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## The study of novelisation: A typology and secondary bibliography

The phenomenon of novelisation is remarkably widely underresearched, even within adaptation studies, which has generally limited itself – until quite recently – to the one-sided direction of literature to film. Considering that the field of ‘film and literature’, which has vigorously started emancipating itself over the past decade, has traditionally been regarded as only a subfield of film studies, it is obvious that the study of novelisation is rather marginal in the grand scholarly universe, in the film department as well as the literature department. While film adaptation studies focus on the adaptation from novel to film, literary science is primarily occupied with the study of highbrow literature. Needless to say, novelisations are widely derided and discarded as low forms of paraliterature. But the genre is peripheral in content as well, since the novelisation is a ‘hybrid’ form, often mixing film, literature, screenplay, and even film photography into one package. It is in other words ‘the odd novel out’ in the disciplinary academic world.

Here I make a plea for more attention to novelisations, not to demand respectability for these novels per se (for bad writing is unfortunately the rule rather than the exception), but to show its significance and ubiquity as a cultural and literary practice. The novelisation is ideally suited to refine, modify, and perhaps subvert the typical pet peeves in film adaptation studies, such as the assumption of linearity or the notion of fidelity. In this essay, though, I will not concern myself much with the theoretical implications or the historical roots of novelisation. Instead I will explore the various types of novelisation by way of a synchronous overview, in order to illustrate the range of the phenomenon. Following that, I will draw attention to the study of novelisation itself by mapping the current state of the field and by presenting an extensive bibliography of the existing literature on the subject.

### Typology

Typically, novelisation is defined as the adaptation process from film to literature. As is the case with any definition, such a condensed formulation immediately raises a few key issues. From a literal viewpoint at least, novelisation is in many cases not at all an intersemiotic process of translation or transmedialisation, in that standard novelisations are mostly based not on their visual counterparts but on the screenplays. Furthermore, the source text does not necessarily have to be film or television, nor does the target text need to be literature in its strict sense, for film tie-ins come in various guises, as I will discuss below. Of course, any refinements of the definition depend on the scope or range of the researcher’s perspective on the genre. It is also important to note that any definition should never be more than simply a method, or an attempt to grasp and comprehend a subject, without narrowing it down or reducing it. In this case, the line between adaptation, or novelisation, and intertextuality is sometimes very thin indeed, which supports the

hypothesis that the various forms of adaptation should be considered as part of a sliding scale from one end of the spectrum to the other. On the other hand, at the same time the need arises, certainly in adaptation studies, to distinguish the notion of adaptation from the broader concept of intertextuality. Therefore, this essay sets out to demonstrate the very diversity of the genre of novelisation – which is in fact what makes the attempt at any definition elusive – while balancing it within a paradigm of adaptation.

The most common type of novelisation is the Hollywood film tie-in, that is to say, the commercial or industrial novelisation, a standard novel published in paperback and possibly on a limited scale also in hardback. As a practice, the Hollywood novelisation is part of the global marketing campaign of film releases. Its goal is twofold, both as additional publicity for the film and as additional income either to benefit from the possible success of the blockbuster-to-be or – in tandem with other tie-in products such as the DVD and the soundtrack – to limit possible losses of the investment. From this perspective, the novelisation blends in with other merchandising in exploitation of a new film. For instance, the book market alone offers a multitude of related products, like 'official magazines', 'behind the scenes'- or 'the making of'-books, as well as colouring books, stickers, postcards, calendars, and so on. Correspondingly, the genre of novelisation itself covers a wide range of different types. In the following sections, I will give various examples on the basis of three general parameters, moving from the context over the content to the form of the text.

## 1. Source Texts and Writers of Novelisations

First, I should pose the question as to what it is that is being adapted, what the source is. It is this text, whether existent or non-existent, which justifies the critical demarcation of the process of adaptation, in that one source text is not only distinctly more dominant than the other intertexts, but, more significantly, is usually being recognised and labelled as such. While the very word 'novelisation' implies that it can be derived from anything, as long as it is turned into a novel, the most obvious and common sources of novelisations are theatrical motion pictures and television series. Television films, too, may get adapted into novels, e.g. Walter Kendrick's novelisation *A Fire in the Sky* (1978). But as I have mentioned above, most of the time the literal source is actually the screenplay. Therefore, when the script has undergone profound changes during the production or post-production process, the novelisation can differ significantly from the final result on film or TV. Edward Bryant's *Phoenix without Ashes* (1975), for instance, is purely based on Harlan Ellison's original pilot script for the TV series, while the producers modified the story and concept to such an extent that Ellison distanced himself from the TV series. Furthermore, novels developed from screenplays of abandoned film projects can be considered novelisations as well. Ian Fleming's *Thunderball*, which was later adapted into the James Bond film, is technically in the first place a novelisation, since it is "based on a screen treatment by K. McClory, J. Whittingham and Ian Fleming". In short, novelisations are not exclusively derived from cinema or TV, but can also be adapted from pretty much all other possible media, like from comics, e.g. Roger Stern's *The Death and Life of Superman* (1993) or Hugo Pratt's *Corto Maltese: Una ballata del mare salato* (1995), from video and computer games (see Letourneux 2004), e.g. Alan Dean Foster's *Shadowkeep* (1984), the first computer game novelisation (see Larson 1994: 54), or from radio series, e.g. Stephen

Gallagher's *The Last Rose of Summer* (1978) or Douglas Adams's *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (1979). Another variant is the play novelisation, which is in fact one of the precursors of the film novelisation itself. This practice reached its peak in the period 1900-1915, upon which it pretty much faded away, although the occasional play novelisation has popped up since, e.g. John Burke's *The Entertainer* (1960). Lastly, amongst the myriad of King Kong spin-offs and tie-ins, there is even a novelisation of a novelisation, so to speak, namely Joe DeVito and Brad Strickland's *Merian C. Cooper's King Kong* (2005), which is "a full, expanded rewrite of the 1932 novel" by Delos W. Lovelace. All this goes to show that the novelisation is not merely limited to the film tie-in, but that it remains a persistent reflex of the ever-growing body of different media to churn out adaptations in literary form.<sup>1</sup>

Opening up the notion of the source text, it is always worth considering the context in which a novelisation has been developed. Of course the cultural-historical situation and the evolution of the genre are vital in such matters, but it is equally interesting to examine the transformational processes that a given text has gone through or, in other words, the 'making' of novelisations. For instance, film adaptations are usually not novelised, as in that case the adapted novel is being reprinted as film tie-in, unless the film is not adapted from a novel but from another source, like a short story or a comic book (series), which apparently allows for a full-length novelisation, e.g. Alan Dean Foster's *The Thing* (1982) or Terry Bisson's *Johnny Mnemonic* (1995), and Steve Perry's *Men in Black* (1997) or Max Allan Collins's *Road to Perdition* (2002), which is exceptionally by the same author as the original graphic novel. Although it thus seems that the book market (or rather the film production company) only leaves room for one fictional film tie-in novel, there are still enough exceptions to contest this rule, for example Pierre Véry's *La chartreuse de Parme* (1948), Françoise D'eaubonne's *J'irai cracher sur vos tombes* (1959) (see Baetens 2008a), Peter George's *Dr Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964), Gordon Williams's *The Duellists* (1978), Fred Saberhagen and James V. Hart's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) (see Montalbano 2005), Leonore Fleischer's *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (1994), Todd Strasser's *Jumanji* (1996), and William T. Quick's *Planet of the Apes* (2001). Especially when the screenplay diverges widely from the original novel, it is likely that a new book version will be published that is in accordance with the film, e.g. Christopher Wood's *James Bond, The Spy Who Loved Me* (1977) and *James Bond and Moonraker* (1979). Many of the aforementioned novelisations, moreover, prove to be interesting case studies about 'readaptation' in themselves. Contrary to common practice, some films have even generated two different novelisations (simultaneously), one for the US market and the other for the UK market, e.g. Ron Goulart's versus Ken Follett's (aka Bernard L. Ross) *Capricorn One* (1978) (see Allison 2007), Randall Frakes and Bill Wisher's *The Terminator* (1985) versus Shaun Hutson's unauthorised version (1984), or Richard Mueller's *Ghostbusters: The Supernatural Spectacular* (1985) versus Larry Milne's *Ghostbusters* (1984), or even the German novelisation by Helmut Rellergerd (aka Jason Dark), *Ghostbusters: Sie kommen um die Welt zu retten* (1985), a rare example of a (New) Hollywood film novelisation originally written in another language instead of translated from the English version.

The author of a novelisation is typically a hack writer, who regards novelising as a hack job and does not put much effort into the novelisation, and often a writer with a bad reputation to boot. Like with all paraliterature, it is very common amongst

novelisers to use pseudonyms, usually in order to distinguish their novelisations from their original novels, which they consider their legitimate work. Novelisations are also done occasionally by a ghost-writer, since attributing the novel to a better-known author is expected to boost the sales of the book, e.g. *Star Wars* (1976), credited to George Lucas but written by Alan Dean Foster, or *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977), credited to Steven Spielberg but written by Leslie Waller. Interestingly, the novelisation of François Truffaut's *Les quatre cents coups* (1959) is ascribed to Marcel Moussy, who had also helped out with the screenplay, while its reissue in 1999 (as a children's edition, no less) has the names of both Moussy and Truffaut on the cover, although it is unclear how much Truffaut was involved with the novel (see Miller 2004). The noveliser may sometimes give unique insight into the 'making of' a novelisation, as he or she can shed light on the typical 'constraints' on the genre, such as the film companies' exertion of control over the novel. Recently, Max Allan Collins and Lee Goldberg founded 'The International Association of Media Tie-In Writers', which has a website offering a plethora of insider's peeks into the writing and business of tie-ins and novelisations. Clearly, going against the reputation of novelisers as hacks, there is also a need for the more regular tie-in writers to distinguish themselves precisely as a group of authors in their own right, as the name of the association itself "is a declaration of pride in what we do: **I AM** a Tie-in **W**riter. We say it with pride because we are very proud of what we do and the books we write."<sup>2</sup>

Often, the rare cases of collaborations between the film director and the noveliser make for the most interesting case studies, e.g. Arthur C. Clarke's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), or Orson Scott Card's *The Abyss* (1989) (see Martín Alegre 1997). Not to be confused with novelisations (partially) credited to the director or screenwriter but really written by a hired author only, these are collaborative efforts in that film and novelisation have mutually influenced each other, and illustrate the kind of symbiosis that texts in different media may reach. They are also part of a larger group of novelisations that have been developed simultaneously with the film, which dismisses from the outset any clear hierarchy. Other examples of 'simultaneous' novelisations are Thea von Harbou's *Metropolis* (1926), Graham Greene's novella *The Third Man* (1950), and Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Teorema* (1968). Often such novels enjoy the same respectability as the film; therefore it is telling that they are seldom considered novelisations, and sometimes even mistaken for adapted novels instead. Although it may be debatable case by case to what extent the term is applicable, an inclusive approach to novelisation appears to be most valid here, especially considering a fundamental institutional difference between adaptation and novelisation. Book-to-film adaptation presupposes a rhetoric of anteriority and linearity, in that a clear temporal distinction is being made between the one text and the other. Consequently, film adaptation studies has often focused upon the processes of adaptation, that is to say how books are being transformed into films. Novelisation, on the other hand, does away with any clear temporal distinction, since many commercial novelisations are solely based on the screenplay, and are being written before the production of the film is completed. As Vonda N. McIntyre, author of several novelisations, says: "It takes a lot longer to print and distribute half a million copies of a paperback than it does to edit and copy a film, so the manuscript must be finished before filming is complete" (Larson 1995: 12-13). The simultaneity of novelisation upsets – albeit somewhat modestly – the notion of what constitutes an adaptation, and encourages research into issues of interaction between art forms and media. More importantly, it shows that the new-

found field of novelisation needs not adhere to the methodologies and critical traditions of adaptation studies, but is free to explore other roads to deal with its research object.

## 2. From Continuation Novels to Literary Novelisations

Under the pretext of a second parameter I would like to differentiate novelisations on the basis of content, more specifically their relation to the content of the source. Generally, novelisations borrow story and plot, especially when it concerns adaptations of films. In the case of TV novelisations, though, there are two distinct main types, namely novelisations from a teleplay and 'original novels' (i.e. with an 'original' story) based on the story or concept of the TV series. The former type is confronted with a discrepancy between the average length of a book and the relatively short duration of one TV episode. Logically, publishers have found various ways to 'standardise' teleplay novelisations into publishable books. As Kurt Peer notes in his comprehensive bibliography of TV tie-ins (Peer 1999), one TV episode may be expanded into a full-length story, two or more episodes may be connected to form a single novel, or several episodes may be individually novelised to form a book collection of "short story novelisations". On the other hand, a TV tie-in may also be restricted expressly to one teleplay novelisation without much expansion, and hence marketed as young adult fiction. The latter type of TV novelisation is in fact a subgenre in itself, which may be designated as the 'continuation novelisation'. Overall, a continuation novelisation can relate to a TV series on both a syntagmatic and a paradigmatic axis. Syntagmatically, it can connect different episodes or seasons of the TV series, or precede or follow its story in time – as 'prequel' or 'sequel' – e.g. the *24 Declassified* novels or various original novels, the first of which was James Blish's *Star Trek: Spock Must Die!* (1970). Paradigmatically, it can copy the story format of the TV series and make up a new story around it, which is by the way what the blurb 'inspired by' hints at. Besides typical story features or kernels, the main characters are usually retained too, like in Charles Grant's *The X-Files: Goblins* (1994) for example. However, depending on the series in question, this is not always required: for instance, Cathy Hapka's novelizations of *Lost*, *Endangered Species* (2005) and *Secret Identity* (2006), revolve around original main characters with only a few guest appearances by the characters of the TV series, while borrowing the narrative structure by alternating between flashbacks and the present. Thus, on the whole, the relation between the continuation novelisation and the TV series is mainly temporal and/or structural. At this point, though, I should mention three special forms of continuation. The first is the 'crossover' novelisation, which is a spin-off from two or more different series, e.g. Nancy Holder and Jeff Mariotte's *Unseen trilogy* (2001), tying in with and . The second is the 'interactive' book, which leaves it to the reader what path the protagonist takes by presenting different storylines and options in a second-person narrative, e.g. Richard Brightfield's *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* children's books in the "Choose Your Own Adventure" series by Bantam Books. The third is the 'meta-representational' novelisation, which concretises a certain object from the TV series. In what is essentially a play on media, this involves a mediatic representation – within the reality of the reader – of a fictional text or object. Consider for instance the original TV tie-in *Bad Twin* (2006), a mystery thriller with its own story, independent from the TV series. This is literally a 'mise-en-abyme' spin-off, as a manuscript of the book is shown to be read by characters in the series. It is credited to the fictitious author Gary Troup (i.e. an anagram of

'purgatory'), who, according to the mythos, was killed in the aftermath of the fatal plane crash which opened the series; hence the novel's blurb "His Final Novel Before Disappearing on Oceanic Flight 815". As such it is part of a larger marketing whole which tries to turn into a multimedia event beyond the classic format of a TV series, with fiction bleeding into reality by way of false websites, faux corporations, fake advertisements in actual newspapers, webisodes, games, which all contain additional clues and information tying in with the series' mythology. Other examples of similar tie-ins are the novelisations of , namely *The Secret Diary of Laura Palmer* (1990) ("As seen by Jennifer Lynch") and *The Autobiography of FBI Special Agent Dale Cooper: My Life, My Tapes* (1991) ("As heard by Scott Frost"). Needless to say, the peritext plays a significant role in the case of such continuation novels: on the one hand, it is obviously clear from the covers and other peritextual information that they are tie-ins to TV series, but on the other hand they try to present the fiction of the series as reality.

Although it has mostly developed as TV novel, the subgenre of the continuation novelisation is of course not restricted to television, as the sheer volume of *Star Wars* novels will testify. Witness also William Rotsler's *Star Trek II: Short Stories* (1982) and *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock: Short Stories* (1984), William Kotzwinkle's *E.T.: The Book of the Green Planet* (1985), K. W. Jeter's *Blade Runner 2: The Edge of Human* (1995) (see Saint-Gelais 2004), Michael Walsh's *As Time Goes By* (1998) (which is both a prequel and a sequel to *Casablanca*) or, to give an example based on another medium as well, Dean Wesley Smith's game novelisation *Brute Force: Betrayals* (2002), the "official prequel to the sensational Xbox game!". Again continuation comes in various guises, e.g. the interactive *Indiana Jones "Find Your Fate Adventure"* books, D. A. Stern's so-called real *The Blair Witch Project: A Dossier* (1999) (see Burtin 2004), or Pau Gómez's fictional *Biografía of Indiana Jones* (2006). Here another taxonomy of continuation novels, which has been proposed by tie-in writer Michael Stackpole and which is relevant to the concrete practice of tie-in writing (involving licensors and property-owners), comes in useful. A distinction can be made between "interstitial novels" and "expansion novels". The former are "filler novels" that work within the timeline established by the original film texts and which have no effect on the stories of those films, for instance Steve Perry's *Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire* (1996), an 'interquel' between *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*, which is also a remarkable case in that it is part of a whole array of tie-in products that normally accompany a film (including a soundtrack release) without there actually being an original film. The latter are novels set outside the established timeline, which explore the universe of the parent property and as subsidiary texts may sometimes even influence and affect the primary texts.<sup>3</sup> In conclusion, the continuation novelisation is a typical paraliterary phenomenon, in that the story and the characters take precedence over the author, who is essentially replaceable. It is such content-related elements that the consumers and fans usually base themselves on to judge a continuation novelisation by comparing it to the film or TV series in the dubious and much-debated name of fidelity, wielding the elusive concept of 'true' tone or spirit.

Aside from the industrial form and practice, novelisation can also be diversified into the realm of the literary, as there are numerous other novels that incorporate or resemble novelisation in a more highbrow fashion. Such novels adapt their source material much more freely (which then becomes a synonym for 'more creatively'), and the authors will usually reject the label 'novelisation' as such. In French

academic circles, Tanguy Viel's *Cinéma* (1999), which self-consciously novelises Mankiewicz's *Sleuth*, has rapidly become the prototype of the literary novelisation (see Rongier 2003 & 2006; Houppermans 2004; Blatt 2005; Maggitti 2005). Moving away from explicit or obvious novelisations, there are also novels that at first sight obscure their source text to that point where it might even become an (invisible) intertext, such as Louis-René des Forêts's *Le malheur au Lido* (1987) or Patrick Deville's *La tentation des armes à feu* (2006) (see Baetens 2008a), which rework Visconti's *Morte a Venezia* and Hitchcock's *Topaz* respectively. Clearly, novelisation can be opened up, not only on an intertextual but also on a thematic level, to a whole range of novels, not in the least to the genre of the film novel, with the Hollywood novel as its most notable subgenre. Ronald Sukenick's *Blown Away* (1986), for instance, includes a postmodern play on novelisation, with its characters concerning themselves with "prenovelization" and "renovelization". It is not uncommon for such Hollywood novels to integrate descriptions of either actual or fictional films, fragments that effectively amount to embedded novelisations. André Hodeir, for example, briefly novelises a fragment from a Harry Langdon film in *Play-back* (1983). In Theodore Roszak's *Flicker* (1991), as the narrator describes the movies of the fictional film-maker Max Castle, it soon becomes clear that, due to Castle's revolutionary but impossible subliminal technique, his short novelisations are the only means to represent Castle's films. Some film novels can even be regarded as novelisations of film genres, e.g. *Horace McCoy's They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* (1935), which in fact reworks two Hollywood musicals, *42nd Street* and *Gold Diggers of 1933* (see Musser 2005), and Robert Coover's *A Night at the Movies, or, You Must Remember This: Fictions* (1987). Aside from the Hollywood novel, regular (literary) novels can involve hypothetical novelisations, too. A fitting example is undoubtedly Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves* (2000), which is – rather simplistically put – a novel about a report on a hypothetical documentary film called *The Navidson Record*. Distinctive of the whole range of literary novelisations described here is their tendency to transpose, besides the diegesis of the film, the viewing of the film itself as well, which indicates their ekphrastic nature and high degree of self-consciousness (see also Baetens 2007). What these examples also illustrate, even without really blurring the boundaries of this phenomenon, is how the novelisation – which at first sight appears to be limited to commercial trash – is in fact a highly differentiated form, ranging from lowbrow commercial novelisations over middlebrow Hollywood film novels to high-art novelisations of classic films.

### 3. The Genres of Novelisation

For the third parameter, I will go into the form of the novelisation, as novelisations appear in many different guises. In accordance with the inclusive definition that I am defending here, novelisation encompasses any text that is novelistic or in book format. Incidentally, this does not cover novelisation as an umbrella term to include all kinds of narrative forms, like at the Udine conference in 2005, where it broadly covered narratives "from the catalogue to the trailer" (see Autelitano and Re 2006). Before going into further types of novelisation, I would briefly like to touch on its complex peritext, which includes multiple references to the film it adapts, thereby signalling its dependence on and subordination to its cinematic counterpart. The retelling of the film story is far from the only feature of a novelisation, and considering that promotion is its *raison d'être* it is perhaps not even its main feature. Its derived visuality is the first aspect of the peritext that catches the eye.

Its chief admissions of adaptation are the movie poster and movie credits on the front and back cover respectively; novelisation also frequently display various types of images in a quire, a portfolio, or on various pages throughout the book. Additionally, there is a whole range of other texts that may be included in novelisations, such as prefaces or postfaces by authors, editors, screenwriters, film-makers, various incidental experts (e.g. the director of the Center for UFO Studies in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind: The Special Edition* (1980)) or even fictional characters (e.g. "Admiral Kirk's preface" in *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (1979)), interviews with the author or the director, notes or essays on the making of the film, a FAQ section by the director on the film in *The Sixth Sense* (2000), bios of the film-makers and the noveliser, cast and crew credits, a glossary of terms, and last but not least publicity for other novelisations.

Generally, there are two factors that have a significant impact on the form (or even medium) of a novelisation. One is the role of images (see also Baetens 2009b), which can range from film stills, set photographs and photograms (i.e. frame blow-ups) to sketches, storyboards and drawings. The quintessential type of novelisation in which text and image complement each other is the 'cinéroman', a term for the early French novelisation in the 1920s and 1930s, which was basically a book in brochure format and indeed a fundamentally hybrid form. Over the years, though, it has become a loose label used for any kind of film novel that wants to be set apart from the industrial novelisation, as the cinéroman possesses more prestige than its commercial counterpart (see Baetens 2006b). In short, the cinéroman can refer to the short pulp novelisation that accompanied the silent film or the black-and-white film (called 'cineracconti' in Italy), the published screenplay novel of the 'auteur' film (see Viswanathan 1999), or a variety of highbrow film novels. The best-known contemporary variant that permeates novelisation with film stills is the 'movie storybook', a type of novelisation directed at young children which is characterised by its abundance of photos and extreme simplification (in both style and length) of the story of the film, e.g. *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace Movie Storybook* (1999) or *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial Movie Storybook* (2002) (which "includes more than 30 movie stills!"). Whereas the movie storybook still relies on a text to recount the narrative, though for its particular audience the images are of far more importance, it is in the 'photonovelisation' that the image goes beyond its illustrative function. The photonovelisation, a subgenre of the novelisation and the photonovel, tells the story of the film in photographs, often (though not always) supplemented by some text (notably dialogue and narrative exposition), instead of the other way around. While its roots can be traced back to a variety of books, such as the Italian 'cineromanzi', adult photonovels like the 'Olympic Photo-Readers', and Richard J. Anobile's 'Film Classics Library' books (which reconstructed classic films like *The Maltese Falcon* and *Psycho* by reproducing a very large number of photograms and all the dialogue), the commercial Hollywood variant – aka the 'fotonovel' (sometimes called 'video novel', 'photostory', or 'movie novel') – has only had a short existence. The fotonovel ("the movie you can carry in your pocket") flourished in the second half of the 1970s, with merely a handful of publications, among which *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1978), *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1979), and a line of photonovelisations, e.g. *Star Trek: Fotonovel 6: All Our Yesterdays* (1978). It briefly resurfaced at the end of the 1990s, for instance with the retro book *The Blair Witch Project* (1999) and *Dinosaur* (2000), but this resurrection only lasted for a very short while. The commercial photonovelisation functions as the photographic equivalent of the regular Hollywood



novelisation, as it has a rather similar peritext and is in the same paperback format. By contrast, there are also highbrow instances of photonovelisation, e.g. Chris Marker and Bruce Mau's *La Jetée* (1992), which is in fact a special case, in that the film itself is almost exclusively composed of still photographs. Lastly, the comic book or graphic novel, which the photonovelisation is heavily indebted to, is another tie-in format that exists alongside the regular novelisation. Moreover, the 'graphic novelisation', e.g. Scott Allie and Davidé Fabbri's *Planet of the Apes* (2001), inscribes a film into a whole other cultural universe and medium, which often opens up new possibilities for continuation.

The second factor that relates to the form is the literary genre of the novelisation. First of all, within prose fiction itself the targeted readership can play an important role, as many novelisations are tailored to the subcategory of young adult fiction. What distinguishes these novelisations as such is not necessarily the prototypical feature of young adult fiction, namely an adolescent protagonist, but mostly its peritext, its simple style and its shorter length. A young adult or 'junior' novelisation can either be the only novelisation of a given film or TV episode, e.g. Les Martin's *The X-Files: X Marks the Spot* (1995), or share the market with a regular novelisation, e.g. James Luceno's junior novelisation versus James Rollins's 'adult' novelisation of *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* (2008). In the latter case, it is usually an entirely new novelisation, written by a different author, but in some exceptions, the junior novel may also be a special abridgement of the original novelisation (in the same manner as so many of the literary classics), e.g. Donald F. Glut's *The Empire Strikes Back: Special Young Readers' Edition* (1980). Very generally speaking, the bulk of TV novelisations are young adult fiction, while films are adapted into standard novels. But novelisation is not at all restricted to the novel or to prose. For one thing, novelisation often appears in short-story format, whether it concerns novelisations of TV episodes, e.g. Steven Bauer's *Steven Spielberg's Amazing Stories* (1986), or short stories that are actually condensed from full-length films, as can be found in the movie story magazines from the golden age of Hollywood (see Fuller 1997). Another variant is the poetry novelisation, e.g. Jan Baetens's *Vivre sa vie* (2005) or Guy Samson's *Haiku Sci-Fi Film Reviews* (2008), which probably contains the shortest ever novelisations; a whole array of other examples can be found in *The Faber Book of Movie Verse* (1993). Considering the close proximity of the novelisation to the screenplay (since its status as transcription of the screenplay often entails a heavy emphasis on dialogue and action), it is not surprising that there is also a sliding scale from the screenplay to the novel, with certain novelisations taking elements from both forms. The prototypical example is the cinéroman of the French New Wave, the 'auteur' movement that propagated the concept of filmmaking as writing in order to relieve the director's artistic expression of the screenwriters' influence. Hence its cinematographic auteurs were awarded much prestige for the publication of their screenplays, for it demonstrated their complete control, and at times they would also creatively rework their screenplays and films into a kind of film novel that held the middle ground between screenplay and novel, as Alain Robbe-Grillet, for instance, did in his cinéromans, e.g. *L'année dernière à Marienbad* (1961). Other striking examples of such screenplay novelisations are Ingmar Bergman's *Persona* (1966) and Bruno Dumont's *La vie de Jésus* (2001) (see Baetens 2008a). At the same time, many published scripts, e.g. Michael Crichton's *Westworld* (1974), adopt a cover and peritext that aligns them with the novelisation and tie-in market, but strictly these remain screenplays in form. Finally, there are also a few

non-fiction film books and novels that skirt around the genre of novelisation, in particular novelistic film essays, reflections, or autobiographical diaries or accounts of the viewing or making of a particular film, e.g. Louis-Paul Boon's *De Bom* (1969).

While the previous examples have all been based on a concrete media text, the form of a novel can also foreground its novelising traits and determine to what extent it may be designated as a novelisation without there being any source text at all. In particular, hypothetical novelisations and screenplays novelise hypothetical films by imitating the style of certain film-makers, e.g. Gianni Celati's *La farsa dei tre clandestini* (1987), a hypothetical Marx Brothers screenplay, or Paolo Pedote's *Come in un film di Almodóvar* (2006), a kind of modern novel of manners in the style of Almodóvar. Some of those screenplays or screenplay novelisations are derived from film projects that have never been realised, like *Trois films fantômes de Jacques Rivette* (2002); others are merely being written in the form of a screenplay without a corresponding (hypothetical) film project, e.g. Marguerite Duras's *La pluie d'été* (1990). This brings us to various kinds of filmic writing, which may fall under the common denominator of novelisation as well, since it concerns an adaptation and application of the formal techniques and characteristics of another medium. For instance, Alfred Machard coined his own novel, *L'homme qui porte la mort* (1926), a "roman cinéoptique", since he purposely searched for literary equivalents of cinematographic processes. Arguably, the appropriation of filmic techniques has been superseded by the contemporary variant of filmic writing. Since cinema has replaced literature as the centre of the cultural system, literature has increasingly needed to define and position itself in relation to cinema. The contemporary novel, then, can often be considered a novelisation of a hypothetical film, meaning that the novel is already being written filmically in the hope of or even in preparation of its adaptation into a film (see Baetens 2007: 236). Moreover, as Baetens has suggested, it might even be said that the contemporary reader is always already trying to visualise the sequences of a novel as if they were scenes of a film adaptation, which is quite similar to reading a novelisation. Novelisation thus seems to play a not insignificant part in our present media culture in more than one way.

## 4. Conclusion

Wrapping up this attempt to describe, differentiate and map the various kinds of novelisation, I would like to draw attention to a few threads that run through this typology. First of all, it is possible to discern a sliding scale with on one end the formal imitation of filmic techniques (e.g. hypothetical screenplay novelisations) and on the other end the transfer of story content (e.g. commercial Hollywood novelisations). As Viswanathan puts it, in contemporary novelisations "on note au contraire une démarche constante qui consiste à effacer, dans le livre du film, toute trace d'une écriture cinématographique" (Viswanathan 1999: 15). Film novels cover a similar spectrum, as they can be thematically (e.g. the Hollywood novel) or formally oriented (e.g. the cinéroman). Along the same line, the text itself reveals a clear tension between ekphrasis and a lack of ekphrasis or anti-ekphrasis (see Baetens and Lits 2004b; Baetens 2005b). While literary novelisations (which are interested in the viewing process, the formal characteristics of the film, or the process of adaptation itself) often relate explicitly within the text to the film, commercial novelisations (which strictly aim to replicate the story of the film)

carefully avoid any such references in order not to take the reader (who wants to relive his or her film experience) out of the diegesis and break the mimetic illusion. Paradoxically, the text in Hollywood novelisations is distinctly separated from the peritext, which excessively exhibits the subservience to the source text of the adaptation. In this context, ekphrasis and anti-ekphrasis also have a part in the notion of *mise-en-abyme*, which is a concept significant to novelisation on multiple levels. For instance, film novels may contain embedded novelisations, whether of actual films (e.g. *Cinéma*) or fictional films (e.g. *Flicker*). Furthermore, a book that exists within the story world of the film or TV series may be published as an actual book, which gives the illusion that the diegesis extends into reality (e.g. *The Secret Diary of Laura Palmer* or *Bad Twin*). Conversely, the film or TV series may play a material role in the novelisation. In Thomas M. Disch's continuation novel of *The Prisoner* (1969), for example, Number 6 discovers seventeen canisters of film, which correspond with the seventeen episodes of the TV series, and watches one of those episodes ("The Schizoid Man"). In this way, the novel not only incorporates the themes of that particular episode but also addresses its own status as a continuation.

In conclusion, the myriad of variations on form, theme and content of novelisation shows that the relation between novelisation and its source text is, contrary to popular assumptions, highly flexible. Moreover, the position of novelisation vis-à-vis adaptation is never fixed either. It can be considered at the same time a hypotactical form of adaptation, the paratactical counterpart to (book-to-film) adaptation, and even a kind of "anti-adaptation" (Baetens 2005b: 45). All in all, novelisation constitutes a diverse and fertile field with many different genres, forms, and adaptations; it is quite ready for critics to explore it.

## Research

This synchronous examination only sheds light on part of the phenomenon of novelisation, and further research will undoubtedly uncover its many layers and contexts by taking different angles and approaches, such as history, language, region, genre or medium. Meanwhile, I would like to emphasise that the variety of existing research on the subject should not be overlooked either. As the bibliography below will testify, novelisation studies is clearly well past the initial stage of definition and demarcation, thanks to exploratory work by Jan Baetens among others (e.g. Baetens 2002; Baetens 2004). Specifically, a 2003 conference and the subsequent volume, *La novellisation: du film au roman / Novelization: From Film to Novel* (Baetens and Lits 2004a), together with the Udine conference and book, *Il racconto del film. La novellizzazione: dal catalogo al trailer / Narrating the Film. Novelization: From the Catalogue to the Trailer* (Autelitano and Re 2006), have paved the way for further academic interest in this originally quite marginal corpus, on many different fronts to boot.

Research into the novelisation can roughly be divided into two major fields, that of the Romance world and that of the Anglophone world. Appropriately so, since novelisation has also evolved differently within each national and linguistic context (which the previous typology largely disregards for the sake of clarity). Academic criticism on the French and Italian novelisation has progressed far more substantially than in other areas. The ball was set rolling by investigations into the *cinéroman*, notably by Jeanne-Marie Clerc (1985; 1993) and Alain and Odette

Virmaux (1984; 1998) in France, and Emiliano Morreale's volume on 'cineromanzi' (2007) in Italy, which led to more focused discussions on novelisation as such. The Italian novelisation was the topic of a special issue of *Bianco e nero*, edited by Raffaele De Berti (2004a); the bible of the French novelisation is without doubt Baetens's *La novellisation: du film au roman* (2008a).

Investigations of the English novelisation are much scarcer, partly due to the overemphasis on book-to-film adaptations in the domain of adaptation studies. Even the volume *Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text* (Cartmell and Whelehan 1999), the second part of which might be expected to be devoted entirely to adaptation from film to literature, features only one essay that deals with a standard novelisation. Linda Hutcheon's recent "A Theory of Adaptation" (2006) briefly touches upon novelisation, but does not go into much in-depth discussion. Nevertheless, there have been a few insightful articles on the phenomenon, especially on the early forms of novelisation like the early tie-in forms (Singer 1993) and the movie story magazines (Fuller 1997; McLean 2003). A number of exhaustive catalogues trace the large corpus of photoplay editions (which is an early term for a 'movie tie-in', in reference to both the reprint of an adapted novel and the film novelisation): Petaja (1975) is their forerunner; Davis (2002) and Miller (2002) offer the most extensive reference books of photoplay editions, while Mann (2004) focuses on a genre-specific collection of horror and mystery novelisations (but also takes magazine fictionisations into account). Wadle (1994), then, compiles a long list of movie tie-in paperbacks. The real precursor of academic research on the English novelisation, though, is Randall D. Larson's *Films into Books: An Analytical Bibliography of Film Novelizations, Movie and TV Tie-ins* (1995). The first part of this book gives a modest introduction to the phenomenon, mostly from the perspective of production, but it is especially meritorious for its second part, consisting of interviews with novelisers, and its thorough third part, an extensive bibliography of novelisations. Conveniently, Larson's book may be complemented by Kurt Peer's bibliography of TV tie-ins (1997). Finally, I would like to refer to Baetens's introductory essay in *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen* (2007), which merely summarises previous efforts of his but is important in that it brings novelisation officially to the attention of Anglophone adaptation studies, and to my own historical overview of the genre (2009a), which is pretty much a diachronous counterpart to this article.


Apart from the work done in the Romance and Anglophone areas, Flemish and Dutch novelisations have already attracted attention, too. Special issues of *Deus ex Machina* (2006), *Spiegel der Letteren* (2009) and *Parmentier* (2009) have been complemented by a PhD thesis by Heidi Peeters in 2009 on the novelisation in Flanders. Meanwhile, Leuven University in Belgium has hosted two sequels to the initial 2003 conference mentioned above, namely *Filmliteratuur in Vlaanderen en Nederland* in 2008 and *Science Fiction across Media: Adaptation/Novelisation* in 2009. Overall, the increasing interest in novelisations at conferences worldwide, the growing body of essays on the subject, and the incipient emancipation of tie-in writers are mere signs of an increasing awareness of the existence and critical relevance of this phenomenon, to which I can only hope this article will contribute.

With the following preliminary bibliography I set out to chart the initial academic research on novelisation. Specifically, I want to indicate in this overview that the study of novelisation is not limited to one or two essays, but has produced a


reasonably short yet very fruitful history of articles, volumes, and books. As the bibliography highlights, discussions of novelisation are not limited to introductory essays and overviews, but often consist of excellent case studies. It is my hope that it may come in handy for researchers who want to work and expand on the subject of novelisation, so that articles do not need to start from scratch anymore but instead can build on the existing literature and analyse novelisation in more depth.<sup>4</sup>


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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>  1. One might even make a good case for considering a book like L. Jon Wertheim's *Strokes of Genius: Federer, Nadal, and the Greatest Match Ever Played* (2009) a novelisation, as well, since it is basically a detailed and chronological description of one specific tennis match, namely the 2008 Wimbledon final, which, though not a media text, has been highly mediatised on television and on DVD.

<sup>2</sup>  2. The website can be found at <http://www.iamtw.org/>.

<sup>3</sup>  3. Michael Stackpole, "Practical Taxonomy for the Description of Novelisations, Adaptations, and Franchise Writing", paper presented at the conference *Science Fiction across Media: Adaptation/Novelisation* in Leuven, May 28, 2009.

<sup>4</sup>  4. I would like to express my thanks to Jan Baetens, who singlehandedly compiled the first draft of this bibliography and contributed virtually all of the French, Italian and Spanish references. I would further like to apologise to potential disgruntled researchers for the inevitable omissions.

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For the sake of clarity, I have divided the bibliography in four parts: books, volumes of essays, special issues of journals, and selected articles.

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