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21W.730  
Spring 2001

**ESSAY #3: FROM PRINT TO FILM: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

Submit two copies with cover letter.

Draft Due Date: Monday 4/30

Final Version Due Date: Thurs, 5/17 in class. Please submit essay #3 with writing portfolio from the term (details on portfolio preparation to follow.)

Introduction:

The relationship of fiction to popular film is intriguing and complex. While the two forms of media compete for public attention and communicate differently, they are also interdependent. Since the birth of the feature film, the motion picture industry has continuously mined fiction and nonfiction print texts as sources for cinematic adaptation. Many twentieth century novels, in turn, have been influenced by the visual language of cinema and the potential for filmic adaptation. This essay explores the complicated relationship between fiction and film through a comparative analysis of a print text) and its motion picture adaptation.

In analyzing print-to-film adaptations, some scholars argue that literary texts tend to lose their complexity, controversy or critical edge when translated into motion picture form. In contrast, others see cinema as a popular art form, expressing a democratic aesthetic and translating print narratives into a creative visual language of emotional intensity to a wider audience.

This essay invites you to participate in this intellectual conversation about the relationship of literature to film by analyzing comparatively a print text and its motion picture adaptation.

Essay #3:

Suggested length: 7-8 typed pg., double-spaced

Compare a print text (e.g. nonfiction book, novel, novella, play or short story) with its adaptation into a popular film, in the light of the critical issues mentioned above. Develop your argument through analyzing comparatively one or two scenes from the original literary text and the filmic adaptation. In comparing both texts, please note the various ways in which the film follows, departs from or expands upon its print source. Some suggested

topics to consider in your scene analysis include: literary and cinematic interpretation of key characters, plot elements, symbols and setting, literary and filmic mode of narration (e.g. first person), and representation of dialogue and interior monologue. (Topics will vary with specific novel/film adaptations.)

We will analyze the first scene of *Girl, Interrupted* as book and film in class. Therefore, if you pick *Girl, Interrupted*, you should choose another scene(s) in this print-to-film adaptation for analysis for this essay. You are also free, however, to select another literary text adapted into a motion picture. However, the best option, given the time constraints of the course, is to choose a text with which you are already quite familiar.

Note: Secondary sources should be integrated into the revision, but not necessarily the first draft.

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Exercises 3.1 and 3.2 (due in class Thurs. 4/19) - bring 5 copies of each to share with your classmates in small workshop groups.

Ex 3.1: Write a paragraph analyzing the similarities and differences between the first scene of the film *Girl, Interrupted* and the beginning of the book.

Ex 3.2: Write a two paragraph proposal describing the print-to-film adaptation that you have chosen to analyze for Essay #3. Tell the reader what texts you've chosen, why you think this analysis will be interesting and what parts of the two texts you plan to analyze. (Note: if you are choosing *Girl, Interrupted*, you can select any part(s) but the beginning.)