

A filmic adaptation study of J.K.Rowling's Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone

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Abstract- Filmic adaptation is the adaptation of a literary work into a film. It provides a new look to the original source text. This paper "A filmic adaptation study of J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter and the Philosophers stone" is a study of the filmic adaptation of J.K. Rowling's novel Harry Potter and the Philosophers stone. It is not an analysis of which genre is more successful- novel or film, nor about the fidelity of the film to its source. This paper is a study of the text and film based on the seven strategies namely inclusion, exclusion, compression, extension, creation, substitution and re-sequencing. It works to analyse the filmic adaptation on a new context as a way of shedding light on the recent trends in Adaptation studies.

Keywords: Adaptation study, Filmic adaptation, Harry Potter, J.K.Rowling.

"Books and Movies are like Apples and Oranges. They both are fruit but taste completely different."

- Stephen King.

A book is a film that takes place in the mind of the reader and a film is a merger between the power of ideas and images. Change is inevitable and adaptation is a vital change. Filmic Adaptation is the adaptation of a literary work into the film genre. An adaptation is a reworking of the source but is in no way secondary to it. The film Harry Potter and the Philosopher's stone directed by Chris Columbus and released in 2001 is the filmic version of the first novel of the Harry Potter series of the same name. The film is a representation of the complex, challenging and ambiguous nature of the novel's adaptation. This paper "A filmic adaptation study of J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" is a study of the filmic adaptation of the first novel of the Harry Potter series Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone.

J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone is the first novel of the Harry Potter series. The novel is about the journey of the protagonist Harry Potter as he matures from a teen of age 11 in the first novel to a young adult who sends off his son to learn at the Hogwarts school of magic in the last novel. It traces his life as he fights against the evil Lord Voldemort and finally destroys him by destroying one of his Horcrux in each novel. Much has been talked about the literary credit of the Harry Potter series and also about the various themes in it like family, friendship, gender study,

marginalisation of muggles, feminist perspective, postcolonial and postmodern criticism.

In this paper, I have studied the filmic adaptation of the first novel Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone. This study is not done in the regular context of which is better? Novel or Film nor about which genre is more successful nor about the fidelity of the film to its source-the novel. It is more of a side by side analysis of the text and the film based on the strategies of Inclusion, Exclusion, Compression, Expansion, Creation, Substitution and Re-sequencing.

The first strategy Inclusion is about identifying the elements of the source text that has been included in the adapted film version. This doesn't mean that the film has copied these elements but has rather preserved it in the film as well. The second strategy Exclusion is about identifying the elements of the source text that has been excluded in the adapted film version. This is based on the film director or script writer's choice that these elements are less significant for the film's progression. According to the third strategy Compression, certain elements of the source text are compressed in the adapted film version. This is based on the film director or script writer's choice that these elements can be represented in mini version in the film. In the next strategy Expansion, it deals with the elements of the text that are expanded in the film based on the film director or script writer's choice that these elements have to elongated for the film's progression. The next strategy Creation is about the new elements that are created and introduced in the film and are not present in the novel. In films, sometimes certain character or situation in the text is substituted with someone or something else and the strategy - Substitution deals with it. Re-sequencing is about

the flow of text that is rearranged or re-sequenced in a different order in film than in novel. All these are done based on the choice of the film director or script writer as they deem it requisite for the film's progression and success.

In this paper, I have analysed Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone based on the strategies: Inclusion, Exclusion, Compression, Expansion, Creation, Substitution and Re-sequencing.

For the first strategy Inclusion, it can be identified that the three main characters of the novel- Harry Potter, Ron Weasley, Hermione Granger ; the important adult characters- Albus Dumbledore, Severus Snape, Lord Voldemort; the secondary characters- James Potter, Lily Potter, Hagrid, Professor McGonagall, the Dursley family, the Weasley family, Professor Quirrell; the inhumane characters- Sorting Hat, Centaur, the mirror of Erised, Invisible cloak, Nimbus 2000, the settings- Dursley's home, Diagon Alley, Platform 9¾, 3rd floor corridor and the Great Hall have all been included in the film as well.

For the second strategy Exclusion, the normal life of the Dursleys in the start of the novel, Harry's life at the normal school has been excluded. Also, Harry's stay with the Dursleys after his eleventh birthday after knowing that he is a wizard has been excluded as it is shown in film that Harry after his shopping with Hagrid at the Diagon Alley is left at the railway to board the Hogwarts while in the novel Harry stays with the Dursleys for one more month before he boards the train to Hogwarts at Platform 9¾. Certain characters like Mrs.Figgs-the caretaker (23), Piers Polkiss- Dudley's best friend (25), Madam Malkin – Robes shop owner (82), Peeves the Poltergeist (137) have been excluded. The reason might be while adapting a 332 novel into a 2hour 39minute film, certain characters need to be excluded because of time constraints. A very important scene that has been excluded in the film is Harry's dream in Chapter 7- The Sorting Hat:

... he had a very strange dream. He was wearing Professor Quirrell's turban, which kept talking to him, telling him he must transfer to Slytherin at once, because it was his destiny. Harry told the turban he didn't want to be in Slytherin; it got heavier and heavier; he tried to pull it off but it tightened painfully. (139)

This in my personal opinion is important because it links to the climax where Lord Voldemort is revealed as Professor Quirrell removes his turban. The reason for the exclusion of this might be to maintain the suspense of Lord Voldemort till the film's climax.

The next category is Compression. The entire shopping episode of Harry with Hagrid in Diagon Alley has been compressed as only the wand shopping is shown in film. The Sorting hat ceremony has been compressed as well as only that of important characters is shown in the film.

The next strategy is Expansion. The Quidditch match is expanded in the novel. This might be because it abounds in animation so as it attracts the viewers. Also, in the end of the novel Harry blacks out as he holds Professor Quirrell while in

film it is expanded and Professor Quirrell is given an end as his body disintegrates into ashes and burns away.

The next strategy is Substitution. The incident of delivering Hagrid's baby dragon at the top of the astronomy tower has been substituted in the film to mere two lines in which Hagrid says that he had sent it to Romania on Dumbledore's order while in the novel it is explained in three pages (254-259) as Harry, Ron and Hermione deliver it to Charles Weasley's friends on top of the Astronomy tower. There are examples of substitution of location as well. In the novel, Harry is taught Quidditch in stadium while in the film it is in the castle courtyard. In the novel, Snape tells Quirrell how to tame the 3-headed dog in the forbidden forest while in film he discloses it in the castle hallway. An important substitution is in the novel climax, where Professor Quirrell ties Harry with rope while in the movie Professor Quirrell casts a spell and Harry is surrounded by fire. This substitution of fire instead of rope may be for enhanced graphics effect to attract viewers.

The next strategy is Creation. An example for this is a scene in film where Ron gets a newspaper and through which Harry learns about the robbery in Gringotts's bank. This is not in the novel while it is invented in the movie. Also, there is another scene where Hermione casts a spell and repairs Harry's spectacles. In my opinion, this scene has been invented in the film to showcase the importance of Hermione and her intelligence.

The final strategy discussed in this paper is Re-Sequencing. The scene where Harry meets Draco Malfoy is re-sequenced. In the novel, Harry meets Malfoy in the Diagon Alley before Hogwarts while in the film Harry meets Malfoy in the hallway of Hogwarts after the Sorting hat ceremony. The classroom scenes of Professor McGonagall's transfiguration class, Flitwick's Charms class, Professor Quirrell's Defense Against Dark Arts class are all re-sequenced. The most important example for resequencing is the scene where Harry learns about his parents and how on that fateful day they were killed. In the novel, this comes in chapter 4- The keeper of the Keys when Hagrid comes to meet Harry in the shack on his Birthday. In the film, it comes after the shopping at the Diagon Alley. This resequencing might be to maintain the suspense and to create a build-up in the viewers to anticipate about Lord Voldemort.

Thus, in this paper, I have studied the filmic adaptation of the novel Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone. This study is done as a side by side analysis of the text and the film based on the strategies of Inclusion, Exclusion, Compression, Expansion, Creation, Substitution and Re-sequencing. This study done in a new context thus sheds light on the new emerging trends in Adaptation studies.

Works cited:

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