

LITERATURE AND FILM: DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO TWO NARRATIVE FORMS

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Abstract: Considering the very common assumption that reading is a much more demanding process than watching literature-based films, film adaptations have been one of the most debatable issues in academic studies. It is apparent that both the reader and the audience are involved in a complicated relation set between texts and films which are the most significant means to familiarize the audience with literary masterpieces. Script writers are regarded as artists who make alterations in texts while translating or adapting them into the screen to serve their distinctive needs and approaches, thus to create a deeper and permanent effect on viewers. Clearly, it is to be admitted that both literature and film adaptations share certain similarities as well as differences. The objective of this study is to explore this complex relationship between literature and film adaptations, by providing a critical analysis of the interdisciplinary and intertextual nature of both disciplines and dwelling on the differences between translating and adapting, with reference to one of the most popular literature-based films, *Moby Dick*.

Keywords: Literature, Film Studies, Film Adaptations, Novel, Moby Dick.

Edebiyat ve Film: İki Anlatım Biçimine Farklı Bakış Açıları

Öz: Okumanın, edebiyat uyarlaması bir filmi izlemekten daha zahmetli bir süreç olduğu bakış açısı göz önüne alındığında, film uyarlamaları akademik çalışmalarda tartışılan konulardan biri olmuştur. Açıkça görülmektedir ki, hem okuyucu hem de izleyici, metinler ve başyapıtlarla buluşturan filmlerle karmaşık bir ilişki içerisinde yer almaktadır. Film yapımcıları, kendilerine özgü yöntem ve yaklaşımlarıyla metinleri ekrana uyarlarlarken, metinler üzerinde değişiklikler yapan ve bu sayede izleyiciler üzerinde derin etkiler yaratan sanatçılar olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Edebiyat ve sinema benzerlikler aynı zamanda da farklılıklar taşıyan iki disiplindir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, edebiyat ve edebiyat uyarlaması filmler arasındaki karmaşık ilişkiyi, her iki disiplinin disiplinler arası ve metinler arası yapısının eleştirel bir analizini yaparak; çeviri ve uyarlama arasındaki farklara değinerek ve en bilindik edebiyat uyarlamalarından biri olan *Moby Dick*'e göndermeler yaparak incelemektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Edebiyat, Film Çalışmaları, Film Uyarlamaları, Roman, Moby Dick.

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Introduction: Novels and Films

Considering the very common assumption that reading is a much more demanding process than watching literature-based films, film adaptations have been one of the most debatable issues in academic studies. Ardent readers generally agree on the fact that “The book is always better than the movie. A movie based on a literary source is often seen as a secondary work and consequently of secondary value” (Chair 2006:13). However, it is apparent that both the reader and the audience are involved in a complicated relation set between texts and films which are the most significant means to familiarize the audience with literary masterpieces. Script writers make use of not only classic books but also popular books as their sources, such as *Harry Potter*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Fifty Shades of Grey*, *The Hunger Games* and so on. Filmmakers are regarded as artists who make alterations in texts while translating or adapting them into the screen to serve their distinctive needs and approaches, thus to create a deeper and permanent effect on audiences.

Literature is an invaluable source for filmmakers since it provides them with already created scenarios, including plot, characters and so on to appeal to viewers who have different tastes and perceptions. There are several reasons for adapting literature to films, ranging from authors’ not paying for film rights by 1908, benefiting from literature’s artistic superiority, and teaching literature, making the audience familiar with literature, and of course, making money. (Desmond & Hawkes 2006:15). It is seen that the motive urging filmmakers to prefer adapting literary texts into film is the result of not only aesthetic concerns but also financial profit.

It is of primary importance to mention the uniqueness and distinctive qualities of the two forms of art. In doing so, possible definitions may be provided with reference to intertextual and interdisciplinary nature of both film and literature. It is also clear that there is a strong correlation between film and other art forms, literature, in particular. In this respect, it might be useful to refer to “Alexandre Astruc, [who] in his phrase “camera stylo” (1948), defined the film director as an auteur equivalent to a literary author ...” (qtd. in Mayne 1988:5). Astruc’s words might be interpreted that a film director possesses all the artistic skills that can be found in an author.

Keeping in mind that perceptions might differ in the two art forms, each art form might contribute to the success of each other in that films may benefit from the popularity of the author, and the story or literary works will be much more accessible by means of film adaptations. Film versions might also increase the sales of literary products. In societies, wherein watching is preferred to reading, films are much more popular and successful in popularizing the unknown and unread literary sources. There are numerous examples of literary texts not only in English literature but also in world literature which have been

very popular without being read. In other words, “The novel may help us understand the film more thoroughly, much as the film may help us understand the novel more fully and guide us to see the book in new ways” (Desmond&Hawkes 2006:99). Obviously, just watching the movie would not suffice to have the gist of a literary work. This tendency which excludes the reading activity which is generally accepted a demanding process on the part of the reader and is based on merely watching the film adaptation appears to be unfair appreciation of both forms of art. By accepting that the two have distinct qualities, literary works should not be read either to understand the film version since each art has its own distinct and aesthetic features and harmony.

In this respect, it is also useful to refer to the fact that both literary forms and cinematic forms bear certain similarities in terms of their devices as well: “... from the personal diary to the historical chronicle in the case of the novel, from comic strips to melodrama in the case of the cinema. And as narrative forms, novels and films employ similar devices of narrative and point of view” (Mayne 1988:1). Apparently, both forms of art make use of similar narrative techniques. In the process of creation, there exists a great analogy between literature and film: “...[which] have aesthetic equivalents in methods and styles ... Much like literature, a film achieves its distinct style through its organizing and editing methods; its particular rhythms, tones and syntax; and its genre and subject matter” (Chair 2006:45). As is understood, both forms are involved in a very demanding process of aesthetic creation in which each art form has its own particular style.

Another analogy between films and literary texts is related to the fact that each art form is based on a close scrutiny in composition and editing process in terms of frames, words; film shots, and paragraphs respectively: “Film is composed of a sequence of still images (frames) that pass through a projector at the rate of twenty-four frames per second ... Like words in a sentence, film frames are placed in a specific sequence ... Film shots, like literary paragraphs, interact with those that precede and follow them” (Chair 2006:46-47). The logical flow of thought in a literary text might be likened to a sequential motion of frames into a film. Thus, it might be said that both forms are coherent in notional and motional terms.

Both forms of art follow a similar constructional pattern that is producing a coherent meaningful whole by bringing together bits and pieces in a harmonious style: “Like a work of literature, a film is the result of the process of composition, the meaning of which is to make by putting together ... The compositional structure of both is created from the splicing together a sequence of smaller units: a paragraph (or stanza) in literature and a shot in film” (Chair 2006:45).

Films and books share another common element which is described as activating imagination. In terms of imagination that the two forms stimulate, McFarlane argues that "... film makes fewer demands on the imagination than a book does ... coming to terms with a continuous narrative involving a set of characters operating in a given time and place enjoins a greater effort on the part of the reader rather than it does on that of the viewer" (1996:16). It is clear that reading a literary text is an active process in which the reader is inevitably forced to draw mental images of characters, their physical and personal traits, spaces, colours, textures and so on. Literary texts' recreated versions, projected to the screen, including film industry and technology, may or may not appeal to tastes; however, the reader, now a viewer is in the process of interpretation by collecting all the clues the author gives while creating. Thus, the viewer/audience becomes the author who creates his/her own vision.

Clearly, it is to be admitted that each art attempts to activate the reader's and the viewer's imagination by means of certain techniques: "... whether by a conceptualizing based on the words given on the page or by a conceptualizing based on the diverse perceptual information taken in while watching the screening and listening to the soundtrack" (McFarlane 1996:20). With reference to the fundamental difference between films and books in terms of this imagination process, it might be said that "... visual images stimulate our perceptions directly, while written words can do this indirectly ... Film is a more direct sensory experience than reading—besides verbal language, there is also color, movement, and sound" (Davies 2011:15). Thus, it is understood that both forms of art stimulate imaginative powers of the audience. While literary text is making use of words on the page, cinema provides the viewer with audial and visual elements on the screen.

Despite the aforementioned similarities, there are several differences as well between the two art forms. For example, while the author is the sole authority of his/her text, a film is the product of several people working in each distinct step of producing a film.

Robert Stam also refers to the differences between literature and film by listing film's five tracks such as "Theatrical performance (live or animated), Words (spoken and written), Music, Sound effects (noise and silence), Photographic images (moving and still)" by stating "that a text is a single-track medium and film a multitrack medium ... film uses more than just words to communicate ..." (qtd. in Desmond&Hawkes 2006:36). In other words, unlike the written text, whose only medium is words, film adaptation establishes a multifaceted contact with the audience by appealing to auditory and visual senses of the audience.

Considering the differences, one should be aware of the fact that “One is not de facto, more important held in higher regard, or inherently better. Instead the novel and film are seen as independent entities, to be assessed independently and simultaneously, to be explored inter-relationally” (Desmond&Hawkes 2006:98). Thus, it is significant to refer to the two forms as the two distinct art forms benefiting from each other by not considering the superiority of one to another. The two forms offer wider perspectives by telling a story. The major element in literature is the use of words while the film, defined as a cultural artifact as well, having its own codes, makes use of such techniques as angles, music, lighting and so on to provide the reader with ready-made visions different from written documents.

Another difference is related to the time constraint in films and novels, in which the former is concerned with the possible time limit regardless of page number in literary texts, and the latter does not have to limit itself with a certain period of time or a number of pages: “Yet film is also limited: for one thing, there are no time constraints on a novel, while a film usually must compress events into two hours or so” (Davies 2011:16). Another aspect is related to the identification process on the part of the viewer/reader. Within this frame, it may be asserted that “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” (Davies 2011:16). Since cinema is a time-bound art, it seems to be a rather difficult process for a film viewer to identify himself/herself with a character on the screen. However, the reverse situation is easier for a reader.

The film necessitates an interaction between three fundamental elements. In the words of McFarlane, “The film ... will require that we pay attention to the intricate interaction of mise-en-scene (what is visibly there in the frame at any given moment), the editing (how one shot of a film is joined to /separated from the text) and sound (diegetic or non-diegetic, musical or otherwise)” (1996:16). Literary text lacks the interplay between three basic components “mise-en-scene, editing, and sound” that make up cinema as a distinct form of art.

On the other hand, according to McFarlane, novels and films are both narrative forms while the former generally covers the past tense while the latter is mostly narrated in the present time despite the use of flashbacks: “... Once the filmgoer is transported to this past time, every action in the narrative seems to be happening with the same degree of presentness as the actions pertaining to the sequences set at the later date” (1996:21). Although the critic, McFarlane claims that novels are generally narrated in the past tense, films mostly use present time so as to create a sense of “now.” This idea appears to be controversial because employing all existing tenses in the narrative method of a

novel is possible through the use of countless literary devices. In other words, a novel can move back and forth just a film does.

In terms of visuality of films, it might be pointed out that "... each act of visualization narrowed down the open-ended characters, objects or landscapes, created by the book and reconstructed in the reader's imagination, to concrete and definite images" (Marciniak ND:60). Cinema, through visualization, has the power to transform written characters, ideas, aspirations, ideals, and themes into corporeal entities. In other words, what is invisible turns out to be visible by means of film.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that films should exhibit peculiar features and take certain responsibilities to be able to make any serious impact on the viewer which could be listed as follows:

The film must communicate definite ideas concerning the integral meaning and value of the literary text, as the filmmakers interpret it. The film must exhibit a collaboration of filmmaking skills...The film must demonstrate an audacity to create a work that stands as a world apart, that exploits the literature in such a way that a self-reliant, but related, aesthetic offspring is born. The film cannot be so self-governing as to be completely independent of or antithetical to the source material. (Chair 2006:99)

According to Chair, the film adaptation should not be too distant from the source material; otherwise, it might lead to distortion in meaning and aesthetic. Within this frame, it might be asserted that the film should not only retell or summarize the texts since it is both visual and audial. Characters' physical and emotional traits, sexuality, psychological disorders, social and cultural debates might be some of the main focuses of films for the length of the movie depends on specific choices or alterations. It may be inevitable for certain films to miss some vital points concerning the complexities of plots. Within this frame, films may represent characters or themes which are not very similar to the original text.

Considering the very distinct nature of both literary texts and films, one of the major issues to discuss is whether adaptations are faithful to source texts or not: "The language of fidelity, then, is a language of buried metaphors that inappropriately draws the adaptation into the human moral dimension. In such language, the literature and film are not equals. The text is never judged as being faithless to its film adaptation; rather, it is the adaptation, and only the adaptation, that is capable of being unfaithful to the text" (Desmond&Hawkes 2006:41). Thus, it may be said that the adaptation has the right to be unfaithful to the text.

In terms of fidelity of films, it should also be noted that "...the literature comes first as source the film comes later as derivation. The literature is regarded as the original (a supreme value in art), the film is regarded as a copy" (Desmond&Hawkes 2006:41). This idea places film to an inferior status compared to literature. However, Chair rejects this statement, for the critic, being an adaptation does not reduce the film's artistic merit. In the words of Chair, "... the film that emerges, like any translation, is a separate entity, with a life of its own ..." (2006:97). As he further argues "... a film based on a literary text carries its own distinctive ideas about the book, and that filmmakers, creating such a movie, take on the responsibility of attempting to capture and translate those essential qualities which they perceive to be present in the literature, a medium with a separate and independent life" (Chair 2006:97). In other words, what filmmakers do is not a mere copying but creating an independent art work. Literature functions as a source of inspiration for the filmmaker as it provides him/her new alternative perceptions and visions.

McFarlane explores the fidelity process by focusing on its being a personal activity based on the individual's cognitive and interpretative skills other than putting emphasis on a thorough fidelity to the source text:

... it shouldn't be necessary ... to insist that fidelity to the original text ...is a wholly inappropriate and unhelpful criterion for either understanding and judgment. ... it is hard to suppress a sort of yearning for a faithful rendering of *one's own vision of the literary text* ... every reading of a literary text is highly individual act of cognition and interpretation; that every such response involves a kind of personal adaptation on to the screen of one's imaginative faculty as one reads. (1996:15)

Cognition of both written text and film is dependent on the intellectual capacity of its receptors. Thus, each perception gives way to different experiences related to the novel, and mental and emotional experiences in film as well.

Adaptation and Translation

In the words of Bluestone, adaptation of the novel does not refer to the full alteration in the novel, thus one cannot refer to a faithful adaptation:

...What he adapts is a kind of paraphrase of the novel—the novel viewed as raw material... That is why there is no necessary correspondence between the excellence of a novel and the quality of the film in which the novel is recorded... it has always been easy to recognize how a poor film "destroys" a superior novel. What has not been sufficiently recognized is that such a destruction is inevitable. (1957:62)

In other words, it is not possible to transfer the meaning of the novel thoroughly into the screen. To Bluestone, who assumes the superiority of films over texts, and films' autonomous nature as he postulates in his *Novels into Film* (1957) "... it is erroneous and fruitless to examine whether a filmed adaptation is "faithful" to its literary source ... the filmist becomes not a translator for an established author, but a new author in his own right ... regardless of thematic, formal and medial mutations, the film stands up as an autonomous work of art" (1957:62). Thus, Bluestone's discussion is based on the idea that any effort to achieve a faithful adaptation may be futile.

In terms of adaptation, three fundamental types of adaptation, namely close, loose, intermediate adaptation have been explained as follows respectively. One of the three types of adaptation is described as a **close adaptation**: "... [in which] most of the narratives in the literary text are kept in the film, few elements are dropped, and not many elements are added ..." (Desmond& Hawkes 2006:44). The second type of adaptation is a **loose adaptation** "...when most of the story elements in the literary text are dropped from the film and most elements in the film are substituted or added ..." (Desmond&Hawkes 2006:44). The third type of adaptation is defined as an **"intermediate adaptation** [in which] [s]ome elements of the story are kept in the film, other elements are dropped, and still more elements are added. [It] neither conforms exactly nor departs entirely" (Desmond&Hawkes 2006:44). Considering the above mentioned types of adaptation, one might argue that each adaptation employs certain techniques in keeping, adding or omitting the components of films thus altering the perceptions of viewers.

On the other hand, to Hutcheon, "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"..." (qtd. in Marciniak ND: 59). As Hutcheon mentions, no matter which adaptation method is employed, it will never be as substantial and complex as literary text is.

Being a visual medium, in this transferring process, films may offer varieties, new perceptions, and meanings, independent of the source text or may keep to the major elements in the novel. Films may create new cultures and identities and thus offer multiple alternatives, and responses independent of the source text: "... [which] continues to be perceived as a unified, harmonious whole, capable of unproblematic reading – the 'problems' are all seen as pertaining to the adaptation ... most adaptations remain remarkably faithful to 'core elements' of story, theme and character arc" (Clayton 2007:129-130). Thus, although the process of adaptation is debatable, it is considered to be faithful to the source text.

It is also clear that codes of culture are great sources for film adaptations ranging from "... music, landscape, painting, mythological and other deep-structural references ... [and] there is no such thing as a straightforward 'translation' or adaptation of a text, ... new meanings [might be produced to] allow for re-interpretation of the source material and render the process of adaptation fluid and dynamic, and continually new"

(Clayton 2007:130). Thus, it is apparent that Clayton is of the opinion that being a dynamic process, one cannot achieve neither a “straightforward” translation nor adaptation.

Although it is essential to regard literature based films as translations of the source text, there are some differences between the terms, adaptation and translation. The former term “... means to alter the structure or function of an entity so that it is better fitted to survive and to multiply in its new environment. To adapt is to move that same entity into a new environment ...” (Chair 2006:14). As opposed to adaptation, “... to translate ... is to move a text from one language to another. It is a process of language ... Through the process of translation a fully new text- a materially different entity- is made, one that simultaneously has a strong relationship with its original source, yet is fully independent from it” (Chair 2006:14). In this respect, it may be said that adaptation is a process of replacing an entity in a new atmosphere, whilst translation refers to creating a new and an independent entity.

To consider literature based films to be the translations of the original texts, one might be aware of the fact that “Every act of translation is simultaneously an act of interpretation. Through the process of translation, a new text emerges- a unique entity- not a mutation of the original matter, but a fully new work, which, in form and function, is dependent from its literary source” (Chair 2006:14). Thus, translation may be said to formulate an authentic entity by means of interpretation.

It may be said that the spirit of the book should be definitely kept in 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” (Marciniak ND: 60). Nevertheless, being a separate and an independent entity, and art form, an adaptation as a form of interpretation may not cover all the details of the literary text; however, it should create an alternative sense and perception.

Film adaptation enables filmmakers to grasp the hidden or the deep meaning in texts so that they can start the recreation process in “... the visual and aural medium. The complexity of a literary work represents a great challenge to every reader because the world it evokes is an open-ended world that is left to be completed in the process of reading” (Marciniak ND: 62) which creates an active participation of readers to combine all the implicit or explicit units to offer their own visions and responses concerning not only the text but also the adaptation.

Being a visual and aural medium, the film makes the viewer see and hear, what he/she has not encountered or discovered in the text, and respond in a different manner by means of certain images, symbols, devices, necessary for the artistic creativity to appeal to all human senses and perceptions, and sounds that may not be included in the verbal expression: “...The ideas mystified in symbols and the veiled references to different aspects of life that we once decoded in a particular way speak to us from a new perspective and we learn to appreciate a literary text on a different level, we begin to notice that many of its elements gain a new life when interpreted in the context of the

new medium's specificity" (Marciniak ND: 63). Thus, due to its mediating and transferring nature, the film enables the audience to translate, interpret, decode and thus appreciate different ways of expression through all the images which the film addresses, appeals to or communicates with the viewer.

The Literal Film Translation of *Moby Dick*

Clearly, it is to be admitted that *Moby Dick*, which is a noteworthy novel in terms of not only its page number but also its rich and poetic language and its focus on a number of issues ranging from, nature, whaling, fate, revenge and so on, has numerous adaptations in various media including television miniseries and episodes, fantasy films, animated films, radio broadcasts, musical and painting compositions, comics and graphic novels, BBC radio series, stage adaptations, musicals, video games, card games, the 1926 silent movie, *The Sea Beast*, the 1956 and 1998 *Moby Dick* movie versions, the 2010 *Moby Dick*, a very modern adaptation of *Moby Dick* in which Ahab is the captain of a high technology submarine and other adaptations which are not included in the list.

The 1956 *Moby Dick* movie version directed and produced by John Huston, (screenwriters are Ray Bradbury and John Huston), is described as an example of literal tradition, which seems to be one of the most faithful movies adapted from the novel using the original end of the text but with some modification. In the literal translation method, a literary text is reconstructed by considering all the "details as closely possible to the letter of literature ... with little or no addition of scenes that were not in the original literary work ... Details of character, locale, and custom are recreated ... brought to visual life. The movie stands as a facsimile, the best examples of which are memorable in their visual faithfulness to the letter of the text ..." (Chair 2006:19). Having the above mentioned characteristics of literal translation, the 1956 *Moby Dick* movie version "... on the story level ... does a solid job of conveying the novel's drama: and in art direction ... certain scenes get the dense and salty taste of Melville just right. The latter is apparent in the film's recreation of "The Spouter Inn," of the pious Bildad assigning Ishmael an inhumane portion of the voyage's profits, of the Pequod meeting the Rachel, and of Queequeg's reverie" (Chair 2006:19). It may be said that the film is a literal translation very similar to the novel in that it keeps the meaning and artistic complexity of the source text.

With reference to the above explanation, some quotations of such dense and salty scenes from the novel have been provided to illustrate the descriptions which are presented in a similarly detailed manner in the film with a certain respect to the source text. One of the dense scenes "The Spouter Inn" is described in the novel in detail:

Entering that gable-ended Spouter-Inn, you found yourself in a wide, low, straggling entry with old-fashioned wainscots, reminding one of the bulwarks of some condemned old craft ... But what most puzzled and confounded you

was a long, limber, portentous, black mass of something hovering in the centre of the picture over three blue, dim, perpendicular lines floating in a nameless yeast Yet was there a sort of indefinite, half-attained, unimaginable sublimity about it that fairly froze you to it, till you involuntarily took an oath with yourself to find out what that marvellous painting meant. (Melville 1994: 30)

The focus on the hidden meaning of the painting both in the novel and the film activates the reader and the viewer's imagination. Another scene chosen from the novel is Bildad's unfair portion of the voyage's profits narrated as follows: "Seven hundred and seventy-seventh," again said Bildad, without lifting his eyes; and then went on mumbling--"for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Melville 1994: 90). The scene portrays the conflict between the major motive for the voyage, money, and whaling practices.

The scene in which the two ships the Pequod and the Rachel in the novel is described in the following lines: "... the boastful sails all fell together as blank bladders that are burst, and all life fled from the smitten hull." "Bad news; she brings bad news," muttered the old Manxman" (Melville 1994: 495). The two captains pour out their innermost thoughts and feelings in the following words. The captain of the Pequod is after Moby Dick: "... Ahab's voice was heard. "Hast seen the White Whale?" (Melville 1994: 495). However, the captain of the Rachel is depicted as a father who is desperately trying to find his own boy: "My boy, my own boy is among them. For God's sake--I beg, I conjure"--here exclaimed the stranger Captain to Ahab ... She was Rachel, weeping for her children, because they were not" (Melville 1994: 496, 498). The visual image of the two ships and the two captains provides the viewer with an alternative perception related to the descriptions presented in the novel.

Another scene which gets dense in the film is related to Queequeg's reverie which is narrated in the novel as follows: "... there sat Queequeg, altogether cool and self-collected; right in the middle of the room; squatting on his hams, and holding Yojo on top of his head. He looked neither one way nor the other way, but sat like a carved image with scarce a sign of active life" (Melville 1994: 96). Obviously, this presentation enables the viewer to materialize the reverie of Queequeg on the screen.

The sea is presented as a major character in the film which is not only a space but a major theme as clarified in the novel in the following words by referring to the Persians, the Greeks, the story of Narcissus, the image of man in the sea, and the magic of the sea:

Why is almost every robust healthy boy with a robust healthy soul in him, at some time or other crazy to go to sea? ... Why did the old Persians hold the sea holy? Why did the Greeks give it a separate deity, and own brother of

Jove? Surely all this is not without meaning. And still deeper the meaning of that story of Narcissus, who because he could not grasp the tormenting, mild image he saw in the fountain, plunged into it and was drowned. But that same image, we ourselves see in all rivers and oceans. It is the image of the ungraspable phantom of life; and this is the key to it all. (Melville 1994: 23)

The novel version of *Moby Dick* opens with the narrator's, who wants to be called Ishmael, description of Captain Ahab's insatiable obsession with finding Moby Dick that amputated Captain Ahab's leg prior to the novel, and his decision for shipping aboard a whaling vessel, the Pequod. The narrator narrates the story in retrospect recounting his experiences. Within this direction, "At different points throughout the movie, director John Huston [1956 version] attempts to emphasize Ishmael's perspective in the story by allowing him to provide commentary on events he witnesses" (Eason 2000:8).

In this respect, it would be useful to refer to Ishmael who furthers his arguments about the sea and the process of whaling in the novel as follows:

... There is magic in it. Let the most absent-minded of men be plunged in his deepest reveries--stand that man on his legs, set his feet a-going, and he will infallibly lead you to water, if water there be in all that region...Chief among these motives was the overwhelming idea of the great whale himself. Such a portentous and mysterious monster roused all my curiosity. Then the wild and distant seas where he rolled his island bulk; the undeliverable, nameless perils of the whale ... (Melville 1994: 23, 25, 26)

To him, the sea is definitely an inevitable and a magical route for whaling as well which is a mysterious quest. It is unequivocal that Ishmael is not an ordinary character both in the film and the novel. He is the one who will collect all bits and pieces together to uncover all the doubts to provide a meaningful end in spite of not having great deeds like Ahab. He is wise enough to comprehend life and the world, and a keen observer involved in the action who wants to communicate with the reader to tell his story: "Call me Ishmael. Some years ago--never mind how long precisely--having little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world" (Melville 1994: 21). It is through his speculative mind that all the deep meaning of the entire story unfolds. It is Ishmael's talent to use language that explains all the frightful activities of Captain Ahab. He is the only one who survives in the novel to talk about all the horrifying and mysterious aspects of life and existence he has witnessed. Despite being sceptic about everything or everybody, he is happy with ships and sailors as well though it is paradoxical since the sea itself is a symbol of wilderness, mystery and unknown.

However, the film mainly focuses on Captain Ahab who is the symbol of tyranny, rebellion, violence and vengeance and who actively acts as the hero of a revenge tragedy in the novel as well. He is portrayed as an eccentric and a demonic hero who challenges nature throughout his obsessive quest and assumes the role of God and who tries to assert his power and supremacy over nature by chasing the whale thus committing sin against God and his reflection, Nature, in his futile attempts, transcending the limitations of man and as the hero of the war epic which ends tragically both in the film and the novel as narrated below: "He's a queer man ... Ahab's above the common; Ahab's been in colleges, as well as 'mong the cannibals; been used to deeper wonders than the waves; fixed his fiery lance in mightier, stranger foes than whales ... HE'S AHAB, boy; and Ahab of old, thou knowest, was a crowned king!" (Melville 1994: 92-93).

Captain Ahab's obsession with chasing Moby Dick is reflected in the novel through these lines: "... I'll chase him round Good Hope, and round the Horn, and round the Norway Maelstrom, and round perdition's flames before I give him up. And this is what ye have shipped for, men! to chase that white whale on both sides of land, and over all sides of earth, till he spouts black blood and rolls fin out. What say ye, men, will ye splice hands on it, now? I think ye do look brave." (Melville 1994:166). His revenge for Moby Dick, which is a theme not only in the film but also in the novel, is described as follows: "... Moby Dick had reaped away Ahab's leg, as a mower a blade of grass in the field. ... Ahab had cherished a wild vindictiveness against the whale, all the more fell for that in his frantic morbidness he at last came to identify with him, not only all his bodily woes, but all his intellectual and spiritual exasperations" (Melville 1994:185). It is possible that the above given quotations represented in cinematic techniques familiarize the viewer with the main theme of the novel.

Within this frame, Captain Ahab's monomania is explained in the following words:

... that the final monomania seized him ... he was a raving lunatic; and, though unlimbed of a leg, yet such vital strength yet lurked in his Egyptian chest, and was moreover intensified by his delirium, that his mates were forced to lace him fast, even there, as he sailed, raving in his hammock. ...even considering his monomania, to hint that his vindictiveness towards the White Whale might have possibly extended itself in some degree to all sperm whales, and that the more monsters he slew by so much the more he multiplied the chances that each subsequently encountered whale would prove to be the hated one he hunted. (Melville 1994:186,211)

As depicted in the film as well, it is clear that Ahab is enslaved by his passion to kill Moby Dick: "Though, consumed with the hot fire of his purpose,

Ahab in all his thoughts and actions ever had in view the ultimate capture of Moby Dick; though he seemed ready to sacrifice all mortal interests to that one passion” (Melville 1994:211). This monomania is because of the fact that Moby Dick is more than a sea mammal for Captain Ahab, it is the symbol of evil and destruction in not only the sea but in life, in society, in nature, in soul and so on. Captain Ahab cries: “it was Moby Dick that dismasted me; Moby Dick that brought me to this dead stump I stand on now” ... “Thus, while in life the great whale's body may have been a real terror to his foes, in his death his ghost becomes a powerless panic to a world” (Melville 1994: 166, 301). In other words, the above given statements refer to the fact that there is not a harmonious relationship between man and nature in both the film and the novel.

Captain Ahab’s insatiable claim for supremacy which is a recurrent motif in the film as well is described in the novel as follows:

That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate; and be the white whale agent, or be the white whale principal, I will wreak that hate upon him. Talk not to me of blasphemy, man; I'd strike the sun if it insulted me. For could the sun do that, then could I do the other; since there is ever a sort of fair play herein, jealousy presiding over all creations. But not my master, man, is even that fair play. Who's over me? Truth hath no confines. (Melville 1994:167)

As is detected, Captain Ahab seems to have already lost this unity between nature and existence which is very dramatically presented in the film as well.

The ship like space in the church is also narrated similarly in the film adaptation: “Nor was the pulpit itself without a trace of the same sea-taste that had achieved the ladder and the picture. Its panelled front was in the likeness of a ship's bluff bows, and the Holy Bible rested on a projecting piece of scroll work, fashioned after a ship's fiddle-headed beak” (Melville 1994:56). This ship like space is similar to the presentation of “The Spouter Inn” in that it is not very distant from the original text.

The novel is also full of references to death foreshadowing the inevitable finale: “... Yes, there is death in this business of whaling—a speechlessly quick chaotic bundling of a man into Eternity... Methinks we have hugely mistaken this matter of Life and Death. Methinks that what they call my shadow here on earth is my true substance” (Melville 1994: 53). As detected in the novel as well, prophecy by Elijah is another sign for the disaster: "Yes," said I, "we have just signed the articles." "Anything down there about your souls?" (Melville 1994:103). Another hint for death is associated with fowls as seen in the novel too: “And all the time numberless fowls were diving, and ducking, and screaming, and yelling, and fighting around them” (Melville 1994: 390). As is seen the representation of Elijah and the fowls reminds the viewer of the tragic end.

It is also worth noting that John Huston keeps to the details in the novel in terms of a very similar presentation of the “Pequod, in his painstaking recreation of Queequeg’s tattoos in accord with Melville’s descriptions, and in his insistence that sequences be shot on a turbulent St. George’s Channel rather than a set” (Chair 2006:19-20).

Within this context, it may be useful to refer to the description of Queequeg in the novel which provides the reader with a mental image while the movie creates a similar but a visual one: “... these covered parts of him were checkered with the same squares as his face; his back, too, was all over the same dark squares; he seemed to have been in a Thirty Years' War, and just escaped from it with a sticking-plaster shirt. Still more, his very legs were marked, as if a parcel of dark green frogs were running up the trunks of young palms” (Melville 1994:40).

As to the end of the story, it may be said that the novel allocates a very short death to Ahab; however, it is very dramatic in the film which heightens the suspense. This alteration in ending may be commented in the following words. Following the rules of the literal translation of the novel, the director “... makes Ahab’s final confrontation with the white whale a literal confrontation. In Melville’s book, Ahab does not make direct contact with Moby Dick. Instead Ahab’s death comes about when he is caught in the “igniting velocity” of his own misguided harpoon rope which catches him around the neck and drags him instantaneously down into the sea ...” (Chair 2006:20).

Within this frame, it might be useful to refer to the end of the novel narrated in the following words:

The harpoon was darted; the stricken whale flew forward; with igniting velocity the line ran through the grooves;--ran foul. Ahab stooped to clear it; he did clear it; but the flying turn caught him round the neck ... he was shot out of the boat, ere the crew knew he was gone. Next instant, the heavy eye-splice in the rope's final end flew out of the stark-empty tub, knocked down an oarsman, and smiting the sea, disappeared in its depths. (Melville 1994:534-535)

With reference to the end of the film, considering the image of the whale, it may also be pointed out that “The novel presents the whale as a metaphysical force that cannot be stopped. The whale can be a symbol for God or the devil ... It is debated in the novel whether or not the whale is an actual whale. He is a product of nature that has been present “for some time past” ... and only a few men “had knowingly seen him” (Melville, 1994: 180) (qtd. in Camarillo 2014:20). Thus, the novel enables the reader to create a very unique image of the whale while the film makes the viewer see the whale on the screen. In other words, the image of the whale turns out to be a corporeal entity.

As clearly detected in Huston's 1956 film version *Moby Dick* "which may be described as a synopsis- film" (Chair 2006: 21) is faithful to Melville's dramatization by keeping the writer's perceptions without involving in an act of a major alteration and interpretation by producing any filmic effect except for two elements such as "the initial sighting of Ahab: in the book, Ahab's entrance is delayed for almost 200 pages, while in this film, Ahab is seen within five minutes of the film's opening, and Ahab's death: In this film, Ahab vaingloriously shouts invectives from atop Moby Dick, where he is pinned by a web formed of his own crew's harpoons and ropes" (Chair 2006:20).

In the light of the above chosen quotations from the novel and the related scenes from the film and the theoretical framework, it may be said that the 1956 *Moby Dick* movie version embraces the following traits. First of all, recreating the plot as well as characters with all its details as closely as possible to the novel, the film does not include any scenes that are not narrated in the text and the film may be defined as one of the most faithful films adapted from the text using the original ending of the novel with some modification. The translation succeeds in representing the novel's drama. Most of the scenes such as the Spouter Inn, profit sharing, the two ships' meeting, Queequeg's reverie and tattoos, the sea and the whaling process in the film are presented in a similarly detailed narrative faithful to the original text. However, while the novel allocates a very short death to Captain Ahab, the film creates suspense in the dramatization and while the whale may signify a metaphysical image in the novel, a great white whale is before the viewer's very eyes in the film. In other words, it is transformed into a corporeal entity. Similar to the novel, Ishmael's perspective, Captain Ahab's obsession with chasing Moby Dick, his monomania, and claim for supremacy, references to death are some of the elements that the film puts emphasis on.

The Traditional Film Translation of *Moby Dick*

Written by Anton Diether and Franc Roddam, directed and produced by Franc Roddam and Kris Noble, the 1998 film adaptation of *Moby Dick* presents the story which begins with Ishmael's journey, meeting Queequeg, leaving Nantucket on the Pequod, Captain Ahab's obsession with finding Moby Dick and the eventual death of all the crew due to the revenge of Moby Dick which is very close to the source text. The 1998 film adaptation of *Moby Dick* is an example of traditional translation "[in which] the filmmakers stay as close as possible to the original literary text, while making those alterations that are deemed necessary and/or appropriate.... scenes are added or deleted as needed; characters are often composites; and the settings are frequently modified in ways that make them more visually interesting or more cost effective" (Chair 2006:21). Thus, the adaptation involves certain alterations and changes,

additions and eliminations which are inevitably necessary for the filmmaker to be independent in recreating or reproducing his own meanings in accordance with his own interpretations and stylistic tendencies so as to appeal to different perceptions, expectations and tastes of viewers.

The 1998 film version of *Moby Dick*, keeps most of the components of the text adding or altering some specific details where necessary. However, it should be noted that "... the film also includes whaling and historical inaccuracies ... the harpooners sleep in the forecastle with the common mates. Historically, harpooners bunked separately from the rest of the crew ... the harpooners were treated as a privileged group aboard the whaling ships" (Chair 2006:22).

An error or reproduction is related to the whaling practice which is much more dramatically presented in the film: "... Ahab pursues Moby Dick into iceberg-filled waters ... an act contrary to the actual practices of American sperm whaling ... most whalers, certainly those in *Moby Dick*, hunted whales in more tropical or temperate climates and would never approach the polar caps" (Chair 2006:22). However, even such errors or alterations provide the audience with an alternative perception and an opportunity to offer new comments and interpretations.

In the adaptation process, the film foregrounds one of the characters in the novel, Starbuck. The representation of Starbuck in terms of his personal traits is modified: "In the film's alteration of Melville's book, an interesting complexity is added to Starbuck's character ..." (Chair 2006:24). Being a more active character in the film, Starbuck tries to stop Captain Ahab in the novel as well: "Vengeance on a dumb brute!"... "that simply smote thee from blindest instinct! Madness! To be enraged with a dumb thing, Captain Ahab, seems blasphemous." (Melville 1994:166). Further to this, in one of the scenes, "Starbuck grasped Ahab by the arm--"God, God is against thee, old man; forbear! 'tis an ill voyage! ill begun, ill continued; let me square the yards, while we may, old man, and make a fair wind of it homewards, to go on a better voyage than this." (Melville 1994: 478).

Within this frame, one alteration related to Starbuck is about his conflicts concerning Ahab which might be noticed in the film version. As detected in the novel as well "... Starbuck realizes that Ahab's conduct has transcended all rational and acceptable modes of behaviour and he is clearly placing the Pequod's entire crew in peril of their lives ... Starbuck debates the moral necessity of assassinating Ahab" (Chair 2006:23). Starbuck's dilemma whether to assassinate Ahab or not is presented in the 1998 film version, "... as literal translations will, [the scene] stays on the surface of the dilemma ..." (Chair 2006:23). He is pictured as having a very complex inner crisis in terms of obeying God and Ahab's order. What is also significant is that "In the film,

Starbuck decides against the assassination ...” (Chair 2006:24). Because Starbuck chooses to believe in Ahab and his decision to give up his dangerous and preoccupied attachment to Moby Dick.

Starbuck’s utterances and the actions in the novel reflect his dilemma: “My soul is more than matched; she's overmanned; and by a madman! Insufferable sting, that sanity should ground arms on such a field!” (Melville 1994:171). He has great difficulty in understanding Captain Ahab’s motives. He describes Captain Ahab as a “Horrible old man! Who's over him, he cries;--aye, he would be a democrat to all above; look, how he lords it over all below! Oh! I plainly see my miserable office,--to obey, rebelling; and worse yet, to hate with touch of pity! For in his eyes I read some lurid woe would shrivel me up, had I it. Yet is there hope. Time and tide flow wide” (Melville 1994:172). Starbuck is in conflict with his moral and professional duties. He deeply feels the futility of chasing this cursed animal: “The white whale is their demigorgon. Hark! the infernal orgies! ... Foremost through the sparkling sea shoots on the gay, embattled, bantering bow, but only to drag dark Ahab after it, where he broods within his sternward cabin, builded over the dead water of the wake, and further on, hunted by its wolfish gurglings” (Melville 1994:172). Deeply affected by this maniacal pursuit of Moby Dick, Starbuck blames Captain Ahab of impiety and blasphemy which lead to disaster: “What more wouldst thou have?--Shall we keep chasing this murderous fish till he swamps the last man? Shall we be dragged by him to the bottom of the sea? Shall we be towed by him to the infernal world? ... Impiety and blasphemy to hunt him more!” (Melville 1994: 524).

In addition to Diether’s making Starbuck “more assertive and stronger,” the movie version alters the depiction of Queequeg and Ahab as well. The novel does not explicitly narrate Queequeg’s accepting Ahab’s kingdom and order or not while in the film Queequeg’s being ready to obey Ahab’s orders makes Ahab “... dynamic, charismatic, and commanding...” In the film’s alteration of this scene, Ahab’s potency- his greatness- is demonstrated” (Chair 2006: 24, 25) which definitely changes viewers’ perceptions. In this respect, the screenwriter, Anton Diether, maintains that “My intention was...to show the extreme of Ahab’s power over the men ... I had to show how Ahab prevails over ALL the men, even defiant Queequeg and, even in the end, the doubtful, mutinous Starbuck ...” (Chair 2006:25). The film presents Captain Ahab as monomaniac and demoniac as possible exerting his power over everybody.

Another alteration is related to the end of the film which represents the dead Captain Ahab as if he were crucified on the back of Moby Dick though defined as an “unintentional” representation by Diether. Concerning the image of Captain Ahab, it could also be said that “Captain Ahab, the fanatical destroyer of lives ... in the movie ... is ultimately encoded by a supreme visual trope of

benevolent conduct, Jesus Christ. If taken literally, the film's interpretive image is inconsistent with the complexities of Ahab created by both the film and the book" (Chair 2006:25).

It could be deduced from the above mentioned statements that the traditional film translation of the 1998 film version of *Moby Dick*, as discussed in the literal translation, presents the plot as closely as possible to the novel. However, the filmmaker is free to make interpretative alterations when necessary, omit or add scenes, change the setting, and characterization for the sake of producing visual effects by keeping to most of the details. To illustrate, the movie adds complexity to Starbuck's character by creating a more assertive and stronger Starbuck as well as making Captain Ahab much more dynamic having power over both Starbuck and Queequeg. The film changes the end of the novel by portraying Captain Ahab in the image of crucified Jesus Christ. Though the film focuses on "the integral meanings of the parent literary text," it also involves some inaccuracies, related to the harpooners, and false whaling practices (Chair 2006:26).

The Radical Film Translation of *Moby Dick*

In contrast to the novel, which focuses on Ahab as the main character and his vengeance for Moby Dick, the silent 1926 film version *The Sea Beast*, directed by Millard Webb, which pictures Ahab's love, is described as an example of radical translation. As can be understood from the very title of the term, "A radical translation reshapes the literary work in extreme and revolutionary ways ... as a way of construing or interpreting the literature; or as a mode of making the translation, itself, a more fully independent work. Radical translations are not unique to film" (Chair 2006:26). In other words, radical translations are the most independent artistic creations. They are also similar to literature in that "[they] allow for multicultural explorations of literary texts, as literature generated by one culture can be explored and reconstituted in other cultures" (Chair 2006:26). In this radical film translation of *Moby Dick* "[the focus is on] the story of Ahab Ceeley's love for the sweet, pretty, and very young "Faith," a paron's daughter. The movie takes audacious liberties with the novel, adding layers of story and character that simply never occurred in Melville's work" (Chair 2006:27). Thus, the film rewrites and reshapes the novel and subverts the subject matter thus intensifies the emotional response of the viewer. It is also worth mentioning that without the impact of sound effect, it appeals to sight of the viewer as literary text does. However, the film contains animation and dramatization and the words are transformed into silent and visual images.

Considering the features of radical translations, it could be discussed that "... a radical translation allows for total artistic liberties ... the filmic rephrasing

of the parent text, under the codes of a radical translation, permits- even celebrates- the alteration of any or all details that promote the filmmakers' personal vision of the literary work" (Chair 2006:27). Thus, just like literal and traditional film translations, radical translation provides the viewer with alternative comments and perceptions; however, it gives the viewer much more liberty in exploring the meaning of the film compared to the two types of translation.

Being a radical film translation, *The Sea Beast* focuses on the following three items: "(1) literature's ability to confer instant status and marketability upon a movie; (2) the slowly emerging popularity of Melville's book at the time; and (3) the 1920s' popular taste for swashbucklers and sea epics in combination with the ever-abiding popularity of the love story. *The Sea Beast* attempts to be all three" (Chair 2006:27). Thus, combining such features as financial gain, benefiting from the popularity of a literary masterpiece and very popular themes such as love and sea adventures peculiar to the period, the film helps the filmmaker to achieve a great success and popularity.

The radical translation of *Moby Dick*, the silent 1926 film version *The Sea Beast* is definitely an unfaithful adaptation of the source text for the fact that it is capable of reshaping, recreating, rewriting the original text in a considerably radical manner, thus offering numerous comments and interpretations making the film an independent entity while providing the filmmaker with great liberation in reproducing the text. Even the title of the film is completely modified; different layers of story and character are incorporated in the film that the reader never finds in the source text by including a passionate man, in love with a pretty lady, Faith. Considering the radical change in the plot, being "... fully antithetical to Melville's vision, *The Sea Beast* ends happily: Barrymore's Ahab kills Moby Dick and returns to New Bedford, where his great love, Faith, waits faithfully for him" (Chair 2006:29).

Conclusion

Clearly, it is to be admitted that both literature and film adaptations share certain similarities. Though the two genres, film and literature, share similar methods, editing and narration in particular, in producing an aesthetic effect, each of them embodies its distinct and particular quality and nature in combining and composing different unities, shots and lines respectively, and styles and methods and discursive influences with reference to the genre's requirements. The major element in literature is the word, whilst the film, defined as a cultural artifact as well, having its own codes, makes use of such techniques as angles, music, and lighting, to provide the reader with ready-made visions different from written documents to enable the reader with several images, though the two forms offer wider perspectives by telling a story.

Therefore, it is significant to refer to the two narrative forms, literature and film, as the two distinct art forms which benefit from each other. Keeping all the differences in mind, one should be aware of the fact that, considering the superiority of one to another is out of question: "... [but] independent entities, to be assessed independently and simultaneously, to be explored inter-relationally" (Desmond&Hawkes 2006:98). Thus, all the differences, digressions, alterations refer to the distinction between the director and the author in the two distinct genres who have different perspectives and comments. It is inevitable that alterations enable the filmmaker to be free to recreate or reproduce the meaning. It is quite difficult to transfer a book into a movie keeping directly to the perspectives of the author. If the adaptation does not focus solely on retelling or summarizing the story, but a recreation process, producing a specific or an authentic work of art, considering social, political, economic, ideological and technological variables in the society, through the interpretation of the director and screenwriter, and the actor's performance, it is probable to reproduce or recreate the same original text the author has already created. It may be pointed out that whether it is literal, traditional, or radical translation, it is possible for filmmakers to film every text provided that they are intelligent enough to comprehend the complexity and layers of the meaning of the literary text, to decode, to translate and to be creative enough to do all three. All the above mentioned alterations and versions of film translations contribute to the creation of a memorable novel, *Moby Dick*, and an enchanting hero Captain Ahab. Recreating the plot as well as characters with all its details as closely as possible to the novel, as an example of literal translation, the 1956 *Moby Dick* film version does not include any scenes that are not narrated in the text and the film may be defined as one of the most faithful films adapted from the text using the original end of the novel with some modification. The traditional film translation of 1998 film version of *Moby Dick*, as discussed in the literal film translation presents the plot as closely as possible to the novel. However, the filmmaker is free to make interpretative alterations when necessary, omit or add scenes, change the setting, and characterization for the sake of producing visual effects by keeping to most of the details. On the other hand, the radical translation of *Moby Dick*, the silent 1926 film version *The Sea Beast* is definitely one of the most unfaithful adaptations of the source text for the fact that it is capable of reshaping, recreating, rewriting the original text in a radical manner and offering numerous comments and interpretations making the film an independent entity whilst providing the filmmaker with great liberation in reproducing the text as well. However, admitting the possibility of the film's unfaithfulness to the text, the original unit to be copied, new perceptions concerning the two genres should be welcomed. It may also be declared that literal, traditional and radical film translations of *Moby Dick*, which should be regarded as separate and independent entities and art works other than mere

copies, have definitely contributed to the appreciation of the two genres, film and literary text, both distinct and similar as well, produced in different styles leading to various perceptions by activating imagination to make both the viewer and the reader translate, interpret and decode the messages implicit or hidden in different narrations.

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