

NARRATIVE ALCHEMY: TRANSFORMING CRIME THROUGH ADAPTATION IN LARS KEPLER'S *THE HYPNOTIST*

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Abstract

This research unravels and explores the intricate process of adapting Scandinavian crime narratives, delving into the transformation of Lars Kepler's novel *The Hypnotist* to its cinematic counterpart, *Hypnotisoren*. It examines the literary works within crime genre, evolve across different media. By analysing the interplay between source texts and the adaptation of the Swedish film titled *Hypnotisoren*. The research mainly focuses to unveil the nuances of narrative transformations, exploring how elements such as character development, plot structure, and thematic elements are modified in the process using the Adaptation theory proposed by Linda Hutcheon in path with analysing the intertextual relationship between the original novel and its potential adaptations, specifically investigating how the crime genre is transformed during adaptation. The process and concepts undertaken towards the transformation process are bound through a comprehensive examination. This study seeks to shed light on the dynamic relationship between crime fiction and its adaptations, offering insights into the creative choices made during the transition of these narratives into a film, various other concepts residing under crime fiction narratives and adaptations are discussed to prove understating about the subject.

Keywords: *Crime genre, Scandinavian Crime, Fiction and film, Adaptation, Narrative Focus.*

Introduction

Crime genre has been one of the most dominant genres in the field of film, the contribution of crime when it comes to fiction and film is enormous right from the early development of film creation and development. The major role of crime fiction and film is to provide a gripping entertainment to its viewers and audience by the narrative technique of presenting criminal deed or activity with the help of various sources. Crime pictures are designed to thrill and capture the viewers using the projection of intense situations, intricate plot which gives audience a psychologically thrilling experience they feature characters with dark past psychological issues driven by intense emotions and desires. The genre has continued to evolve pushing the boundaries and creating new and exciting twist and turns based on today's society on the traditional format.

The study of narratives, including narrative texts, images, spectacles, events, and other cultural artifacts that tell stories, is known as narrative theory. This body of knowledge aids in our comprehension, analysis, and evaluation of narratives. (Bal, 2017). The narrative techniques often

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delve deep into the psyche of the characters exploring the motivations fear and desires. The hallmark of a crime thriller emphasis on the moments of actions of the protagonist antagonist or both along with their psychological behaviour. The influence of crime movies cannot be the same it varies based on the audience who spectate or observe the film. Crime film genre concentrates on various aspects like law enforcement morality justice portraying the consequences the narrative techniques used to represent or develop a film play a crucial role in the approach to kept with audience and the overall impact of the film. This research paper aims to explain the concept of crime narrative through the Swedish film *Hypnotisören* released in the year 2012 adapted from the literary fiction *The Hypnotist* published in the year 2009. The key role of a film adaptation is to make the outcome reach a wider audience carrying the essence with it to the audience. When a piece of fiction is adapted into a visual medium, it is a complex process that requires an understanding of the material resources that are available. The audience members who visualize the fictional work on screen experience a renewal of their subconscious images, which they go through when they are reading (Mazdon, 2018).

Scandinavian Crime dramas are especially adept at scrutinizing communities in operation, immersing themselves in the interconnected realms of law enforcement, journalism, governance, and the judicial system and marks the format of gruesome crimes. At the core of nearly all the narratives lies the family, which simultaneously functions as both a distinct entity and a broader nationstate. (Peacock, 2015). Crime genre has their own way of function of organising and controlling the elements that brings an output, they try to portray the part of the protagonist and his deeds using the key concept of logic and reasoning incorporating the track of narrative techniques and various other directive methods. In a film a narrative conveys story to the audience through the structure and storytelling techniques used while making a film. It involves the structuralised pattern of arrangements of events to provide a seamless and captivating cinematic experience, centred events and other aspects must be arranged in certain way. The film *Hypnotisören* follows chronological sequence does falling under the path of linear narration and not a nonlinear, the sequential order defines the structural frame of a film.

The linear cinema employs a narrative method that presents the tale in a sequential manner, following a chronological order and establishing distinct cause-and-effect connections between the events. The plot progresses seamlessly from its inception to the midpoint and ultimately reaches its conclusion, without any substantial modifications to the timeline. A multitude of films employ this timeless narrative method, providing the audience with a well-organized and comprehensible viewing experience.(Versteraten, 2012). In general, linear narratives exhibit a straightforward progression of events, where each scene or sequence follows logically from the previous one. This form is commonly utilized in action, drama, and romance genres since it effectively maintains audience engagement with a compelling plot. The simplicity and availability of linear storytelling enhance its advantages, as it aids viewers in understanding the tale. It is a favoured choice for movies that seek to explicitly demonstrate the causal relationship between events or have a simpler storyline.

Research Gap and Methodology

The previous research works generally talk about the film adaptations and the setting of Scandinavian fiction, they are potentially set in snow-filled regions and the gruesome crimes that take place in a particular region. Scandinavian crime fictions are set to evoke thrill through their intricate plot developments. This research work deals with the narrative adaptation of the literary fiction *The Hypnotist*, into a film adaptation focusing on the aspects of essence being lost during the transformation process and narrative compression resulting in a loss of details during the transformation process.

This research utilizes a Qualitative technique within a Descriptive framework to examine narrative alterations in *The Hypnotist* by Lars Kepler into *The Hypnotisoren* released in the year 2012, particularly in the realm of Scandinavian crime fiction. The research uses Linda Hutcheon's Adaptation Theory as its framework to analyse the adaptation and transformation of crime narratives across various media and literary contexts. The descriptive methodology was chosen to offer a thorough examination of the narrative elements under analysis. The study examines the construction of the original text, *The Hypnotist*, and analyses the transformation of its themes, characters, and settings when interpreted from the perspective of adaptation. The descriptive method facilitates the identification of narrative structures distinctive to crime fiction by focusing on the specific elements that transform, as well as their evolution in adaptations, and the representation of Scandinavian cultural elements, including bleak landscapes, social commentary, and an emphasis on human psychology within the narrative ("*Scandinavian Crime Fiction*", 2022).

Linda Hutcheon's Theory of Adaptation

This research is grounded in Linda Hutcheon's Adaptation Theory. Hutcheon characterizes adaptation as both a process and a product, entailing the reinterpretation and alteration of a narrative when it transitions from one medium or context to another. This study employs Hutcheon's framework to analyse the intertextual relationship between the original novel and its potential adaptations, specifically investigating how the crime genre is transformed during adaptation, with particular emphasis on the modifications of narrative elements such as plot, character development, and thematic content to accommodate new contexts and interpretations of the crime narrative. Hutcheon's focus on adaptation as a creative endeavour, rather than just adhering to the source material, corresponds with this research's aim to examine how crime fiction is adapted while preserving its fundamental components. The theory elucidates the transformational potential of adaptation, clarifying how the established patterns of Scandinavian crime fiction may be modified or preserved across various narrative formats (Levay 2020).

Plot

The plot of *Hypnotisoren* centres on an intricate network of enigmas, homicides, and psychological fascination. Detective Joona Linna, portrayed by Tobias Zilliacus, is investigating a savage triple homicide, which entails the killing of an entire family during a forcible entry into their residence. The main character is Erik Maria Bark, a well-known psychiatrist portrayed by

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Mikael Persbrandt. Bark becomes involved in the inquiry since he utilized hypnosis on a traumatized witness, who happens to be the sole surviving son of the murdered family. The plot revolves around 15-year-old Josef, who killed his own parents and his little sister brutally. The boy hurt himself with multiple self-inflicted wounds to project himself as the victim of crime. Joona Linna takes charge and decides to find clues to proceed with the case. The only evidence to unravel the case is to get information from the boy through a hypnotist named Erik, later Josef is found as the murderer of his own family. Eric is also dragged down to the case as his son Benjamin is kidnapped by a lady who claims herself as a mother of Josef. The film follows the linear pattern with no flashbacks and follows a chronological sequence of scenes arranged to form a complete structure. The scenes depict the portrayal of events from investigation and finding the unjust (Peacock, 2015).

Subjective Viewpoint

The *Hypnotisören* skilfully employs character narration to create a captivating psychological narrative, immersing the audience in the profound inner workings of the main characters. The central focus of the story revolves around an experienced detective who is heavily weighed down by the responsibility of solving a gruesome murder case, presence of Foil characters adds more significance to the protagonist travelling with them throughout the plot line. The character narration explores the detective's inner world, revealing the complexities of his drives, anxieties, and the impact that the case has on his psychological and emotional state. "The reality of the image ensures us that this is the way it will really be" (Bordues, 1985).

The detective is faced with the intricate details of the murder, while the film introduces a captivating hypnotist, whose mysterious skills give an extra level of intrigue. Character narration provides the spectator with a deep comprehension of the hypnotist's history, the morally dubious aspect of his abilities, and the individual challenges he encounters. The utilization of this dual narrative form facilitates a meticulous examination of the characters, effectively highlighting both their vulnerabilities and strengths in a balanced manner. The inclusion of the hypnotist in the inquiry offers a supernatural aspect, so enhancing the film beyond the boundaries of a typical crime thriller. The utilization of character narration plays a vital role in expressing the hypnotist's emotional struggles and ethical quandaries linked to his exceptional abilities. The contrast between the detective's practicality and the hypnotist's supernatural beliefs generates a gripping interplay that sustains the audience's interest and keeps them in suspense.

The convergence of the individuals' trajectories is facilitated by the character narration, which acts as a connecting link between their separate travels, intensifying the overall sense of suspense. The film's thorough focus on the psychological terrain of its characters through narration guarantees that the audience is not only engaged in uncovering the crime, but also in comprehending the tremendous influence it has on the main characters. The *Hypnotisören* showcases character narration as a masterful narrative technique, skilfully weaving together elements of suspense, psychology, and mystique to create a captivating cinematic experience that leaves a lasting impression on the audience (Peacock, 2015).

Whodunit and Howdunit

Within the framework of whodunit and howdunit, these phrases pertain to the discernment of the culprit (whodunit) and the technique or rationale behind the offense (howdunit) (Edwards, 2020). The film skilfully integrates the whodunit element into the plot, leaving the viewer in suspense as they try to determine the identity of the murderer. Throughout the development of the story, multiple characters become subject to suspicion, including persons who have strong relationships with the victims and those who has concealed intentions. Joonas Linna's investigative prowess, along with the mysterious essence of the murders, generates a captivating ambiance that effectively captivates the audience. Concurrently, the howdunit aspect explores the techniques and reasons behind the killings. Hypnosis plays a vital role in the plot by revealing concealed memories and exposing a complex psychological terrain. The film delves into the influence of the subconscious mind on actions and decisions, introducing an additional level of intricacy to the research. The protagonists confront their personal struggles while the audience embarks on a journey that blends psychological introspection with the resolution of the crime.

The film's suspense is intensified by its moody cinematography and a music that emphasizes the strain. The director adeptly employs tempo and visual cues to sustain a feeling of anxiety throughout the storyline. As the many elements of the jigsaw align, the viewers are presented with unforeseen plot developments that question preconceived notions and redefine the limits of trust and treachery. The resolution of the whodunit and howdunit aspects in *Hypnotisören* is a complex and non-linear procedure. The film skilfully combines elements of psychological drama with the traditional crime thriller, resulting in a distinctive viewing experience. The investigation ultimately uncovers both the killer's identity and the complex reasoning and psychological foundations that drove their atrocious actions.

Hypnotisören captivates viewers with its skilfully executed elements of mystery and intrigue, challenging them to unravel the identity of the culprit and the method behind the crime. The film's utilization of hypnosis as a narrative tool enhances the conventional criminal thriller, resulting in a captivating and intellectually stimulating cinematic encounter. While the protagonists confront their personal struggles, and the detective unravels the intricacies of the case, the audience is immersed in a thrilling exploration of the most profound aspects of the human mind. *Hypnotisören* becomes an engaging narrative when analysed from the perspective of Adaption theory proposed by Linda Hutcheon. The film adaptation of Lars Kepler's work requires a careful balance between staying true to the original material and meeting the specific requirements of visual storytelling. As we analyse this adaptation, we examine the interactions between characters, the development of the story, the underlying themes, and the use of visual components. Through this exploration, a complex and detailed narrative emerges, influenced by the careful decisions made during the adaptation process.

The characters in *Hypnotisören* experience a transformation when they shift from the medium of the novel to the realm of the film screen. In the film version, Detective Joonas Linna, who plays a significant role in the original material, takes on a different identity. This transition is not simply a matter of changing the actors; it is a process of adjusting the storyline due to the

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limitations of the duration of the film. The inclusion or exclusion of character backstories and subtleties can be simplified or deliberately removed, which can impact the audience's connection with and comprehension of these characters. Adopting the perspective of adaptation theory, we see that characters undergo change as dynamic entities influenced by the limitations of the medium and the priorities of the narrative.

The process of adapting the plot, which is a complex and intricate task, serves as a significant narrative element in *Hypnotisoren*. The novel's complex and convoluted structure, filled with multiple storylines and numerous elements, faces the difficulties of condensing it into a film format. Some narrative strands may be trimmed, and characters' journeys may be simplified to accommodate the limitations of a two-hour visual presentation. The Adaptation theory lens enables us to analyse these modifications, revealing the narrative choices taken to preserve the core of the original story while guaranteeing consistency within the cinematic framework. We admire the directors' skill in condensing the intricate nature of the literature into a captivating visual storytelling.

The adaptation process of *Hypnotisoren* reveals the importance of thematic research. The story explores psychological tension, criminality, and the consequences of hypnosis as a thematic fabric that runs throughout the tale. When filmmakers transfer these themes to the visual media, they must not only capture their fundamental nature but also discover methods to communicate them through visuals, sounds, and acting. The Adaptation theory lens prompts us to examine how these themes are emphasized or refined in the film adaptation, providing insights into the filmmakers' understanding of the novel's fundamental concepts.

In the Adaptation theory framework, the narrative context of *Hypnotisoren* goes beyond just the characters and plot. It also includes the cultural and contextual nuances of the original source material. The cultural significance of the novel may be expanded or highlighted in a specific manner to cater to the film audience. From this perspective, we can perceive both the storytelling decisions and the cultural conversations intricately integrated into the film, a conversation that goes beyond the limitations of Lars Kepler's initial creation.

Hypnotisoren comes to life as a narrative creature fashioned by the guiding principles of adaptation theory in the complex interplay between the novel and the cinema. The filmmaker's narrative acumen, adeptness in handling the intricacies of adaptation, and dedication to creating a cinematic experience that connects with viewers while staying true to the core of the source material, is truly commendable. By examining the film from this perspective, we not only understand and enjoy it as a story on its own, but also obtain a more profound understanding of the complex connection between literature and cinema. Furthermore, adaptation theory enables an examination of thematic elements that could be emphasized or diminished during the conversion from a book to a film. Themes such as psychological tension, criminality, and the influence of hypnosis on the storyline may be interpreted in distinct ways in the visual media.

Narrative compression

The film *Hypnotisoren* relies heavily on narrative compression to effectively bring Lars Kepler's complex novel to the screen. As the filmmakers compress the story into a limited

duration, they have the difficulty of simplifying intricate plotlines and character progressions while ensuring logical consistency and viewer interest. During the process of narrative compression, some subplots and secondary characters from the novel may be simplified or excluded. The purpose of this targeted pruning is to give priority to the primary plotline, guaranteeing that the central storyline stays coherent and captivating for the film audience. Compression can lead to a narrative framework that is more concentrated and simplified, enabling a concise yet impactful storytelling experience (Wallace 2020).

Narrative compression has a tremendous impact on character development. Characters in a novel frequently have the privilege of engaging in prolonged introspection and delving into their background. However, in a film adaptation, the limitations of time require the condensing of character traits. This compression can result in a more immediate and focused portrayal of individuals, where their intricacies are condensed into essential qualities that contribute to the main storyline. Also, the speed at which events occur is modified during the process of condensing the story. Scenes that were originally portrayed in a relaxed manner in the novel may be shortened or combined in the film, in order to maintain a fast pace that is appropriate for cinematic storytelling. Compression also affects the cadence of revelations and suspense, so influencing the audience's perception of tension and resolution.

Visual storytelling is of utmost importance when it comes to condensing a narrative. Visual cues, cinematography, and editing are essential tools that filmmakers utilize to effectively communicate information. Dialogues and actions assume greater importance, propelling the story while reducing the need for explanatory information. This visual economy guarantees that the audience obtains crucial information without experiencing an overwhelming sensation due to excessive details. Although there may be difficulties, the skilful condensation of storytelling can improve the overall quality of a film. It requires a deep comprehension of the fundamental nature of the source material and the skill to condense its essential components into a visually captivating and emotionally evocative narrative. *Hypnotisoren* invites spectators to engage with a condensed and powerful version of the original narrative. Each scene in this adaptation serves a specific role in developing the plot and conveying the core of Lars Kepler's captivating story.

Narrative Focus

The film *Hypnotisoren* showcases a deliberate narrative approach, highlighting specific themes to craft a coherent and captivating cinematic journey. While adapting Lars Kepler's work for the screen, filmmakers face the task of carefully choosing and emphasizing crucial elements of the story while ensuring a captivating plot. An important element of narrative focus in the film entails giving priority to central characters. The cinematic adaptation is anticipated to centre around Detective Joonas Linna, who plays a crucial role in the novel. The directors may condense his character development to produce a coherent and impactful storyline. By prioritizing central characters, the film may deeply examine their motivations, tensions, and connections, providing a concentrated analysis of the human dynamics that lie at the core of the narrative.

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Moreover, the narrative focus also encompasses the several plotlines. The directors exercise intentional discretion in determining which subplots and story lines to accentuate, consolidate, or potentially exclude. This targeted methodology guarantees that the primary storyline remains easily understandable and captivating for the viewers, sidestepping any superfluous intricacies that could appear in a more extensive literary piece (Bordues, 1985).

Thematic aspects are also meticulously analysed in relation to the narrative's central theme. The film may emphasize some key themes from the novel, such as psychological tension, crime, and the influence of hypnosis, in order to establish a strong thematic unity. By focusing on specific themes, the filmmakers can enhance the audience's emotional attachment to the story and intensify the overall effect of the narrative. Visual storytelling is crucial in preserving narrative coherence. The utilization of cinematography, mise-en-scene (arrangements of scenes), and editing serves the purpose of directing the audience's focus towards significant aspects and moments. The visual emphasis guarantees that the spectators are fully engaged in the cinematic universe built by the adaptation, with every frame enhancing the overall impact of the narrative.

In the framework of *Hypnotisoren*, the narrative focus extends beyond what is explicitly presented, encompassing both deliberate omissions and simplified elements. Through deliberate decision-making, the filmmakers craft a narrative that is meticulously tailored to suit the cinematic medium. This emphasis enables a prompt and more intense narrative encounter, catering to the visual and emotional involvement of the audience.

The primary objective in *Hypnotisoren* is to strategically concentrate on the storyline, allowing the filmmakers to condense the core elements of Lars Kepler's novel into a visually captivating and thematically meaningful cinematic experience. By using this specific perspective, viewers are encouraged to immerse themselves in a narrative where each component contributes to the overall impact, resulting in a film that is both unique and true to the original source.

Conclusion

In summary, this study has examined the intricate realm of Adaptation theory in relation to crime fiction, with a particular focus on the analysis of Lars Kepler's novel *The Hypnotist* and its film adaptation, *Hypnotisoren*, as a unique case study. Adapting a fiction into a visual essence is an intricate process which involves through understanding of the material resources available, audience who visualise the fictional work on screen experience a renewal of their subconscious visuals which they undergo while reading. The inquiry has uncovered the intricate yet significant alterations in the story that occur while transitioning from literature to film, particularly in aspects such as character development, plot structure, and thematic elements. A comprehensive investigation has been carried out to examine the interplay between original texts and their film adaptations, leading to a thorough understanding of the intricate relationship between crime fiction and its cinematic renditions. A narrator may not be seen for a long time, but all of a sudden start talking about itself, sometimes in a way that the reader doesn't even notice. Still, a scene of presence—the presence of a witness shows up. (Bal, 2017).

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This study has uncovered the artistic choices made during the process of adaption through a comprehensive evaluation. The adaptation of *The Hypnotist* across several mediums has highlighted the challenges of transforming written narratives into visual storytelling, while also showcasing the potential for creativity and reinterpretation. The nuances of these alterations in narrative technique augment our comprehension of how crime literature can be modified and shaped to suit the film medium yet only limited elements being carried towards the output. This research contributes to the wider discourse on the adaptation of literary works by investigating the correlation between the original source material and its subsequent adaptation. This study provides valuable insights into the intricacies and complexities involved in adapting crime fiction novels, so improving our understanding of storytelling in both literary and cinematic domains.

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