

Harry Potter and the Battle of Adaptation

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In her 2007 essay 'Adapting Children's Literature' Deborah Cartmell describes the relationship between literature and cinema as part of the continuing tradition of *ut pictura poeisis*. Cinematic adaptation should be considered in a similar context to the mutual admiration and interdependence between literature and painting. However, Cartmell quickly recognises that there is a degree of tension between cinema and literature. She thus echoes a point which Bluestone made as early as 1957 in his seminal work, *Novel into Film*, where he famously classified these narrative arts as 'apparently compatible' while yet being 'secretly hostile' to one another.

Even if adaptation theorists such as Brian Mcfarlane and Linda Hutcheon have done much since to temper such an oppositional point of view when comparing film and literature, according to Cartmell this difficulty still exists today and we find it especially in the field of children's literature. Here the moral influence of film as well its supposed threat towards the 'purer' literary art form has been questioned even since the very beginnings of cinema. Cartmell thus describes cinematic adaptation as a 'battle' between media where the winner is the one which appears dominant on screen.

This proposition aims to consider the *Harry Potter* films in this context. Is this a series which invites us to think about adaptation differently? We will question the validity of the 'battle' notion in this case and ask whether transmedia storytelling will finally bring an end to the tension created by adaptation.

We will firstly search for boundaries between two forms of narration, reflecting on the common ground which does exist between cinema and literature. Taking Eisenstein's category of 'cinematic' authors in *Dickens, Griffiths and the Film Today* as a starting point, we will

examine the influence of cinema on the writing of J.K. Rowling, asking if her writing is particularly well-suited to cinematic adaptation.

Next we will focus on Cartmell's idea of a battle to consider J.K. Rowling's heritage as a writer of children's fiction and her place as an author in the film industry. We will see if the historical context of the conception of the *Harry Potter* stories, as well as cinematic elements found in the texts, provide Rowling with a privileged status in comparison with other canonic children's authors.

Finally we will question the validity of the 'battle' notion. Does the *Harry Potter* series represent a good example of the theory of *convergence* as defined by Henry Jenkins in 2006. Focusing on the idea of world-building and participation from his 7 elements of transmedia storytelling, could Jenkins' concept finally bring an end to the creative tension surrounding adaptation?

Biography

David Goldie has taught English in the cinema department (SATIS) at Aix-Marseille University since 2001 where he gives an annual Masters Seminar on Adaptation studies as part of the screen-writing course. He is affiliated to the LERMA laboratory where his research centres on English literature and adaptation studies. His thesis examines the cinematic adaptations of J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis and J. K. Rowling.

His published contributions treat the subject of mythopoetic adaptations in *The Lord of the Rings* and the poetics of adaptation in *Harry Potter*. His most recent publication is 'On the Origin of Stories': la sélection naturelle par l'adaptation' in the collection *Le Cinéma de la littérature* compiled by Jean Cléder and Frank Wagner.