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Tapping on the Touchstone of Recognition: the Role of Memory in Adaptation

Abstract

The possibilities for adaptation in the creative arts are potentially infinite, apparently lying along the margins of memory where the recognition of previously encountered images — written, spoken or visual — becomes a crucial element in the process of adaptation.

When a writer sets out to adapt a story, intending to produce a new version, some aspect of the original piece of writing must be echoed in the new telling for the adaptation to succeed.

It will succeed when the memory evoked by the writer is recognised by the audience. By tapping on the touchstone of recognition, the writer generates a desire in the audience for a new presentation of a story which is already known.

The final section of this paper, presented as a coda, outlines a research project investigating the nature of adaptation (including the role of memory) as the basis for a model of the process of adaptation in writing.

Keywords

Adaptation; memory; recognition; original version; overwriting; change identity

The nature of adaptation

"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change." This frequently quoted comment is supposedly from Darwin's On the Origins of Species (Darwin 1979). It is not. It is a rendering of what Clarence Darrow (Darrow 1987) thought Darwin's great thesis is saying. It is also a very good example of how everything is able to be adapted, even writing about adaptation.

Adaptation is a natural and integral part of being. Every living thing, and much that is inanimate, is in a constant state of flux, changing from moment to moment. In all that lives there is an inexorable desire to continue, to survive. This condition has engendered a symbiotic relationship between the need to adapt and the fact of change. If the environment remained fixed in its nature, there would be no obvious need for anything to seek to change itself. But the world is not stable. There is a dynamic in the planet's intrinsic character that means it is always moving towards a new expression. Additionally there is the impact on it of everything we call life. Just by being there, living things affect their habitat. So, this reality of change all about us presents an insistence that we also change. Without changing, it is not possible to adapt; and without adaptation, there will soon be death.

Not all attempts at change are successful. In the natural world, change is accidental. Mistakes in genetic replication occur. In the vast majority of cases they are fatal; they cause anomalies in the organism's make-up, which are inimical to survival. Only rarely does one of these errors in genomic coding produce an advantageous possibility. Then we have a mutation, a new form, which is better equipped to deal with the changing environment, one which will both survive and pass on its enhanced qualities to subsequent generations. Ultimately the mutation will replace the original form. The original form does not cease; it does not disappear. It always continues to exist in some manner. Previously living things often remain as fossils. In the inanimate world it is common to find antique instances of furniture, housing, dress, weaponry, utensils, tools and machinery, to mention only a few examples. At the very least there will be memories of what once was. The oral histories of many peoples provide strong demonstrations of how original experiences and realities are preserved.

This quality of transformation — the replacement of the original by the new version — is evident in the adaptation of a piece of art from one expression to another. The connection with the original is evident despite the adaptation being unique and sovereign. Of particular significance with art is the frequent situation of the original work remaining in existence so that the progenitor as well as the adaptation is available for consideration and comparison.

The process is essentially the same in all acts of adaptation, with all forms of art. For the rest of this discussion, however, I want to concentrate on creative writing.

The urgency to survive makes fairly clear why adaptation takes place in humans and other animals. But why adapt a work of art? Doesn't the original thing — the novel, the play, the film, or whatever form it takes — have an intrinsic worth which will allow it to survive in its own right? We know, of course, that some works become classics while many more are ephemeral. For a work found in the canon of the classics, we assume the foundational beauty of the work has ensured its continuance. There is something in the style of writing, in the nature of the characters, or the particular themes, which is universal and timeless. So it lasts.

Now we have a conundrum. Why has virtually every classic been adapted at some time, in some way, often to some other form? What is allegedly being gained from this process? The answer must depend on more than just a consideration of the quality of the creation. One suggestion is the possibility of achieving something in the new form which enhances the original or at least creates a different perception of it. There's a sense that the adaptation can take us further into the world of the story, where it will be revealed in a new, heightened, more real way.

Yet a curious contradiction to this view — a paradox — lies in the enormous application of fidelity measures when an adaptation is being reviewed or critiqued. While there is a desire to discover something new, there is an equal desire to maintain a verisimilitude. The new version is frequently praised or damned according to how faithful is the recreation to the original work.

A certain perversity exists in the expectation of fidelity. Firstly, there are good reasons to argue that every piece of writing is already an adaptation. There are estimations that only a few dozen plotlines exist in all literature, meaning that a very small number of basic situations has given rise to an infinite number of variations. While not every story can be categorised in a genre, the fact of genre implies a standard expectation for the way a particular type of story will unfold. Put simply, every cop show, every space opera, every romantic comedy is merely an adaptation of the original cop show, space opera, romantic comedy.

Secondly, the adaptation is most often in a different form from the original, that is, it is a film instead of a novel, or it is a stage musical instead of a film. The essential features of a novel are quite distinct from those which typify a film. A novel, for the most part, tells its story whereas a film shows it. The contrast is between words presented linearly and images presented as pictures in motion. Despite the use of real people on a stage, a stage play is never going to equate to the realism which can be evinced in a film. The nature of the medium through which the story is communicated necessarily has a major impact on the way the story is received and understood. The two versions of the story are effectively two different stories.

Whatever we decide is the way to differentiate between the original story and its adaptation, it is difficult to avoid accepting that there is a relationship existing between the two forms. Logic suggests there can't be an adaptation without there being, a priori, a story to adapt.

Given the finite condition of the universe, there is a law of conservation in operation for the adaptor as much as for any other activity involving construction. Anything that is built new has required something already existing to be broken down or rearranged. Beyond the foundational features of all stories — characters, setting, conflict, plot, and the theme which links them all — there are the specific qualities of the particular story which will be retained (or at least used as influences) in the adaptation.

The new self tells a new story

The fundamental requirement of adaptation — Darwin's essential criterion of change for the survival of the species — is inherent and insistent (Darwin 1979). In our response to the imperative to change, we instinctively describe new representations of ourselves. The new self tells a new story — a story etched over the tale of who we were — taking the memory of the earlier version and recreating it as a new expression. The adaptation contains different understandings, but always influenced by what we recall from previous perceptions.

In the world of visual art there are many instances of images superimposed on earlier ones; a practice whose antecedents lie in prehistory. Rock art — in Zimbabwe, in France, in Australia — provides numerous demonstrations of the way later artists have overwritten what was already extant. The original meaning of a painting had been literally overtaken by a new imagination of the world. So a representation of that new imagination was needed.

However, the earlier painting can very often be discerned behind the new creation. What's more, a line of continuance can also be identified. Typically what is being depicted is the same subject matter — human figures, domestic activity, hunting scenes, concepts of gods — so that the new painting has quite clearly evolved from the old. The first piece of art has been adapted and made into a new expression of what is essentially the same subject.

Zimbabwean Rock Art Painting photo© Roger Horton

The rock artists of the past have their counterparts in every subsequent age. Some have worked in images. Others have worked in words, binding myths, legends and mysteries into poetry, song and drama. The fabled stories relayed from generation to generation are attempts to explain who and what we are. We tell them to reassure ourselves about our existence, about our locus in the universe, about our part in the order of creation. These tales have their microcosmic equivalent in the personal

histories and memoirs that tell of particular individuals and their relations with each other.

Zimbabwean Rock Art Painting photo ©Roger Horton

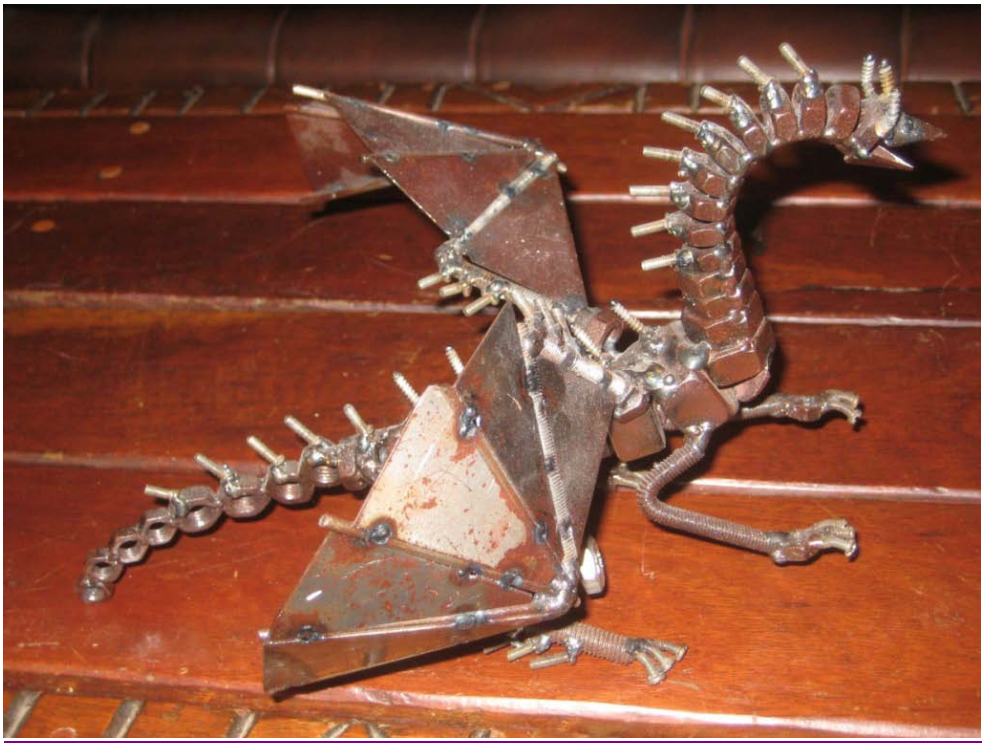
The visual overwriting of the rock artists is congruent with the way life is. The process provides an effective metaphor for the regular and normal operation of the mundane. From moment to moment our lives change. In apparent contradiction, a constant state of flux describes our environment. So our view of our world also changes. In a reflexive manner, we respond to this continuous mutation by rewriting/redrawing our personal image, for ourselves and for the others who are in our world. In the same way that the myths are always being reinterpreted, so are the stories we tell of ourselves. Every new experience is overlaid on what has gone before so that the new is partly explained by the old and the old becomes qualified by the new. The memories which we held yesterday morph into new memories because of what has happened today. We spend our lives as a constant adaptation, forever adjusting our memories, retelling our personal story in order to fit our new understanding. We do it also in order to survive. The old story still has meaning, but it is no longer a fit story to express who we are now.

Yet that old story is still there. It resides in our memories. It provides the basis for the revisions we make in the new version. Much of what is in the new version echoes the memory of its ancestor. Like the image in the rock art, the memory can be discerned lying behind what is now being told.

The writer seeks to do the same thing. To look for what is central and worthy in the original and then build on that, while ignoring what is felt to be unnecessary. In many writerly adaptations — again like the rock art — it is relatively easy to align the new story with the old.

Perhaps surprisingly, if we assume that an adaptation is intended to generate something new, many adaptations seem almost clones of the original. This may satisfy a need in some audiences, but it is a very limited outcome compared to the exciting potential for refashioning the base materials into something truly innovative.

I saw a piece of so-called junk sculpture the other day. It pretended to be the form of a dragon. The body parts, the head and the wings were put together from various bits and pieces of scrap iron, nuts and bolts, split pins, washers and shims. The sculpture was a chimera in two distinct senses. Firstly, it represented a fantastical creature, imagined out of the body parts of known creatures. Secondly, it was created from things originally intended for an entirely different, very practical, function. In both senses, the things from which it had been made were obvious. The wings were those of a bat, the tail had been stolen from a crocodile, the ears recalled a fox. Every corporeal item could be linked to some real animal. Neither were the nuts and bolts and other mechanical gizmos in any way disguised. Yet the sculpture stood there as something else, a new thing, echoing its animate and inanimate components, drawing from the memories of their original natures and purposes, to create a new understanding of what those bits and pieces could also be.



Dragon Junk Sculpture photos©Roger Horton

The role of memory

When a writer adapts a story, there is an assumption that there will be something new in the revision. Not only new, but also better. Memory is the yardstick for

comparison. Without recollection of what was prior, there can be no possibility of recognising what has changed.

When we meet someone for the first time, someone entirely unknown, we discern only what we see there and then. We have no understanding of what the person was like formerly. Yet the new acquaintance was certainly in existence before our meeting. As our association continues, we grow in knowledge of the new person; we discover items from earlier times. There is a history, a remembrance of times past. But what is the nature of this additional information? How does it fashion our modified understanding? We may be treated to reminiscences, descriptions of actions and experiences lying back there, down the years. Since we were not there, not participating in those activities, not sharing those experiences, we are compelled to take their recollection on trust. Our new friend's memory is all there is to connect past existence with present reality. Even so, it will produce a new comprehension, one that advances on the severely limited impression available at that first meeting. The personal story is now a combination of both present and past variations.

Adapted stories, in the way they connect to earlier versions, present a close parallel to this description of how humans relate to their pasts. The adapted story can be traced to its original. We can find links between the two in the same way as we link what we see in the face of our friend with a portrait photo taken some years ago. There are clear similarities, points of connection, but it is not exactly the same person. Likewise, the adapted story is never the same tale.

Nobody is ever entirely happy with their life. There are always things which we wish to improve, to make better. As we tell our present story, we buff the memories of our previous selves. There is a selective process operating in which favoured aspects are maintained and glossed while less satisfactory features are minimised or eliminated.

In recent times several movies have been based on the notion that memory is the way in which we literally continue to exist, both for ourselves and for others. *The Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, (Tarantino 2005), *50 First Dates* (Segal 2004), *Total Recall* (Verhoeven 2005), *Groundhog Day* (Ramis 1994), provide just a sample selection. These filmic stories revolve around the opinion that any sense of

continuation is premised on remembering our past selves and our past actions. If we have no recollection of our past then every moment is absolutely a new beginning which we are damned to repeat continuously until the end of time.

Fortunately, almost everyone can remember their past. Pleasant or horrible, it is there. The memory of who we have been until now identifies us to ourselves and to others. It defines our behaviour and our relationships. Every new step we take is innately a reaction or response to what we have done and been in our past. It is also intentionally a consequence of the memories of that past.

In the same way, when a writer sets out to adapt an existing work, there will be a memory of what was first found in that work. How the features of the original are remembered will influence the manner in which those features are employed in the adaptation.

The corollary to this proposition should be that the reader or audience for the adaptation also has a memory of the original, and will also deal with the adaptation on the basis of that memory. But an adaptation may not be recognised as such by a reader or audience. Confronting the original work and then proceeding to the adaptation is not always what happens. Frequently the adaptation is what comes first. There may not even be awareness that it is an adaptation. (Many in the audience of a based on a novel will not have read the novel; often, viewing the movie drives them to read the book.) For the person with no memory of the earlier version of the story, the adaptation will seem to be original. It is only seeming. The story is still an adaptation though its predecessor is unknown.

An enormous number of films are adaptations, making them perhaps the most obvious demonstration of the process. As many as three out of four Hollywood movies are filmic versions of novels, short stories or plays. The percentage is even higher when applied to Oscar-winning Best Movies. Part of the reason for this lies in the voracious appetite of the industry for content. Just as significant is the keen interest that audiences have in wanting to revisit a story which they already know from personal reading or viewing. (Or by cultural transmission: the situation where the story has not been read, the play has not been seen, yet in the community there is a

fairly high-level awareness of the story, its characters and setting, as well as the plot line and the themes).

It seems that audiences want to match up their memory — or at least awareness — of the original version with the adaptation. Many in those audiences emphasise fidelity in the comparison, a typical response as noted already. In reality, the adaptation replaces the original, producing a new understanding of the story. Significantly, this new understanding is an amalgam of the two versions of the story, the original and the adaptation.

So, adaptation is a process of responding to memories, creating new stories to explain them. But which memories? We know that every reading, every viewing, every listening is a unique occurrence. No two people have exactly the same understanding of a text. Different features of the story are more or less significant to different members of the audience. Beyond that, memory is notoriously unreliable, even untrustworthy.

Despite the faultiness of memory, it still serves to connect the audience with the story. That is a very useful thing to recognise. The memory is not perfect, not precise, but it holds enough detail to allow a hook-up between origin and adaptation.

For the adaptor, whether writer or director or filmmaker, this is a critical issue. What in the original story is to be used? How should it be used? What is certain to be recognised by the audience? Where in the original narrative is the crucial element that will unlock the memories, and invoke the world that has been entered in that earlier reading?

Some adaptors seize on the irregularity of memory. The flaws open a range of possibilities: exploring ideas suggested in the world of the original narrative but not developed; creating completely new relevance for a character, scene or event; allowing minor characters to be brought to the fore.

Tom Stoppard's play, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (Stoppard 1967), significantly expands our experience of Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince*

of Denmark (Shakespeare 1972). Stoppard has done more than find an interesting angle in the older play, which he can exploit for a new piece of writing. He has worked the problem of memory itself as a powerful device in creating his own play.

Charles Kaufman went to a different extreme. Claiming he couldn't find any narrative ground to Susan Orlean's novel, *The Orchid Thief*, (Orlean 2000) which would allow him to make a film adaptation of the story, he ended up writing a screenplay for a film called *Adaptation* (Jonze, Kaufman, and Orlean 2003) in which he recounts the difficulty of the process. "I learned I had no idea how to do a movie about flowers. That was my struggle. I thought Susan Orlean's book was great and I wanted to be true to it. I didn't know how." (Murray and Topel 2010, 1).

The film becomes his story, an account of how he tried through much frustration to find a way to make the adaptation — or at least it is his version of what he remembers as having happened. By its conclusion, he has produced a powerful demonstration of some of the problems that can beset the adaptor. He has also produced an extremely original and creative adaptation of Orlean's book.

Whatever particular style or technique a writer may choose in making an adaptation, there remains, however tenuous, a line of connection with the original story, providing the foundation on which the adaptation is built. It is a filament constructed from our memories.

Postscript before the end: the place of theorists in the discussion

It is conventional to review what already lies in the relevant field of knowledge before starting to build one's own theory. Although there are several writers and theorists who have presented opinions about the ways adaptation works, it is important to say that I did not consult any of these writers in preparing this paper. The ideas and speculations which underpin the argument of the essay have been developed from reflections on personal experience plus the activity of working on a specific number of adaptations as the major part of my PhD project.

At least in the early stages of my project, I have wanted to attempt the development of a model of adaptation uninfluenced by other views. I did not want to be distracted by

alternative suggestions from what the approach of direct experience and practice might generate. From the outset, the project has been designed as a practice-led activity with the emphasis very much on the process of writing, focussing on what happens in the creation of a piece of writing from the writer's point of view.

At the time of writing the paper for presentation at Curtin University's Creative Margins conference in late 2009, I was not aware of Linda Hutcheon (2006) or Julie Sanders (2006), two theorists with well-developed notions on adaptation and appropriation. I have since discovered their separate studies and been stimulated by their perceptive, sometimes provocative, discussions. Even so, the particular suggestion about the role of memory, the crux of my argument, does not appear to have been taken up by either of these writers.

Hutcheon does make the important observation that "we need memory in order to experience difference as well as similarity" (2006, 21-22). In other words, we would not know something is an adaptation without the intervention of memory to remind us of what we already know and then to separate it from what is different and therefore new.

Hutcheon also refers frequently to her idea of the palimpsest. At times it almost seems she is using the word as a synonym for adaptation. Early in her discussion, she argues that "adaptation is a form of intertextuality: we experience adaptations (as adaptations) as palimpsests through our memory of other works that resonate through repetition with variation" (2006, 8). This notion is intriguing as it picks up my own view that adaptation can be understood as an overwriting, a way of retelling that is superimposed on an earlier inscription.

Almost at the end of her book, in chapter 6: Final Questions, she has a few more brief thoughts concerning memory while answering a question about the appeal of adaptation (2006). Then she finishes without pursuing this momentary interest in memory to any significant end.

Sanders (2006) looks at adaptation (and appropriation) from a literary theorist's, rather than a practitioner's, viewpoint. Consequently there is a heavy emphasis on

intertextuality or the influence of texts on each other. Sanders also seeks to distinguish adaptation from appropriation while still agreeing that there is much that overlaps when considering the two processes.

In a survey of definitions (chapter 1: What is Adaptation?), where she is primarily concerned to establish what is of significance in both adaptation and appropriation, she quotes John Ellis's suggestion that "adaptation trades upon the memory of the novel, a memory that can derive from actual reading, or, as is more likely with a classic of literature, a generally circulated memory" (2006, 25). This opinion fairly closely parallels one of my own ideas on the role of memory. But it is raised to support the belief that the end effect of adaptation is achieving pleasure rather than to argue memory's critical importance in achieving the adaptation in the first place. Again, as with Hutcheon, there is no persistent investigation of the role of memory in producing adaptations.

It seems there is a need to look further into the idea that memory is crucial in producing any sort of adaptation. In the natural world, where adaptation results from genetic accidents leading to mutation, there is still the memory of the original organic structure contained in the genomic coding. The mutated form doesn't lose all the laid-down patterns of its being; only some part is altered allowing a new version to evolve over time.

In the same way, in the world of the creative artist (in this study, the writer), the beginning point for any adaptation lies somewhere in the artist's memory. The adaptation is a creative response to that memory. It picks up on the established pattern and then rearranges it to form something new. My project is an attempt to enter that matrix and try to find the pathway the writer's mind travels in moving from the memory to the production of the new piece of writing. So far this does not appear to be an area which has been explored.

While there is a great deal of writing about the nature of adaptation, the discussion is typically from the point of view of literary analysis, of critical and comparative interpretation; in other words, adaptation as product. An alternative approach is to look at adaptation as process, emphasising how the writer produces the new work.

The new work can then be considered as an integral component of the process, not as an end in itself.

Building a model for adaptation

In a practice-led research project in Creative Writing, I am exploring issues involved in developing a model for the process of adapting one form of writing to another.

The project requires production of several pieces of writing, all based in some manner on the same narrative concept. The pieces include a novella, a stage musical, and a feature length film script. This creative work will provide a framework of practical reference within which I hope to find some indications of what might constitute a model for the process of adaptation in writing.

The formation of a practical model is, at this stage, an uncertain possibility. It may be that a set of matrices can be formulated to guide the process of adaptation. It may equally be that every adaptation is unique and can only be achieved by working from first principles derived from the basic construction of the original piece of writing.

Either result will still be worthwhile. If a model can be developed, it will be of obvious benefit to the adaptor; if it cannot, then knowing that it cannot will provide a different signpost, pointing to the need to approach every adaptation as an inimitable experience.

So far what I have completed in the creative writing component of the project is a thirty-thousand-word novella. The work, titled Townsend, comprises twenty short chapters, none of them exceeding two thousand words. A lot of the chapters are capable of standing alone as short stories; the novella is obviously episodic in structure. Most of the narrative unfolds in a linear plot development though there is some use of flashback.

Four characters — two who are mates and two who are sisters — are central to the story. A set of overlapping relationships bind these four people together in varying ways, which produce the conflicts and determine the plot.

The story concludes in the ultimate failure of all the relationships. Even the sisters are finally lost to one another. And there is another significant failure: the overthrow of the traditional belief that hope remains when all else is lost. In this story, hope is also lost. All that can be held onto is the memory of love since the object of love, in every instance, has disappeared. Somehow the characters must adapt to their lonely circumstances. They have only their memories to guide them. This thematic device is deliberately intended to reflect the emphasis on the role of memory in adaptation, which is the central proposition of the exegetical discussion.

With the novella as my basic narrative, I have now begun my first adaptation. It is in the form of a stage play. For convenience, I have defined it as a musical though it may finish up as a song cycle. Since I do not play any instrument and cannot read music, I am reliant on expert help for the composition of the score. My contribution is the writing of the libretto.

Why choose to adapt the novella as a musical rather than as a straight drama, especially given that the story is not 'light'? In part the answer is to avoid the temptation of producing a so-called faithful translation. As earlier argued, the fidelity concept of adaptation is inherently flawed, essentially because the changed form of presentation involves quite different means of communication which, in turn, profoundly affects the nature of the audience's understanding. Rather than fight this fact, it is better to exploit it.

Townsend is an emotional story. The characters are depicted in the grip of their emotions much of the time. Additionally there is an unsolved mystery as an important plot development. These qualities lend themselves to being represented through music, which always operates on an emotional plane.

My intention with this adaptation is to try for a performance in which the emotional dimension of the four characters is highlighted. I do not plan to follow the linear plotline of the novella. Instead, the songs and the music will evoke moments — and memories of those moments — in a shifting pattern of reinforcement, contradiction and counterpoint so that the audience senses rather than being told that we survive

and continue because of our memories. And the foundational memory, sine qua non, must be, can only be, the remembrance of love.

A further adaptation will be undertaken later in my project. This time I will write at least a scenario for a movie. Within the limits of time and word count for the project, I hope that I will be able to write more than just a treatment. A full screenplay is the aim.

The first move in this second adaptation will be to make a decision. There are a number of choices available:

1. the film can be adapted from the novella alone;
2. it can be adapted from the stage musical alone;
3. both novella and musical can provide the basis for the movie.

Whatever the final determination, the film will inevitably be developed, to some extent, from both the novella and the musical. As stated earlier, every experience qualifies our behaviour, and every idea, once identified, continues to reside in our memory. Since both novella and musical will be extant, it will be impossible for me to avoid the memory of what I have already written.

As with the play, I will seek to exploit what is intrinsic to film when making this second adaptation. Though all types of sound — dialogue, music, and FX — are found in a film, it is the moving images which dominate. Film is fundamentally visual. This will be the quality that is emphasised. The aim will be to depict the characters, their setting and circumstance, their emotions and relationships, in images, first and foremost. Pictures have a visceral impact more immediate than words or music which often tend to work reflexively. Dialogue, music and FX will only be employed when the visual cannot carry the meaning on its own.

We are accustomed to films having a set of scenes where some dissolve into the next scene while others fade to black before the next scene opens. There is nothing qualitatively different in this process compared to the movement from one chapter to the next in a novel. Nor does it vary from the change of scenes or the shift in action in a stage play.

Although most movies proceed in a linear manner, this is not imperative. A film can allow presentation of a set of images, random in sequence or overlapping each other, to create an expressionistic take on its themes. Alternatively, the deliberate fracturing of plotline — which Tarantino used in *Pulp Fiction* — presents possibilities of challenge in the meaning of relationships and events (Tarantino 1994). The need to remember each piece as a separate entity in order to fit all the pieces into a pattern offers diverse meanings where none is ultimately dominant. In a story like Townsend — focussed on the tenuous residue of love as a lifeline to survival — this could be brave as well as confronting. Yet our memories more often than not operate in very much this manner. It is virtually impossible to force our consciousness to recall, in precisely the same order, any series of events from our past. We recollect images in a haphazard arrangement and then work to make the required connections which might allow us to use the memory for some current purpose. Like explaining a relationship. Or establishing our identity. Or finding a reason to continue.

Reflection

What started for me as very much a 'nuts and bolts' matter, a simple desire to try to work out some practical aids for use when attempting an adaptation in creative writing, has found me travelling down some unexpected paths.

The original intention is still in place, but it has been adapted. Every day I discover new ideas lying in my memories. About stories I have read, plays I have seen, films I have viewed. I find myself recollecting particular features, techniques that were effective or startling, probably both. And so I change. I take a new direction, but not losing sight of where I have come from or the things already experienced.

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