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FILM PHENOMENOLOGY AND ADAPTATION

SENSUOUS ELABORATION

DAVID EVAN RICHARD

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Film Phenomenology and Adaptation: Sensuous Elaboration

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Introduction: A ‘Fleshly Dialogue’

Abstract
This chapter positions the book in the extant scholarship of adaptation and phenomenology. It establishes the book’s argument that in order to ‘make sense’ of adaptations as adaptations, we must first attend to their sensual presence: their look, their sound, their touch, and how they materialize in the embodied imagination. This chapter builds on foundational adaptation scholarship by Robert Stam, Linda Hutcheon, and Christine Geraghty who advance an intertextual approach to studying adaptation. Rather, this chapter employs the existential phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty—and how it has been adapted to film studies by Vivian Sobchack—to propose an intersubjective account of adaptation.

Keywords: adaptation; film-phenomenology; perception; synaesthesia; embodiment

If Only You Could See What I’ve Seen with Your Eyes

Film Phenomenology and Adaptation: Sensuous Elaboration draws its name from Susan Sontag’s ‘The Imagination of Disaster’, an essay that considers screen adaptation as a phenomenon in all senses of the word. Although discussing the particular case of science fiction novels adapted for the screen, Sontag’s article nonetheless evokes the stigma that tends to be attached more generally to screen adaptation that concerns the difference between modes of aesthetic engagement. Reading a novel requires imagination and cognition, while, as Sontag puts it, in lieu of ‘an intellectual workout, [these films] supply something that novels can never provide—sensuous elaboration’.[1] Yet Sontag’s words do not comfortably sit with my experience of many film adaptations that certainly do demand an ‘intellectual workout’—and more—of its spectator. Indeed, adaptation theorists have adequately challenged the

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[1] Susan Sontag, ‘The Imagination of Disaster’, p. 212.

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assumption that the experience of literary and cinematic arts might demand different responses of their beholder, that literature requires imaginative engagement, for instance, while a film simply appeals to the senses.[2] In doing so, these scholars have overthrown any hierarchies of value that are implicitly (or explicitly) formed in such categorizations: that novels are complex, demanding, and therefore worthy, while films are dismissed as facile entertainments, with the particular form of the film adaptation seemingly furthest removed from the realm of art due to its fundamentally derivative nature.

I build on this scholarship to further advocate that film adaptations certainly do involve an ‘intellectual workout’. But in doing so, this book does not disavow the pleasure of an adaptation as a *physical* workout as well, so to speak: far from it. This book aligns with recent developments in sensual scholarship and embodied spectatorship to argue that the means by which film adaptations appeal to the senses—how they delight the eye, resonate in the ear, and appeal to the skin—not so much precludes intellectual meaning and aesthetic significance, but rather grounds it. In doing so, this book challenges scholars who might have turned a blind eye to the sensual contours of an adaptation, or those who that have lost touch with the critical value of the sensual capabilities of the body. Even scholarship that would seem to be explicitly sympathetic to the sensual form of a film adaptation tends to show a reluctance to deeply engage with the senses, or to simply dismiss an adaptation’s overt sensual appeal as excess. For instance, in his examination of the science fiction film adaptation, film genre theorist Barry Keith Grant suggests that ‘because film is primarily a visual medium, it tends to concentrate on the depiction of visual surfaces at the expense of contemplative depth’ and that therefore the novel’s ‘philosophy is replaced with *frisson*’.[3] In doing so, Grant appears to overlook the multisensory and synaesthetic nature of the film experience, for films are not only seen but are also *heard* and *felt*. Following the work of phenomenological film theorists, I would suggest that films not only have *contemplative* depth but also have *textural* depth too.[4] The specific case of the film adaptation thus raises even more beguiling questions for sensory scholarship. How might the textural intersect with an adaptation's innate textual depth? How do texts rub against one another, and, in doing so, what is its sensory appeal, and to what aesthetic purpose? This book takes these questions as its starting place. In doing so, I argue that any sense of *frisson* that emerges through these layers of contact not so much *replaces* philosophy (to recall Grant's words) but, rather, ignites it.

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[2] See Thomas Leitch, ‘Twelve Fallacies’, pp. 149-171; Kamilla Elliott, ‘Novels, Films’, pp. 1-23. Elsewhere, Elliot gives extensive literature reviews of the development—and limitations—of the adaptation studies discipline in ‘Theorizing Adaptation’, pp. 19-45 and ‘Adaptation Theory and Adaptation Scholarship’, pp. 679-697.

[3] Barry Keith Grant, ‘“Sensuous Elaboration”’, p. 20.

[4] I am indebted to scholars such as Vivian Sobchack, Jennifer M. Barker, Laura U. Marks, and Tarja Laine. I will explicate the aesthetic experience of touch and texture—and its implication

A brief example illuminates this idea, one drawn from the very form of adaptation criticized by Sontag and Grant: the science fiction film adaptation. Consider Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982) as an adaptation of Philip K. Dick's 1968 novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Both novel and film follow a relatively similar plot: Rick Deckard (played in the film by Harrison Ford) is employed to search for and destroy ('retire') a technologically advanced group of androids or 'replicants'. As Deckard gets further entrenched in his task, and as he becomes further entangled with the sophisticated replicant Rachael (played in the film by Sean Young), both novel and film become meditations on human nature and how memory and imagination, emotion and perception 'make us' human whether biologically determined or artificially manufactured. Although both novel and film are rich in significance, what interests me in particular is how *Blade Runner*, far from being impoverished as its nature as a screen adaptation, augments and inscribes the themes of Dick's novel onto the surface of the film. That is, *Blade Runner* takes the quite literally 'meaty' existential philosophy of the novel and in turn fleshes it out through the film's 'meat': its décor, its sound, its *style*.

Striking about the film in particular is its play with surface detail, depth, and texture that continually solicits the eye. Take the moment in which Rachael takes the Voight-Kampff empathy test administered by Deckard. Lit with a *noir* sensibility that creates a stark contrast between light and shadow, Rachael's face glows against the darkness behind her, her face an impassive mask that is further obfuscated by thick plumes of cigarette smoke that curl and lace in the air. Later, Deckard hunts down and 'retires' Zhora (Joanna Cassidy). As Deckard shoots her in the back, the camera cuts to a long shot as Zhora bursts through a plate-glass window. Filmed in slow motion, Zhora leaps and falls, her flapping translucent raincoat virtually indistinguishable from the shards of glass that tumble towards the camera. And towards the end of the film, Pris (Daryl Hannah) hides from Deckard in a derelict warehouse. Assuming the 'disguise' of a shop

in the experience and analysis of screen adaptation—later in this introduction, as well as in Chapter Three.

mannequin, Pris drapes herself with a sheer veil. Cutting to a tight close-up, the camera captures her face as it is bathed in golden light. Diffused by the veil, the golden light has a heavy quality, thick with dust and tension as Deckard closes in.

It is particularly telling that Scott's heavily textured *mise en scène* so frequently intersects with the depiction of the replicant, or what the film also refers to as 'skinjobs'. *Blade Runner*'s replicants—'more human than human', according to their creator Eldon Tyrell (Joe Turkel)—act as a warning to not take things at face value, to not be tricked by a bewitching surface that disguises its dangerous truth.[5] Much like the famous sequence in which Deckard uses a form of technological apparatus to zoom in on a photograph to reveal its secrets, Scott's *mise en scène* compels us to look at the details. And if *Blade Runner*'s play with texture and light was not enough evidence of the film's continual provocation to look, so too does its frequent reference to eyes, from the close-up of the iris that opens the film to the way that the replicant Roy (Rutger Hauer) tells Chew (James Hong) 'if only you could see what I've seen with your eyes'. By foregrounding an appeal to the spectator's vision so overtly, *Blade Runner* asks us to recognize an innate artifice that supports its world of duplicity.

Therefore, *Blade Runner*, as an adaptation, certainly does not 'concentrate on the depiction of visual surfaces at the expense of contemplative depth', as Grant might suggest, as its construction of surfaces is necessarily tied to its politics. But beyond its optical appeal, *Blade Runner* appeals to the spectator's other senses to dynamize and thicken its source material. One striking element of the world in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* is its pervasive and oppressive silence as Earth is described as depopulated and toxically radioactive. Characters often reflect on a silence that seems to radiate in the air like the poisonous atmosphere. John Isidore, a 'chickenhead', describes the silence like it 'flashed from the woodwork and the walls [...] It rose from the floor [...] it oozed out [...] It managed in fact to emerge from every object within his range of vision, as if it—the silence—meant to supplant all things tangible. Hence it assailed not only his ears but his eyes'.[6] Re-imagined for an audio-visual medium, *Blade Runner*'s composer, Vangelis, translates this 'deafening' silence into a score that pervades the film with sonic fullness.

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[5] More could be said here about the patterns between the surface of/in the film, the artificiality of the replicant in general, and its gendered construction in particular. For similar arguments, see Aylish Wood, *Technoscience in Contemporary American Film*, and Catherine Constable, 'Surfaces of Science Fiction' pp. 281-301.

[6] Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, p. 18.

Atonal synth phrases drone and pulse, and although this might seem cold and mechanical, the score is punctuated with clashing percussions, tinkling chimes like electric rain, and a soaring refrain that seems to resonate in the spectator's sternum. In doing so, Vangelis's score imbues what could be a lifeless synth sound with palpable warmth, echoing the way that the film's synthetic characters are nonetheless capable of emotional feeling. And indeed, beyond the way that it mimics the synaesthetic quality attributed to auditory experience in the novel, the way that I have just described how Vangelis's score 'resonates in the sternum' testifies to the importance of touch to further 'make sense' of the film and further ground its philosophical weight. Film scholar Lesley Stern has evocatively reflected on this, analysing Pris's movements as she suddenly shifts from stasis to incredible speed as she flips and spins in the air. As she contends, Pris's incredible movement seems to be reciprocally felt in the spectator's body:

> There is a lurching in the pit of your stomach. But something more happens when you witness the somersault—as the figure becomes again ordinary, returning to an upright position the momentum remains in your body as a charge, a whoosh, a sense of exhilaration—the effect persists, the fear and exhilaration, the frisson.[7]

Crucially, for Stern, such 'frisson' is not dismissed as an affective side-effect or pleasure of the cinematic experience, but rather, it is 'an acting out of a philosophical precept [...] an instantiation of the thoughtful body' (p. 352). Rather than a Cartesian duality that places conscious experience solely in the mind (as Pris wryly remarks, 'I think. Therefore I am'), Pris's bodily movement is a hyberbolic illustration of how 'an assertion that subjectivity, history, memory (manufactured or not) are lived through the body' (p. 352). Of course, the extraordinary bodily experience and capabilities of the replicant nonetheless differ from the human, which is why Stern suggests that this sequence not so much *describes* or *depicts* differences in bodily capability as much as *enacts* them. Prompted by Pris's extraordinary movement, that lurch in the stomach 'insinuates a kinesthetic connection' that on the one hand is exhilarating, but on the other dread-full, a moment that sharply emphasizes the embodied differences between human and artificial movement. In this moment of connection with Pris—quite literally a 'skinjob'—spectators can concretely grasp the uncanny sensation the replicant's bodily intelligence. In sum, although the novel's title asks us to consider the conscious experience of its robotic creatures, the film's sensuous and imaginative grasp of us demands an embodied experience of the spectator. Thus, just like the 'empathy boxes' that characters plug themselves into to stave off affective and emotional isolation in the novel, *Blade Runner* sensuously and emotionally provokes us to share in the experience of characters—human and artificial alike—and, in doing so, grounds its philosophical significance in lived experience.

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[7] Lesley Stern, 'I Think', p. 352

This short case study thus raises many of the issues that ground this book. *Film Phenomenology and Adaptation*: *Sensuous Elaboration* takes its title from the way that the film adaptation—as a repetition (but not, to evoke the world of *Blade Runner*, a replication) of a previous source—is able to fill out the sensual details of a prior text. But the story does not end there. According to *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 'elaborate' is drawn from the Latin root *laborare*, to labour, to work. This book therefore draws on the philosophy and research methodology offered by phenomenology to examine the work of the spectator's senses in 'making sense' of screen adaptations. I argue that this approach is a necessary corrective to a critical myopia to the sensual experience of screen adaptations.

Fuzzy and Sticky: The Stigma of Subjective Impressionism in Adaptation Studies

This phenomenological model of screen adaptation offers a vital rejoinder to the discipline that has not only 'lost touch' with the spectator's sensual experience of adaptations but has also actively *distanced* itself from the senses through its critical approaches. For instance, although she titles her article 'Materializing Adaptation Theory', Simone Murray does not examine the material texture of screen adaptations, but instead analyses the adaptation industry itself as a coalescence of material forces including production contexts, distribution channels, and reception practices. Indeed, Murray steers adaptation studies *away* from evaluating the emergent patterns of aesthetic texture—a 'questionable project', as she puts it—and suggests rather that sociological approaches would be productive to reveal the political economy of adaptation.[8] Although such an approach is certainly useful, emphasizing industry, circulation, and the broader cultural landscape side-lines an adaptation's physical materiality as well as its physiological experience. This book, rather, follows Kyle Meikle's intelligent development of Murray's work, in which he argues for a reassessment of the 'material culture of the adaptive process' through media archaeology.[9] I emphsize the body's materiality and what it brings to the process of adaptation. I suggest that before screen adaptations can be categorized in terms of their cultural function and meaning, they must be first be examined as they are meaningfully lived.

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[8] Simone Murray, 'Materializing Adaptation Theory', pp. 11-15.

Two critical roadblocks have deterred adaptation studies from thoroughly grasping the lived experience of adaptation. As Robert Stam notes, the discipline has been dogged by an 'anti-corporeality' sentiment in which the screen adaptation 'offends through its inescapable materiality, its incarnated, fleshly, enacted characters, its real locales and palpable props, its carnality and visceral shocks to the nervous system'.[10] Stam's perspective is informed by a historically pervasive 'iconophobia' that contrasts with 'logophilia', a celebration of the written word. By this dichotomy, images (and the moving image in particular) are considered irrational in their bodily and sensual appeal, contrasting with literature's cerebral and transcendent use of the imagination. Associated with this divide is the question of media specificity, the idea that certain forms of media are uniquely equipped with features that 'determine the proper domain of effects of the art form in question'.[11] Containing forms of art into their 'proper domain' can be traced at least to Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's 1766 treatise *Laocoön: or, The Limits of Poetry and Painting* in which he describes the capabilities of verbal and visual art. Per Lessing, poetry expresses the experience of time while the visuality of painting depicts space; but, importantly, those artworks that attempt to transcend the perceived 'material limitations' of their form are described by Lessing as instances in which 'equitable and friendly neighbours' *intrude* upon the other's territory.[12] Lessing's metaphoric evocation of war was influentially developed for adaptation studies by George Bluestone, who describes literature and film as 'overtly compatible, secretly hostile' as the 'percept of the visual image and the concept of the mental image lies the root difference between the two media'.[13] Bluestone's analysis established many of the categorical distinctions that ground the iconophobia/logophilia debate, such as the notion that only the novel can express interiority whereas on film, the 'rendition of mental states—memory, dream, imagination—cannot be as adequately represented [however, film] can show us characters thinking, feeling, and speaking, but it cannot show us their thoughts and feelings. A film is not thought; it is perceived' (pp. 47-48).

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[9] Kyle Meikle, 'Rematerializing Adaptation', p. 174.

[10] Robert Stam, 'Introduction', p. 6.

[11] Noël Carroll, *Theorizing*, p. 34.

[12] Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, 'From *Laocoön*', pp. 558-567.

[13] George Bluestone, *Novels into Film*, pp. 1-2.

Few adaptation scholars—particularly now that the discipline has moved from its traditional roots in English literature departments—would agree with such claims. But I would suggest that the lingering stigma of iconophobia has thwarted sustained interest in the sensual properties of an adaptation. So too has the stigma of fidelity blocked adaptation studies from exploring the sensual and embodied dimensions of screen adaptations. Fidelity criticism suggests that a given text possesses core or essential features that must be faithfully adapted for its perceived success. Therefore, as Stam observes, an adaptation being described as 'unfaithful' to its source 'gives expression to the disappointment we feel when a film adaptation fails to capture what we see as the fundamental narrative, thematic, and aesthetic features of its literary source'.[14] This 'disappointment' and sorrow, and other words used in the evaluation of adaptations such as '"infidelity"' and "betrayal" [...] translate our feeling, when we have loved a book, that an adaptation has not been worthy of that love'.[15] These emotional responses that underpin fidelity criticism are dismissed for their critical impropriety—and further, that these responses are somehow embarrassing or shameful in their overt bodily presence—mirrors the Platonian distrust of the senses that characterized iconophobia. Subjective responses such as sensation and emotion are positioned against detached rationality and critical engagement. Focusing on the spectator's expressed 'love' for the source of adaptation (and assumed 'hate' for, or 'disappointment' with, its adaptation), Shelley Cobb explains that for many critics '[love] is subjective, personal, and relational; criticism is analytical, public and institutional. Love is partial; criticism is objective. Love is sensation; criticism is intellect'.[16] Positioning emotion against criticism in this manner leads the critic to compile an ongoing list of binary oppositions: subjective/objective, passivity/activity, affective/rational, and so on. Although I acknowledge that emotional evaluation should not be a critical endpoint in itself, adaptation studies has been too quick to dismiss the senses and emotional responses as if they were diametrically opposed to critical objectivity. What interests me here is therefore less the way that fidelity criticism continues to colour subjective evaluations of screen adaptations,[17] but rather how this discourse has stimulated adaptation theory's kneejerk response away from subjective responses wholesale.

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[14] Robert Stam, 'Beyond Fidelity', p. 54.

[15] Robert Stam, 'Introduction', p. 14.

[16] Shelley Cobb, 'Adaptation, Fidelity, and Gendered Discourses', p. 32.

The perceived critical impropriety that accompanies subjectivism in adaptation studies led scholars to advance a rigorous (and resolutely objective) critical agenda that focused on a comparative narratology. The concurrent influence of Structuralism in film studies proved to be fruitful. With its emphasis on semiology and linguistics, a structuralist approach to film studies encouraged theorists to unpick 'the cinema's signifying procedures, its combinatory rules, in order to see to what extent these rules articulated diacritical systems of "natural language"'.[18] Christian Metz, for instance, influentially developed a 'grand syntagmatique' that examined how the 'grammar' of film language articulated narrative through sequentially arranged shots. Although Metz cautions the critic against taking the comparison of the '*syntagma*' of the filmic sequence with the linguistic sentence structure too far,[19] adaptation scholars grappled with the mutual 'narrative semiology' of literature and film, and how its complexities—not only plot, but point of view, tense, and enunciation—could be transferred or adapted across media forms. Seymour Chatman, for instance, took a narratological approach to adaptation to analyse how description and point of view shifts between medium forms, but this is not a wholly satisfactory approach. Chatman, for instance, suggests that the novel's descriptive passages create *tableaux vivants* that invite a mode of aesthetic contemplation, something denied by film's 'excessive […] "overspecification"' of visual detail that resolutely marches on due to narrative pressure.[20] So too does Chatman suggest (quite ironically, no less) that the novel offers greater flexibility in narrative *voice* and point of *view*. By Chatman's account, the film's narrator (which Chatman reduces to the function of the camera) is fixed in its position to record the narrative from a distance. Meanwhile however, the novel's narrator is given unrestricted freedom to move between multiple perspectives, ranging from a detached omniscient point of view to a highly subjective vantage points that 'enter solid bodies and tell what things are like inside' (p. 133). Thus, in advocating 'what films can do that novels can't', Chatman turns a blind eye to not only the way that cinematic spectacle can 'freeze' the narrative to invite the spectator's aesthetic contemplation, but also to the dynamic way that films can narrate from multiple perspectives that range from a detached, omniscient perspective to those that are highly subjective. Indeed, the novel is hardly privileged in its ability to 'enter solid bodies'. Films not only can align spectators with the sensual experience of their characters (through point of view shots, subjective sound, and voiceover), but can also reveal psychological states such as emotion, imagination, dreams, and memory.

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[17] The extent to which fidelity criticism has hindered the development of the adaptation studies discipline is contested. Brian McFarlane, for instance, argues that a 'near-fixation' with fidelity has 'inhibited' adaptation studies (p. 194), while Thomas Leitch suggests that '[despite] innumerable exceptions to the rule, adaptation theorists have persisted in treating fidelity to the source material as a norm from which unfaithful adaptations depart at their peril' (*Film Adaptation*, p. 127). Kamilla Elliott, though, claims that the supposed stranglehold of fidelity criticism on adaptation studies is 'myth' rather than fact, a 'unifying force' for a sprawling discipline ('Adaptation Theory', p. 691). For Elliott, scholars cite the fidelity myth at best to justify the originality of their research or, at worst, out of sloppy scholarship. But as anyone who has taught an adaptation course or a film studies subject that includes an adaptation of a popular novel on the syllabus knows, primary responses are often subjective and emotional evaluations.

[18] Robert Stam, Robert Burgoyne, and Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, *New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics*, p. 33.

[19] Christian Metz, 'Some Points', pp. 74-75.

[20] Seymour Chatman, 'What Novels Can Do', p. 123.

Inspired by Chatman, Brian McFarlane made it his task to propose a 'more rigorous, objective [theory]' adaptation of narrative, for it is 'at the level of enunciation—the means by which narrative is displayed and organized—that most rigour is needed to offset the lure of mere subjectivism'.[21] McFarlane is more sympathetic to the multi-track dimensions of the cinema, although he is quick to maintain some of the categorical distinctions that have plagued adaptation studies. For instance, he reinforces the values associated with the logophilia/iconophobia dualism in claiming that the novel is conceptual while the film 'works directly, sensuously, *perceptually*', as if the conceptual and the cognitive were absent from the film experience. Further, McFarlane privileges the film's ability to *adopt* the novel's 'distributional functions' of plot and narrative events, while devaluing 'integrational functions' such as characterization and atmosphere that must be *adapted*. Therefore, in his desire to remove the 'fuzzy impressionism' of adaptation theory (p. 29), McFarlane's comparative narratology appears oblivious to the cinema's dynamic and creative potential, preferring transfer and equivalence to adaptation proper and change.

Beyond these structural approaches that characterize comparative narratological studies, Stam suggests that post-structuralism—particularly Mikhail Bakhtin, Julia Kristeva, and Gérard Genette's work on intertextuality—offers the means of circumnavigating the problem of fidelity. As he puts it, the 'concept of intertextual dialogism suggests that every text forms an intersection of textual surfaces. All texts are tissues of anonymous formulae […] conscious and unconscious quotations, and conflations and inversions of other texts'.[22] Rather than accepting adaptation as a one-way transfer between original and derivative, looking at adaptation through the lens of intertextuality helps reconceive adaptation as a dynamic process of transformation and exchange. The post-structuralist intertextual approach heavily informed Linda Hutcheon's influential *A Theory of Adaptation*, explicitly drawing on Genette's literary theory to describe adaptations as '"palimpsestuous" […] haunted at all times by their adapted texts'.[23] Hutcheon's work on the adaptation-as-palimpsest is provocative as it further unshackles adaptation from being perceived as a mere *linear* process of transfer. Rather, palimpsests is a *layering* process, an accrual of citations—some thicker than others—to earlier work that may or may not be apparent to the beholder. What I find especially appealing in Hutcheon's description of an adaptation's mosaic 'palimpsestuousness' is that in its analysis of *textual* identity it usefully gestures towards a mode of *textural* appreciation. Although he aligns with Hutcheon's position, Dudley Andrew points out that an adaptation *is* a palimpsest, albeit a 'peculiar one [as] the surface layer engages, rather than replaces, a previous inscription'.[24] And for Christine Geraghty, screen adaptation should be approached 'in terms of layering and transparencies' that enables an analysis of 'layers of different thickness and significance' whereas 'a thin gauzy layer allows for much to be seen through it, while a more opaque sheet attempts to substitute its own presence for the layers that lie behind'.[25] Andrew and Geraghty's perspectives here are useful as they expand adaptation from the mere transfer of narrative to foreground how film aesthetics—its *mise en scène*, cinematography, sound, and editing—actively enrich the adaptation. Indeed, Andrew explicitly extends the metaphor as a 'palimpsestuous' layering of texts to consider the film's celluloid itself as a layer in the construction of an adaptation. His analytic model is therefore decidedly textural as he explores how these various 'layers' align and inflect one another. As he puts it, '[when] the layers appear nearly congruent—the film filling in with vibrant colors the fading skeletal lines of the original—the effect and the value of the adaptation are greatly multiplied'.[26]

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[21] Brian McFarlane, *Novel to Film*, p. 195, p. 202.

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[22] Robert Stam, 'Beyond Fidelity', p. 64.

[23] Linda Hutcheon, *Theory of Adaptation*, p. 6.

[24] Dudley Andrew, 'Adapting Cinema', p. 191.

[25] Christine Geraghty, *Now a Major Motion Picture*, p. 11, p. 195.

[26] Dudley Andrew, Adapting Cinema', p. 191.

But I take issue with Andrew's assertation here. Although he usefully gestures towards the importance of analysing the design of an adaptation and its texture, Andrew seems to quickly slip back into an evaluative model that evokes fidelity criticism. He describes the appropriate analytical methodology as first an '[investigation] into its congruence with the shape of its source […] and next into the appropriateness of its "feel" (the texture of detail, point of view, tone)' (p.193). But why should value be only given to those adaptations that are 'nearly congruent' with their structuring texts? And further, Andrew's suggestion of what is 'appropriate' in capturing and expressing the 'texture' of an adaptation reinforces the morally-loaded discourse that plagues fidelity theory. Therefore, although these approaches make inroads into a more dynamic analysis of screen adaptation, they are not wholly satisfying as they skirt around the film's sensual dimensions and how they visually, audibly, tangibly, and viscerally entangle the spectator. Such entanglement might be congruent with the 'skeletal lines' of the original, or the adaptation might express 'vibrant color' and texture in wildly creative ways. But either way, in screen adaptation the 'skeletal lines' of the source material are always brought to life through the spectator's flesh.

As Stam has noted, film's inherent sensuality impacts on 'our stomach, heart, and skin'.[27] Novels certainly have the power to viscerally affect their readers. Imagine the lengthy descriptions of sexual violence, torture, and death that pepper Bret Easton Ellis's novel *American Psycho*. When Ellis's narrator—Patrick Bateman (played by Christian Bale in Mary Harron's 2002 adaptation)—describes how he feeds a rat into a woman's vagina,[28] it is hard to not involuntarily shudder and gag at the imagery conjured through Ellis's graphic words. However, the audio-visual nature of screen media is certainly privileged in its ability to sensuously affect the spectator. The projected image (particularly if viewed in the cinema) dazzles the eye with light and colour while sound—whether a whispered caress or a piercing blast—sonorously envelops the spectator. Indeed, describing sound as a 'caress' or 'piercing' testifies to the film experience's synaesthetic and kinetic appeal. Not only audio-visual, films also invite a tactile response whether it be through indistinct 'haptic imagery' that appeals to the skin, or camera movement that rushes and jolts through space in a way that ranges from the exuberant to the dizzying. So too do the inner rhythms of the viscera—connected to smell and taste—physically and emotionally affect the spectator, while recent neuro-cinematic research reveals the way that mirror neurons make meaning below the threshold of consciousness in what can be thought of as the 'embodied imagination'.[29] Screen adaptations enrich their sources by crafting this brute sensual data into more specific codes, such as the ability to bring characters to life through screen performance, an 'uncanny amalgam of photogenie, body movement, acting style, and grain of the voice, all amplified and moulded by lighting, mise-en-scène, and music'.[30] But even before such organization, the cacophony of sensual information is—quite literally—vital to the experience and interpretation of screen adaptation. In sum, as Stam points out, 'the cinema has not lesser but rather greater resources for expression than the novel' as it 'thickens, takes on flesh' and becomes undeniably tangible.[31]

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[27] Robert Stam, 'Introduction', p. 6.

[28] Bret Easton Ellis, *American Psycho*, p. 315.

But while Stam's points are convincing, he does not advance a rigorous methodological framework with which to examine this phenomenon. This book proposes such a methodology. In doing so, I challenge a lingering problem of the discipline that—in the hopes of maintaining critical distance—has lost sight of adaptations as works of art. Sarah Cardwell, in her thorough critique of the discipline's limitations, argues that adaptations 'are rarely studied for themselves—rarely is interpretation valued as much as theorizing; broader theoretical issues take precedence over local aesthetic concerns'.[32] Cardwell uses British prestige television adaptations to more concretely evaluate and appreciate the aesthetics of adaptation. As she correctly points out, such an aesthetics should not focus only on the transfer of narrative, 'but also [on] the visual pleasure that they provide—their texture, sensuality, and form'.[33] But to do so necessitates aspects of a comparative analysis, the kind of criticism that has been labelled—as dismissed—as fidelity criticism. This position is shared by philosopher Paisley Livingston who argues that comparative analyses reveal the aesthetic achievements of adaptation. As he puts it, an 'appreciator who is oblivious to the source and can draw no […] comparison manifests a blind spot pertaining to artistically essential features of the adaptation', and that a comparative analysis rather allows the appreciator to evaluate the similarities and changes from an adaptation's source material, and how they contribute to its aesthetic achievement (or failing).[34] Throughout this book, then, I have avoided this 'blind spot' by keeping the formal texture of adaptations in clear sight.

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[29] For research into the role mirror neurons play in meaning-making in the cinema, see Vittorio Gallese's article 'Embodied Simulation', pp. 23-48, and Arthur P. Shimamura's edited collection *Psychocinematics*.

[30] Robert Stam, 'Beyond Fidelity', p. 60.

[31] Robert Stam, 'Introduction', p. 20, p. 27.

[32] Sarah Cardwell, *Adaptation*, p. 69.

[33] Sarah Cardwell, 'Adaptation Studies', p. 51.

But my interest is not in terms of similarities or differences in terms of characterization or plot (the form that most comparative analyses, particularly in the popular press or those that emerge in everyday conversation). Rather, my interest is in the form and function of the senses and how other structures of embodied experience are solicited in screen adaptation. For instance, in Chapter One I examine how F. W. Murnau's 'unofficial' adaptation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, *Nosferatu* (1922), articulates the unreliability of vision that is coded into the novel, while Chapter Three analyses how Jane Campion's adaptation of *In the Cut* (2002) translates Susanna Moore's first-person *voice* through the spectator's *skin*. Therefore, this book is not only concerned in how screen adaptations accurately render or *translate* a novel's world as it is described, but also how the appeal to the spectator's senses *transform* and revitalize the novel's sources. In doing so, this book also answers Livingston's important call for adaptation scholars to attend to those 'artistic problems confronted by filmmakers undertaking an adaptation, including artistic problems that are and are not shared by the creators of literary sources' (p. 123). For instance, Chapter Two analyses the sonic design of Jonathan Glazer's *Under the Skin* (2013). This film is adapted from the novel by Michel Faber, yet very little of Faber's plot or characterization of the alien creature is maintained. However, attending to the film's score reveals how Glazer transforms the alien Isserley's (unnamed in the film, played by Scarlett Johansson) alienation so that it is aurally grasped by the spectator.

Therefore, not only does this book examine how sensual experience is translated and transformed from page to screen, but also how the spectator's sensual experience acts as a form of translation and transformation that 'fleshes out' an adaptation's source material. Far from the fears that attending to the lived experience of adaptation would lead to 'fuzzy impressionism', to recall McFarlane's words, film-phenomenology offers a rigorous philosophy and methodology with which to examine the experience of film adaptations. In doing so, I argue that attending to screen media's synaesthetic and kinetic possibilities not only further develops an 'aesthetic of adaptation', but also brings a renewed awareness both to the materiality of film and the materiality of the body.

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[34] Paisley Livingston, 'On the Appreciation', pp. 106-110.

Beyond 'Intertextual Dialogism': Phenomenology, Film, and a 'Fleshly Dialogue'

My embodied model of adaptation extends the studies of Hutcheon and Kamilla Elliott who both approach the embodied experience of adaptation from quite different perspectives. Hutcheon's approach tends to how understanding adaptation as both a *product* and a *process* requires attention to the different 'modes of engagement' offered in their multiplicity: telling, showing, and participation. Literature is expressed in the 'telling' mode within 'the realm of the imagination [...] unconstrained by the limits of the visual or aural'.[35] Hutcheon explains that the experience of being 'shown' a screen adaptation does not mean that the spectator is passive: besides being a sensual event, film spectators are also responsive through their imagination, cognitive processing, and patterns of emotional engagement. However, Hutcheon undoes her careful qualifications about the spectator's agency and activity when she argues that novels and plays nonetheless stimulate the imagination in a way that films cannot. Obviously, reading a novel involves different kinds of imaginative activity, involving differing degrees of direction, attention, and duration. But do film and television adaptations, in the showing mode, '[move] from the imagination to the realm of direct perception' as Hutcheon claims (p. 23)? I find this too dismissive of the kinds of imaginative involvements that occur during the film experience in general and the adaptation experience in particular. This is the task of Chapter Four, in which I ask adaptation studies to review how different forms of imaginative engagement—such as the 'bodily imagination'—might enrich the adaptation experience. Having said that, Hutcheon does address the importance of perception, saying that a film's address to the senses powerfully enriches its storytelling, such as the physical performance of the actor,[36] or how sound may be emotionally expressive and affective. These are valid points, and I will explore many of these possibilities throughout the chapters of this book. However, Hutcheon's claim that the showing mode overall has difficulty adapting novels as 'the camera *limits* what we can see' is a position that I do not share.[37]

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[35] Linda Hutcheon, *Theory of Adaptation*, p. 23.

[36] The presence and performance of the actor's body is clearly felt in adaptations that are performed on the stage. Indeed, all theatrical productions can be thought of adaptations—either of pre-existing work or of the play's script itself—and terrific work in adaptation studies has grasped with the physical and temporal demands that are brought by the actor's fleshy liveness. See for instance: Katja Krebs, 'Ghosts We Have Seen Before', pp. 581-590; Frances Babbage, *Adaptation in Contemporary Theatre*, pp. 9-44; Kyle Meikle, *Adaptations in the Franchise Era*, pp. 133-158.

Hutcheon reserves the hermeneutic value of physical and kinetic experience in adaptation for videogame and virtual reality adaptations—'kinesthetic provocations', as she calls them—that invite their user to palpably feel incorporated within a storyworld. Even more immersive is the theme park, participatory spaces 'where our own bodies are made to feel as if they are entering an adapted heterocosm' (p. 51). *The Wizarding World of Harry Potter* at Universal Studios in Orlando recreates the spaces of J. K. Rowling's series of novels and extends their fans' contact with storylines and characters. This is clear in attractions like *Escape from Gringotts*, a dark ride that not only speeds its passengers along its tracks but also includes 3D technology, screen performances from the stars of the film adaptations, and pyrotechnics. Therefore, the ride not only offers a *narrative* but also *sensorial* extension of the Harry Potter universe as our 'tour' of Gringott's vault is interrupted by Voldemort (Ralph Fiennes) and Bellatrix (Helena Bonham Carter). But screen adaptations too not only solicit the eyes and ears but can provoke the body's tactile sensitivity. Although it is not experienced in quite the same way as *Escape from Gringotts*, the dynamic cinematography of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2* (David Yates, 2011) stimulates a kinetic thrill as Harry (Daniel Radcliffe) plummets into the bank's depths on his own rollercoaster, the camera adopting his point of view as his rusty carriage shakes and rattles around its looping track. I contend that the 'kinesthetic provocations' to the body are not unique to the videogame or rollercoaster,[38] as cinema spectators experience an intense immersion in the screen world as well, one that is at times felt in the bones and gut, or as a disorientating rush that catches in the chest.

Therefore, although the way that she frames her analysis through different modes of engagement certainly offers insight into the dynamics and experience of adaptation, Hutcheon gives an unsatisfactory account of the film experience. I suggest this is because she draws her analysis of the spectator's film experience from psychoanalytic theory that suggests a relationship between spectator and screen world based on illusion, identification, fantasy, and the unconscious. For instance, she refers to Metz's claims regarding the spectator's so-called voyeuristic relationship as they sit in the dark and stare at a glowing screen like 'spectator-fish, taking in everything with their eyes, nothing with their bodies'.[39] But as I discuss below—and as I reveal through the case studies studied in this book—Metz's account of a distanced and disembodied spectator does not accurately capture the fullness of the cinematic experience, and has been refuted by more recent directions in film studies that emphasize spectators' cognitive and phenomenological responses.

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[37] Linda Hutcheon, *Theory of Adaptation*, p. 43.

[38] See Kyle Meikle, *Adaptations in the Franchise Era*, pp. 133-158.

Elliott attends more carefully to the dynamic and synaesthetic dimensions of screen adaptation in her meticulous study *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate*. In order to navigate around the trap of media specificity, Elliott heavily leans on the analogy of form and content being akin to body and spirit to devise a series of models to account for the way that adaptations split form and content. Although some of her concepts are more colourful than helpful—such as the 'ventriloquist' and 'de(re)composing' concepts of adaptation—I will focus on her 'incarnational concept' that offers the most for an embodied approach to screen adaptation. This concept references Christian doctrine to suggest that screen adaptation is akin to 'the word made flesh'. As she puts it, the written word in novels is only able to suggest perceptual experiences—vision, hearing, touch, taste, and smell—that are incarnated and sensually fulfilled by its adaptation to the screen. As the cinema is a phenomenological art form *par excellence* as it directly appeals to the senses, it brings synaesthetic richness to adaptation, 'bringing to life' its source material. The problem with Elliott's approach, however, is that in emphasizing the spectator's bodily experience she raises the ghosts of the iconophobia/iconophilia debate: the very thing she tries to avoid. She references the idea that '[the] word made flesh is also the word brought down to the level of flesh' and that adaptation appears as a sacrilegious 'carnalization, a sordid morally reprehensible corruption of spiritual and transcendental signification'.[40] Further, although she draws attention to the film adaptation's ability to sensually render its source material, she does not propose a working model to explore the dynamics of the embodied and incarnated fulfillment of the novel by both spectator and screen, admitting that further study is necessary to 'probe the philosophical and semiotic issues in the depth and detail they warrant' (p. 183).

Building on this important scholarship, this book employs phenomenology to do some of this necessary philosophical and semiotic probing to enrich the analysis of screen adaptation. Phenomenology is a philosophy and research procedure that describes and reflects on experience as it is meaningfully lived. *Transcendental phenomenology*—as advanced by Edmund Husserl—sought to examine the ‘essences’ of experience, abstracting them into a universalized ‘transcendental ego’.[41] Rather, *existential phenomenology*, radically developed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, is grounded in the body’s lived experience. As Merleau-Ponty attests, ‘[my] body is the fabric into which all objects are woven, and it is, at least in relation to the perceived world, the general instrument of my “comprehension”’.[42] Although some film-phenomenologists follow Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology,[43] Vivian Sobchack’s semiotic phenomenology of film experience—informed by Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy of perception—has been profoundly influential, and it is this approach I follow. Thus, rather than Elliott’s ‘incarnational concept’ of ‘transcendental signifiers’, this book attends to the significance of lived experience in the carnal comprehension of screen adaptation.

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[39] Christian Metz, *Psychoanalysis*, p. 96.

[40] Kamilla Elliott, *Rethinking*, pp. 166-167.

Sobchack’s phenomenology of film experience radically counters psychoanalysis’s claim of a ‘silent, motionless […] *vacant* spectator’.[44] Instead, film phenomenology describes the spectator as being sensually *filled up* by their perceptive experience in a manner that grounds all cinematic intelligibility. As Richard McCleary writes, existential phenomenology demands that to understand the world ‘we must first describe the life-world we perceive and then reflexively determine the essential meaning-structures of the self in its relation to itself, to other persons, and to the world’.[45] Therefore, a phenomenology of film experience entails not only a description of objective phenomena, but also necessitates reflection on how such phenomena are subjectively lived and made meaningful. While etiquette in the cinema still calls for the ‘silent, motionless spectator’ as posed by psychoanalytic theory,[46] a phenomenological analysis reveals how the spectator nonetheless

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[41] Edmund Husserl, *Paris Lectures*, pp. 29-35.

[42] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, p. 273.

[43] For instance, see Alan Casebier’s *Film and Phenomenology: Toward a Realist Theory of Cinematic Representation*, and Harald Stadler’s ‘Film as Experience: Phenomenological Concepts in Cinema and Television Studies’. See Sobchack for an extended critique of transcendental phenomenology (*Address of the Eye*, pp. 32-38).

[44] Christian Metz, *Psychoanalysis*, p. 96.

[45] Richard McCleary, ‘Preface’, p. xiv.

[46] Although the theatrical experience of a film is rarely completely silent, and nor is the spectator ever completely motionless. Indeed, the physically and audibly reactive spectator forms an important role in some contexts. Julian Hanich, for instance, explores the pleasurable dimensions of the cinema as a communal experience (*Cinematic Emotions*, pp. 246-248). Much of the pleasure of horror and cult films is how they are experienced as a communal event with emotions—disgust, fear, tension, and relief—that ripple through the crowd like waves.

'speaks back' and is profoundly moved by their perceptive experience in a way that is first expressed through the fleshy contours of the lived-body.

The 'lived-body' refers to how conscious experience of the world is always existentially embodied in the flesh, and is enacted through an existential structure of 'intentionality' that correlates acts of consciousness with its object. The lived-body is both a subject in the world and an object for the world: that is, the lived-body subjectively perceives the world, and is also able to objectively express and signify for others. Therefore, the core capacity for the intrasubjective commutation of perceptive and expressive modalities forms the intersubjective '*primacy of communication*'.[47] As she puts it, 'long before we constrain "wild meaning" in discrete symbolic systems', such as speech, 'we are immersed in language as an existential system. In the very movement of existence, in the very activity of perception and its bodily expression, we inaugurate language and communication' (p. 12). Thus, as Sobchack summarizes, Merleau-Ponty's philosophy offers a sustained investigation into 'the sensuous contours of language, with meaning and its signification born not abstractly but concretely from the surface contact, the fleshly dialogue, of human beings and the world together making sense sensible' (p. 3).

Sobchack parallels the reversibility of perception and its expression through language, gesture, and movement with the perceptive and expressive capacity of the 'film's body'. Although materially different from the human body, the film's body is similarly embodied in its world, and similarly demonstrates an intentionality that is constituted by its own intrasubjective commutation of perception and expression that is enacted through its own technologically constructed 'organs' of camera lens, projector, and screen. As she explains, 'the film experience is a system of communication based on bodily perception as a vehicle of conscious expression. It entails the visible, audible, kinetic aspects of sensible experience to make sense visibly, audibly, and haptically' (p. 9). Therefore, before the film experience is abstracted into various theoretical paradigms or deconstructed into 'readings', films employ the modes and structure of embodied experience to quite literally 'make sense'. In doing so the film is not reduced to an object that is *beheld* by a disembodied spectator. Rather, through its own intentional agency, the film invites the spectator to *be held* close in a shared and intersubjective process of sense-making.

Sobchack terms this an '*embodiment relation*' as the film's body incorporates and extends the intentional interest of filmmaker, film, and spectator

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[47] Vivian Sobchack, *Address of the Eye*, p. 41.

(p. 181). The technology offers a clear form of audio-visual extension into the screen world, such as the way that the close-up brings visual details into sharp relief, or an *acoustic* close-up that reveals sound in its full materiality, as I explore in Chapter Two. But as the term 'embodiment relation' reveals, the cinema not only offers a form of audio-visual extension but also extends the spectator's tactile and proprioceptive sense into the screen world. In Chapter Three, for instance, I argue that the film's body offers what I describe as a 'tactile orientation' in relation to screen characters. This is significant for screen adaptation, as rather than considering the way that narratives are 'focalized' around particular characters (a term that seems to privilege optical 'point of view'), 'tactile orientation' offers an account of how spectators can be aligned with a character's sense of touch and kinesthetic behaviour in their world.

But Sobchack's phenomenology of film experience explicitly maintains that there is no universal experience of a given phenomenological structure. Although the film's body can transparently incorporate the spectator through a realistic and familiar expression of perception, it can also transform it into the unfamiliar and strange. So too the film's body might gesture its intentional choice-making activity in a way that might align with, or wildly differ from, our own interest. As an expression of perception, then, a film not only shows us *what* is seen, but also more fundamentally *how* vision is always embodied and 'framed' by a particular perspective. Here phenomenology reveals itself not only as a philosophy of existential experience, but also a research procedure that questions and clarifies the habituated 'givenness' of perception. Merleau-Ponty refers to this as the 'natural attitude' of phenomena, and that 'in order to see the world and grasp it [...] we must break with our familiar acceptance of it'.[48] To do so, a systematic process of 'reduction' interrogates phenomenological experience. The phenomenological reduction begins with the *description* of phenomena as they are given, setting aside or 'bracketing' any presuppositions that might be associated with them. Then, *horizontalization* unpicks any 'hierarchies of significance' that might structure the phenomena, which are then *thematized* through imaginative experiments that determine its invariant structural features.[49] Then, after performing this series of reductions and thought experiments, the phenomenological method calls for *interpretation*, revealing the significance of the phenomena to its lived experience.

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[48] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. xv.

[49] Vivian Sobchack, 'Phenomenology', 436.

Film-phenomenology has been criticized for what is perceived as a tendency for introspective solipsism, for being overly personal and impressionistic. Summarizing the criticism against film-phenomenology, Julian Hanich explains that using 'a method that draws on first-person descriptions at this historical point when some film scholars start to embrace the methods of the natural sciences might be considered a provocation, a methodological ignorance, or an outright stupidity'.[50] So too has some phenomenological film criticism been dismissed for its apparent universalizing tendencies, as if the experience of one spectator is type-identical to that of another. Christian Ferencz-Flatz and Hanich describe this as the '*problem of incompleteness*' that plagues phenomenological analyses, as they appear flawed as the critic's response cannot possibly speak for all possible experiences.[51] This is traced back to the original phenomenological philosophers, in that while the lived-body 'has been explicitly articulated as "every body" and "any body" [...] it has implicitly assumed a male, heterosexual, and white body',[52] causing some theorists to suggest that phenomenological film criticism similarly marginalizes the experience of female, queer, and rationalized bodies. This criticism is perhaps ironic, considering Sobchack's polemic *Address of the Eye* sought to revitalize contemporary film theory from its psychoanalytic abstraction, and to carefully attend to embodied experience that *includes* embodied difference. Building on Merleau-Ponty's claim that the 'most important lesson' of the phenomenological reduction is the 'impossibility of a complete reduction',[53] Sobchack explains that phenomena have 'provisional forms and structures' so that while the phenomenological reduction 'may begin with a *particular* experience, its aim is to describe and explicate the *general* or *possible* structures and meanings that inform the experience and make it potentially resonant and inhabitable for others'.[54] For Sobchack, the 'proof' of a phenomenological analysis does not rest with whether the reader has shared the experience in a type-identical way, but, rather, 'whether or not the description is resonant and the experience's structure [is] sufficiently comprehensible to a reader who might "possibly" inhabit it (even if in a differently inflected or valued way)' (p. 5).

In order to invite the reader to share in or 'inhabit' a phenomenological description, the language used by the critic must be both precise—hence my careful attention to the exact words used by others in this section and throughout this book as well as detailed description of the phenomenological properties of adaptation—and evocative. Metaphoric language is therefore essential to a phenomenological analysis for as Hanich points out, a phenomenological analysis describes 'often reaches beyond where words can go' to describe perceptive, imaginative, and emotional experience, however, 'metaphors help us to come closest to an adequate description of our lived-body experience for which we would otherwise have no words'.[55] As Paul Ricoeur wonderfully explains, metaphors infuse feeling 'into the heart of the situation', extending 'the power of double meaning from the cognitive realm to the affective'.[56] Therefore, throughout the phenomenological descriptions and analysis that structure this book, I use evocative and metaphorical language in the hopes that the reader may be invited to share in type-similar, or type-*possible*, if not type-identical experience.

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[50] Julian Hanich, *Cinematic Emotions*, p. 41.

[51] Julian Hanich and Christian Ferencz-Flatz, 'What is Film Phenomenology?', p. 35.

[52] Vivian Sobchack, *Address of the Eye*, p. 148.

[53] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. xv.

[54] Vivian Sobchack, *Carnal Thoughts*, p. 5.

Film phenomenology insists that 'we dwell on the ground of experience before moving on to more abstract or theoretical concerns, that we experience and reflect on our own sight before we [...] cite others'.[57] If performing a phenomenological reduction allows the critic to bracket prior assumptions about phenomena under investigation, a phenomenology of film adaptation sets aside any previous theoretical paradigms about adaptation that dictate particular 'readings', such as the desire for fidelity, structural approaches to narrative, and so on. Indeed, the fact that screen adaptations are drawn from previous sources assists a phenomenological analysis as the film's source material offers one such 'imaginative variation' required to fully grasp the 'shape' of phenomena. Then, by using metaphoric language, throughout this book I hope to solicit the sensory and imaginative capabilities of the reader in order to invite them to inhabit my case studies. Or, at least—to follow Hanich's qualification—that they are 'recognizable enough to evoke embodied understanding'.[58] It is from this experiential base from which I build my phenomenological model of adaptation.

Earlier I drew attention to how the 'concept of intertextual dialogism suggests that every text forms an intersection of textual surfaces. All texts are tissues of anonymous formulae, variations on those formulae, conscious and unconscious quotations, and conflations and inversions of other texts'.[59]

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[55] Julian Hanich, *Cinematic Emotions*, p. 43.

[56] Paul Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, p. 224.

[57] Vivian Sobchack, 'Fleshing Out', p. 194.

[58] Julian Hanich, *Cinematic Emotions*, p. 45.

[59] Robert Stam, 'Beyond Fidelity', p. 64.

But rather than considering the 'anonymous formulae' that comprise an adaptation's 'intertextual surface', a phenomenology of screen adaptation insists on intersubjectivity and the very personal lived-body as 'meaning and its signification [is] born not abstractly but concretely from the surface contact, the fleshly dialogue' between body and world, spectator and screen.

Corpus

Phenomenology is at times a theoretically challenging philosophy, but one of its most attractive aspects is how it directs attention onto the 'things themselves',[60] and Sobchack is correct when she explains that the best way of *understanding* phenomenology is to *do* phenomenology.[61] Therefore, this book's phenomenological model of screen adaptation will be conceptualized and illuminated through the close analysis of a range of case studies. I largely avoid drawing on adaptations of classical and canonical literature for these analyses. Although a phenomenological approach to such films would raise critical insight into the nature of their adaptation, such works often come with a deep sense of familiarity, or a preconceived sense of the author's 'vision', that makes it more challenging to bracket ideas and beliefs of what the adaptation *should be* rather than what the adaptation *is*. By grounding my analysis in a range of case studies from popular genres—such as horror, science fiction, and *noir*—I jettison this baggage while opening the field to more diverse and (to my mind) more interesting choices. Indeed, many of these adaptations have yet to be discussed within the discipline of adaptation studies, while others are what Catherine Grant refers to as 'free adaptations', those adaptations that resist conventionality and instead trade in their difference and '*manifest* innovation and ingenuity with regard to interpreting [...] their "sources"'.[62] Using 'free adaptations' as case studies extends the field beyond questions of narrative transfer: indeed, the central question of this book is not *what* has been translated from page to screen but *how*?

This book argues that the synaesthetic richness of perception and the embodied structures of imagination and memory offer radical insight into the dynamics of adaptation. Each chapter, therefore, examines the relationship of a particular mode of subjective access to an adaptation:

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[60] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. ix.

[61] Vivian Sobchack, 'Fleshing Out', p. 194.

[62] Catherine Grant, 'Recognizing', p. 58.

vision, hearing, touch, imagination, and memory. In structuring this book in such a manner, I do not suggest that one mode of access is more valued than another in a particular experience of adaptation, or that other modes of access are absent from the experience in a given case study. This is particularly important to remember when thinking through the activity of the embodied imagination and memory—the subjects of Chapter Four and Five respectively—as perception and imagination are inherently intertwined in conscious experience. However, revealed through a series of phenomenological analyses, each chapter proposes a range of techniques that screen adaptations employ to solicit, provoke, or evoke a specific mode of experience that enhances the spectator's understanding and embodied appreciation of an adaptation.

Chapter One, for instance, banishes the ghosts of iconophobia to argue that the visible textures of screen adaptations have been subjected to a critical oversight. To illustrate my claim, I primarily draw on two adaptations of Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*: *Nosferatu* (F. W. Murnau, 1922) and *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1992). *Dracula* was written at a time of great technological innovation (a period that notably included the invention of the cinema) that transformed perception. The reliability of vision is therefore a consistent theme in Stoker's novel, which I argue is thickened by these two adaptations. The developing language of special effects is clearly seen in *Nosferatu* that weaves trick effects throughout what is often a naturalistic *mise en scène* to unsettle and disturb vision. Released seventy years later, Coppola's *Dracula* harks back to the aesthetics of early cinema to relish the playful tricks to the eye. This self-reflexivity, along with its warped perspectives, lurid colour, and subversion of classical Hollywood conventions perforate the frame and attack the eye. It is my contention that these techniques—exemplified by these adaptations but extendable to many others—fundamentally returns awareness to what Linda Williams terms the 'carnal density of vision'.[63]

Chapter Two examines the function and value that screen sound brings to adaptation. In doing so, I extend critical approaches to sound and adaptation that largely attend to the introduction of dialogue in the synchronized sound period. Rather, in this chapter, I emphasize the textural qualities of voice and music. Actors do not only embody characters through their costume and physical performance but also through their vocal performance. As Lesley Chow puts it, 'the voice can be our way *into* a film, becoming inseparable from its overall texture’.[64] Music too lends texture, at times smoothing the narrative’s flow, revealed in my analysis of how the score of *The Hours* (Stephen Daldry, 2002) bridges the film’s multi-strand narrative structure, while its repetitive orchestration also expresses the depression felt by the film’s characters. But just as Chapter One discusses visual effects that seem to perforate the frame and grab hold of the spectator, the sonic texture of film music and the voice can be obtrusive, unsettling, and estranging. To demonstrate this, I examine how *The Exorcist* (William Friedkin, 1973) and *Under the Skin* (Jonathan Glazer, 2013), as adaptations, creatively use textural sound effects, vocal performance, and scoring to thicken their source material and—in doing so—ensnare spectators into the horrible machinations of their monstrous protagonists.

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[63] Linda Williams, 'Corporealized Observers', p. 36.

Speaking of how music and voice has a ‘texture’—something that is not only apprehended through the ear, but also felt on the skin, teeth, and viscerally in the guts—reveals how the cinema is not only an audio-visual medium but also synaesthetically appeals to touch. In Chapter Three, I analyse cinema’s ability to provoke tactile responses in spectators by following film phenomenologists such as Sobchack, Barker, and Laura Marks, and the influence of Merleau-Ponty’s philosophical suggestion of ‘flesh’. Through employing haptic imagery—indistinct and textured visuals that invites an eye ‘more inclined to graze than to gaze’[65]—coloured lighting, kinetic movement, and sound, cinema appeals to the skin, proprioceptive awareness, and the viscera. Primarily using Jane Campion’s adaptation of *In the Cut* (2003) as a case study, I argue that these tactile responses hold unique possibilities for screen adaptation by inviting what I term a ‘tactile orientation’ with screen characters. In doing so, this chapter importantly expands critical approaches to narrative ‘focalization’ to include haptic experiences, marshalling the critical value of passion and touch.

How spectators become orientated around the tactile perspective of characters demonstrates the synaesthetic imagination at work. In Chapter Four, I provide a more comprehensive account of the function of the embodied imagination in the experience of adaptation. Rather than separating imagination from perception, I follow the work of Jennifer Gosetti-Ferencei who argues that ‘imagination relies upon the embodied basis of thinking, grounded both in the brain and its connections throughout the body and in interaction with the world’.[66] Rather than cognitive accounts that posit imagination as a purely cognitive process of simulation and judgement, thinking through—or better yet, *feeling through*—the embodied imagination puts the critic in contact with a character's thoughts and emotions to prompt embodied understanding. I illustrate these claims with an analysis of *Mood Indigo* (2013), Michel Gondry's imaginative adaptation of Boris Vian's absurdist novel. Although the film's dazzling *mise en scène* and eye-popping special effects overtly solicit the spectator's perception, I argue that this does not negate the embodied imagination. Rather, I suggest that the film—evoking the neurological basis of the embodied imagination—crafts a 'multidimensional, "we-centric" shared space'[67] that allows us to feel the palpable weight of grief.

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[64] Lesley Chow, ‘The Actor’s Voice’, p. 33.

[65] Laura U. Marks, *Skin of the Film*, p. 162.

[66] Jennifer Gosetti-Ferencei, *Life of Imagination*, p. 27.

As I have already pointed out in this introduction, adaptation has been conceived as a textual layering of sources in a manner that allows the appreciator to see (and feel) the traces of the past. This process parallels how memory too is constructed by the layering of the traces of subjective experience that connect us with the past. In recognition of the mutual 'palimpsestuous' nature of both adaptation and memory, Chapter Five posits adaptation as a form of memory work. In this chapter, I follow the work of philosophers of memory—such as Edward Casey and Paul Ricoeur—who suggest that memory has a 'thickness' that is weighted with significance. Memory is not only a subjective phenomenon, but also an intersubjective experience, and novels, films, and adaptations form part of this rich tapestry of collective memory. Thinking through adaptation as a form of memory work draws attention to not only *what* stories are 'remembered', but also *how* and *why*. I track several incarnations of Lili Elbe—the first woman to receive gender-confirming surgery—from her memoir, to novelization, to Tom Hooper's prestige biopic *The Danish Girl* (2015). I argue that although the process of adaptation valuably draws attention to Lili and the continued struggle for the acceptance of transgendered individuals, her experience is nonetheless co-opted and reshaped for other uses. Thinking through the 'use' of memory, then, I turn to Todd Haynes's *Poison* (1991), a mosaic of references to the novels of Jean Genet and cinema history. In doing so, I argue that adaptations can be critical of their sources and memory itself. *Poison* adapts Genet's formal and narrative play, and shares a resistance to mainstream conventions (both social and aesthetic) that opens a space for the articulation of marginalized identities that helps reshape cultural memory. Adaptation's capacity to not only reshape texts but culture itself testifies to how any *aesthetics of*

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[67] Vittorio Gallese, 'Roots of Empathy', p. 172.

adaptation also necessitates attention to an *ethics of adaptation*, a line of thought I complete in the books's conclusion.

Hutcheon points out that because the word ‘adaptation’ refers to both a formal *product* and a *process* of change, she argues for the ‘need for a theoretical perspective that is at once formal and “experiential”’.[68] This book offers this theoretical perspective. In doing so, I augment recent approaches to adaptation that are concerned with affect, such as Anne Gjelsvik's work on adaptation and violence,[69] and John Hodgkins's approach to the affective economy and transmission of adaptation. While these studies are enticing, they still remain reluctant to engage with the fleshy properties of the body and its role in ‘making sense’ of the ‘fleshly language’ of the world, let alone an adaptation. Although Hodgkins's analyses affect—typically thought of sensations on the body that are felt prior to cognitive reflection—through a Deleuzian lens, he claims that his study will not ‘necessarily devolve into reductive conversations about “your” body or “my” body’.[70] In hedging his bets in such a manner, Hodgkins seems almost ashamed of the sensing capacities of the body, and all too easily gives in to the criticisms levelled at phenomenology as a purely subjective—and therefore not objective—form of criticism. But as Amanda Ruud has usefully argued, ‘adaptations *produce* experiences at the same time as they *reflect on* experiences’, and that it is ‘[in] the act of seeing, hearing, touching, playing [that] receivers and adaptors meet, connecting across time and space by means of the body’.[71] Therefore, although phenomenology might be dismissed for its subjective impressionism, it is important to remember that phenomenology can also ‘enlarge our capacities for conscious awareness, refine our cultural sensorium, and change our perspective on the world’.[72]

Grounded in the analysis of the phenomenological experience of screen adaptation, this book answers Cardwell's call for an ‘aesthetics of adaptation’,[73] and offers an enhanced awareness of the poetic means by which the filmmakers can translate story worlds from page to screen. Indeed, some scholars prefer the term ‘translation’ to ‘adaptation’.[74] As Linda Costanzo Cahir puts it, it is ‘[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'.[75] But just as the word is translated to the screen, the senses too go through a material process of translation, and attending to the synaesthetic richness of perception reveals the spectator's entanglement in the making of meaning. Earlier in this introduction I suggested how adaptation scholars such as Stam, Andrew, and Geraghty all employ the metaphor of the layer to explore the intertextual relationships between texts as surfaces that come into contact. Here, I add that the spectator's body is another such layer in a relationship that is not only intertextual, but intersubjective and *textural*.

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[68] Linda Hutcheon, *Theory of Adaptation*, p. xiv.

[69] Anne Gjelsvik, ‘What Novels Can Tell’, pp. 245-264.

[70] John Hodgkins, *The Drift*, p. 16.

[71] Amanda Ruud, ‘Embodying Change’, p. 247, p. 255.

[72] Julian Hanich, *Cinematic Emotions*, p. 15.

[73] Sarah Cardwell, ‘Adaptation’, p. 58.

[74] Lawrence Venuti, ‘Adaptation, Translation, Critique’, pp. 25-43; Dennis Cutchins, ‘Bakhtin, Translation and Adaptation’, pp. 36-62.

Cardwell writes that the early writing on adaptation appealed due to being 'emotionally vivid, even passionate' and that the 'selection of appropriate analytic tools for analysing adaptations was in great part determined by the "gut feelings", emotional reactions, [and] desires' of early theorists.[76] Unlike those that reject the 'fuzzy impressionism' or subjective analysis, Cardwell finds value in it, arguing not only for its insights but also for the way it leads to more 'engaged and engaging' analyses (p. 31). I hope that the analyses that I offer in this book help propel a return to such—quite literally—impassioned writing. I propose that film phenomenology provides the rigorous critical methodology and the language required to fully examine the subjective experience of screen adaptation—a 'sensuous elaboration'—an endlessly pervasive and provocative phenomenon of words made flesh.

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[75] Linda Costanzo Cahir, *Literature into Film*, p. 14.

[76] Sarah Cardwell, *Adaptation*, p. 31.

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