers, visual art revisitations of prior works and comic book versions of history, poems put to music and remakes of films, and videogames and interactive art” (Hutcheon, 2006: 9), affirms that “live performance works”, like musical scores, represent a “parallel” case in which there are inevitable changes anytime from performance to performance, which

are determined by the “production process” rather than “by reception, by the people who ‘materially alter texts’” (Hutcheon, 2006: 170).

It would appear less improbable to call performances all those cinematic works that have a play as a source rather than a novel, but at the same time it is impossible to affirm that movie adaptations from plays do not exist. At this point it would be more accurate to define adaptations as works that treat their forbears as performances texts, whether or not those texts were originally so intended; and this account is well mirrored by the fact that any movie that has been adapted from a novel first is “translated” into a screenplay which is the base for the filmmakers to realise a movie adaptation.

Although all film adaptations are indeed performances of their screenplays, Jack Boozer correctly observes that the screenplay “has been deemed merely a skeletal blueprint for the adapted film and thus unworthy of serious consideration in its own right” (Boozer, 2008: 2), so approaching adaptations as performances stresses more importance to their screenplays as performance texts, which is not something to underestimate since screenplays are absolutely necessary in the realisation of any kind of adaptation and not only for movie adaptations. A complementary result would be to provide a new context for film adaptations based on the relationship between other adaptations that depend on performance and the texts they perform: operas and their librettos, ballets and their musical scores, popular songs and their words but also more modern adaptations as video games and their adapted storylines.

This reorientation however becomes problematic when we consider all movies, not only adaptations, as performances of their screenplays. For example, it would make confusion even in the distinction between the categories of movies written directly for the screen and those that are not that the *Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences* itself makes. What basically would happen if we start considering adaptation as congruent with all performances is that thousands of

works that have never before been considered adaptations would start claiming their nature of adaptation.

A possible solution to distinguish adaptation from other performances is to define adaptations not as performances but as recordings or transcriptions of performances, but unfortunately it would also distinguish recorded music or filmed operas — all of which would count as adaptations — from live performances of plays and operas. Although it may seem difficult, almost impossible, to define adaptation as a particular type of performance, the analogy is valuable because it shed light on old problems and seems to find a solid track in the debate of adaptation studies.

2.2.8 Adaptations Are Quintessential Examples of Intertextual Practice.

This definition of adaptation may be interesting since it puts the emphasis on adaptation as a centre rather than a congruence. In this account adaptation becomes a place that helps locate the field of study in which it operates rather than marking the limits of its boundaries.

Apart from the enlargement of the field of study of adaptation scholars, what would be the benefit of adaptations as the quintessential intertexts? Rochelle Hurst in her essay *Adaptation as an Undecidable: Fidelity and Binary from Bluestone to Derrida* suggests a possible defence of this position on adaptation. Working in the framework of fidelity, which first admits that faithfulness to the original source texts is impossible and then blames adaptations for failing to achieve it, Hurst reports Jacques Derrida's notion of "undecidable" — " 'false' verbal properties...that can no longer be included within philosophical (binary) opposition, but which, however, inhabit philosophical opposition, restating and disorganising it, without ever constituting a third term, without ever leaving room for a solution in the form of speculative dialectics" (Derrida, 1981: 43). Hurst takes this definition of Derridean undecidable as model that "inhabits both sides

of the binary” (Hurst, 2008: 186). So every single reference that has been made, both in scholarly and popular writing to adaptation considered as a “version” of an earlier text, highlights adaptation as a “hybrid, an amalgam of media — at once a cinematized novel and a literary film, confusing, bringing, and rejecting the alleged discordance between page and screen, both insisting upon and occupying the overlap” (Hurst, 2008: 187)

Of course there are many other texts that bring such binaries into question, but what makes adaptation especially powerful is that it also calls into question all the dichotomies concerning texts, textuality, and cultural status that John Tibbetts and Jim Welsh have listed as constitutive of the field: “art and commerce, individual creativity and collaborative fabrication, culture and mass culture, the verbal and the visual” (Tibbetts, Welsh, 2005: xv). They go far by asking this question “literature and film: is this a natural marriage or a shotgun wedding?” (Tibbetts, Welsh, 2005: xv) which mirrors the fact that there are advantages and the difficulties in this dualistic thinking that adaptation both encourages and challenges at the same time. Adaptation has never been able to find its own definition since it has always depended on constantly evolving and never stable binaries.

Hutcheon defined adaptation as “repetition without replication” (Hutcheon, 2006: 7) which would seem to make adaptation the centre of intertextual and intermedial theories, which would support this problematic nature, instead of considering it as a disadvantage, since this is the sphere around which scholarly disciplines are organised. Adaptation actually offers advantages in regard to literature and cinema, since both have settled in front of a canon of works rather than working on a series of productive problems.

2.2.9 Adaptations Are a Distinctive Instance, but not a Central or Quintessential Instance, of Intertextuality.

This model is the consequence of the previous one, and it is generated from its failure. It is not a model that Hutcheon analyses, it rather is implicit in her work on intertextuality when she observes that:

“[w]hile we need to expand the concept of adaptation to include the extended “refunctioning” (as the Russian formalists called it) that is characteristic of the art of our time, we also need to resist its focus in the sense that adaptation’s “target” text is always another work of art or, more generally, another form of coded discourse” (Hutcheon, 1985: 16)

Hutcheon herself later reviews her survey by noting that:

“[i]n the last five chapters, the “worldly” or ideological status of adaptation has been touched on a number of times. Much adaptation, we saw, turned out to be conservative or normative in its critical function... According to a Romantic aesthetic, such forms of art are by definition parasitic. Even today, this same negative evaluation exists and its basis, as betrayed by its language, is often ideological in a very general sense: we are told that adaptation seeks to dominate texts, but that it is still ultimately peripheral and parasitic (Stierle, 1983: 19-20).

We have also seen, however, that there is another type of adaptation... This other kind or mode had a wider range of pragmatic ethos and its form is considerably more extended. Adaptation in much twentieth-century art is a major mode of thematic and formal structuring, involving what I earlier called integrated modelling processes. As such, it is one of the most frequent forms taken by textual self-reflectivity in our century. It marks the intersection of creation and re-creation, of invention and critique (Hutcheon, 1985: 100-1)

This claim would make sense for adaptation if Hutcheon was actually talking about it, but she is referring to parody instead. Leitch reported these passages altering the word “parody” with “adaptation”, which shows how fragile are the claims for intertextual modes of which adaptation is only one part of, and not at all the strongest or most important one. And I would personally add that if it is possible to change words — from “parody” to “adaptation” — then it is probably correct to affirm that an adaptation is an adaptation only when we consider that so and we refer to it in these terms.

Adaptation is challenged both by translation and parody when it comes to gain centrality in the field of intertextuality, but the debates that are generated from these difficulties are good for this field of study. Even if adaptation is put aside by another contender, its status of “same-but-different” can be useful to organise genre theory, and for example production and marketing of best-sellers depend on this claim: it means that it becomes a genre itself, a genre that provides the pattern for all others and gives an insight into the reception on other genres and their production and distribution.

This latest model suggest a work of distinguishing adaptations from other intertextual modes as centre of the discipline of intertextual studies although it is not possible to offer a logical conclusion, or a solution.

2.3 How to Approach the Idea of Adaptation.

We have seen Leitch’s nine accounts of adaptation in connection to intertextuality, but as we have already seen at the beginning of this chapter they do not have the intention to find a solution and give a definition of adaptation, since the author himself is well aware of the fact that it is impossible to define it

precisely, and it is only possible to try to define the limits that we should pay attention to when we work with an adaptation.

Of these nine points, I believe, that the fourth one is essential: adaptations are texts whose status depends on the audience's acceptance of a deliberate invitation to read the as adaptation. I would like to make an example to explain my point of view about it: imagine two people looking at the same number written on a paper, the first one is looking at it from the top, the second one is looking at it from the bottom. Imagine this number is "6" for the first one, and "9" for the latter, the two people would start arguing because they are reading a different figure but actually both of them are right. What is the solution then? We should ask the one who has written the number if he wanted to write a "6" or a "9" and only then we could decide who of the two spectators were right. In the same way we can try to give all the possible definitions, and try to find many different approaches, to adaptation, but if we are not conscious of the fact that what is in front of us is an adaptation we would not probably even start to try to find a solution. Therefore all of Thomas Leitch's nine accounts are true, but Hutcheon's idea that an adaptation is an adaptation only when we perceive it as so remains the centre of all the works of adaptations studies.

Chapter 3

Psycho: the Screenplay

3.1 *Psycho*: A Case Study

We have seen how many different and sometimes contrasting opinions there are about adaptations, and we have seen how adaptation studies is not yet a clear-cut field of study.

However these reasons are not enough to stop taking in consideration adaptations and try to analyse them. As long as a medium is adapted into another I believe it is necessary to try to understand the processes behind that.

An interesting case of study is Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), based on the 1959 same-titled novel written by Robert Bloch. The film was produced and directed by Hitchcock, but was actually written (and adapted) by Joseph Stefano. The novel itself was based on the case of Ed Gein which took place in Plainfield, Wisconsin in 1957. Gein was arrested for having murdered two women, and when the police searched his home they found furniture, silverware and clothing made of human skin and body parts. Psychiatrists theorised he was trying to make a "woman suit" to wear so that he could impersonate his dead mother, a lady who, according to the neighbours, was a puritan and very dominant and strict with her son.

Hitchcock's *Psycho* is an interesting case of adaptation because in the collective imagination is not perceived as an adaptation but almost as an original work, actually one of the most successful works by Hitchcock. If we search the internet we find lists about possible things we did not know about the movie, and one of the point is that it is based on a novel; and, moreover, there are website and blog articles by people who affirms they had no idea that the movie was adapted from

a novel. At this point we can affirm that the account according to which ‘adaptations are texts whose status depends on the audience’s acceptance of a deliberate invitation to read the as adaptation’ is probably the most valid, at least for the movie that we are going to analyse.

I also believe that the right approach to analyse this adaptation is not that of pointing out the differences between the novel and the movie, since that is something that everybody can autonomously do. I rather believe that to analyse an adaptation, the processes behind the change of medium, it is more useful to take in consideration the minds behind it, how they work and what were their thoughts during the writing of the screenplay and later during the filming of the movie. In this chapter we will focus on the relationship between Joseph Stefano and Alfred Hitchcock, the impact that the novel had on Stefano, what were his reasons to change or maintain some parts of the novel and how he believed the screenplay had to be in order to make the movie be successful once released.

3.2 Why Robert Bloch’s *Psycho*?

In the first chapter we have seen that Linda Hutcheon suggests four reasons why adapters do their job and are asked to work on adaptation. Of these four reasons there are two that certainly fit into the decision of Hitchcock to adapt Bloch’s novel: the economic lures, and personal motives.

As cameramen Leonard South explained, “Hitch[cock] had promised Universal a picture and decided that *Psycho*, a small project, would get that commitment out of the way” (Rebello, 1990: 28). Earlier that year, in fact, Paramount lost much money on two aborted Hitchcock projects. One was *Flamingo Feather*, an adventure-chase set in Africa: Hitchcock had delegated the screenplay to the screenwriter Angus MacPhail (who also worked on the screenplay of *The Wrong*

Man and *Vertigo*) who never delivered the finished manuscript. The other aborted project was that of *No Bail for the Judge*: the script, written by Samuel Taylor (who also had worked on *Vertigo*), was camera-ready when Audrey Hepburn, the actress chosen for the movie, announced her pregnancy.

The director also complained about stars' salaries which, according to him, were becoming excessive, (Rebello, 1990: 29) and moreover, having a star in the cast, was not the smartest choice in terms of casting because according to Hitchcock "the minute you put a star into a role you've already compromised because it may not be perfect casting... In television we have a greater chance to cast more freely than in pictures. Star names don't mean all that much in television, at least in dramatic terms". It meant that having a big name in a movie had become an economic risk in case the star did not satisfy the audience's expectation.

We have seen that other reasons to choose to film an adaptation may be personal motives: Hitchcock, at the time, was frantically in search of the unexpected and, as he told the *New York Times*, he was frustrated in finding suitable material: as he said "Newspaper headlines tell too many outlandish stories from real life that drive the spinner of suspense fiction to further extremes. I always regard the fact that we've got to outwit the audience to keep them with us. They're highly trained detectives looking at us out there right now". *Psycho* was almost a personal and professional challenge to Hitchcock: he wondered if he would have been able to make a movie under the same conditions of a television show (Truffaut, 1983: 283). He did not start with the intention of doing an important movie, he rather wanted to to have fun with the subject and the situation. As he affirmed "the picture costed eight hundred thousand dollars and [he] used a complete television unit to shoot it very quickly. The only place where [he] digressed was when [he] slowed down the murder scene, the cleaning-up scene and the other scenes that indicated anything that required time. All of the rest was handled in the same way that they do it in television" (Truffaut, 1983: 283).

3.3 Why Joseph Stefano?

Joseph Stefano was the adapter who worked on the screenplay of *Psycho*. Hitchcock was actually disappointed by the first draft screenplay from screenwriter James P. Cavanagh, so Hollywood agency MCA suggested another young client to Hitchcock, Joseph Stefano, a thirty-eight-year-old former lyricist-composer. Described by Stephen Rebello as “exuberantly cocky, volatile, streetwise, Stefano, who had only owned a television for two years, had garnered not writing aspirations outside of music” (Rebello, 1990: 51).

Through the words of Stefano we get to know how the first meeting between him and Hitchcock went:

“In our very first meeting, Hitchcock told me that he’d been impressed by a company called American International which was making movies for less than \$200,000 apiece, and he was especially impressed with what the films were doing at the box office. His very words to me at the time were, ‘What if somebody good did one?’ In putting it that way, he wasn’t criticizing American International and the other low-budget production companies; he was just issuing a challenge to himself. Since he was already set up as a production company at Universal for his television series, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, he was in the perfect position to attempt such a project. So right from the beginning, every single consideration was guided by his idea of doing ‘a low-budget movie’ – not really to prove anything, but simply to make a lot of money. Hitchcock’s movies had always made astonishing amounts of money, but he felt that they were beginning to cost far too much to make. *North by Northwest*, which he made right before *Psycho*, starred Cary Grant and had a huge budget, and Hitchcock felt that he wasn’t being appropriately rewarded financially for what he was doing. So he decided that a low-budget success would change

all that.” (Joseph Stefano, 2013, online interview see webliography reference)

The director definitely wanted to “make a lot of money” but, at the same time, contradicting Stefano’s claim, he was also stating that he wanted to make a low-budget movie that would have been so good to earn so much money as a big movie with a high budget.

No other directors nor writers were able to get another meeting with Hitchcock beyond the first time, but Stefano felt like he had penetrated the armour of the director, because he had the impression that Hitchcock found him funny and he states that they had a lot of laughs together (Rebello, 1990: 55). A second meeting was immediately arranged by the Hitchcock’s office. The director himself told Stefano that he would have liked a big-name actress to play the role of Marion because nobody would have expected her to die. However, as the screenwriter recollects: “He wanted somebody much bigger than Janet Leigh—someone I did not think was terribly good. But once he mentioned Janet Leigh, the whole thing really began to get me: she was someone with no association with this kind of movie—a suspense-horror movie—and neither were Perkins, Hitchcock, nor I” (Rebello, 1990: 55). What Hitchcock basically did was keeping the expectations at the lowest so that the movie would have been shocking, he wanted to keep everything simple to make the most out of it once in front of the audience.

By mid-September 1959, Hitchcock decided that Stefano would have been the screenwriter for the new movie: he hired him on a week-to-week basis in case the collaboration would not have worked.

During the next meetings it seemed that Hitchcock was more focused on Stefano himself rather than on the process of writing a screenplay for *Psycho*. Stefano recalls that they rarely talked about the movie at all, but that the director always

gave him the feeling that he trusted him and knew that he was going to do a great job. Stefano admitted that Hitchcock gave him the rarest gift that a prouder or director can give to a writer: total confidence (Stefano, 2013). At this point it is important to highlight the peculiar strategy that the director adopted: he surely was careful about the project he had to work on, so the fact that they never actually talked about the movies was not a matter of indifference towards the writing of the screenplay, but I would rather suggest that he often met Stefano in order to be able to understand the writer of his screenplay, give him some hints and teach him the basis of cinema. The reason behind that, I believe, is that Hitchcock intentionally never really talked about the actual process of writing the screenplay in order to separate the spheres of the writing from the one of the shooting. In regard to the book Stefano once asked Hitchcock if he had bought it and read it, and he replied that “there was no point in reading it”: it is clear that the director kept himself as far as possible from the novel.

Stefano recollects those moments with these words:

“I still have my steno notebook from those meetings with maybe three pages of little odds and ends: notions that I had, or something Hitch might mention about something he didn’t like, so I’d make a note of it. But most of the time, we talked about other things. He was extremely interesting, and he was a wonderful person to work with. I was in analysis at the time, and I would go to his office directly from the couch and tell him all about it. He was very interested, and he seemed delighted that I was, I guess, a different kind of animal than he’d worked with before. I was very informal and very expressive, and he seemed to enjoy that.” (Joseph Stefano, 2013)

At the same time, however, Hitchcock was very careful about details. It is true that he left Stefano work by his own and did not interfere with the writing of the

screenplay, but he was present when discussing the little details that made the difference: the screenwriter recalled the moment when they had a discussion about the murder scene in the shower and explained that they both wanted to know all the details about what was going to be in the movie: “He rose from his desk, came round toward me, and said, ‘You be the camera. Now, we won’t have her really lying on the bathroom floor. We’ll show him lift up the shower curtain ...’ And Hitchcock acted out every move, every gesture, every nuance of wrapping the corpse in the curtain. Suddenly, his office door flew open behind him. In walked his wife, Alma, who rarely came to the studio. Hitchcock and I yelled, ‘Aaaaaaaaagggghhhh!!!’ The shock of the intrusion at that moment was so great, we must have laughed for five minutes!” (Rebello, 1990: 59)

An aspect that emerges from the interview with Joseph Stefano is that one of the things that Hitchcock feared the most was boredom. He was afraid of it, especially of the possibility for the audience to get bored. The fact that Stefano himself got to know this detail about Hitchcock from the director himself, during one of their meetings, is explanatory of what we have seen: the two of them did not talk about the movie, they rather worked on themselves, which ended up with Hitchcock shaping Stefano’s mind so that he could eventually write a screenplay that was enough for the director’s expectation. But the same time, by doing so, Hitchcock was able to give Stefano all the freedom that a creative mind needs to realise a good work, and this, perhaps, may be one of the reasons of the success of the movie.

“If, in any of those meetings, Hitchcock ever seemed distracted or disinterested, I would ask him to show me a movie, and when it was over, I’d ask him two-hours worth of questions, and he’d explain everything – even draw diagrams of things. It was quite unbelievable. I remember once asking him why he told the audience the truth about Madeleine halfway through *Vertigo*, and he explained that there was

nowhere else for the audience to go because they would have gotten bored if he didn't reveal the truth. And that was Hitchcock's greatest bugaboo: boredom. It was about the only thing that he was really afraid of, and I made a note of it. The whole experience was incredible. There was no place else in the world I could have gotten a better education about filmmaking. Yet, despite all that he taught me, Hitch never interfered with me as a writer. He was perfectly willing to tell me everything I wanted to know, but he clearly felt that the writing was my job. A lot of directors don't do that, but he had every confidence that I'd come in with a good script." (Joseph Stefano, 2013)

When not working on the new production Hitchcock was very willing to talk about cinema, and eventually show Stefano a movie and later explain everything about it, sometimes even through diagrams, and the screenwriter recalls those moments as something unbelievable. The director was very aware of the fact that Stefano knew nothing about cinema and television and this is probably the reason why he decided to spend so much time with him and to teach him all he needed to know.

We may wonder if this was productive and whether would have been smarter to work with a screenwriter who had much more experience, but we should also remember that *Psycho* was a low-budget movie. Therefore we may hazard to say that the director wanted to see what result could be brought about by working in such a peculiar way. Stefano himself admits that not many directors do that, but Hitchcock instead told Stefano everything he wanted to know, and everything he needed to know, he had been present in the process of writing, working on the writer instead of working on the screenplay.

From Stefano's words about his meetings with Hitchcock it appears that the director was more than enthusiast of working with him and giving him total trust.

Yet according to Hitchcock instead “*Psycho* all came from Robert Bloch. Joseph Stefano...contributed dialogue mostly, no ideas” (Rebello, 1990: 56). The reason for Hitchcock’s words may also be his tendency to appropriate any good idea as his own, so of course he would not probably have admitted that many of the good ideas were Stefano’s ones rather than his own.

Stefano moreover recalls how he felt about engaging with Hitchcock’s imagination; he admitted that the only way to intellectually get closer to the director was by conceptualising and verbalising the story in visual terms: “He was not interested in characters or motivation at all. That was the writer’s job. If I said, ‘I’d like to give the girl an air of desperation,’ he’d say, ‘Fine, fine.’ But when I said, ‘In the opening of the film, I’d like a helicopter shot over the city, then go right up to the seedy hotel where Marion is spending her lunch hour with Sam,’ he said, ‘We’ll go right into the window!’ That sort of thing excited him.” (Rebello, 1990: 58)

3.4 Joseph Stefano’s Approach to the Novel

It is not a secret that when Stefano got involved with the project and got to read Robert Bloch’s novel *Psycho* he did not like at all the character of Norman Bates. Norman Bates in fact, in the novel, is described as an unpleased, obese and balding drunk man, who Stefano absolutely disliked. The screenwriter did not really like the character of Mary neither, later renamed Marion, and was clear from the very first meeting with the director about the changes that he wanted to make.

Stefano’s take on how to adapt the book into a movie, as he explained to Hitchcock during their first meeting, was that it should have been a story “about a girl who is in a dead-end love affair with a man who has serious financial

problems. She loves him, but she does not want things to continue as they are — shacking up in cheap hotel rooms over her lunch hour whenever he can get to town”, so the solution for Stefano was that of describing what “this woman was going through in her sordid life when a wealthy, smarmy man unexpectedly walks into her office at the bank and hands her \$60,00 in cash to deposit. And the temptation is just too much for Marion as she later realises in the parlour scene with Norman.” (Stefano, 2013)

There’s a link between the two characters that Stefano noticed and wanted to portray: he described them both as impulsive and mad, on two different levels of course. Marion’s decision not to deposit the \$60,000 is a true moment of impulsive madness, one of those moments when we irrationally think that all the problems can be solved, whereas Norman’s madness is a ‘convenient’ madness, a rational kind of madness, which works him to keep him out of trouble and prevent him from confronting his ghosts.

The novel and the movie open in very different way and are very different in their structure. The first actually opens with the description of Norman Bates reading a book about the preservation of corpses inside the house, which gives space to the possibility of making interact him with “mother”, an expedient that is possible only in the book: the reader is fooled into thinking that the character is actually having a conversation with his mother, he sees through the eyes of Norman Bates. The book then continues with a chapter on Mary to return then to Norman’s point of view. The movie instead begins with a scene about Marion, precisely with a moving wide shot of the city of Phoenix which gradually descend into a hotel room where two people are revealed: Marion and her lover Sam. Hitchcock, according to Stefano, appreciated this innovation and another trick that the director liked was that of presenting Marion first, who “was going to be killed and taken away from the audience, and then the film would encourage the viewers to sympathise with Norman — who would turn out to be

the very person who'd actually killed her" (Stefano, 2013), and this was a trick that was possible only in the movie, whereas in the novel would probably have seemed to be boring.

According to Stefano, this is what he thought as he first read the book and when he actually decided to completely change the movie structure and make it different from the novel structure:

"When I first read the book, I didn't have any definite thoughts about how to deal with this. All I knew is that by page three or so, it was clear to me that I couldn't start the movie like the novel. Then on my way over to meet Hitchcock, the idea of making it into a movie about Marion Crane came to me, so I pitched it that way to Hitchcock, and I think that he instantly appreciated that I was solving the big problem with the book. I believe that every audience wants to grab onto somebody almost from the first frame; they want to care about someone. In this film, it was going to be this young woman who steals the \$60,000 and then is killed unexpectedly. That was the shocker. My hope was that in the scene between Marion and Norman in the back parlor at the motel everything would be set up right for the audience to deal with the loss."

(Stefano, 2013)

According to Stefano the beginning of the novel was very problematic, not only for him, but also for Hitchcock himself. The problem was that it was not possible to film an opening scene like the one that opens the novel since it would have destroyed the turning point of the whole story: the fact that Norman's mother was dead and Norman pretended to be her, dressed like her and talked to himself as if he was having a real conversation with the woman.

Changing the whole structure of the novel to adapt it into a screenplay was not an easy task, and the work had to be done together with a reshaping and a new

characterisation of the characters, specially of that of Mary/Marion. As Stefano explained:

“I worked on a level of characterization that was probably unheard-of for what turned out to be a horror movie. In fact, I felt like I was writing a movie about Marion, not about Norman. I saw Marion as a girl getting on in years working at a dull job around undelightful, unimpressive people. She is in love with a man who won’t marry her because he has financial problems. The greatest thing about Marion is that she never stops to think ‘Can I get away with this?,’ which is exactly the way that someone performs an act of madness when they themselves are not mad. Once we got to the motel, the whole game changed for me. From then on, we were into manipulation of the highest order. Torturing the audience was the intention. Because there was no precedent for *Psycho* in Hitchcock’s body of work, I went at it with an incredible and surprising amount of freedom.” (Rebello, 1990: 58)

As Stefano told during this interview the shocker was the moment when “this young woman who steals the \$60,000” is killed unexpectedly. The difference between the novel and the movie is that the novel starts in medias res, and the fact that Mary stole the money is only a little detail to justify why she escaped all by herself and to make her end up in an isolated motel with no many tracks left behind. The novel instead is much more focused on the character of Norman, its relationship with his mother and the environment in which he lives.

Joseph Stefano goes on by describing the turning point that precede the famous scene of the murder in the shower:

“During the parlor scene, when Marion learns about Norman’s life, she gets a renewed perspective on herself. She sees this pathetic guy who’s stuck in something he can’t get out of, and she realizes that she’s also in

a similar situation. But she remains sympathetic to Norman, and the audience needs to feel the same way. The scene has to properly prepare the audience to like this pathetic guy because they're going to lose Marion very soon and unexpectedly." (Stefano, 2013)

We talked about madness as the link between the two characters, two different kind of madness but still something in common that seem to make them cross the paths, but in the exact moment when Marion realises what she has done, the same moment in which she realises about her madness is the moment in which something breaks in Norman's mind and eventually lead him to the decision of murdering her. In the book instead the argument that lead to the murder is much more soft than the one in the movie: in the novel Mary seems in control of what she says, and Norman, on the other side, simply seem desperate rather than furious.

Stefano comments in this way the choice that he made while adapting the novel in order to make the audience first sympathise with Marion and later with Norman:

"In the real world, murders happen all the time, and nobody seems to give much of a damn about the victim, and that's why I felt it was important for the audience to like Marion and sympathize with her before she dies. Then, in the middle of the shock of her death, the audience needs to shift its sympathies to Norman who, we believe, knows that his mother committed the murder. What a horrendous situation for a young man to be in! So the audience, which already kind of likes him from the scene in the parlor – for his shyness and so on – is hopefully prepared to shift its loyalties to Norman. And it worked. If the audience could have gotten on screen and helped Norman get rid of the body, they would have done so. When the car stops sinking in the bog, there was often an

audible gasp in the audience because they didn't want him to get caught.”
(Stefano, 2013)

Stefano and Hitchcock both got what Hitchcock wanted to achieve and what he was known for, which is suspense. In this passage Stefano also mentions Norman's shyness “and so on” which lead us into talking about how he manipulated and changed the protagonist. In the first pages of the novel we get a glimpse of what he looks like:

“The light shone down on his plump face, reflected from his rimless glasses, bathed the pinkness of his scalp beneath the thinning sandy hair as he bent his head to resume reading.” (Bloch, 1959: 2)

Norman Bates, in the novel, is portrayed like a 40-year-old man who still lives with his mother and by the many dialogues that he has with her it emerges how dominant the woman is on her son. If Stefano, and then Hitchcock, had portrayed such a character, with such a physical aspect it would not have been trusted — or would have been trusted less — by the audience.

It is interesting to notice the fact that, when Stefano began working on the full script, he had Anthony Perkins in his mind for the part of Norman Bates, and Perkins is physically completely different from the Norman Bates of the novel; he would rather resemble a next-door guy, or at least he gives the impression of being a man who is physically and mentally in control of himself. The reason why the director decided to have Perkins in the cast was not deliberately an artistic one, but it was mostly because they knew they could have had a great actor at a lower price than the usual.

“Hitch[cock] had Perkins in mind mainly because Tony owed Paramount a picture and his price for the picture was much less than his normal rate. In one of our earliest discussions, when I was complaining about the

Norman Bates character in the novel, Hitch let me go on for a while, and then finally he said, ‘We can get Tony Perkins.’ And I was delighted. I’d just seen Tony in New York during the final run-through of *Look Homeward Angel*, and when Hitchcock told me that Tony was Bates, I had this powerful image of Perkins on stage, and said to myself, ‘That’s Norman Bates! That’s exactly who I want it to be!’” (Stefano, 2013)

We have seen how economic lures and personal motives intertwined in many decisional processes that were taken during the writing of the screenplay but that anticipated the filming of the movie. One of the personal motives for Joseph Stefano was that of how murders were seen by the public reception. In one of the previous passages the screenwriter highlights the fact that “in the real world, murders happen all the time, and nobody seems to give much of a damn about the victim”. The death of Marion in the movie seemed to have two important meanings: the first is that she is punished for her crime, the latter is that she dies repentant of this crime. But what was Stefano’s idea about the many murders that were happening at the time?

“At the time I wrote the screenplay, I was very upset by all the supposedly ‘meaningless’ murders that were happening in our society, and I couldn’t bring myself to see how any murder of a human being could be meaningless. As for Hitchcock’s attitudes, I must admit that I’ve never really thought about it before, but Hitchcock and I definitely came from similar religious backgrounds. I was raised a Catholic, and although I’d left the faith, so to speak, we both had a similar moral sense, and, for both of us, it seemed much more terrible – and affecting – for someone to be killed after she’s finally gotten back on the right track and washed herself clean.” (Stefano, 2013)

The fact that Marion gets murdered as soon as she repents is very striking and pretty much unusual, especially for an audience who is used to see that there is always a solution and a happy ending for the bad character when he/she realises his/her own mistakes and decides to change. This probably was not easy for the audience to accept, but they also had to accept it fast since there was another character to root for, Norman Bates, who has to cover the act of madness committed by his mother, and this shift of attention from Marion to Norman was possible only because Norman was the kind of man that everybody would like.

The second death scene is that of the detective Arbogast, which was artificially built and studied in such a way that the audience would have been sure to have seen Norman's mother killing the detective:

“Hitch[cock] and I had quite a few long talks about that scene too, since it's so crucial that the audience continues to believe that ‘mother’ is mother. In the novel, ‘mother’ comes down the stairs and kills the detective at the front door. So I suggested that we reverse things and follow Marty Balsam up the stairs and then keep the camera rising up to a high crane shot before ‘mother’ comes out at the top of the stairs. Then things would happen so fast that the audience would think that they'd actually seen the old woman as she stabs the detective and knock him down the stairs. And Hitch liked the idea very much, and he felt that it would work, but he was worried because it would cost him about \$25,000 to build the crane into the set. In the end, he finally decided to do it, and the scene was very successful. Many people who saw the finished picture were absolutely convinced that they'd seen Norman's mother in the scene, but, of course, they only saw the top of her head.”

(Stefano, 2013)

Norman Bates in the movie is also well characterised by the idea that he somehow has some secrets, by voyeurism, stuffed birds and many mirrors. Late in the movie there is a scene during which Lila, Marion's sister, is exploring Norman's room and find a book with a blank cover which she opens and stares at. The camera however did not show the content of the book but one critic wondered if it was a family album, even tho in the novel it is a book with 'almost pathologically pornographic' illustrations. The fact that one critic wondered if that was a family album is significant, since it means that the movie had not been compared that much to the novel from which it was adapted, and it rather was a new creation, a new medium, and critics themselves treat it like that.

When asked about the 'censorship' in the movie, whereas in the novel the content of the book is clear, Stefano replied: "I wanted the audience to see Norman as a suffocated young man who constantly seeks sexual stimulation, but I didn't want it to come from pathological pornography – maybe just pictures of women in corsets or something like that. So it was definitely muted from the novel." (Stefano, 2013)

So many things were changed from the novel in order to make the movie not only successful but also solid from a cinematographic point of view. The book definitely was a valid layer upon which start working but, as Stefano explained, these cinematographic imprint was not planned by the author or somehow intentional: "Even in [Robert Bloch's] book, I don't think Bloch was aware of some of the things he came up with, like the shower scene. But the dynamics of it were there." (Rebello, 1990: 56).

Chapter 4

Psycho: the Movie

4.1 The First Steps of *Psycho*, the Movie

“Hitchcock liked to boast about playing the emotions of audiences as though they were notes on an organ, but when he read *Psycho* he must have recognized his own inner music surging through him. It was ... a phantasmagoria with a scary mansion, stairwell, and dark basement; it was a Peeping Tom and a screaming Jane; it was the world’s worst bathroom nightmare, mingling nudity and blood.... It is no exaggeration to say that Hitchcock had been waiting for *Psycho*—working up to it—all his life.” (McGilligan, 2004: 579)

Alfred Hitchcock already had 46 movies at his back when he was once again looking for new material for his next movie. In 1959 he and his assistant Peggy Robertson noticed a review of Robert Bloch’s *Psycho* in the *New York Times* feature “Criminals at Large”. He got the book and spent a week with it in his Bel Air home. It pretty much possible that he did not carefully read the book or maybe read it twice or three times, because we know that Hitchcock had its own approach to adaptation and the process of adapting. For example, while talking about *The Birds* and Daphne du Maurier’s book he admitted that he “read it only once, and very quickly at that”, as if he did not want to make a faithful copy of the original work, but rather wanted to get inspired by the plot and the themes of the book. Moreover, as we have read in the opening quote of this chapter, what really interested Hitchcock the most was the audience’s emotions and its reaction to the images that they were seeing (Truffaut, 1983: 71).

In the words of Stephen Rebello, Hitchcock considered the novel as if “Bloch had sexed-up and Freudianized the Gothic, revitalising such creaky elements as the rattletrap Old Dark House, the stormy night, and the crackpot mad-woman locked in the dank basement” (Rebello, 1990: 12)

A curious fact about *Psycho* is that the novel was bought not directly by Hitchcock but by an agent who did not state who was the director who wanted to buy it. Hitchcock made a “blind bid” of \$7500 which was negotiated by Bloch and its agent up to \$9000 — with no provision for future royalties — and only afterwards the writer learnt that the novel was sold to one of the most famous film directors in the world (Smith, 2009: 13). *Psycho* however definitely was a novel that was somehow destined to become a movie since there were advance copies of it that had already circulated at several Hollywood studios, but many considered it “too repulsive”, “shocking” and “impossible for films” (Rebello, 1990: 13), and Hitchcock actually got the same reaction when he presented the idea to the Paramount; according to Rebello they went into “executive apoplexy” over the material that the director presented, they eventually refused to finance the picture and would not even let Hitchcock film it on their sets. Not only the producers were the one who were worried by the kind of movie that Hitchcock wanted to film, but also many of Hitchcock’s own people were alarmed. Production assistant Joan Harrison reportedly told the director “This time you’re going too far” (Rebello, 1990: 30) — and assistant director Herbert Coleman left for his own career and claimed that he “didn’t much care for the sort of movie that it was shaping up to be” (Spoto, 1983: 417).

Hitchcock was known to be fiscally conservative, but in a rare move he decided to finance the picture himself, which shows how much he believed in the possibility that *Psycho* had how much he wanted to challenge himself and his own limits. He even refused his usual \$250,000 director’s fee in exchange for an

initial 60 percent ownership and a deal for which all rights and revenues, which, according to biographer Donald Spoto, made him a millionaire 20 times over.

4.2 Alfred Hitchcock and *Psycho*'s Screenplay

As we have already seen the first choice for screenwriter was James P. Cavanagh, who already worked with Hitchcock on “One More Mile to Go” for *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* (1957), one of the teleplays that Hitchcock himself directed. By the way, even if Cavanagh’s draft had many elements in common with Stefano’s screenplay, Hitchcock found the first draft unacceptable. As Peggy Robertson noted: “It took some kind of genius to make that story dull, but Cavanagh managed to do it!” (Leigh, 1995: 10). So the director chose the lyricist Joseph Stefano instead, who had previously written only one screenplay for a movie: *The Black Orchid*, directed by Carlo Ponti.

Except for his very early work in the 1920s and 1930s, Hitchcock was generally never credited as writer on his own films. Nevertheless, as we have seen, the screenplays for most of his movies were written under his supervision, usually planning many meetings and conferences between him and the screenwriters. For *Psycho*, Stefano spent five weeks meeting daily with Hitchcock, and three more weeks writing on his own and working on a radically different script from Bloch’s book. (Smith, 2009, :15).

But how much was Hitchcock actually involved in creating the plot and screenplay of his movies? As Raubichek and Srebnick write in *Scripting Hitchcock, Psycho, The Birds, and Marnie*:

“He worked closely with the screenwriter in adapting the source and developing the story and characters, and then at a certain point he would ask the writer to go home and produce a first draft. When this was

submitted, Hitchcock again took complete control. He would direct the writer as to what needed to be cut and what needed to be added in the subsequent drafts as he worked toward the creation of a shooting script. Finally, he would normally ask the writer to assist him as he broke the penultimate draft down into shots.” (Raubichek, 2011: 55)

As we guessed in the previous chapter, it seemed that Hitchcock did not really work on the screenplay but he rather worked on the writer, and his words confirms what his approach was to the script: “I do not let the writer go off on his own and just write a script that I will interpret. I stay involved with him and get him involved in the direction of the picture. So he becomes more than a writer; he becomes part maker of the picture.” (Crawley, 1972: 26)

Although, as we have analysed in the previous chapter, Stefano affirms that the director gave him complete freedom and did not interfere with the writing of the screenplay, Hitchcock actually made many changes to the original screenplay that Stefano wrote. When the first draft of a new movie was submitted to him, the next process was an accurate revision that would culminate in a shooting script. After a study of various drafts of not only *Psycho*, but also *The Birds* and *Marnie*, what emerges is that Hitchcock’s objectives were: 1) the removal of what he called “no scene” scenes; 2) The addition of some strongly visual shots or the elaboration of a scene to provide increased insight into a character, usually without new dialogue; 3) and the removal of any dialogue that did not add anything substantial to characterisation or that merely indicated some idea that the camera had already conveyed. (Raubichek, 2011: 55-56). Also, between the first draft and the last shooting script, the screenplay was often rewritten while the collaboration between the director and the writers continued. And it was this the very moment during which Hitchcock also began working with the

preproduction team to scout locations, work on sets, and this usually influenced the last drafts of the script. (Raubichek, 2011: 56)

As Hitchcock did not seem to interfere with the writing process of Stefano, on the other side, he did not want the screenwriter to interfere with the actual shooting of the movie. When his work was completed and the director had the shooting script, the screenwriter was not part of the team anymore. Hilton Green, assistant director on *Psycho*, affirmed that he remembered who the writer on the film was, but that once production began Stefano was out of the picture, even if he went on set on several occasions (Raubichek, 2011: 113). During those moments when he was on set, Stefano voiced objection to the director because of the omissions from the script or because of what had been filmed as original material; in particular he objected to the cutting of a poignant shot of the dead Marion draped over the tub with her buttocks exposed after the murder (Rebello, 1990: 95).

Stefano did not recall watching *Psycho* again until ten years after its release, when he went to see it at a Los Angeles revival house with his wife Marilyn and some friends and was struck by its brilliance and depth. For years he was ambivalent about whether it was a good career move to have written it, since the film led him to be typecast as a writer who specialised in the dark side of human experience (Raubichek, 2001: 113). This is symptomatic of the fact that Stefano may have been disappointed by his own role in the making of the movie: Hitchcock let the writer work on the screenplay making him believe he was the one in total control of it, whereas at the end the one who always had the control was the director himself, although he never personally wrote a single word of the screenplay.

4.3 The Pre-Production of *Psycho*

November 11th, 1959, Hitchcock captures the first footage of his new movie *Psycho*. He started shooting “photographic tests” of Anthony Perkins with the same crew from his previous TV production (Rebello, 1990: 108). Hitchcock sometimes called *Psycho* a “30-day picture”, but it actually required 42 days of actual shooting, with principal photography beginning on November 30th, 1959, and wrapping on February 1st, 1960. What is impressive is that it was an incredibly tight schedule, but even more impressive is the final budget of the movie: \$806,947.55, which is incredible if we compare it to 1959’s *North by Northwest*, that costed five times that; or another 1959’s film like *Ben-Hur*, whose budget was \$11 million. (Smith, 2009: 18)

What determined the decision of keeping the costs low was, as we have seen, the fact that Hitchcock was paying for the picture himself; but it seems that he possibly had another motivation: there were other directors who kept the budget for the movies low but with big results in terms of incoming. Such companies as Hammer and American International, and directors as Roger Corman and William Castle were working on second-rate thrillers like *Macabre*, *The Tingler* and *The Curse of Frankenstein* which despite of their budgets under \$1 million were making great incomes.

To keep the budget low Hitchcock made several decision which helped him to cut the costs. First of all he chose black-and-white photography, which not only was cheaper, but also believed that the colour red would have been too repulsive for his viewers. This ended up being a smart choice not only economically speaking but also on the artistic account of the movie: “*Psycho*’s black-and-white photography greatly enhances its chilling and depressing effect and perfectly matches its sordid, seedy milieu of cheap motels, used-car lots, and low-paying jobs” (Smith, 2009: 19).

Similarly to this decision, before the actual shooting, Hitchcock cut several shots from Stefano's script that were either too expensive to film or that slowed the rhythm of the movie: "Lila's hotel room in Fairvale; exteriors of Marion's neighborhood in Phoenix; a 360-degree pan as Arbogast approaches the Bates Motel; an early scene in which the fleeing Marion stops for fuel but drives off quickly when the gas station phone rings; a lengthy sequence in which Lila and Arbogast, both in cabs, converge on Sam's hardware store; shots of Arbogast's car repeatedly driving past the Bates Motel while checking on Marion's whereabouts; and a sequence of exterior shots drawing the viewer into the courthouse as the final scene begins" (Smith, 2009: 19).

Another decision which was made to cut the cost of production was that of using the crew from the TV show *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* which worked in the creation of costumes, hairstyles, makeup, photography and set design. In addition to this crew, however, Hitchcock collaborated also with non-TV experts like composer Bernard Herrmann, editor George Tomasini, and pictorial consultant Saul Bass who created visual designs for the titles, the Bates home, Mom's corpse, and both murders. Moreover, Hitchcock made the unusual decision for him to use multiple cameras in filming several scenes, this permitted him to have more coverage and a faster shoot for many of the sequences: the different angles and shoots necessary for a single scene could be executed simultaneously.

These are only a few of the many details that were carefully looked at during the preproduction of *Psycho*. However I believe these are the most significant in terms of working with an adaptation. As we have seen in the first chapter of this thesis Linda Hutcheon identifies four motivations according to which adapters decides to work with adaptation. Following that model it emerges that Hitchcock definitely had financial and economical reason when he made such choices, but at the same time, those same choices are the ones that inevitably made *Psycho* such a successful movie.

4.4 *Psycho* and Its Audience

In an audio recording included in *Psycho*'s publicity kit, Hitchcock himself instructed theatre owners on what to do once the movie had ended:

“Close your house curtains over the screen after the end-titles of the picture, and keep the theater dark for ½ minute. During these thirty seconds of stygian blackness, the suspense of *Psycho* is indelibly engraved in the mind of the audience, later to be discussed among gaping friends and relations. You will then bring up house-lights of a greenish hue, and shine spotlights of this ominous hue across the faces of your departing patrons. Never, never, never will I permit *Psycho* to be followed immediately by a short subject or newsreel.” (quoted in Rebello 1990: 151)

Psycho was carefully handled from the very beginning, also during the actual shoot, when Hitchcock made everything possible to keep absolute secrecy about the storyline. Of course, being an adaptation of a novel, anyone who read the book would know the truth about Marion's death and also about Norman and Mother. So, to discourage people from seeking answers in the novel the movie was referred to as “Wimpy” — possibly from second-unit cameraman Rex Wimpy. This secrecy is very important to consider since it highlights how the director himself did not perceive the movie as an adaptation, but as a new artistic medium. Perhaps, it would seem logical for any other directors, not to make the effort to keep secrecy about a movie with a plot line that can possibly be known by everyone. On the contrary, *Psycho*'s director felt the necessity to preserve the plot line until its release.

Hitchcock's attitude is also mirrored in his total control of the publicity stills for the movie: “Hitchcock strictly monitored publicity stills for the film— to such a

degree that Paramount's publicity department complained about not being able to take pictures on the set. And indeed, most of the film's publicity shots — even those taken later, after the shoot was done — do not reflect events in the actual film. They show a screaming Janet Leigh—fully clothed!” (Smith, 2009: 172).

“Hitchcock was especially careful about not revealing the true identity of Mother. At one point during the production, he put out word that he was looking for an older actress to play this role; Helen Hayes and Judith Anderson were supposedly among his top candidates. Furthermore, art director Robert Clatworthy told Rebello that throughout the shoot, Hitchcock had, in prominent view on the set, a director's chair with “Mrs. Bates” written on the back. One afternoon, Hitchcock even allowed himself to be photographed in this chair—partly to appease studio publicists” (Smith, 2009, 173).

One more interesting commercial and artistic manoeuvre is the fact the Hitchcock's publicity campaign brilliantly insisted that no one could have been admitted to the theatre after the film had started, which was not what the audience was used to. As Rebello describes, movie theatres opened at 10 am and ran a continuous program into the late evening. People would arrive and leave whenever they preferred; they could arrive halfway through the showing and stay till it started again to watch the part they had missed earlier (Smith, 2009, 174).

Hitchcock's policy for his new movie *Psycho* was already tested two years before for the release of *Vertigo*: the director had advised theatre managers against admitting viewers during the last ten minutes of *Vertigo*. This time, however, it was not only an advice, he rather “insisted that theatre owners follow his decree against admitting patrons once the picture began.” He also wanted this decree to be rigorously enforced — “as a contractual prerequisite for any theatre exhibitor who booked the film” (Rebello, 1990, 149).

When *Psycho* was released it almost suddenly became a success, making \$9.5 million revenue from its first thirteen thousand theatrical engagements and \$6

million more in international incomes. As for the first wave of critical response, Hitchcock had learned to wait and see what would have happened. Such previous movies as *Foreign Correspondent*, *Shadow of a Doubt*, *Notorious*, *North by Northwest*, and *Vertigo* had also won varied critical responses at the time but are nowadays considered as superior works of art. The director himself observed: “my movies go from failures to masterpieces, without even being successes!” (Rebello, 1990, 219).

But how was the movie perceived in relationship with the novel from which it was adapted? Whereas the movie initially received mixed reviews, there had been an almost unilateral dismissal of the source novel by Robert Bloch. Many were those who considered the book inferior to the screenplay by Stefano. Bloch himself observed that “most film ‘historians’, particularly the British, wrote that *Psycho* was a short soy in a cult magazine or that Hitchcock took this little thing and blew it up into something bigger. The inference being that he introduced all the things that seemed to make the film work — killing the heroine early in the story, killing her off in the shower, taxidermy — when, of course, they’re all in the book” (quoted in Rebello, 1990, 227). What happened to offend Bloch even more was his perception that Stefano had done little to discourage the common belief that he was the author of *Psycho*. Even if Hitchcock could never be considered magnanimous in matter of credit, there is some suggestion that he may have shared the same resentment felt by Bloch. The director told interviewer Charles Higham: “the screenplay writer contributed dialogue mostly, no ideas” (quoted in Rebello, 1990, 228). Robert Bloch said: “That Hitch himself began to give me credit for the thing was kind” and goes further adding that Stefano made only some changes, but that “other than that, he stuck very, very closely to the novel. It’s all there, right down to the final sentence, ‘I wouldn’t even harm a fly” (quoted in Rebello, 1990, 228).

Conclusion

Talking about *Psycho* is not easy, and someone may argue that there are way too many things that have not been mentioned and analysed in this thesis. My aim, however, was not that of making a cinematographic analyses, and this is the reason why I intentionally did not talk about such things as cinematographic choices, or the meaning of certain details, shoots, and pictures. My aim was that of finding a link between an adapted movie — which sometimes we refer to as if it was not an adaptation — and theories of adaptation.

We have seen that the reasons why Hitchcock decided to work on Bloch's novel were first of all economical, but also personal ones, since he wanted to challenge himself and make a good movie with the lowest budget possible. It is true that he wanted to make a great success with *Psycho* but he also never betray his own artistic values.

One of the first definition that we have seen is Linda Hutcheon's idea that an adaptation is an *adaptation* only when we perceive it as such and when the relationship between the two media — the original work and the adapted one — is openly announced. The case of *Psycho* is peculiar for two reasons: Hitchcock worked and kept the secret about the plot as if the screenplay was an original one, and on the other side the critics often attributed the screenplay entirely to Stefano's creativity and never mentioned it was adapted from Bloch's novel.

If we take in exam Thomas Leitch's nine accounts of adaptation we may notice that there are some that particularly fit to this specific case of study:

- Adaptations are exclusively intermedial, involving the transfer of narrative elements from one medium to another.
- Adaptations are texts whose status depends on the audience's acceptance of a deliberate invitation to read the as adaptation.
- Adaptations are translations.

It is true that, being an adaptation, the novel *Psycho* was adapted into the movie *Psycho*, which means that from one literary medium the narrative has been transferred to a cinematic medium. The second point, instead, is very close to Hutcheon's definition of adaptation, and as we have seen the status of adaptation of *Psycho* depended on the audience's will to read it as adaptation. It is important to consider that both the novel and Robert Bloch are credited at the beginning of the movie, and with *Psycho*, for the first time in history, the spectators could not enter the theatre once the projection was started, so all of them must have read its credit. Lastly, we may affirm that adaptations are translations if we consider that not only one medium was transferred to another medium, but also a verbal language was translated into a visual one. As we have seen, as soon as Stefano finished working on the screenplay, Hitchcock started working on a shooting script, which was the text on which the director could rely to visually express what until that moment was expressed only verbally.

In conclusion, it is impossible to give an exact and universal definition for adaptation, but it is certainly possible and useful to analyse what we think may be an adaptation or what is considered as an adaptation. The focus should be on the processes and the operations that were made while transferring the narrative from one medium to another, rather than analysing the differences of narrative between the two medium; for it is the decisional process that makes and adaptation an *adaptation*.

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