II
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1.0 Survey of Literature: Adaptation Studies over the Years

This Chapter makes a survey of adaptation studies done by scholars over the years. Some of the well-known scholars in the field are Robert Stam, Christine Geragthy and Simone Murray, all of whom are widely published. It also talks about some of the prominent theories which have influenced film studies as well as adaptation studies. The Chapter finally presents the theories relevant for the present study.

2.1.1 Lester Asheim’s Theory of Adaptation

As early as 1951 and 1952, Lester Asheim published a series of four articles on adaptation, all of them rooted in his 1949 doctoral dissertation. In the fourth of these articles, entitled ‘From Book to Film: Summary’:

[he] (i.e. Lester Asheim) brought forth an extraordinary catalogue of 39 principals, extending over six classifications, that affect how, what, and sometimes why adaptive changes are instituted. The classifications impinge on (i) technology (a verbal approach must be converted into a visual one), (ii) artistry (plot is given more weight than character or philosophical nuance), (iii) audience limitations (a film audience is flatly assumed to have a lower level of comprehension than a literary audience), (iv) the star system (characters played by stars are given greater salience in the film than in the novel), (v) societal pressures (violence and sex normally get reduced), and (vi) fidelity (the leading plot line is usually retained).
2.1.2 Beginning of Adaptation Studies (Fidelity Studies)

Scholars studying Film Adaptation of literary works began with the natural tendency of looking for materials borrowed directly from the original source and deviations made from it. Such studies which began in the 1950s came to be known as ‘Fidelity Studies’. George Bluestone who published the founding text on adaptation studies, *Novels into Film* (1954) became the leading film theorist during the middle of the twentieth century. His book is the first major study of literary-to-cinematic adaptation in the English language and it is unquestionably a ground-breaking text within the field of cinematic studies. This process, called a “fidelity study,” became the most basic way of exploring an adaptation. In short, a fidelity study consists of a scholar examining a primary text and an adapted text (in this case, a novel and a film, respectively) and noting the differences in the plot, mood, interpretation and general representation between the two. Bluestone conducted these studies for a number of years, and because twelve years passed before another seminal text was published on the topic Bluestone’s text was widely used in colleges and universities. Although Bluestone was the first to conduct fidelity studies, his methodology was widely used for many years and was the gauge by which many adaptations were measured. He claimed that literature and films had a “fitful relationship” (Bluestone 1957:172) and that although it seemed as if the two would complement one another, they were in fact “secretly hostile” (Ibid.:173) and in fact undermined what the other was trying to achieve by forcing them into competition. The method proved to be both time-consuming and repetitive. In fact, using Bluestone’s methodology is frustrating: by only looking for similarities and differences between the book text and film text, scholars note that they are alike in some ways but not in others. In his discussion of William Wyler’s 1939 adaptation of *Wuthering Heights* he (Bluestone) points out that “the film makers have made the events comprehensible to a twentieth century mass audience” (Ibid.:179) by eliminating much of the social and class tension from the plot. Bluestone himself admits that the changes enhance the film, although he does not explain why exactly, saying that “we are forced to conclude
that it is precisely those additions which the filmmakers have written into their story” (Ibid.). Despite that, Bluestone still claims that the film represents the “mutational process” (Ibid.:174) of adaptation. (Adopted from V. L. Smith pp.7-16).

A very interesting point is made regarding the upsurge in the 1960s of ‘fidelity studies’ by one film theorist, Robert B. Ray (as incorporated by Hollands 2002:49) in his article ‘The Field of Literature and Film’ (2005). He finds out that adaptation studies got its start not in these new academic haunts but in literature departments hoping to stem declining enrolments by using the study of film adaptations to buttress their literature curricula (Kranz and Mellerski 2008:3). Despite the contemporary distaste for fidelity studies, critics view Bluestone as a necessary step in the evolution of adaptation theory.

Brian McFarlane (1996:8) notes, “discussion of adaptation has been bedevilled by the fidelity issue.” Robert Stam addresses this issue at some length in his Literature through Film: Realism, Magic, and the Art of Adaptation (2005:3-4):

The traditional language of criticism of filmic adaptations of novels...has often been extremely judgmental, proliferating in terms that imply that film has performed a disservice to literature. Terms such as “infidelity”, “betrayal”, deformation”, “violation”, “vulgarization”, “bastardization”, and desecration” proliferate, with each word carrying its specific charge of opprobrium. Despite the variety of the accusations, their drift always seems to be the same – the book was better. The notion of “fidelity” does, admittedly, contain its grain of truth. When we say an adaptation has been “unfaithful” to the original, the very violence of the term gives expression to the intense disappointment we feel when a film adaptation fails to capture what we see as the fundamental narrative, thematic, and aesthetic features of its literary source. The notion of fidelity gains its persuasive force from our sense that (a) some adaptations do fail to “realize” what we most appreciated in the source novels; (b) some adaptations are indeed better than others;
and (c) some adaptations miss at least some of the salient features of their sources. But the mediocrity of some adaptations, and the partial persuasiveness of “fidelity,” should not lead us to endorse fidelity as a methodological principal. Indeed, it is questionable whether strict fidelity is even possible. An adaptation is automatically different and original due to the change of medium.

This final sentence especially is instructive as adaptation, by its very nature, involves a process of change and modification in order to suit a new or different purpose: in this case, the transition from one medium, prose, to another, film. André Bazin (1997:41) was certainly one of the earliest scholars to directly address this issue when he wrote that, “A novel is a unique synthesis whose molecular equilibrium is automatically affected when you tamper with its Form”. In fact, there is necessarily a metamorphosis of at least some (generally most) of the narrative, thematic, and aesthetic components of any prose work when it is adapted into film. As Brian McFarlane (Welsh and Lev: 2007:6) wrote in his essay, ‘It Wasn’t Like that in the Book…’:

I suspect there is a yearning for fidelity, not just among those with a literary training, but among quite wide sectors of the film-going public, without any real concern for how much fidelity is either possible or desirable – or what it might mean. And such thinking begs the question that there is such a thing as the “true” or fixed meaning for a literary text – or any sort of text for that matter.

Or as Denise Faithfull (2002:1 as quoted by Shepherd 2009:8) wrote in her article, ‘Adaptations/Variations’:

Despite the various approaches available, critical and other audiences frequently demand that the film be 'faithful' to the original text, and unfortunately film-makers too often oblige. Thus, for example, Jane Campion, in her adaptation of The Portrait of a Lady, admitted that she found adapting 'James's novel for the screen ... at times scary' because of her awareness of audience expectations of fidelity.
On a humorous note, James Naremore in the introduction to his *Film Adaptation* (2002:2) wrote:

Unfortunately, most discussions of adaptation in film can be summarized by a *New Yorker* cartoon that Alfred Hitchcock once described to François Truffaut: two goats are eating a pile of film cans, and one goat says to the other, “Personally, I liked the book better. Merely because a novel constitutes the original text, coupled with the fact that literature has enjoyed a far longer and thus considerably more productive history than cinema, provides no automatic guarantee that a novel is superior to its film version. In fact, there has long existed an adage within cinematic circles that “a great book often makes a poor film, but a poor book often makes a great film”. Greg Jenkins, in the opening paragraph of his *Stanley Kubrick and the Art of Adaptation: Three Novels, Three Films* (1997:1), quotes Richard Corliss thus: “Adapting a best-seller for the movies is like carving flesh down to the bone. You keep the skeleton, then apply rouge and silicone until the creature looks human”.

Although Jenkins believes that this may often be inaccurate, it nevertheless also belies some truth. The reasons for this particular phenomenon are potentially manifold: a great book (or, especially, a bestseller) may be made into a film for purely commercial reasons, and thus result in a piece of lightweight, cynically-motivated dreck; a skilled, ambitious filmmaker may see in a poorly received or poorly written novel enough visual potential to make a great film. Bluestone (1973/1957:62) comes closest to addressing the root cause of why this may be so when he writes:

What happens…when the filmist undertakes the adaptation novel, given the inevitable mutation, is that he does not convert the novel at all. What he adapts is a kind of paraphrase of the novel – the novel viewed as raw material.
This perhaps suggests that, while many a filmmaker will treat a classic work of literature as sacrosanct, and thus attempt to make a “faithful” adaptation of the work – ignoring the fact that a film adaptation must inevitably add, remove and alter aspects of the novel in order to make a successful film – when it comes to either a poor or mediocre novel a filmmaker is often much more willing to alter aspects of the text during the conversion process into film.

Cinema is, after all, a distinct medium, and whether it improves or impairs the original material, it does so within its own conventions. (Adopted from Shepherd 2009:7-10).

2.1.3 Fidelity Studies in the 1970s and 1980s

The emphasis on fidelity studies began to shift to other kinds of study as scholars in the field began to see its limitations. In the 1970s and 1980s, scholars began to view films in terms of other contemporary theoretical trends including post-colonialism, feminism, post-structuralism, and multicultural studies. As Corrigan (1999:40) notes the shift in thought was not particularly “hospitable” to adaptation studies. Films began to be defined as its own discipline that stood independent of literary studies and film. Without the support of those two fields, adaptation studies floundered until two different principal schools of thought arose: one neo-formalistic front (that films should be analysed based on their structural components and sociologically) and one ideological (that films should be analysed as a product of a cultural) front. Each strove to define film in its own right: while the first sought to distinguish between film from printed literature, the second looked more closely at how film fit into other ideological and psychological theories of the time. Their studies might include questions such as: how is Francis Ford Coppola’s Apocalypse Now, a very popular adaptation based on Joseph Conrad’s Heart of Darkness that moved the original story from colonial Africa to war-stricken Vietnam, affected by post-colonialism? How is it affected by feminism? Scholars argued that film serves as means of observing society; our fears, hopes and beliefs come through in our visual narratives, and adaptations go one step further by referencing older texts. While these questions
were an excellent beginning, these scholars tried to impose a particular set of ideas adaptation instead of letting the adaptations be the lens through which the scholar should examine society. More contemporary studies have begun looking at the act of adapting a text, finding the best means of evaluating the results, and what adaptations mean about our culture and how we view previously received literature. Scholars want to show how adaptations are works of art and literature even without the context of the original work, and how they can be used to reveal cultures trends, biases and beliefs.(Adopted from Shepherd 2009:13-14).

2.1.4 Positive and Negative Aspects of Fidelity

Fidelity studies which dominated film studies so long were not without their positive aspects. Such studies started to decline because of their negative aspects which were brought to light by a new wave of scholarship in the 1990s.

2.1.4.1 Positive Aspects

Talking about the positive aspect of ‘fidelity’ editors David Kranz and Nancy Mellerski in the ‘Introduction’ to their book In/Fidelity: Essays in Adaptation (2008:2) note:

Part of the thrill of watching cinematic adaptations of canonical, famous, or best-selling literary works, we surmise, lies in witnessing how the personally remembered or culturally widespread understanding of those beloved artifacts is reproduced or transformed in the new medium. … Thus, fidelity is an important issue in viewer response. Ultimately, adaptations involve the human desire for security and immortality…By faithful adaptation, the great works live in another medium and reach more minds and souls than can the printed word. Homo faber can think or dream that the civilization he built will not change despite the winds of time.

Thus, there’s both big money and psychological satisfaction in film adaptation, and fidelity is no small part of the equation.
2.1.4.2  Negative Aspects

In spite of certain positive aspects film has also certain negative points. It is limited: for one thing, there are no time constraints on a novel, while a film usually must compress events into two hours or so. (The 2002 adaptation of *David Copperfield*, for example, compresses a novel that runs to 800 pages into just 180 minutes.) For another, the meaning of a novel is controlled by only one person, the author, while the meaning we get from a film is the result of a collaborative effort by many people. Film also does not allow us the same freedom a novel does—to interact with the plot or characters by imagining them in our minds. For some viewers, this is often the most frustrating aspect of turning a novel into a film.

How faithful to the original written work should a film version strive to be? In *Reading the Movies*, William Costanzo quotes George Bluestone, one of the first critics to study film adaptations of literature. Bluestone believes the filmmaker is an independent artist, “not a translator for an established author, but a new author in his own right.” Some agree with Bluestone that a literal translation of a book is often foolish—even, some have said, a “betrayal” of the original work. Instead, the filmmaker has to refashion the spirit of the story with his or her own vision and tools. (Ibid.)

The earlier cliché that the book is better than the film or I like the book better are no more heard these days in the “ … college and university literature departments. There are many reasons for this sea-change … but the most prominent are (1) the creation in the last half-century and growing academic respectability of cinema studies, now institutionalized in its own academic niche, and (2) philosophical changes in literature departments brought on by post-structuralist literary theory. … Meanwhile, young literary scholars interested in film and trained in post-structuralist theory have joined the anti-fidelity movement.

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4 Film in the Classroom’ Masterpiece. (p-16) 2011. Web. 8 Oct. 2013
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece
Here, for example, is the transformative statement made by the new editors (both English professors specializing in literature and film) of Literature/Film Quarterly, the premier American academic journal focusing on cinematic adaptation, in Literature/Film Quarterly (2005:2-3) was first produced when “faithfulness” to original literary sources was the primary concern in adaptation studies….Now, over thirty years later, notions of fidelity, faithfulness, and authenticity have been interrogated and, to a large extent, replaced by much more permissive approaches to adaptation: explorations of wide-ranging intertextuality are favoured as much as finding direct correlations between pairs of texts….Furthermore, the long-standing primacy of original literary texts over cinematic (re)creations has been consistently called into question. Anxiety about preservation is undone by the spirit of exploration. (Ibid.2-3).

2.1.5 Decline of Fidelity Studies
Multiple focuses of film adaptation started questioning the traditional boundaries. As a result, the earlier emphasis on fidelity studies began to decline. Thus, research made in the 1990s shows a significant shift toward this dehierarchizing attitude. The discussions “have moved from a moralistic discourse of fidelity and betrayal to a less judgemental discourse of intertextuality” (Stam 2002:209-10 – as cited by Marciniak [nd]:60). Adaptations are now being analysed as products of artistic creativity “caught up in the ongoing whirl of intertextual transformation, of texts generating other texts in an endless process of recycling, transformation, and transmutation, with no clear point of origin” (Ibid.). When an adaptation is compared with the literary work it is based on, the stress is on the ways the film creators’ move within the field of intertextual connections and how they employ the means of expression offered by the filmic art to convey meanings. An adaptation can, therefore, be seen as interpretation, as a specific and original vision of a literary text, and even if it remains fragmentary, it is worthwhile because it embeds the book in a network of creative activities and interpersonal communication.
2.1.6 1990s – New Approaches to Adaptation Studies

The 1990s sees a wave of new scholarship on film and adaptations. Timothy Corrigan (2007:29-43) claims that since the 1990s adaptation studies have a new focus on the possibilities for adaptations, and its capabilities. He also says that the new focus has produced “new energies and significant scholarship . . . opening the questions informing the relations of literature and film in larger, less predictable, and more concrete ways” (p.41). The results are questions about cultural and historical studies, “gender, textual authority and priority” (p.41) and national interpretations of adaptation. As a consequence, studies now are being done to explore a particular cultural theory’s presence or representation in an adaptation. Geraghty (2008:16), for example, often explores how one theory or set of related theories affect several adaptations (“Feminism, Authorship, and Genre: Adaptations of the Novels of Edna Ferber and Pearl S. Buck”). For example, all the three Scarlet Letter adaptations represent female gender roles in varying ways as a result of the different times in which they were produced (1934, 1979 and 1995). Corrigan (2007:41) seems to feel that having multiple focuses is positive in terms of the field’s future, as adaptation will serve to question traditional boundaries of the discipline. One of the opportunities is how adaptations fit into education, and many other scholars are exploring this avenue of using adaptations in classrooms as teaching tools. (Adopted from Smith 2010:14-16).

2.1.7 The Present Scenario in Adaptation Studies

Adaptation theorists like Robert Stam felt that the past procedures have not proved fruitful, or at least not brought any new and valuable revelations. They have recently started focussing on the actual procedures for studies. Many scholars – including Simone Murray and even Stam himself - concentrate on not necessarily on how a film was adapted, but instead focus on the problems with adaptation studies and redefining adaptation as a part of an Inter-textual process that is responsible for the production of all texts. Unfortunately, there is still a negative stigma ever since the fidelity supporters condemned adaptations in the
1950s. Since then, adaptations have been plagued with a whole list of problems that Stam discusses in *Literature through Film: Realism, Magic and the Art of Adaptation* (2005). In short, the misconceptions Stam lists focus on the “parasitic” quality of adaptations that draw from the success of the original text, and assume that because adaptations are newer art form, and are “of the body”, they must essentially be for a lower class of viewer that would not appreciate the original format of a work. The general assumption is that adaptations are not as intelligent as novels, and the people who enjoy them similarly lack intelligence as well.

Stam’s entire list of causes for the bitter relationship between literature and adaptations: the assumption that “older arts are necessarily better arts;” “the dichotomous thinking that presumes a bitter rivalry between film and literature;” “iconophobia (fear of icons);” “logophilia” (love of words); “anti-corporeality” (distaste for bodily ideas); “films are suspectly easy to make and suspectly pleasurable to watch;” “class prejudice” and “parasitism” (Stam 2004: 4-7).

### 2.1.8 Adaptation as Interpretation

The debate on cinematic adaptations of literary works was for many years dominated by the questions of fidelity to the source and by the tendencies to prioritize the literary originals over their film versions. Adaptations were seen by most critics as inferior to the adapted texts, as “minor”, “subsidiary”, “derivative” or “secondary” products, lacking the symbolic richness of the books and missing their “spirit”. Critics found such a tendency not only as too limiting but also as the major fault of adaptations: the impoverishment of the book’s content due to necessary omissions in the plot and the inability of the filmmakers to read out and represent the deeper meanings of the text. More and more critics started to believe that literature as art did not desire closure, that it did not satisfy itself with one approach only. Literature, like other arts, suggested a vast area of communicative possibilities through which it could speak to the audience. According to the reader-response theory, meanings could be seen as events that took place in the reader’s time and imagination. It was therefore necessary to
place the emphasis differently, not on the source, but on the way its meanings were reconstructed in the process of reception. Filmmakers had to be seen as readers with their own rights, and each adaptation – as a result of individual reading processes. Research made in the 1990s shows a significant shift toward this dehierarchizing attitude. The discussions “have moved from a moralistic discourse of fidelity and betrayal to a less judgemental discourse of intertextuality” (Stam 2002:209-10 – as cited by Marciniac). Adaptations are now being analysed as products of artistic creativity “caught up in the ongoing whirl of intertextual transformation, of texts generating other texts in an endless process of recycling, transformation, and transmutation, with no clear point of origin” (Ibid.). When an adaptation is compared with the literary work it is based on, the stress is on the ways the film creators’ move within the field of intertextual connections and how they employ the means of expression offered by the filmic art to convey meanings. An adaptation can, therefore, be seen as interpretation, as a specific and original vision of a literary text, and even if it remains fragmentary, it is worthwhile because it embeds the book in a network of creative activities and interpersonal communication. The verbally transmitted characteristics of the heroes, places and the spatial relations between them, open to various decoding possibilities in the process of imagining, were in the grip of flattening pictures. Visualization was therefore regarded as destroying many of the subtleties with which the printed word could shape the internal world of a literary work only in the interaction with the reader’s response. (Adopted from Malgorzata Marciniak – ‘The Appeal of Literature-to-Film Adaptations’:59-60).

2.1.9.0 Good Adaptation and Reasons for Making Changes
The controversy regarding the filmmakers’ degree of faithfulness continues till now. But what is really important is the fact that an adaptation must be a ‘good’ adaptation.
2.1.9.1 Good Adaptation
What elements that really go into making a good adaptation is also not without any controversy. Marciniak in her essay ‘The Appeal of Literature-to-Film Adaptations’ (undated: 60) addresses this issue:

In order to be seen as a good adaptation, a film had to come to terms with what was considered as the “spirit” of the book and to take into account all layers of the book’s complexity. But who could guarantee that the image of the work that a particular reader had created in his or her mind was elements of the literary work that formed its “spirit” and were indispensable to its recognition in another medium? Who could prove that only a literary approach was capable to reveal finite and ultimative truths about a book’s identity and provide us with exact models of understanding it?

2.1.9.2.0 Reasons for Making Changes
There are mainly three reasons a filmmaker or screenwriter might make major changes in adapting a literary work to film:

(i) Changes Demanded by the New Medium;
(ii) Changes to Highlight New Themes;
(iii) Changes to Suit to a Contemporary Audience; and
(iv) Changes Due to Budgetary Constraints.

2.1.9.2.1 Changes Demanded by the New Medium
Film and literature each has its own tools for manipulating narrative structure. In a novel, a new chapter might take the reader back to a different time and place in the narrative. In a film, the film maker might take the viewers back to that same time and place through the use of a flashback, a crosscut, or a dissolve. By way of example, the film Wuthering Heights can be cited here. Various film techniques such as flashbacks, crosscuts, or dissolves are employed by the filmmakers to keep the complex narrative coherent. Or consider the flashback that begins the 2009 film adaptation of Little Dorrit, with the violent birth of Amy Dorrit in the Marshalsea debtors’ prison. In the novel, ‘little Dorrit’ herself
isn’t even introduced even within some 70 pages, but in the film version she is clearly the centre of the story: the first sound the viewers hear in the film is the sound of her cry as she is born, and in the next several scenes (in which she is a young girl) she is costumed in a robin’s-egg-blue cape, the only bright spot of colour in an otherwise gray world. (Masterpiece – p.16)

2.1.9.2.2 Changes to Highlight New Themes
Filmmakers also make changes to highlight new themes, emphasize different traits in a character, or even try to solve problems they perceive in the original work. Allan Cubitt, who wrote the screenplay for the 2001 film Anna Karenina, says in an interview that he always felt Vronsky’s suicide attempt was ‘under-motivated’, and therefore he tried to strengthen the character’s sense of rejection and humiliation in the film version.

2.1.9.2.3 Changes to Suit to a Contemporary Audience
Filmmakers might also make dramatic changes to an adaptation in order to make a classic story appear new or give it a new interpretation for a contemporary audience. Sometimes this means subtle substitutions or additions of language or props that are more recognizable to a modern audience. At other times it means depicting events or characters in the novel in a way that better fits a modern sensibility.

One of the most striking examples of adaptation, is Steven Moffat’s and Mark Gatiss’s startling 2010 reinvention of Sherlock Holmes. In their series, Sherlock, Mr. Holmes is a private detective in today’s London. He has a smart phone and a website, and he enjoys baiting the police via text messages when they aren’t solving a case adroitly enough for his liking. As Mr. Moffat says, Conan Doyle’s stories “lend themselves incredibly well to a modern setting...[they] were never about frock-coats and gas light; they’re about brilliant detection, dreadful villains and blood-curdling crimes—and frankly, to hell with the crinoline. Other detectives have cases, Sherlock Holmes has adventures, and that’s what matters.” (Moffat as quoted in ‘Masterpiece: 2011’). Reimagined, however, the Holmes
stories still retain the central idea that any technology—whether it be the early forensic science of the original stories or a Google search in this version—is merely another tool for a detective with a superior mind.

To show students how cleverly a literary classic can be brought into the 21st century, the teacher can invite them to read just the first chapter of *A Study in Scarlet*, the famous story in which Holmes and Watson first meet, and compare it to the parallel scene, about ten minutes into the film, called *A Study in Pink*. It must be noted, in particular, the brilliant way in which the original famous first line to ex-soldier Watson (“You have been in Afghanistan, I perceive”) has been reworked for today (Adopted from ‘Masterpiece’ – pp.16-18).

2.1.9.2.4 Changes Due to Budgetary Constraints

Besides the changes necessitated by the transition made from the linguistic to another medium – the visual medium - film makers sometimes become somewhat forced to make some minor changes also. Some of these changes can be minor changing of place for budgetary reasons, for instance, changing the name of a character, whose name is the same as a current newsmaker, changing a train to a plane, or creating a family of three children instead of five. For example, the shift of location from R. K. Narayan’s imaginary small town in south to Udaipur in Rajasthan in the film Guide. These changes can be difficult for the original writer, who has struggled with creative choices only to see them so easily changed by the screenwriter. But not every adaptation has to follow the original.

In fact, if adaptors have an exaggerated respect for every word, comma, and turn of phrase in the literature, they will be unable to reform the material into drama. There is no rule apart from the obligation of one’s contract that says one cannot use one’s own imagination when working with the original material. The adaptation is a new original. The adaptor looks for the balance between preserving the spirit of the original and creating a new form.
2.2.0 Some Prominent Theories

In the hundred years’ history of cinema/film not only a wide variety of films were made but a number of theories were also put forward by film critics in their efforts to raise the status of cinema to that of literature and other arts. Since the major thrust of the present study is on the techniques of film adaptation, only a general idea of a few prominent and influential theories are presented below.

2.2.1 The French New Wave and the Auteur Theory

Emerging in the 1950s with the introduction of French New Wave cinema, a series of anti-establishment rules and regulations were determined by filmmakers who wanted to create something different from Hollywood Cinema. A series of art-film magazines founded by André Bazin called Cahiers du Cinema established rules for how French filmmakers should create films that were different than those which already existed by introducing the concept of the “auteur”. Derived from the French word for author, an auteur is a director who “infuses the entire work with his or her personality and point of view and all of whose films can be related in terms of similar techniques, style, and themes” (Konigsberg 24). This was common for French New Wave filmmaking – to observe the figurative “stamp” that a particular director puts on their specific works. Recent examples of auteur directors working presently would be Quentin Tarantino, Guy Maddin, Kevin Smith, Lars von Trier, and more importantly in relationship to the argument of adaptation and alternative forms of cinema – David Lynch…. It was Jean-Luc Goddard’s Breathless (1960) that solidified French New Wave as a filmmaking means to counter Hollywood cinema (Moullet 40). Using techniques that were unheard of in Hollywood cinema, such as jump-cuts (cuts that break temporal continuity in a scene by leaving gaps in time) (Sklar 369), and long-takes which extended scenes well past their action, meant Breathless was something completely different that broke from conventions of storytelling within narrative film. Both André Bazin and French New Wave director Francois Truffaut had differing opinions on how adaptations should work within the film world. Truffaut’s attack was upon the artistic
precedence of the literature the adaptation was being derived from. He believed that the director should assume the role of the auteur and to “take cinema out of the hands of literary people, and give it to film directors” (Sklar 367). This would give the auteur filmmaker control over the work and allow complete creative control – even with adaptations. If scenes were too difficult to film, they were typically re-written instead of “finding a way to express its meaning visually” (Sklar 367). Bazin’s argument was that film can extend art, and believed that faithfulness to a source material is the only way to respect literature (Harrington 5). Bazin states that many filmmakers go to novelists for inspiration or character development (Bazin 13) because these established characters and ideas are easier to interpret once they are created by another individual. He also states that he finds many written sources (such as detective novels) are written with a dual purpose: not only to write a novel and to have it published, but also “with an eye on a Hollywood adaptation” (Bazin 14). This of course allows filmmakers to interpret the actions of not only the story, but that of the author. Many actions that are brought to screen are dependent on how the author has written a particular character that has already been established…. This ideology is one that many filmmakers follow – staying true to the source material is essential in creating an adaptation that is an accurate reproduction of the original source. To further tie concepts of auteur filmmaking with that of adaptation, one needs look no further than one of the first established North American auteurs – Alfred Hitchcock. Hitchcock had secured the rights to some of his most popular films of the time – Strangers on a Train (1951), The Trouble with Harry (1955), and Psycho (1960) for hardly any money at all. In this manner, he was able to rework the original stories, doing away with a straight forward literary adaptation and instead turning it into an auteur film that contained all the same dramatic suspense and “reliable generic thrills” (Leitch 239) that audiences had come to expect from Hitchcock’s work. (Adopted from Vugt 2011:7-9).
2.2.2 Linguistics and Film Theories

What brought film studies initially into contact with linguistics was not the fact that the cinema (since its beginnings) had combined images with language, whether spoken (during the film-performance) or written (in the form of intertitles). The appeal to language was prompted by a number of theoretical and philosophical issues around the question of signification. How can a photographic reproduction of reality be a meaningful statement about this reality? As Christian Metz put it: 'we need to understand how films are understood', or in Bill Nichols' phrase: we need 'to understand images of the world as speech about the world' (Nichols, 1985, p. 259). …

Theorists of realism (Hugo Munsterberg, Rudolf Arnheim, Siegfried Kracauer, and André Bazin) already raised the problem of how films are understood, relying on the psychology of perception or phenomenology to account for the fact that films not only give an impression of reality, but are intelligible, while remaining interpretable by different users in very different ways. …

Theories of the cinema have always emphasized the constructed nature of filmic representation: where they differ is in locating the source of that construction. If linguistically-based theories attribute it to society, ideology and symbolic systems, realist theories identify the mind as itself generating the structures which make the perceptual data and stimuli intelligible. Both currents have a history, but it is the former that will occupy us most. The emphasis here is on linguistics and semiology, giving only brief consideration to the social, ideological or psychoanalytic ramifications of the topic (although in academic film studies, it was the latter that predominated during the 1980s) (Adopted from Elsaesser and Poppe 1991:1-2).
2.2.3 The Language Analogy: Film Language and Film Grammar

The idea that film is like a language is as old as the medium itself. Campaigning for the importance and dignity of film, the American film-maker D.W. Griffith was one of the first to use the language model: he talked of 'moving pictures might have saved the situation when the Tower of Babel was built' (quoted in Hansen, 1985), stressing the universality, untutored comprehension and communication potential of the new medium. … Griffith is often called the 'father of film-language', because his development of parallel editing to signify temporal simultaneity through spatial contiguity was distinct from the mere sequential recording of events or human actions in front of the camera. He systematically exploited discontinuity in his editing to construct cause and effect chains according to a distinct story-telling logic (influential in the Hollywood film industry). …

Eisenstein's conception of film language was quite eclectic, sometimes based on analogies with the Chinese ideogram and the idea of 'pairing'. … He did recognize that the language of cinema had to be identified at a level other than the individual shot, and his theory of montage, … distinguished between referent, signifier and signified. His notion of film grammar, however, did not differentiate clearly between the semantic and the syntactic dimension, and it was the possibility of a (universal) film grammar which came to preoccupy those influenced by his writings. Noting the many conventions and regularities that seemed to govern the formal and narrative construction of films, theorists in the 1930s had the notion of filmic grammar as a set of rules gradually developed by professional filmmakers and more or less rigidly adhered to. Raymond Spottiswoode published 'A Grammar of the Film' in 1935, in which a descriptive approach is often at odds with a normative dimension, a dilemma inherited by countless text-books, how-to guides and histories of the 'art', 'grammar' or 'technique' of film-making. Their use of 'language' is clearly not structural, but 'philological', as it is even in Bazin, signalled in the title of one of his most famous essays: 'The Evolution of Film Language' (Bazin, 1967). Either there is
evolution, in which case we are not dealing with a language, or there is language, in which case historical change would have to be understood as structural transformations.

The concept of film grammar, evidently very problematic, usefully points to a connection which was to become fundamental in the contact between linguistics and film: the exploration of filmic signification by narratology and discourse theory, rather than on the basis of the individual image as the signifying unit (Adopted from Elsaesser and Poppe 1991:3-5).

2.2.4 Structural (Saussurean) Linguistics and Film Theories

The film theories that emerged in France during the 1950s and 1960s owe their origin to the academic context of filmology. Partly continuing this tradition and looking for ways of differentiating film from the other arts, writers tried to define the specificity of film. … From an object of value, film became a possible object of science, if scientifically inspired methods could be shown to be pertinent. The question was once more the relation of object to method, and it is in this context that linguistics began to play a major role in re-situating film theory, since in its Saussurean form it offered the most scientifically oriented body of theory available for the study of cinema.

Metz's basic terms (langue/langage) indicate his allegiance to structural linguistics and the writings of Saussure. … Insisting on the possibility of the cinema being like a language: 'In the cinema, as in other non-linguistic systems, the units of content are also merged with those of expression, but in a different sense, on the level of the "sentence".... The cinema like language, has much to say, but like signposts, it actually escapes the first articulation. It proceeds by "sentences", like traffic signals, but like verbal language, its sentences are unlimited in number. The difference is that the sentences of verbal languages eventually break down into words, whereas in the cinema, they do not. A film may be segmented into large units ("shots"), but these shots are not reducible (in
Jakobson's sense) into small, basic and specific units' (Metz, 1974 [1964], p. 88) (Adopted from Elsaesser and Poppe 1991:8-10).

2.2.5 Semio-Pragmatics and Film Theories

As a kind of compromise between the Saussurean traditions on the one hand, and Anglo-American developments in linguistics on the other, a group of European theorists have championed what they call 'semio-pragmatics'. Its main proponents, Roger Odin and Francesco Casetti, focus on how meaning is constructed at a level distinct from both the text and reception context. This level constitutes a kind of 'preferred reading', involving cognitive, discursive as well as unconscious structures. They thus build bridges between psychoanalytically inspired accounts of textuality and spectatorship, reader-response theory and discourse analysis, while in the choice of the term 'pragmatics' they signal their adherence to a basically linguistic perspective.

Central to the semio-pragmatic theories of Odin and Casetti is the institutional dimension of the filmic discourse, prominent in the psychoanalytical approach (via theories of the cinematic apparatus and the alignment of the ideological subject with the psychic 'dispositif') but absent from narratological models inspired by literary texts. 'Semio-pragmatics proposes to study cinema as the realization and the reading of film as programmed social practices. Watching or making a film are not only aspects of a discourse, they are, in the first place, institutional facts' (Odin, 1983, p.68). Odin accords pride of place to the notion of communication, not in the traditional sense of interpersonal exchange, but as mediated by institutions. For instance, he distinguishes different areas, such as pedagogical, familial (as in home movies), advertising, experimental, documentary communication. One of the few theorists to have analysed non-fictional films, his work points beyond analysing cinema towards other audio-visual texts, such as television, within a single theoretical perspective.
Using the notion of 'actant' (derived from Greimas), semio-pragmatics sees the filmic communication act as defined by a producer-actant and a spectator-actant (neither seen in terms of individuals, but as abstract 'forces' constructed by theory). In the case of the feature film, the resulting effect (called 'communication in fiction') is based on a limited set of operations; for Odin, these are seven in number: figurativization, diegetization, narrativization, monstration, belief, mise en phase (a notion which could be translated as 'setting up') and, finally, fictivisation. Odin, like Metz and Colin trained in linguistics, is one of the few narratologists currently working who has based his semio-pragmatics on explicitly Greimasian premises.

2.2.6 Jakobsonian or Inter-Semiotic Approach to Film Adaptations

Corinne Lhermitte in her article ‘A Jakobsonian Approach to Film Adaptations of Hugo’s Les Misérables’ (Nebula 2.1, March 2005:97-107) mainly focusses on the etymological, cultural and textual aspects of adaptation. She advocates here for an inter-semiotic study of films on the line suggested by Roman Jacobson. Communication is a major factor at the origin of translation. It stems from a desire to interact with other people for a variety of reasons; economic, political, humanitarian or pedagogical. Roman Jakobson talks about three kinds of translation: translation can take place between distinct languages (inter-translation), between two systems of signs (inter-semiotic translation) and even within the same language (intra-translation). Human beings resort to the latter type of translation when they feel the need to explain or clarify a concept, reword a complex sentence or if they want to be better understood by children, students etc. All instructors, parents, administrators, technicians, politicians, and ordinary citizens use this strategy on a daily basis to improve the communication of a message. Teachers, without exception, practice intra-lingual translation for pedagogical reasons. English, mathematics, physics and foreign language teachers alike have to use a simpler terminology to explain new vocabulary and
sophisticated words. Intra-lingual translation is probably the most widely used type of translation worldwide. Particularly relevant to film adaptation is this inter-semiotic translation. It involves the conversion of a particular system of signs into a different configuration. Musical, artistic and cinematic adaptations, as well as computer programming hinging on the relationship between two distinct modes of representation, all enter into this category. Inter-semiotic translation may involve the conversion of a literary text into an opera (Carmen), a musical (Les Misérables), a painting (representation of scenes taken from the Bible), or most commonly a film (Madame Bovary).

He chose Hugo’s novel to support the assumption that film adaptation should not be reduced to “inter-semiotic translation” but also ought to be assessed in terms of “intra-lingual” and “inter-lingual” transfers. Through his study he opens new ways of looking at film adaptation.

2.3 Theories Relevant to the Present Study

The present study is primarily based on the theories and techniques of adaptation as presented by Linda Seger in her book The Art of Adaptation: Turning Fact and Fiction into Film (1992). The insights of Morris Beja as presented in his Film and Literature: an Introduction (1973) are also used for the micro-level analysis.

The insights as presented in their works by film theorists and analysts like Bluestone (Novels into Film: the Metamorphosis of Fiction into Film Cinema - 1957), Brown (Teaching Literary Theory Using Film Adaptations -1947), Chatman (‘What Novel Can Do That Film Can’t [and Vice-versa]’ - 1980), Cohen (Film and Fiction: The Dynamics of Exchange - 1979), Morrissette (Novel and Film: Essays in Two Genres - 1985), and others are also fruitfully used for such micro- and macro-level analyses.

As mentioned above, the present study is primarily based on the theories and techniques of adaptation as presented by Linda Seger. In her book she presents
an in-depth study of some adapted films and tries to find out why certain films based on great novels became box-office failures whereas certain other films based on not-so-popular novels became runaway successes. She also studies how the adaptation techniques of expansion and condensation have been used by great film makers to produce all-time great films.

Talking about adaptors she says, “The adaptor is much like the sculptor Michelangelo, who, when asked how he was able to carve such a beautiful angel, replied, ‘The angel is caught inside the stone. I simply carve out everything that isn’t the angel.’ The adaptor is sculpting out everything that isn’t drama, so the intrinsic drama contained in within another medium remains” (p.2).

So, the most important first step to be taken by the adaptor in adapting an unwieldy novel, may be of five-hundred or six-hundred or more pages, “will be to figure out how to fit the original material into different time parameters” (Ibid.). If it is adapted as a Hollywood film it should normally be a one-and-half to two-hour film. But if it is going to be a Bollywood movie the standard and conventional film time will be two-and-half hours, with its full quota of songs and dances.

Except for certain notable films like Gone With the Wind (1939) rarely does a film story begin and end where the book does. More often, beginning and endings are found within the body of the story. For example, “The book The Color Purple begins with the first incident of incest between Celie and her father, several years before the point in time when the film begins. The film Stand by Me ends eleven pages before the end of the novella Ibid.). So, the second important step for the adaptor is to find out, within the existing material, “the beginning, the middle, and end of a dramatic story line” (p.3).

The fitting of the original material to a particular time-frame requires ‘condensation’ which means losing material. Condensing often includes
(i) losing subplots, (ii) combining or cutting characters, (iii) leaving out several
of the many themes that might be contained in a long novel. For this, writers
sometimes need to give up scenes and characters they love in order to make the
film work (pp.2-3). So, the **third step** to be taken by the adaptor to decide what
to condense from the original material.

Seger (p.3) notes that many of our best-known and best loved films comes from
short stories. They normally revolve round a single incident with only one or at
the most two characters. In such cases the film maker has to add new situations
and characters to round out and develop characters and story line. “These
decisions help craft the script into a workable dramatic story line. But the adaptor
also has to translate the story into a commercially viable film” (p.4).

Hence, the **fourth step** for the adaptor is what to add to the original matter by
resorting to the technique of expansion. Expansion may also be necessary if as a
result of too much of condensation according to the demands of the new story
line the addition of material becomes necessary to fit the film to the required
time-frame.

A very crucial point made by Seger is about the movie’s being commercially
viable. She clearly points out:

“But it’s important to remember that entertainment is show plus
business, and producers need to be reasonably sure that they can
make a profit on their investment. There is a fine line between taking
reasonable risks so that original projects get made and making
careful decisions by assessing what has drawn audiences in the past.
This fine line becomes particularly important when deciding what to
adapt” (Ibid.).

Now the **fifth step**, perhaps the most important one, is deciding what to adapt.
Based on her study she gives certain ideas which can be used by film makers
as tips for success. “Making it more commercial also means simplifying,
clarifying, sometimes spelling out a story line, and making sure characters are not ambiguous. … Creating a commercial and viable adaptation means giving the story a clearer structure, so audience can easily follow it. Film is usually a one-time experience. There’s no opportunity to turn back the page, recheck a name, reread the description. Clarity is an important element in commercial viability (Ibid.:7).

The first thing to remember, then, is the fact that “changes are essential in order to make the transition to another medium” (Ibid.:8). Minor changes like the change of locations, or changing a train to a plane, changing a family with five children that of one with two or three, etc. due to budgetary constraints.

Changes are also made for dramatic purposes such as: creating family tensions, a do-or-die situation, or hammering emotionally weak points, etc. The aim is to make the audience sit on the edges of their seats biting nails.

Another important point she makes is:

Adaptation demands choice. This means that much material that we love may be let go. Event might have to be refocused. Characters who carried a great deal of weight in the book might be deemphasized. If an important plot line does not serve the dramatic movement of the story, it could be dropped. With all these changes, resonances may be lost, but the focus of the story line may be strengthened. A theme may be lost in order to make other themes clearer and more accessible. Making changes takes a certain amount of courage from the writer, but if writers are unwilling to make some changes in the source material, the transition from literature to film will not happen (Ibid.:9-10).

Since the present study on film adaptation of four novels, the comparative analysis of each novel and its corresponding adapted film will be made along the lines suggested by Linda Seger (1992) following the five steps as mentioned above.
Chapter II THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK presents a brief survey of different theories of film studies, along with their strengths and weaknesses, beginning from 1957 till the present time. Then it presents the relevant theories which form the basis of the present study.

The analyses proper are presented in Chapter IV. Before making the analyses it would be in the fitness of things to say a few words about the Hollywood and Bollywood Film Industries in Chapter III.