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# Harry Potter and the Battle of Adaptation

**Abstract:** At the beginning of her 2007 article, "Adapting Children's Literature", Deborah Cartmell encouraged us to remember the complementarity and mutual admiration that should exist between cinema and literature as two narrative arts. At this time, adaptation theorists such as Brian McFarlane and Linda Hutcheon had done much to temper an oppositional point of view when comparing film and literature. Seeking to find other ways of studying adaptations than merely by the question of fidelity, they had argued strongly for intertextual analysis. Cartmell thus supported this approach to adaptation studies at the beginning of the article, but she quickly recognized that there still was a degree of tension between cinema and literature, especially from the point of view of the audience. Framing her own case studies in the metaphorical context of a 'battle' between the arts, she stated that the winner was the one which appeared dominant on screen. Cartmell seemed to argue that children's literature was a particular field in this respect since fidelity remained especially important to this audience. Among her examples she quoted the case of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001), deciding that, here, literature had won.

This may not be so sure. This contribution aims to reconsider Cartmell's evaluation of this film, as well as to examine how the discussion of fidelity discourse has developed in recent years. We will ask if the *Harry Potter* (2001-11) series invites us to think about adaptation differently. We will also question the validity of the 'battle' notion in this case and consider what developments Henry Jenkins' 2006 concept of 'transmedia storytelling' has brought to the debate since.

**Keywords**: Harry Potter, Fidelity, Children's Literature, Transmedia Storytelling, Participation.

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"People would have crucified me
if I hadn't been faithful to the books".
Chris Columbus[1]
(quoted in Hutcheon 123)

As the worldwide success of the *Harry Potter*[2] novels became clear at the beginning of the 2000's, the cinema industry naturally wanted to become involved in the phenomenon. J. K.

Rowling thus found herself in an advantageous position when negotiating the rights for the project. According to an article by Jess Cagle from 2001 in *Time Magazine*, Rowling accepted an offer of only $700,000 from Warner Brothers despite it being well below figures the other studios were prepared to give her. She did this precisely because it allowed her greater input in the aesthetic and interpretive choices of the adaptations of her novels on screen. To quote an example, Jeff Jenson wrote in *Entertainment Weekly* of how Rowling refused to let Steven Spielberg participate as his vision for the story was too far removed from her own. Protecting her creation was much more important than the financial benefit of a generous contract.

The cinematic adaptations of *Harry Potter* (2001-11) are among the most popular and profitable series of films in history[3]. However, as this powerful image suggested by Chris Columbus tells us, he must have felt under a great deal of pressure as the director responsible for launching the series. Given the enormous potential of the film, his professional reputation was definitely at stake and it probably goes without saying that he needed to make artistic choices that would allow the films to capture as large a public as possible, both among those who knew the books and those who did not. The popularity of the series guaranteed a good return on investment but he still needed to make sure of a very good reception to launch the series with the first film *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* in 2001.

A terrifying public execution clearly did not await Columbus. However, as he indicates, the perceived success or failure of the films rested on the precarious notion of fidelity. Who exactly were these people ready to inflict such painful justice? The obvious answer would be the fans. Fidelity may seem an easy objective to achieve. One might think that to be faithful to the source it would be sufficient to conserve the majority of the plot and dialogues from the novel and just represent them visually on screen, thus satisfying the most obvious public by showing them the story they already know.

In reality, it is not so simple. Several factors are in play, and they sometimes necessitate radical changes. J. K. Rowling recognised this herself on her web site, in 2007 when replying to a question asked about the adaptation of the third book, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004) by Alfonso Cuarón:

> It is simply impossible to incorporate every one of my storylines into a film that has to be kept under four hours long. Obviously films have restrictions – novels do not have constraints of time and budget; I can create dazzling effects relying on nothing but the interaction of my own and my readers' imaginations (Rowling "How did you Feel").

As well as underlining the obvious necessity to condense the film version, she also reminds us of one essential difference between literary and cinematographic narration. The novel can tell the story while the film has to show it. If cinematic adaptation seeks to attract an audience which already knows the text, this requires a significant change

in the way they receive the information of the story. The reader has to become a viewer. This is not always as easy a position to take as it would seem, as Brian McFarlane tells us in his article "Reading Film and Literature" from 2007. Firstly, he advances a purely logical argument concerning reception. If a reader naturally creates his own image of the story, it would be impossible for the vision of a single director to match with the preconceived ideas formed by millions of fans of a series (15).

Going beyond this point, however, fidelity had its own enemies within the realms of academia at this time. Much of the literature on adaptation studies from this period focusses on a desire to rid scholarly discussion of an overdependence on fidelity discourse. In the same article for instance, McFarlane seeks to build on a movement among adaptation scholars at the time, initiated by Dudley Andrew's call to abandon fidelity discourse in 1980 (12). A reliance on fidelity as a basis for critical judgement should be eliminated from academic discourse on adaptation, and, perhaps rather condescendingly, relegated to the realms of journalists and the general public. In order to provide a critical alternative to fidelity discourse as a legitimate method for comparison of literature and cinema, McFarlane advocates the notion of intertextual analysis as a more fruitful means to study adaptation (26).

As Casie Hermansson pointed out in "Flogging Fidelity: In Defense of the (Un) Dead Horse" in 2015, the anti-fidelity movement was an attempt to respond to the tension which had existed between cinema and literature ever since the 1950's when George Bluestone famously characterised a hostility hiding behind the apparent compatibility of literary narratives and their cinematic versions (2). However, Andrew and McFarlane's reasoning may be based on a rather paradoxical premise. Hermansson successfully points out that despite preaching the abandonment of traditional fidelity discourse, this academic movement fails to provide a meaningful methodological alternative (155). Comparisons of cinematic literary adaptations necessarily include discussions of similarities and differences. Despite claiming to do the opposite, this automatically relates source to adaptation, thus focussing on fidelity while arguing against it as a foundation for critical judgement.

According to Hermansson, this is a trap, leading to a critical cul-de-sac which is amply demonstrated by an article by Deborah Cartmell from 2007 entitled "Adapting Children's Literature". In this article, Cartmell claimed that the relationship between cinema and literature was based on the tradition of *ut pictura poeisis.* This is the expression of an interdependence and mutual admiration between the two noble arts of painting and literature. Cartmell supports the movement away from fidelity discourse in other publications, such as *Screen Adaptation* from 2010, where, together with Imelda Whelehan, she describes it as just one of a number of intertextual tools for adaptation studies (15). However, three years earlier Cartmell points out that when considering children's literature, fidelity towards the representation of the narrative universe of a novel, as well as respecting its thematic content, is always

regarded of extreme importance in this context. Cartmell sums this tension up in 2007 by describing adaptation of children's literature as a 'battle' (168) where the victorious media dominates the screen.

Of course, Cartmell does not specifically suggest fidelity as the sole source of critical judgement. However, by framing her approach within the metaphoric idea of violence, she proposes an analysis based on relative strength and equivalence which still invites the reader to consider adaptation through binary opposition. Indeed, in another article from 2005, entitled "Harry Potter and the Fidelity Debate", Cartmell emphasises what she regards as the relative failure of the film *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001) which she describes as being too faithful to the books (37).

Now, several years after the end of the film series, we are able to consider it as a whole in a way that was not possible in 2005, 2007 or even 2010. In this contribution, we will attempt to revisit Cartmell's judgements of 2007, re-examining the *Harry Potter* (2001-11) series in the context of subsequent developments on the question of fidelity discourse today. By taking the films as an example of the cross fertilization that can exist today between the arts, we will reflect on the validity of Cartmell's notion of a battle at the heart of the adaptation process. Noting Hermansson's considerations in 2015, we will ask if this series invites us to think differently about the notion of fidelity. We will also examine how the boundaries between arts seem to be more permeable than ever and seek to question the audience's role in the perception of fidelity today.

We will start by reviewing some of the essential questions of adaptation. Here we reflect on Eisenstein's ideas about the representation of characters on screen. Then we will look at the place of the children's author in the cinematic industry. We will examine the influence of cinema on J. K. Rowling's writing and ask if the historic context of the conception of the *Harry Potter* literary series, as well as cinematographic elements we can find in her texts, give her a different and privileged status with respect to other, similarly canonical, authors of children's literature such as Enid Blyton or Roald Dahl. To finish, we will come back to the image of the battle employed by Cartmell in 2007. We will consider the iconographic evolution of Harry to see the influence of the film version on the books themselves as well as some spin-off products of the series. Finally, we will ask if the theory of convergence, first proposed by Henry Jenkins in 2006, allows us to notice a real change in the way that adaptation is perceived, with the story itself retaking its central place at the heart of the question.

## I: The theoretical battle

In the 1930's the Soviet filmmaker, Sergei Eisenstein, theorised the way cinema tells a story through moving images. In his essay, "Dickens, Griffith and Film Today", Eisenstein recognised certain similarities between cinema and literature. He suggested that we could even go back to the 19th century, before the invention of

the Lumière brothers' *cinematographe*, to find authors like Zola, Flaubert and Dickens whose works were eminently adaptable to cinema. According to Eisenstein, these writers constructed their stories in a similar way to films. He explained this by the relative depth they gave to their characters.

Focusing on British literature and in order to create a link with J. K. Rowling which we will develop later, we will consider these points more closely in relation to Dickens. In *Aspects of the Novel*, E. M. Forster uses the example of Mrs Micawber in *David Copperfield* to explain what he calls 'flat characters'. These are stereotypes with several narrative advantages. In Dickens they are often emblematic of a certain characteristic and are easily recognised and understood by the reader. Flat characters guide the reader as they are always predictable in their reactions to events and other characters. On the other hand, 'round' characters are complex and unpredictable. They evolve over the course of the story. Forster uses Madame Bovary as an example since the whole plot of the novel is centred on her.

As far as cinema is concerned, we can say that to a certain extent a film character is flat. Of course this does not mean that deep character development is impossible, neither that we should attribute an inferior status to cinematic narration, but simply reflects the that the viewer only has access to the character from their outside via a screen. While a filmmaker can employ techniques to give an idea of the interior life of the character, direct access to this is reserved to the literary author. Rowling herself underlines this point in the quotation we saw earlier.

For Eisenstein, Dickens is an author with a cinematic vision. His characters lend themselves easily to screen adaptation. The Dickensian universe is inhabited by people who are easily recognisable from the outside by their actions and their attitudes. Characters often exhibit this in their names. For example, in *A Christmas Carol* the main character is called 'Scrooge', a synonym of his own avarice. We are not suggesting that Dickens only employs stereotypes however. Round characters like Oliver in *Oliver Twist* are also easily identifiable by a certain character trait. Even Dickens's places are rich in character and ripe for visual representation. In Eisenstein's view, the essence of Dickens's narration gives his texts sufficient visual elements so that a filmmaker would not need to venture too far away from the source text in the adaptation.

We can note that Rowling adopts a similar technique regarding names in her novels. For example, we can see the negative connotations displayed in the name of Harry's cousin. 'Dudley Dursley' lives in a suburb called 'Little Whinging'. This reflects his relatively poor character in comparison with Harry and the superficiality of his home surroundings. On the other hand, contrary to the darkness suggested by his surname, 'Sirius Black' is a shining light and a force for good in the series despite being brought in a house called 'Grimauld Place[4]'. This is not only limited to English vocabulary. As a French graduate, Rowling is entirely aware of the effect she creates by naming Harry's principle enemy 'Draco Malfoy[5]'.

In *Novel into Film* in 1957, Bluestone shows us that there is a paradox at the heart of the process of cinematic adaptation. If the modes of literary and cinematic narration would seem to be relatively close, they are actually essentially different. This means they can never completely intersect. To describe this Bluestone employs a metaphor of two lines. One is the narrative of the novel and the other the film version. The points where they approach each other represent where the novel and the film are at their closest. On the other hand, where they diverge is where the novel and the film adaptation are at their farthest apart. Clearly many different approaches to adaptation are possible but differences are inevitable and will always be present. Bluestone thus arrives at the conclusion that novels and films are "overtly compatible, secretly hostile" (2).

He develops the argument advanced by Eisenstein previously to establish a model of comparison by opposition. In particular, he focuses on the differences related to representations of time and thought. In the latter case, the writer can use processes ranging from simple techniques such as first person narration to more complex forms such as the stream of consciousness. Representing an emotion or a thought on screen becomes problematic and can be portrayed by a combination of an actor's expression, the soundtrack and music or special effects. In spite of all these points, the viewer is still on the outside looking in on the interior life of the character on screen.

Admittedly, these theorists were writing well before Rowling's time. However, in "Adapting Children's Literature" in 2007, Cartmell considers Rowling's writing to be heavily influenced by cinema. In her opinion, Rowling writes in a cinematic way (178) and this can be seen on several levels. Structurally the novels resemble Hollywood blockbusters. Action sequences are placed at regular intervals along the plot. The theme of a hero from modest origins who has to save the world is a typical cinematic trope. Over the course of the books, the narrative divides into independent units which are also interdependent, necessitating sequels which steadily bring the reader towards an inevitable conclusion.

In the introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen* (2007), Cartmell also draws comparisons with George Lucas' *Star Wars* saga (4). While she does not make the following points explicit, this is a particularly useful comparison. From a structural point of view, it is not very surprising if we take the mythopoetic origins of the two series into account. The central influence of Joseph Campbell's ideas and theories about mythology on *Star Wars* is well known. According to Cyril Rolland (2010), at the time of the release of the first film in the saga in 1977 Lucas discussed his desire to create a modern myth, full of archetypal classical characters to reconnect a modern audience to the values and ideas communicated in ancient stories (Rolland 42). The director based his plot on a cyclical model in three parts according to the seventeen step schema theorized by Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces.* Campbell named his model the 'monomyth' and claimed it was applicable to every mythical narrative which describes the external and internal journey of hero.

Even if Rowling has never spoken about on these structural similarities, Mary Pharr underlines the links between the Harry Potter saga and the monomyth in her article "In Media Res: Harry Potter as Hero-in Progress" from 2002.

Since then, as Noel Brown explains in his 2013 article "'Family' Entertainment and Contemporary Hollywood Cinema" this structure has become deeply integrated into the practices of the Hollywood cinema industry (4-5). In the 1980's it became even more rooted in Hollywood productions thanks to Christopher Vogler who was inspired to create his own simplified version of the hero's journey when he was head of productions at Disney.

In light of these comments, it is interesting to note how closely the narrative structure of the *Harry Potter* books relates to the form of a film scenario such as the 'paradigm' established by Syd Field in *Screen Play: The Foundations of Screen Writing*. Field introduces the idea of a three-act structure where the plot is set up during the first part of a film before a 'plot point' reminds the audience that the action is taking place in a wider context and introduces the main character's goal for the story. The second act is the confrontation which explains how the character approaches achieving their aim before a midpoint event about half the way through the screenplay. This often induces a dramatic reversal, making it much harder for the character to reach their ultimate goal. The third act portrays the character's struggle to complete their mission or fail in their attempt. This reaches the conclusion of the narrative before describing the aftermath. Though varying greatly in length, the novels do indeed follow a regular rhythm and have a similar structure. As such, we should probably not be surprised by how easily Rowling has turned her hand to screenplays since the *Harry Potter* series with the scripts she has produced for the *Fantastic Beasts* series.

The influence of cinema can be seen on a textual level too. Although the story is told in the third person, it is almost exclusively from Harry's point of view. The reader is always with him and even if the narrator speaks about exterior events, the interpretation and the reaction are always filtered through him. To this end, in "Adapting Children's Literature" in 2007, Cartmell notes a stark lack of literary techniques usually employed by a writer to communicate ideas such as interior monologue to communicate Harry's thoughts (178). On the other hand, we always see the wizarding world and understand plot development from his point of view and his perception. Despite constantly remaining on the outside of the character, the reader is simultaneously at the centre of the narrative. Like a film camera, Harry is the filter which forms our vision of the wizarding world and the events within it. Harry's visual perception guides the reader's attention.

Rowling often appeals to our visual sense in her writing. Cartmell suggests that this creates an effect where words form a succession of images like film shots ("Adapting Children's Literature" 178). Rowling's lexical choices show a particular attention to vision, even to eyes themselves. To give one example, Cartmell underlines this point with the following passage which takes place at the beginning of Harry's adventures

in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, where the text seems to be technically constructed like a cinematic shot reverse shot:

> "'Good afternoon', said a soft voice. Harry jumped. Hagrid must have jumped too, because there was a loud crunching noise and he got quickly off the spindly chair.
>
> An old man was standing before them, his wide, pale eyes shining like moons through the gloom of the shop.
>
> 'Hello', said Harry awkwardly.
>
> 'Ah yes', said the man. 'Yes, yes. I thought I'd be seeing you soon. Harry Potter.' It wasn't a question. 'You have your mother's eyes.'" (Rowling *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* 63)

In addition to this, the sentence below seems to echo the fluid movement of the camera. The reader focuses on a close-up image of Mr Olivander, before blurring. This reflects the confusion Harry feels at this moment as he first enters the wizarding world. "Mr Olivander moved closer to Harry. Harry wished he could blink. Those silvery eyes were a bit creepy." (Rowling *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* 63). In this example, we can see a clear illustration of one way that the *Harry Potter* series provides a response to the problems of cinematic adaptation outlined by Bluestone. Now we will turn our attention to the battle as Cartmell sees it on screen in 2007.

## II: The author's place in the battle of adaptation

From Cartmell's point of view in 2007, children's literature neatly sums up the whole relationship between literature and film. When she writes about a 'battle', she states that if the film stays close to the spirit and the events of the book, then literature wins (168). If the film distances itself from the narrative and ideas expressed by the text, then cinema is the victor. In addition to this, contrary to adults, children like to read and reread their favourite stories. The audience's expectations are therefore closely linked to a classical idea of fidelity. They prefer a film version which sticks closely to the source text. Theoretical questions of cinematic and literary narration and a technical appreciation of filmic technique are much less important. We are thus faced with an audience that has a particularly binary vision of the adaptations based on this notion of potential fidelity, subscribing to the 'transformation' approach as described by Dudley Andrew (*Concepts in Film Theory* 99).

According to Cartmell, this is a war fought on three fronts: ("Adapting Children's Literature" 168)

1. The adaptation of classics where she concentrates on the influence of Disney on the perception of fairy tales in the collective consciousness.
2. The adaptation of lesser known, even 'obscure' like *Mary Poppins* by P.L. Travers or *The Wizard of Oz* by Frank L. Baum, where the film versions are much more famous than the source texts.

3.  The adaptation of popular fiction, where she compares three canonical British authors of twentieth century children's literature.

We will concentrate particularly on the third of these fields. Cartmell compares Enid Blyton, Roald Dahl and J.K. Rowling, who, she argues, each occupied a similarly important position over the course of the twentieth century. In the context of adaptations, Cartmell immediately excludes Enid Blyton as adaptations of her *Famous Five* novels remain relatively unknown. In this case, literature has clearly won.

On the other hand, there are many well-known film versions of Dahl's stories, such as *The Witches* (1990) by Nicolas Roeg, *Matilda* (1996) by Danny DeVito, the animated version of *James the Giant Peach* (1996) by Henry Selick and *Fantastic Mr Fox* (2009) by Wes Anderson. To illustrate her point, Cartmell concentrates on the two versions of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Mel Stuart in 1971 and Tim Burton in 2005. Even if we can observe two different approaches to adaptation, the films still provide great examples of the clash between literature and cinema.

Dahl's literature subscribes to an educational tradition which sees reading as an edifying experience for children. He therefore regarded his works as innately superior to films and the two cinematic adaptations respond to this problem differently. Dahl's position is summed up in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by the character of 'Mike Teavee'. He is a 'bad' child, corrupted by his passion for television and is punished by being miniaturized by a camera designed to send chocolate bars through a television screen.

How can a source text which is profoundly anti-image be successfully adapted to the screen? This is a clearly a problem to be resolved and it is attempted through different approaches. The 1971 version tries to maintain a faithfully close link to literature and reading and justify itself through intertextual references. The dialogue features numerous quotes from Shakespeare, Keats and Wilde. When Mike is taken away after his accident with the camera, Willy Wonka, played by Gene Wilder quotes a line from *Romeo and Juliet* and bids him adieu with the words "Parting is such sweet sorrow", though not with quite the same emotional impact as Shakespeare's two lovers separating. However, this sort of attempt to appease Dahl did not work, as Cartmell notes ("Adapting Children's Literature" 177), he hated the film.

Dahl passed away in 1990 and Tim Burton did not have to suffer such judgement of his version in 2005. He uses the same plot to elevate the image and filmic narration. Instead of references to classic literature, he inserts references to other cinematic adaptations of novels like *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) by Victor Fleming or *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) by Stanley Kubrick. The contrast between Burton's and Stuart's works is obvious when we compare the sequences with Mike. By 2005, he has become a delinquent obsessed by violent video games. He still deserves punishing for his bad behaviour but now this is due to his abuse of modern technology. Tim Burton promotes cinema in comparison to television with its proliferation of anodyne images and the cult of celebrity created by reality TV. Mike ends up trapped behind a TV

screen where he is stuck in one of the most famous sequences of cinema: the opening shots of *2001* by Kubrick. This is not just an oppositional confrontation between the book and the film. Burton is using the prestige of Dahl's work to reformulate the original message in his own new way.

According to Cartmell ("Adapting Children's Literature" 167) these examples, together with other Dahl adaptations, show the 'hostility' that Bluestone talked about. In fact, she seems to agree with Dahl's point of view. There is always the feeling that something is missing from the source text on screen. In short, she says the Dahl adaptations are doomed to be disappointing. Perhaps this is due to the dark criticism at the heart of his literature or the pre-supposed dominance of literature in his works. In this case, in her opinion, literature clearly wins the battle. The overall influence of Dahl's view on literature is hard to escape. We may disagree with this point, particularly in the case of Burton's version, which underlines the director's discourse and his vision of the narrative. In this way, it may be described as less 'faithful' to the source and thus would presumably win in the battle. However, given that the film does not regard literature in the same way as the 1971 version, we could even declare that it does not even enter the conflict and thus avoids the battle completely.

Cartmell links the *Harry Potter* series with the example of Dahl since, in her opinion, J. K. Rowling occupies a comparable canonical position in modern children's literature ("Adapting Children's Literature" 175). In Cartmell's opinion however, literature is still the winner on screen ("Adapting Children's Literature" 179), since, as we have already seen, Rowling's writing integrates cinematic elements. It should be relatively straightforward for the film version to stay close or 'faithful' to the novel, in which case literature cannot fail to dominate. The irony of this point of view is obvious if we remember Casie Hermansson's 2015 article. Fidelity is clearly the major criterion Cartmell is using here to judge the relative effectiveness of these adaptations. However, it is difficult to be so categorical in deciding which art wins. Is it not really more a case of the dominance of cinema in this case? Alternatively, is it even really necessary to frame analyses in such stark terms?

If we can render a judgement regarding the vision we have of Harry on screen, it is certain that the film versions have now strongly influenced the audience's perceptions of the characters. Just like other hugely popular series like *The Lord of the Rings* (2001-3) by Peter Jackson, in order to keep the character of Harry at the forefront of people's imaginations, the *Harry Potter* (2001-11) series adopts the sort of marketing strategies pioneered by George Lucas for the *Star Wars* saga.

Following on from this, we are now going to examine this influence. We will look at the iconographic development of Harry in the films to ask if this economic model in fact opens us up to a new paradigm of participative adaptation based on the theory of transmedia narration proposed by Henry Jenkins. The leads us to ask if *Harry Potter* (2001-11) even joins Cartmell's conflict at all.

### III: The evolution of Harry's iconographic image

We only have to look at the changes which take place concerning Harry on the book covers to notice the influence of the film series. For example, the original representation of Harry, drawn by Thomas Taylor for the first edition of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* by Bloomsbury Books in the UK in 1997[6] is significantly different from later versions which appear after the films. The first edition came out four years before the first film and emphasizes his important physical characteristics such as his lightning car, round glasses and dark hair. However, his face remains unfocussed and undefinable.

By 2014, Bloomsbury's cover for the same story, illustrated by Jonny Duddle, has been transformed and is heavily influenced by the film series. Now Harry resembles the actor Daniel Radcliffe. The other characters present on the cover, Hagrid, Hermione and Ron, also look very much like their screen actors. Even their clothes and the hair are very similar to Columbus's vision in his films.

It is interesting to note that in the French versions, the film influence is still present. However, we can see a sort of criss-crossing between different aspects of the literary series that we meet over the course of the film series. If we compare the image created for Jonathan Gray for the 2002 Folio Junior edition for *Harry Potter à l'école des sorciers* with his version for the 2011 edition, we can notice a similar trajectory in the changes. The 2002 edition came out a year after the first film and even if it is still stylized and unrealistic, the three characters are more distinct that Taylor's 1997 British version.

We can also discern a development in the representation of the Hogwarts castle. On the French 2002[7] cover it is seen in the background but dominates the front cover in 2011. In 2002 it resembles a medieval fortress while in 2011[8] it looks more like a chateau from the Loire. This recalls Columbus's vision in the first film which was inspired by a fairy-tale tower like we find in Disney. This is particularly interesting since in the film series we see a similar, yet opposite, development when Alfonso Cuarón transforms Hogwarts into a gothic castle. This is the representation which will remain until the end of the series and finally is closest to Taylor's vision on the 2002 French cover.

From an iconographic point of view, the video games which accompany the series reinforce the influence of the film. As Warner Brothers hold the rights for the film and spin-off products, this is hardly surprising. The video games reinforce the aesthetics of the films. From 2001[9], Harry is recognizable as Harry although his scar seems to have changed position in comparison with the cover of the first UK edition of the book. We also notice the effect of improving technology in this area. Thanks to more sophisticated computer graphics, it is now clearly Daniel Radcliffe on the cover of the *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* computer games in 2011[10]. The level of interactivity increases in the game and this is an important point to underline since it leads us to a discussion on the changing relationship between stories and their audience according

to Henry Jenkins. Interacting with the story allows the audience to become personally involved and to take more and more control of it for themselves.

Today, we are not only considering cinematic adaptations of literature as the variety of media where stories can spread and grow is increasing. Due to the possibilities created by new technologies, the relationship between the audience and a story is changing. The universe of the story is constantly expanding. But is this just marketing or a new development in the narrative process?

As we have seen previously, the problems of adaptation were mainly framed by arguments which highlight confrontation. Henry Jenkins theorises new forms of adaptation of stories through various media as a development in the art of narration. According to Jenkins, all good stories transform in a similar way to the concept of the meme explained by Richard Dawkins *The Selfish Gene* (189). Before his term was adopted on the internet to describe viral images, Dawkins defined the meme as the base unit of culture. Similar to a gene, it will spread if it is strong and durable enough. Jenkins's own definition of a new culture which is developing around transmedia transformation as 'convergence', was first announced in *Convergence Culture* in 2006. In Jenkins's opinion, the notion of adapting a story across different media opened up a truly new approach to storytelling. His transmedia theory was based on seven principles which question the way we approach a story and examine the relation between various versions communicated across different media such as film, animation and video games. This could make multiple rapid changes possible.

If in 2006 this seemed entirely revolutionary, we should note that these ideas have been reconsidered in recent years. For example, Couldry and Hay raised several concerns in their 2011 article mainly based on their reservations compared to Jenkins's tendency to accentuate the positive possibilities of his theory. For Couldry and Hay, the drawbacks of Jenkins's convergence theory included underappreciating the wider economic questions at the heart of the media industries he considers and the extent to which the user can really engage with convergence (473). Jenkins responded to such critiques himself in subsequent publications such as his 2014 article entitled, "Rethinking 'Rethinking Convergence/Culture'" and has indeed extended his arguments further by linking the idea of convergence culture with the concept of 'cultural acupuncture' where he points towards the political engagement of fans of the *Harry Potter* series. Here, he describes 'The Harry Potter Alliance' group which equates the social issues at the heart the stories to the problems found in the real world and undertake action to raise awareness and respond.

Further discussion of such blurring of boundaries between fiction and fact are not our intention here. Instead, we will focus on the notion of transmedia storytelling, since greater interactions between the story and its audience are possible. Beyond interactive extensions to the universe such as the video games, we can notice how J. K. Rowling herself has embraced the widening universe of the stories by publishing annexes to the novels such as works that actually appear within the stories themselves,

like the collection of wizarding fairy tales, *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* or the school book *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* which predated and inspired the spin-off trilogy that she has written directly as screenplays.

Rowling also launched *Pottermore Ltd.* in 2012, as the dedicated digital publishing, e-commerce and information company for her creations. Now transformed into the internet domain *wizardingworld.com* it maintains a close link with fans and the continually expanding universe. Pieces written to provide background information for this site have subsequently been published as *The Hogwarts Library* series of books. These examples clearly show the cross-fertilization that exists between various media and how each one can influence the others.

We can notice a growing phenomenon of appropriation of the story by its audience and according to Jenkins this has been made possible thanks to new technologies. This aspect is developing in the field of creativity and is shown in the principle Jenkins calls 'participation'. This extends to all creative acts. It now represents a massive body of creation and we can see it in all artistic domains. We will briefly consider three: fanart, fanfiction and fanfilms.

Starting with fanart, we can see the influence of the films but also a desire for artists to distance themselves and transform the characters. We can take three examples of the same passage from the novels: the battle of Hogwarts. First, in César Castillo Marquez's work from 2010, we can sense he is heavily influenced by the films. The further we advance in time after the films, the more we find this desire to be different. This is shown in Saji Kohei's work (2012), where Harry Potter is reimagined in a manga version of the story. The third example, created by Richard Moore in 2013, interprets the same passage from a different angle. The viewer is invited to contemplate the scene as a medieval fresco without perspective which represents apocalyptic characters.

Technical possibilities available to the audience allow creative inspiration based on already established and recognised iconography as we have already seen or to strike off into new areas of interpretation, to adapt and bring the artist's own stylistic universe into play, allowing fans to appropriate the characters and the stories for themselves.

Of course, such interpretations are not limited to visual art. We can find this type of participative adaptation in literature too. The website www.fanfiction.net contains 90,108[11] references to Harry Potter in its archives of fan versions of the stories. The audience can upload their own stories which are then evaluated by other users. It is thus possible to follow the evolution of the stories and observe how new ideas are added to the original plots and create new subplots. Adaptation is happening almost in real time. Even if they can sometimes diverge radically from the original stories they still have a place as examples of participative adaptation.

We will finish this short presentation of fancreation with some examples of fanfilms. A simple research on *YouTube* with the key words 'Harry Potter Fan Films'

will reveal numerous references, many with several million views. In this case, we obviously see the influence of the *Harry Potter* (2001-11) film series but from different points of view. Digital cinematic technologies have democratized this area of creation and allow a high level of interaction with story. The examples we are going to look at show an almost professional level of production, including videos made behind the scenes of the films and their own 'making ofs'. Yet they are still made by amateurs, inspired by the films.

These films can represent side stories taken from the books such as *The Greater Good* (2013) created by Broadstrokes Productions in the United States, which currently stands at 10, 253,236[12] views. This short film portrays the duel between Dumbledore and Grindelwald before the birth of Harry. This is a turning point in the history of the wizarding world which is also now interwoven into part two of the *Fantastic Beasts* series. The same group have brought an episode from the life of Severus Snape to the screen in a film entitled *Severus Snape and the Marauders*, uploaded in 2016 and currently with 6,666,140[13] views. This short film was financed by crowdfunding and explains the roots of Snape's animosity to James Potter, Harry's father and has a direct bearing on one of the most interesting subplots of the Harry Potter series.

In a more comedic style, a webseries begun in 2012 recast the main characters and portrayed them from a different point of view. *Harry Potter and the Ten Years Later* by Furious Molecules Productions is a parody which explores the difficulties the characters face as they grow up and become adults. Harry had now become a person similar to Sue Townsend's Adrian Mole. Although it only lasted for one season, it has been screened at many fan conventions such as at Stan Lee's Comikaze Expo. Again, it is interesting to note that the same time frame was eventually used for the stage show *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child.*



Furious Molecules' parody web series 'Harry Potter and the Ten Years Later' from 2012.

With these final points on transmedia narration and fancreation we have seen that Cartmell's battle of adaptation has no more reason to exist today. The example of Henry Jenkins's 'participation' principle shows us that the relationship between the story and its audience is changing radically. That is not to say that binary judgements

on the relative success of an adaptation no longer exist. The internet is still awash with fans explaining how the films do not match with their 'correct' versions of the stories. In the context of this contribution however, the importance of transmedia storytelling is how it responds to the questions of fidelity, allowing for an expansion of the idea through participation and avoiding the necessity to stick closely to a source work, thus providing a potential exit to this particular critical cul-de-sac. Today, large parts of the audience are becoming increasingly ready to accept adaptation as a reinterpretation. Consequently, in one way, we could say that we have reached a conclusion to the battle. The fans, the primary audience of adaptations, are questioning the judgement of fidelity through their own creations.

Finally, judging the different versions by opposition to the source text restricts us to a single way to focus on an object instead of making us think about why we tell stories. In the case of *Harry Potter*, rather than adopting a bellicose language and looking for dominance between the arts, as Cartmell does in 2007, is it not better to celebrate a real partnership? As we have seen, the series is a very good example of 'intermediality' as defined by Jürgen Müller in the 1990's as Rowling adopts a cinematic construction for her work structurally, thematically and even textually. We could even say she adopts the language of cinema. By creating a sort of editing with her words, she employs visual processes belonging to cinema to create a vision and clearly defined point of view in the novels. Instead of Bluestone's hostility where each art tries to jealously guard its own essential difference, we can find a harmony where differences complement each other to form a respectful marriage.

### End Notes

1. Chris Columbus is the director of the first two films: *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001) and *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, (2002).
2. For clarity, the film titles are in italics with their release dates. The novels are underlined. To refer to the literary series, we use *Harry Potter*, for the film series, we use *Harry Potter* (2001-11). The character's name is written in normal script: Harry Potter.
3. See "Franchise Index" *boxofficemojo.com*. https://www.boxofficemojo.com/franchises/
4. Harry thoroughly explores this place from the fifth novel (*Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix)* onwards. It is remarkably grim and old.
5. *Mal-foi* literally translates as 'bad faith'.
6. See https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/harry-potter/11000405/Harry-Potter-covers-then-and-now.html
7. See http://www.gallimard.fr/Catalogue/GALLIMARD-JEUNESSE/Folio-Junior/Folio-Junior/Harry-Potter-a-l-ecole-des-sorciers2
8. See http://www.gallimard.fr/Catalogue/GALLIMARD-JEUNESSE/Folio-Junior/Folio-Junior/Harry-Potter-a-l-ecole-des-sorciers
9. See https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0304142/
10. See https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1571403/
11. Figures collected November 9 2019
12. As of November 9 2019.
13. As of November 9 2019.

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