

An analysis of literature and cinema in Bridgerton: how the Netflix series differs from the book in the conduct of events

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Abstract. The focus of the scientific article will be on the area of literature and cinema. The purpose will be to analyze a story told through a book and through a television series in order to understand the differences involved and their reasons. The idea of carrying out the work in this way is due to the fact that it is very common to have comparisons on equal terms of stories told by different means. When people watch a movie adapted from a book they expect it to be exactly like the book, otherwise the movie is bad. However, the objective of this work is to demystify these misconceptions, explore the idea of the movie/series and the book and how the story (the plot) can be told through these different means. To carry out this research, the second book of the Bridgerton series of books will be analyzed as well as the second season of the series adapted from the literary work. With this, it is expected to obtain clarification about the present distinctions. Finally, the gap in the area to be explored in this paper is the compared literary analysis of Bridgerton.

Keywords. Book, Television series, Bridgerton, Adaptation, Difference.

1. Introduction

It is quite common for people, when watching a film or series, to discover that this production is an adaptation of a literary work. Normally, those who have not had first contact with the book judge whether the film is good or bad based on aspects of it. However, individuals who have previously read the work tend to judge the film by making comparisons with the book, checking whether one was faithful to the other or not.

However, even though a cinematographic work may be an adaptation of a book, it must be seen as just that: an adaptation. This is due to the fact that literary work and cinema are very different ways of telling a story. In other words, when faced with an adaptation of a book, a person cannot conclude that this will be a faithful representation of it.

Therefore, this article will analyze the second literary work in the Bridgertons book series called *The Viscount who loved me*^[1] as well as the second season of the Netflix adapted series Bridgerton^[2] in the light of relevant articles in the area of literature and cinema. Firstly, the plot of both works will be compared in order to identify their differences and understand them. In view of this, the pre-concepts involving the production of an adaptation will be demystified. The general objective, therefore, is to

recognize that there may be significant differences between an original work and its adaptation using a real example and to understand that different means of storytelling have different proposals, but that they should be equally valued and not mistakenly compared.

Considering this, it is hoped that this article will serve to clarify the differences between literature and cinema.

2. Theoretical Background

To start thinking about the relationship between literature and cinema, it is necessary to consider some aspects. In the article *Beyond literature, below cinema? Considerations on intermediality* Adalberto Muller^[3] (translation of the author), on page 49, states:

“For both literature and cinema studies, it is important to understand the processes of mutation, transformation, transfer, translation, adaptation, citation, hybridization between the two types of media and even in relation to other types of media. Understanding how both (literature and cinema) represent (or fail to represent) reality or self-represent themselves based on their relations, is one of the facets of intermediality studies.”
(Translation of the author).

Therefore, it is essential - when dealing with a literary or cinematographic work - to take into

account the various factors that are presented when transferring a story from one means to another. The author Linda Catarina Gualda^[4], in her article entitled *Literature and Cinema: link and confrontation* (translation of the author), addresses the different processes that exist in the transposition of the book to the film, as well as mentioning the issue of film adaptation.

At the beginning of her text, she sees literary work and cinematographic work as completely independent, even though they have their similarities. When reflecting on the issue of adapting one means to another, she considers translation a transformation - something that addresses the conditions of production and reception. She adds:

“As a result of this transformational process, an entirely new structure then emerges and the text has to be seen as an autonomous work that cannot be adequately understood and judged if taken only as an imitation.” (Translation of the author).

Next, the author addresses the issue of fidelity in adaptation (page 204):

“We also reject the notion of the film’s fidelity in relation to the novel, because this notion is ahistorical, subjective and reductive, especially when both works belong to different historical contexts. Furthermore, fidelity is made impossible by the different material means of expression of the novel and the film (...). Therefore, our interest lies in the adaptation procedures adopted by the director and how such changes are verified throughout a given film. We are aware that this metamorphic process that transforms works of fiction into new artistic entities - in this case, film - is a process based on the fact that “changes are inevitable the moment one abandons the linguistic area and moves to the visual” (Translation of the author).

Furthermore, it must be considered that the success of cinema “does not lie in the degree of realism it can obtain, but rather in the exploration of cinematographic resources and the use of these resources to create the context of the action” (Diniz, 1999: 31). The literary work depends on the imagination, while the cinematographic work has at its disposal several visual resources that may or may not differ from what was previously imagined by the reader.

An adapted work needs to be judged on its own, as “(...) there is no other viable criteria, other than knowing to what extent the result, different or similar to the original, traitorous or submissive, autonomous or dependent, holds quality” (Brito, 2006: 75-76).” Even though an adaptation may end up going towards fidelity, the director is a transformer and:

“(…) suppresses certain episodes to expand others that seem much more interesting for their purposes, since fidelity is made impossible by the different means of expression of the novel and the film. “Some passages, sketched only by the writer, provide them, through their amplification, with the visual equivalent of certain comments or descriptions that cinema cannot

transplant” (Sadoul, 1956:83). In this sense, adaptation is a process based on the fact that “changes are inevitable the moment one abandons the linguistic means and moves to the visual” (Bluestone, 1973: 219).” (Translation of the author).

As previously discussed, the adaptation must be seen as an autonomous work and can be seen as a critical reinterpretation of the original work, generating new information (Martins, 2007:151)^[5].

When thinking about the context of *Bridgerton*, the book is a historical novel. The series created some adaptations taking into account the current reality by selecting black actors for high society roles and by showing the issue of homosexuality - two situations not mentioned in the literary work. This demonstrates a reinterpretation considering today's world on the part of the director.

After reflecting on whether the adaptation could be a reinterpretation, Gualda brings in his article the theory of Jean Mitry, who thought of two possible options for adapting a novel to the cinema:

“(…) either he follows the story step by step and tries to translate not the meaning of the words, but the things referred to by them (and in this case the film is not an autonomous creative expression, just a representation or illustration of the novel), or he tries to rethink the subject entirely, giving it another development and another meaning. This second translation corresponds to Haroldo de Campos’ theory of translation as recreation and criticism.” (Translation of the author).

Therefore, the director of film production has the freedom to follow the path they consider the most appropriate for their production; after all, they are, in addition to being a translator, a reader. As a reader, they construct meaning and put their perspective on the scene. A translation never occurs 100% impartially, it will always be impacted by the translator and the culture around it.

“(…) the act of filming can be seen as cutting out the space based on the choice of a certain angle (position that the camera assumes in relation to what it films) with an expressive purpose, we can say that filming is an analysis activity. After this process, in the composition of the film, the filmed images are placed one after the other. This union of images, known as montage, is, then, an activity of synthesis (Bernardet, 1985: 36-37).” (Translation of the author).

It can be said, then, that a film adaptation may consider certain aspects more relevant than others, as it is created from a human perspective. A literary work marks individuals in different ways and as the director is nothing more than a reader, this is reflected in the production.

3. Research design and methods

3.1 Book summary

The *Bridgerton* book series tells the love story of the eight *Bridgerton* siblings: Daphne, Anthony, Benedict, Colin, Eloise, Francesca, Hyacinth and

Gregory - in that order. The second book tells the story of Anthony, the oldest brother and head of the family.

Anthony has never worried about getting married and having a family of his own. Early in the book, readers can see why: his father died at age 38 due to a severe allergic reaction to a bee sting. Soon, Anthony imagined that, if a simple bee had been able to kill a strong man like his father, he would certainly not outlive him. So, what was the point of marrying for love if he would die soon and make his wife and children suffer just like his mother and brothers had?

However, as marriageable age had arrived and the 1814 ball season was knocking at the door, Anthony decided to choose a wife who would be able to give him good heirs. When Edwina Sheffield is chosen as the station's debutante, he decides he will marry her.

However, Edwina has an older sister, Kate. Kate does not have a good impression of Anthony due to his libertine past and because she believes he will not be a good husband, she does everything to prevent him from marrying her sister.

Anthony spends more and more time with the Sheffield family in order to try to win Edwina over and convince Kate to allow her sister to marry him. However, this closeness makes Kate fall in love with Anthony and realize that, in fact, he is an honest and kind man. At the same time, Anthony begins to realize that he thinks about Kate all the time and that he enjoys her company more and more.

The work brings us many secret meetings and stubbornness on the part of Anthony and Kate to admit how much they like each other. In the book, Edwina was never attracted to Anthony and wanted to marry someone else.

While Kate and Anthony denied their love for each other, a compromising incident ends up causing them to have to marry "forcibly". While taking a walk through the garden of one of the Bridgerton family's properties, Kate ends up being stung by a bee right in the chest area. Anthony despairs and believes that she will die in a short time, so he tries to save her by sucking the place to remove what he thought was poison.

They ended up being caught in this situation by Anthony's mother and two of her friends. As, from a distance, it seemed like a very intimate and sexual moment, in order not to compromise Kate's reputation, they would need to get married immediately.

As they liked each other but did not admit it in any way, it can be thought that this moment was the boost they needed so that they could both experience the love they felt.

3.2 Differences between the literary work

and the television series

The plot differences shown here will be aimed at the couple Anthony and Kate. Differences regarding other characters will not be addressed at this time as they are not as important for the development of the main couple's story. It can be said that the distinctions made with other characters in the second season occur purely and simply to bring elements relating to the next seasons and initiate situations that will develop throughout the series.

Anthony and Kate's first date

In the literary work, Anthony and Kate are introduced by Anthony's brother - Colin, at a ball. She has already some idea about his libertine past, but he does not really know her. In the series, they meet before the ball while riding horses. They end up betting on a race, which Kate wins, leaving Anthony impressed.

Anthony's father

In both the book and the series, the death of Edmund Bridgerton, the father of the family, shakes Anthony greatly. However, there is a slight difference in the conduct of events. In the book, Anthony was returning from a walk with his brother Benedict when he found his sister Daphne crying. At this point, he is told about his father's death from a bee sting. In the series, Anthony was present at the time of his father's death, as they were both returning from hunting.

Anthony's reason for not wanting to marry for love

The book brings depth to Anthony's reason for not wanting to marry for love, which relates to his father's premature death and his belief that he would not live long. However, the series justifies this situation by showing that Anthony simply did not want to be carried away by romantic feelings because he had viscount duties to fulfill.

The bee scene

As seen in the book summary previously, Anthony - upon thinking that Kate would die from a bee sting just like his father - tries to remove the poison from her by sucking her breast. Author Julia Quinn's description suggests a desperate but at the same time very sexual scene. At this moment, they are caught and have to get married in a hurry. In the series, Anthony also despairs, but the moment of sexual tension does not happen. Kate simply places her hand on his and Anthony's chest in order to calm him down. They do not get caught and they do not get married after this event.

Love triangle: Edwina, Anthony and Kate

As briefly mentioned in the summary, in the literary work, Edwina never falls in love with Anthony. Their meetings are quite superficial and both would, at first, marry each other out of obligation and not out of love. In the book, their wedding never happens, as it is not shown as a real possibility that they will end up together. In the series, Anthony and Edwina's relationship progresses a lot and they even almost get married, as the marriage ceremony is shown. Meanwhile, Kate secretly falls in love with Anthony and vice versa, which causes conflict between the sisters.

When looking at some of the most noticeable differences between the book and the series, it can be considered that many were subtle while others - for example, the bee scene, the love triangle - were more significant. The director may have decided to create a real love triangle on screen to add more drama and emotion to the plot, as well as making the bee scene less sexual precisely because they wanted to give the impression of a more innocent and pure love. The possibilities of what could have gone through the creator's mind are endless, but it is certain that they put their perspective from the book into the series.

4. Implications and contributions to knowledge

According to the information viewed and analyzed in this article so far, it was possible to notice that there were both subtle and more obvious differences in the conduct of the book's events compared to its adaptation. However, it was also possible to understand how the process of transforming a literary work into a cinematographic one takes place.

When making a quality judgment on an adaptation, it is important to view it as independent and autonomous, as it is completely different from literature.

The author, when creating their story, made use of his own culture, understanding of the world, thinking and imagination. The same thing happens with the director. Most likely, if each reader created their film or series based on a book, there would be different versions of the same story, since it is not possible to dissociate the translator from their reality and their own interpretation.

Furthermore, as there are several audiovisual resources available to the director, they can make use of them as they best wish, changing the order and cadence of events and situations in order to conduct the series in a way that makes sense in cinematographic production. For example, perhaps it would not be possible or easy to show on screen all of Anthony's insecurities about the future and death as it happened on the book.

Therefore, the author first creates their story and delivers it to the world. There is no guarantee that readers will have the same impression and

interpretation that the author originally had. As mentioned previously, the director is nothing more than a reader who has the opportunity to bring to the screen the way they understood a given universe.

Therefore, the second season of *Bridgerton* cannot be considered bad because it gave more emphasis to some aspects to the detriment of others, because it omitted some facts and created others, as this was the way the director thought it would be best to happen on television. Furthermore, the essence of the story remained intact, it just happened through an alternative path. Therefore, we can consider ourselves privileged to be able to follow the same story told from two different points of view.

5. References

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