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Honors 401Thesis, Indiana State University

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Abstract

This paper presents an overview of the process of adapting a creative work (i.e., books, films, works of art, etc.) focusing on the unique issues and challenges of bringing two distinctive types of media and persons from different disciplines together to create a successful adaptation. While the nature of adaptation is change, the process to accomplish that transition is complex. This research discusses the media involved, some of the key people involved in the process (and their expectations of the end product), and other factors upon which the success or failure of an adaptation depends.   Three main areas examined include how the skill and choices made by the adapter can impact the original work and the adaptation (both positively and negatively), how creative visions can mesh or clash, and whether some creative works should not be changed from their original form. This research study includes numerous articles on the Internet, on-line resources, Library resources, books, television, movies, as well as personal observations of the subject matter.   This research can assist a potential adapter or creator of a work in making informed decisions about the viability of undertaking an adaptation project. Further in-depth study should be conducted prior to beginning any project of adaptation, since while some of the issues and challenges are evident and concrete, others are subjective in nature.

Keywords: animation, adaptation, computer-generated graphics, creative work, production

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Introduction

Background

The creative works produced by people can take many forms (such as manuscripts, designs, art, songs, etc.). These forms are determined by the ideas and visions that the creators have. In legal terms, these creative works are also known as "intellectual property," since they are the products of human creativity which the law prevents others from copying. (*Oxford Dictionary*, *n.d.*) For purposes of this study, the term "work," shall primarily be used to describe the intellectual property created by authors, artists, and others as noted herein.

Sometimes, another person or group may wish to take an existing work and adapt it to another medium. However, it is often the case that the party who is adapting a new production from an existing work will have a different vision or intentions behind their production than those of the work's original creator or creators if they are not under that party's own creative direction. As someone who is working towards the development of my own creative works, it is

not out of the question that I may find myself adapting another's work someday, or perhaps having my own work adapted.

People can promote a work with their praise and support, or shame it with ridicule and criticism. In some cases, a work can end up strutting a thin line down both these areas and become a controversial subject, generating a lot of feedback and attention- though this kind of attention is not entirely good for the makers of the work if the audience's reactions to the controversial material tilt in the wrong direction. Others will also try to weigh the quality of a work against another to compare similarities and inspirations, or see what ideas worked in it versus what didn't. Since people's impressions of a work can be determined by how it is portrayed, the issues and challenges involved in the process are of great interest to me.

The definition of an "adaptation" is something (a movie, book, play [artwork], etc.) that is changed so that it can be presented in another form or to make fit (as for a new use) by modification (*Merriam-Webster, Adaptation, n.d.*). Thus, a work is literally made to adapt to a new medium, though it requires human input to actually enforce the changes, as an element that worked well in one medium (such as exposition in a book describing a character's mood or thoughts) may not work for another (on film, showing the viewer how characters react instead of telling them how as not to dull their interest). However, this is only an external look at what it means to adapt something. Adapting a work can be far more complicated than how we look at the practice from afar. One must look closer to notice that those who undertake adaptations often encounter obstacles which tax their abilities to develop a good or great end product. I see the first challenge as the amount of change and the type(s) of modification which are needed or being performed on the "original" work.

One of the main reasons that adaptations are made is for purposes of financial gain; often, money is at the forefront of one's motivation to adapt a work. While money can sometimes be viewed as a problematic influence, it has its uses in the adaptive process. In some cases, money can create the motivation for someone to perform an adaptation to the best of their ability.

Though many people who adapt works will do so for artistic reasons, they usually require funding to get their projects moving along. If an adaptation were to fail, it may not result in receiving enough money to compensate for what was spent on adapting the initial work, and can have a lasting effect on the careers and reputations of those involved.

In contrast, a successful adaptation can lead to significant profits, benefit the futures of the people who were a part of the adapted work, and allow for access to the resources to make more adaptations, as well as funds to improve on the methods or technology used in the past.

Another reason why one would want to do an adaptation would be so the work could be brought to a broader audience.

An adaptation could present the work in a different form (i.e., book to film, play to film, two-dimensional art to three-dimensional art, etc.). In the case of a novel or comic, the adaptation can give "life" to the characters, give greater definition to the setting or locale of the story, and in the case of fantasy/science fiction, make the "impossible" possible. With non-fiction works, an adaptation can allow the audience to be transported through time to experience periods of history, become acquainted with historical figures, and gain a more personal understanding of events, situations, and cultures.

In adapting one form into another, different senses are brought into play.   An article from *Masterpiece Theater* Learning Resources, states that "the major difference between books and film is that visual images stimulate our perceptions directly, while written words can do this

indirectly. Reading the word chair requires a kind of mental 'translation' that viewing a picture

of a chair does not. Film is a more sensory experience [color, sound, movement] than

reading…" (*Masterpiece Theater n.d.*) This would also be true in the case of a play, where live

actors can be seen and heard, and in an interactive theater setting, might actually be touched.

Just because different senses are being stimulated does not automatically guarantee the

adaptation will be a success. The audience comes with their own frame of reference,

expectations, and bias. While it might be wonderful to see/hear/touch a character, if that

character doesn't fit what the audience expects or wants, or the senses are over-stimulated to the

point of detracting from what is being observed/experienced, the adaptation can easily fail (both

critically and financially).

Thesis Statement

Although various types of works (book, art, film, play) being created are known entities,

and the roles of the creator of a work and a filmmaker/producer/adapter are known, the unique

issues and challenges of bringing two distinctive types of media and persons from many different

disciplines together to create a successful adaptation are yet unknown, thus I propose to

investigate the more unique and lesser known issues and challenges in the adaptation process.

The Paradox of Adaptation. The process of adaptation can be paradoxical. Depending

on the work which is being adapted and the skill and choices made by the adapter, the work may

be enhanced, improved, or irrevocably ruined for the audience to which the adapted work is

presented.

As mentioned earlier, while lucrative financial gain is a powerful motivation (for both the

originator of a work and the adapter), there may be equally powerful motivating factors to keep

the original work intact and not to adapt it or to keep the degree of change to a minimum.

Great works of art are often called "masterpieces." Great works aren't confined to art, but can include novels, plays, and films as well, which are often labeled "classics." The fact that they are beloved by a huge audience and continue to be treasured throughout time, can carry a moral obligation not to detract from the original work solely for financial gain. While that obligation may not be recognized by some (especially in the advertising world or entertainment industry), it is a factor to be considered when deciding when to do an adaptation.

Another component in the adaptation of a work is the creator of that work. The term "temperamental artist" can translate not only to the world of art, but to authors, filmmakers, and playwrights. In the process of adapting a work, persons from different disciplines, backgrounds, and vested interests in the work proposed for adaptation are brought together in the collaborative process. How well they can work together to find common ground can spell success or failure. Unfortunately, while the end product may have been a financial and even a critical success, many authors have regretted allowing their work to be adapted.

Research Questions

This research will focus on the following questions:

- Given that one form is being adapted into another, how does the adapter (and the creator of the work, when applicable and actively involved in the process) capture the spirit of the work without getting bogged down in the minor details?

- In the adaptation process, what is involved in balancing the author/creator's vision with that of the filmmaker/producer/adapter?

- Are there issues which should/can preclude/negate a work from being adapted?

Scope of the Investigation.   While there are a variety of types of adaptations which are possible, this research will present more of an overview, with a concentration on the most common forms in the context of the research questions presented above.

While finances and legal issues play a huge role in the adaptation process, this investigation will only peripherally touch on those areas, concentrating instead on some of the lesser known or more unique issues and challenges in the adaptation process. The step-by-step details of the adaptation process will also not be covered in-depth, but rather in the context of how the step(s) impacts the questions being examined. Supplemental and supporting information will be included as Appendices, as applicable.

Data sources will include, but not be limited to: Internet and on-line resources, Library resources, books, television, movies (big screen and Digital Video Disk [DVD]) and personal observation.

Among the subtopics which will be investigated are:

- Insight into the adaptation process as voiced by authors, filmmakers, and others involved in the process;

- Current technology available to aid the adaptation process;

- Expectations of an adaptation from the perspective of an author;

- Expectations of an adaptation from the perspective of an adapter;

- Expectations of an adaptation from the perspective of the audience; and

- Good and bad adaptations.

Supporting data gleaned from this research shall be summarized and organized in the body of the report.

Summary

This research will examine issues and challenges relating to the uniqueness of the media involved. Books, artworks, films, and plays all lend themselves to being adapted, but just because they are capable of being adapted, does not necessarily mean they should be changed from their original form.

In creating an adaptation something new and unique can be created, but something original and unique can forever be destroyed.

One of the main reasons adaptations are made is for purposes of financial gain. That brings about its own set of unique challenges including whether the change can be accomplished in order to earn a profit, and in doing so, not compromise the original work. There are certain intangible elements involved in adapting a work due to the various people involved in the process.

In conducting this study, by compiling some of the lesser known or more unique issues and challenges involved in the process of adaptation, it will enable this researcher to make informed decisions about whether to undertake an adaptation project (whether it is to adapt someone else's work or in allowing my own creation to be adapted).

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Examination of the Adaptation Process

</div>

Introduction

While the nature of adaptation is change, there is a complex process in accomplishing that transition. The process of adaptation can be like a metamorphosis--a major change/alteration in appearance, character, or circumstances. (*Merriam-Webster, n.d.*) With that as a given premise, one of the most important considerations is whether or not at the end of the process, the work will basically be unchanged, be enhanced, or so drastically altered that it is completely

unrecognizable (e.g., allowing a caterpillar to remain a caterpillar, turning a caterpillar into a butterfly, or changing a butterfly back into a caterpillar).

The success or failure of an adaptation depends on the various people involved in the process.   The expectations of what the end product will be can be as varied as the persons involved in the process. It is an apparent and a logical assumption that there needs to be an agreement between the parties involved as to the degree of change and the form it will take. That is probably the most difficult portion of the process and one which can have the most impact on whether the project is a success or a failure.

To detail the legal details, steps, and ramifications would expand this research beyond its scope; however, it is important to note that all parties should ensure that prior to beginning an adaptive undertaking those details are clearly outlined, documented, and understood.

The following examination presents the results gleaned from research and related observations in the context of the questions originally identified. Whether or not the question was answered or any reasonable conclusion(s) which can be made as a result of the research conducted, are included in the Conclusions portion of this thesis.

- **Examination of Research Question 1: Given that one form is being adapted into another, how does the adapter (and the creator of the work, when applicable and actively involved in the process) capture the spirit of the work without getting bogged down in the minor details?**

In a blog for *Premium Beat,* Noam Kroll (*2014*), discusses what to cut and what to keep when doing an adaptation of a book to a film. He notes that one of the greatest criticisms an adaptation will receive is either that the film was too faithful (which could be perceived as not translating well to film) or not faithful enough to the original (and disappoints the book's fans).

He makes the point that when adapting a novel, once the central characters have been selected, the next step is to go back to the novel and integrate the key details/scenes into the adaptation. He also notes that new material will probably need to be added--even some new characters or plot points that did not exist in the original novel. This can include alternate endings which may or may not be accepted by the fans. He stresses that a screenplay doesn't have room for some of the most enjoyable aspects of a novel and while a novel is typically 300 pages, a screenplay is closer to 120 pages. (*Kroll 2014*)

How to define the parameters of the adaptive process from the perspective of the various parties involved is further examined in Research Question 2.

Technology. There are many kinds of technology available to aid in the adaptive process. Not only is technology able to expand the capabilities of the adapter (and to some degree the originator of a work), it can assist (or in some instances hinder) the financial side of the process.

Foremost among these innovative filmmaking techniques, Computer-Generated Imagery (CGI) is being widely utilized to the enhancement (and sometimes detriment) of the end product being created.

In a *Weekly Reel* article by Stephen Romney (*2012*), he discusses the pros and cons of CGI versus the pros and cons of practical special effects.

CGI Pros: CGI technology is capable of realistic effect, such as a character flying through the air or fantasy characters, can be created more economically graphically on a computer instead of using on-set special effects. (*Romney 2012*)

CGI Cons: CGI effects can be problematic and when done incorrectly can break the illusion of the entire film. In a large-scale production, a single effect can require more

manpower and more high capacity processing equipment to handle the specialized software. (*Romney 2012*)

If CGI is used inadequately, it can appear too cartoonish or unbelievable for viewers to take seriously, also breaking the illusion of a film. In its earlier years, when CGI was just emerging as an entertainment technology, its capabilities were quite limited. While advanced for their time, some CGI do not age well due to the noticeable jump in the quality of graphics and animation used for computer-rendered objects.

An example would be the computer-generated Hulk from the 2003 movie *Hulk* versus the 2008 computer-generated version of the Hulk that has reappeared in *The Avengers* film series and become more believable with each successive film due to better budgets and the evolving quality of the techniques and technology behind CGI. (*Marshall 2013*)

Practical Visual Effects Pros: Simple tricks, such as forced perspective and stop-motion can be done in-camera and on set, where they can be adjusted for lighting, framing, and depth-of-field as needed. Since the camera doesn't need to be locked down for the effect to work, more creative shots are possible. (*Romney 2012*)

Practical Visual Effects Cons: Practical visual effects are prone to technical problems, require more careful attention, and can delay a production, thus impacting schedule and cost. Some special effects (pyrotechnics, wires, etc.) also carry a risk of personnel injury. (*Romney 2012*)

In a blog from Austin Community College, Sara Farr (*n.d.*) cites animation costs quoted by AnimationAndEffects.com as usually figured on a "per finished second" basis and can range from $250-$500 per second. An animated movie, such as *A Bug's Life* or *Tarzan* would be in the $7,000-$8,000 per second range, while *The Simpsons* runs in the $500 per second range.

Refer to Appendix A for a list of the most expensive films produced in recent years. It should be noted that many of these films are adaptations which also use CGI wholly or in part.

Looking at the process of defining the spirit of the original work and adapting it from the perspective of the various parties involved is further examined in Research Question 2.

- **Examination of Research Question 2: In the adaptation process, what is involved in balancing the author/creator's vision with that of the filmmaker/producer/adapter?**

As mentioned earlier, there are many motivations (i.e., financial gain, exposing the work to a greater audience, etc.) why the adaptation is being undertaken. There are also some intangible factors such as why the work was originally created, why the adapter(s) or the work's creator(s) felt the work would lend itself to adaptation, and whether an audience would want/accept the work in a different form.

Expectations of an Adaptation

The Author's Perspective. In an article by Benjamin Wood about a panel discussion at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival about the challenges of adapting books for film, he details the struggles of Kathryn Stockett, author of *The Help*, in getting her book published and ultimately made into a film of the same name. Ms. Stockett is quoted as saying, "I had to find a filmmaker that understood Mississippi, for all its baggage and its beauty…" (*Wood 2014*)

Ms. Stockett was involved in the collaborative process of the film and had to work with the filmmakers by paring down the characters and plots within the story. The article quotes her as saying, "Just rip them [the characters/plots] out. Throw them away and create a clean, open space for the voices whose story you want to tell." (*Wood 2014*)

Not all authors are so accommodating. P.L. Travers, author of the book *Mary Poppins*, hated what Walt Disney did to her characters. She didn't like that Dick Van Dyke, an American, was cast as a cockney chimney sweep. Her will stipulates no American will ever be able to work on future adaptations of her works ever. Ms. Travers objected when Walt Disney refused to cut the film's animated sequences prior to the film's release, and she disowned the adaptation outright. (*Oden 2013 & IMDb Poll n.d.*) The recent movie, *Saving Mr. Banks*, brought out the point that she was particularly horrified at the thought of dancing cartoon penguins. (*Walt Disney Pictures 2013*)

According to Ike Oden (*2013*) in an article for *Styleblazer*, author Stephen King has stated that while director Stanley Kubrick's film *The Shining* is a dazzling work stylistically, it failed as an adaptation of his novel. Mr. King was displeased with Mr. Kubrick's downplaying of the film's haunted house plot which also made the character of Jack Torrance (played by Jack Nicholson) less likeable and removed the character's transformation from frustrated writer to psychopath. Mr. King also cited Mr. Kubrick's direction as "dreadfully unsettling." (*Oden 2013 & IMDb Poll n.d.*)

Author Dirk Pitt was so displeased with the film made of his action novel *Sahara* that he sued the producers of the film over what they did to his final script. The producers countersued claiming his remarks and suit caused the film to do so poorly financially. (*Oden 2013 & IMDb Poll n.d.*)

In an Internet Movie Database (IMDb) Poll (*n.d.*), while adaptations of *Mary Poppins*, *The Shining*, and *Sahara* are noted as being disliked by their authors, additionally among the book-to-film adaptations mentioned were:

- *Forrest Gump*, which author Winston Groom felt was too child-friendly and left out key plot points.

- *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*, which actually had a title change from the original book by Roald Dahl in order to promote a chocolate bar. Mr. Dahl also was unhappy with Gene Wilder's choice for the lead role and with his performance, as well as with certain plot changes. *A Farewell to Arms* (1932), which author Ernest Hemmingway felt betrayed the ending of the book as well as the sense of wartime he wanted to portray.

- *The NeverEnding Story*, with which author Michel Ende felt differed so significantly from his book, that he wanted the film to stop entirely or have the name changed (which producers didn't do), and he refused to have his name appear in the credits.

William P. Kinsella (*n.d.),* author of *Field of Dreams* is quoted as saying, "Most writers are unhappy with film adaptations of their work, and rightly so. *'Field of Dreams* [the film],' however, caught the spirit and essence of 'Shoeless Joe' while making the necessary changes to make the work more visual."

On the *Bookmark* television program airing on RLTV (2015), host, Daryn Kagan, interviewed romance author, Jude Deveraux, about the challenges of writing. Ms. Deveraux discussed the process of character development and her evolving "real" relationship with each of her characters. She also discussed what could be termed the development of a "backstory" (*Merriam-Webster, n.d.*) which explains the history, motivation, etc., for the characters she creates which sometimes leads her to actually scrap her plot idea or the characters entirely. This interview points out why authors can be so adamant in what they expect their characters to look like, as well how they should act, think, and feel.

The Adapter's Perspective. According to John Marlow (*n.d.*), a novelist, screenwriter, producer, and adaptation specialist, "In the book world, the publisher's cost-per-page remains the same, whether your characters are playing checkers or blowing up a planet. This is not true of film, where shooting two characters playing checkers might cost $200,000, and filming a major action sequence could run $10 million. If the story seems prohibitively expensive to film, it will not become a movie unless someone very powerful pushes the project very hard."

According to Mr. Marlow, "Studios divide the movie going public into four large segments, or quadrants: young male, older male, young female, older female. The greater the number of quadrants your project appeals to, the better. Four-quadrant appeal is the primary reason for the huge success of animated films—and of *Avatar* and *Titanic*, by far the two biggest grossing films of all time." (*Marlow n.d.*)

Mr. Marlow further states, "A book is meant to be read and enjoyed for what it is. A screenplay aims to roll a movie in the reader's head so vividly that he or she says: 'I want to make this movie, I want to see it on the screen, and I will pay money to make that happen.'" (*Marlow n.d.*)

Mr. Marlow points out that books raise questions screenplays don't: "Will this work onscreen? How do we squeeze four hundred pages into two hours? Half the book takes place inside the hero's head; how do we fix that? This would cost $300 million to shoot—can we make it less expensive? Can we tell this story in three acts, streamline the plot, [and] strengthen character arcs? If we buy the rights, who do we hire for the adaptation? How much is that going to cost? And, at the end of all that—will this be a movie?" (*Marlow n.d.*)

In an article from *Masterpiece Theater* (*n.d.*), screenwriter Michael Hastings is quoted as saying, "Film is visual brevity…If the novel is a poem, the film is a telegram."

The article attributes author William Costanzo with stating in his book *Reading the Movies*, that it has been estimated that a third of all the films ever made were adapted from novels. The article also notes that Mr. Costanzo quotes George Bluestone, one of the first persons to study film adaptations of literature, as stating the filmmaker is an independent artist …"not a translator for an established author, but a new author in his own right." There is much debate if a literal translation of a book can be a "betrayal" of the original work and whether the filmmaker should impart their vision of the story. (*Masterpiece Theater n.d.*)

The article notes the three main reasons a filmmaker or screenwriter would make major changes in adapting a literary work to film: 1) to change to accommodate the new medium, 2) to highlight new themes, and 3) to make the original story interesting or more contemporary. (*Masterpiece Theater n.d.*)

The article also states that "the major difference between books and film is that visual images stimulate our perceptions directly, while written words can do this indirectly. Reading the word chair requires a kind of mental 'translation' that viewing a picture of a chair does not. Film is a more sensory experience [color, sound, movement] than reading…" (*Masterpiece Theater n.d.*)

Another difference between film and a novel is time limitations. While a novel has no time constraints, a film usually is held to about two hours. Additionally, a novel is controlled by the message sent by author, but a film is usually controlled by a collaborative effort of several persons. The article also notes that a novel allows the reader more freedom than viewing a film, since through imagination, the reader can interact with the plot and characters, while the film presents what the image should be. (*Masterpiece Theater n.d.*)

A huge factor in whether an adaptation of a book to another medium will be successful is the choice of cast members. On the *Bookmark* television program in the *Touche'* segment, host, Daryn Kagan, interviewed film critic, Jeffrey Lyons, about adaptations of books into films. One of the points Mr. Lyons raised was the choice of actors and actresses and the expectations of the audience as to who would play the role of the character(s). He noted that often the audience forms their own opinion and if the selected actor/actress doesn't fit or can't be seen in that role, the adaptation will fail. He also noted that if an actor/actress is popular with the public, they will often overlook a misfit in their being cast in a particular role.   Another point which was discussed was that sometimes the choice actor/actress can actually make an enhancement to the original character or by their interpretation/delivery of a scene, can improve upon the original story. It should be noted that the reverse could also be true, in that if an actor/actress was truly miscast or poorly interpreted their character or plot, it could be to the film's detriment.

The 2015 film adaptation of the *Fantastic Four,* was criticized on several counts, one of which was the casting of Michael B. Jordan as the Human Torch, whose ethnicity was different from that of the original Marvel character. (*20th Century Fox 2015*) The franchise has had a rough history with film adaptations in general, this one in particular being cited as too edgy and lackluster for its target audience, who expected the humor and action that has been a part of the original *Fantastic Four* comics and several cartoon series.

The Audience's Perspective. In a Florida International University Student Media (FIUSM) Blog by Nadine Rodriguez, she comments that "…Hollywood has made a habit of turning cherished and loved novels into blockbuster films, disregarding the fan's opinions on the action." (*Rodriguez n.d.*)

In discussing the negative aspects of adaptation, she further states, "Although the big screen gives the words of a novel life and its characters a face for readers to familiarize, the switch over to a different type of media leaves irreversible damage at times." (*Rodriguez n.d.*) She cites the original *X-Men* movie as an example where comic book fans were disappointed by the lack of character development and plot. However, subsequent films were able to focus in areas where the first film did not go, indicating that the lack of development in one does not necessarily make a film bad, if it is viewed as part of a bigger saga. Some films which are weaker as standalone works can be supplemented by new installments.

Marvel incorporated several past films into a gigantic storyline spanning several movies over many years by showing how several heroes originated in their own feature films, then tying them all together into one large continuity when they came together to form the Avengers, and still allowing for more films with the heroes on their own. For example, the *Iron Man* series starts off independent from *The Avengers* films but later becomes part of a larger continuity, yet continues onward with elements of *The Avengers* in play during more stories featuring Tony Stark as the central protagonist. (*Marvel Entertainment, 2008 & 2012*)

Similarly, films can be received differently as continuities grow. The first *Batman* film by Tim Burton (*Warner Brothers 1989*) was highly praised for capturing the essence of the series, but the sequel, *Batman Returns* (*Warner Brothers 1992*), was noted for being considerably more dark and violent despite good reviews. Warner Brothers took notice that the sequel did not exceed the gross profits of the first film due to parental complaints and decided to enlist Joel Schumacher for the next installment, who envisioned a more comical atmosphere for *Batman Forever*. (*Warner Brothers 1995*) However, this more family-friendly comical tone only worked well for the third film, and was overemphasized in the fourth film, *Batman and Robin*, (*Warner*

Brothers 1997) resulting in the film being panned and compared to the campy 1960's *Batman (20th Century Fox Television 1966-1968)* television series and the need to reboot the film franchise in 2005.

When dealing with projects involving historical events and persons, and/or real locations, the continuity and accuracy of the end product can also greatly impact an audience's perception (and ultimately the success or failure of the adaptation).

In recent years, audiences have often found additional entertainment in finding "bloopers," or errors within films and television programs. Those can include changes of costume, zippers showing on a "historical" costume, placement of characters within a scene, microphones dipping into the picture, modern cars driving by, modern equipment showing (technology not consistent with the time frame), terminology or "catch phrases" (not consistent with the time frame) etc.

While some audience members enjoy finding these errors, they can greatly detract from the credibility, quality, and overall perception of the end product being viewed. This researcher personally experienced this when watching a movie about World War II where a soldier was given an order and said, "No problem."

In an article in *People*, Pick No. 10, *Killing Jesus,* a drama based on the book by Bill O'Reilly and Martin Duguard, which appeared on the National Geographic Channel, editor Tom Gliatto (*2015*) notes that the story covers the geopolitics of Jerusalem at the time of the crucifixion. It is interesting that the editor makes the comment: "However, on another contemporaneous note, it's jarring to hear a disciple use "impact" as a verb.

- **Research Question 3: Are there issues which should/can preclude/negate a work from being adapted?**

Good and Bad Adaptations. Whether or not an adaptation is considered "good" or "bad" can be highly subjective. It would appear that overwhelming critical and popular opinion (which would reflect in box office revenues), as well as the level of satisfaction expressed by the original creator of the work (when applicable), would tend to determine which label was applicable.

In a *Rolling Stone* article by Katie Van Syckle (2013), she rates *Fight Club*, *Clockwork Orange*, *Trainspotting, No Country for Old Men*, and *Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* among the best adaptations. She counts among the failures: *Atlas Shrugged*, *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, *Battlefield Earth*, *The Scarlet Letter* (1995 adaptation), and *The Lorax*. Her rationale on both counts centers on the success or failure of translating the plots, characters, and locale (through special effects/cinematic needs).

Matt Singer (*2013*), film critic for Indiewire.com gave the following as his picks for the best and the worst book-to-film adaptations. His picks for the best film adaptations were: *Jaws, Fight Club,* and *The Shining.* Mr. Singer noted that these films delivered an entertaining experience and story; however, he noted that Stephen King did not feel the movie *The Shining* was a proper or successful adaptation of his book.

Mr. Singer's picks for unsuccessful book-to-film adaptations were: *The Cat in the Hat, The Scarlet Letter* (1995 adaptation), and *The Bonfire of the Vanities*. He stated that the latter was a bland, boring comedy, there was too much sex and modernizing of *The Scarlet Letter*, and *The Cat in the Hat* was overdone. (*Singer 2013*)

The *Harry Potter* films, which generated a worldwide revenue of $7,709,205,984 for all eight movies, dating back from 2001 all the way to 2011 (*Rodriguez n.d.*), were well received, and judging by the financial and popular success were good adaptations of books-to-film.

Plays can also have good and bad transitions to film. In a *New York Post* article by Elisabeth Vincentelli (2014), the screen version of *Mama Mia* is noted as actually being better than the Broadway version, in part to the cinematography. She sites *Bye Bye Birdie*, *Cabaret*, *West Side Story*, and *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* as successful film adaptations of Broadway plays. Among the film adaptations of plays which she considers failures are: *Rock of Ages*, *Chicago*, *Nine*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Evita*, *Camelot*, and *Les Miserables* (2012 musical). Her rationale for the ratings ranged from good/bad casting and/or direction to poor staging or improper filming of dance numbers.

The Moral and Ethical Dilemma of Deciding to Adapt a Creative Work.

Though it may be reasonable to adapt something if it is faithful to the original creation, is it wise to do anything that could change it?

If an artist considers their work fine just the way it is, or designed it in a particular way to fulfill a vision, an adaptation may not be advisable. If someone else has tailored a work to fit it to *their* vision, it can take away or detract from what made the work special in its original form.

To know that a work has been modified from the original can seem like it was twisted, and contaminate the way someone looks at the original because there is now a warped version which exists, or even trample the positive values contained within the original work because someone did not agree with it.

A person may be motivated to improve a work or to benefit themselves. In adapting the work, they may either be doing a service or a disservice to the original creator and to those who love the original.

To take a revered work and cheapen it with parody or satire, use it to promote an advertisement, assume a political stance, trigger controversy with potentially offensive material, or push forth one's own agenda-- all of these decisions are dangerous for the sake of a work.

Sadly, some people do not feel the need for a moral obligation to protect a creator's vision if their version can net them financial gain, and if a creator is no longer alive, the rights which protected their work from unsolicited changes may be trampled upon by opportunistic businesspeople. Some examples are included in Appendix B.

Unfortunately, there is no truly right answer or easy solution to this dilemma. Each situation is as unique as the creative work itself, and must be carefully examined in multiple areas before undertaking the process of adaptation.

Conclusions

This study has examined the unique issues and challenges involved in the process of adaptation. Multiple research data sources were utilized including Internet and on-line resources, Library resources, books, television, movies (big screen and DVD), plus personal observation. In conducting this study, by compiling some of the lesser known or more unique issues and challenges involved in the process of adaptation, it has expanded the knowledge base to enable this researcher to make informed decisions about whether to undertake an adaptation project (whether it is to adapt someone else's work or in allowing my own creation to be adapted).

Throughout the creative works listed here, there is one recurring concern-- identifying if the adaptations were produced in a respectable manner. The research done about these works has shown that the adapter of a work should honor the beloved qualities of an original work, yet it is

not necessarily wrong for the adapter to make changes. If a creator of the original work is involved, they might have preferences as to what direction an adaptor takes with the work, but the adaptor could very well have different ideas for the new version of the work. Thus if a creator and adaptor can reach a compromise, a healthy balance can be struck between the old and new to create an even more unique work.

Probably the most important factor in the process of adaptation is finding the "right" blending of all the elements involved in bringing together different types of media and persons from different disciplines.

It doesn't need to become a wild and daunting effort to make an adaptation or even to decide what to edit out, add, or leave alone. While criticism can be constructive in adapting something, if a creator, adaptor, or audience becomes too concerned with searching for flaws, they risk getting to point where they overlook the true merits of a work. Sometimes, instead of having a valid issue with a work, people can over-think the properties of the work and invent reasons why something is wrong just because they want everyone else to agree with them. Yet, it is also not a good idea to pretend a work is flawless if it contains a serious fault of some kind.

Casting the right actors is integral to an adaptation, too, as it is a tricky process to find the best portrayals that fit what both producers, directors, and the viewing audience are looking for and wish to get out of a performance.

There are also ideal times to produce a work. For instance, when someone has a vision for a film that exceeds the limitations of technology or budget, waiting to adapt it may be a smarter choice.

Special effects continue to improve and become more versatile, so there can be a drastic difference between the special effects quality used in a work produced in 2005 versus one

produced in 2015. A film that has been given additional time and effort after waiting for a bigger

budget to become available is equally helpful. The timing of a work is also important, as it may

be more practical to schedule the production when resources are more abundant.

There are even situations where a work, such as a comic book (or the Japanese form of

comic called a manga), becomes popular and gets a television adaption into a cartoon or anime

(the Japanese stylized cartoon format) (*Wikipedia November 2015*), while at the same time, the

original comic continues to be produced. In that respect, the source material can also be a

resource for planning.

When a comic adaptation begins, it is often easy to produce episodes while keeping a

decent pace with the material storyline by incorporating several chapters into the episodes fairly

quickly. Unfortunately, if the television series draws too close to the latest chapter installment of

the series, the adaptors might need to slow down the pace of the televised series to avoid

overtaking its source material, or need to delay its progress by incorporating stories exclusive to

the television adaptation, known as "filler." This can work well if the stories are faithful to the

progress of the source material's main plot, but it risks alienating viewers if the filler carries on

too long and distracts from the progress of the plot. Another problem is if filler creates a plot

hole by having a story element that contradicts the story told by the author, which means that

before creating a filler, the creator of the series should be allowed to assess the production and

put a stop to anything they know is going to go against the plot they wish to weave.

The most important concerns with adapting a work are ethical and legal rights to adapt

something. A creator of a work deserves to be given credit and respect for what they have done

in making an original work, and they have the right to defend and protect their work from

potential misuse. While one of the main reasons that adaptations are made is for purposes of

financial gain, that should not necessarily be the only motivation of the people involved, due to the risk of compromising not only the original work, but also the quality of the adaptation being produced. Furthermore, a work should be presented delicately if it is going to confront a sensitive issue to avoid conflict with groups who would not sit still if they felt threatened, confronted, or slandered.

In conclusion, this research has revealed that the process of adapting a creative work is in itself a creative work, and a touchy process. Some of the issues and challenges found in bringing a work to fruition are concrete, while others are subjective in nature. What factors may affect one work's adaptation or creation may not apply for another work. Finding a balance between the two is perhaps the greatest challenge of all in order to make informed decisions about whether to undertake an adaptation project (whether it is to adapt someone else's work or in allowing my own creation to be adapted).

There are so many ways to go about producing a work, but they all lead back to the same starting point: an idea. No matter what happens when a work gets created or adapted, it is key for us to remember that it begins by taking someone's ideas and bringing them to life, and whatever life those ideas have is entirely up to those who played a part in their development and adaptation. For the sake of the creators and everyone else that had something to contribute to a work, we should strive to give every good idea a brilliant life.

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    280&bih=576&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&sqi=2&ved=0CB0QsAR

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Appendix A

Compilation of the Most Expensive Films

This is a list extracted and expanded upon from:

Wikipedia. (July 16, 2015 update). Retrieved July 17, 2015 from

the Wiki:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_most_expensive_films

This list represents some of the most expensive (unadjusted for inflation) films produced since

1997. This list is included to show the potential financial investment in creating an adaptation

(which most of the following are). Annotations have been added to show the type of original

work from which the film was adapted. Additionally, many of these films used Computer-

Generated Imagery (CGI).

Most expensive films			
Rank	Title	Year	Cost (est.) (millions)
1	***Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides*** From the novel from the novel *On Stranger Tides* by Tim Powers.	2011	$378.5[*]
2	***Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End*** Third installment of *Pirates of the Caribbean* film series.	2007	$300
3	***Avengers: Age of Ultron*** Based on the *Marvel Comics'* superhero team the Avengers.	2015	$279.9[*]
4	***John Carter*** Based on *A Princess of Mars*, the first book in the Barsoom series of novels by Edgar Rice Burroughs.	2012	$263.7[*]
5	***Tangled*** Based on the German fairy tale, *Rapunzel*.	2010	$260
6	***Spider-Man 3*** Based on *Marvel Comics'* superhero Spider-Man**.**	2007	$258[*]
7	***Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*** Based on the J.K. Rowling Book ***Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince***	2009	$250
	The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies Based on the book *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien.	2014	$250

	Most expensive films		
Rank	Title	Year	Cost (est.) (millions)
9	***Avatar*** Not an adapted work.	2009	$237[*]
10	***The Dark Knight Rises*** Based on *D.C. Comics'* character Batman.	2012	$230
11	***The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian*** Based on *The Chronicals of Narnia* books by C.S. Lewis.	2008	$225[*]
	The Lone Ranger Based on a 1933 Radio Show of WXYZ Radio, Detroit MI.	2013	$225[*]
	Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest Second installment of *Pirates of the Caribbean* film series.	2006	$225
	Man of Steel Based on *D.C. Comics'* character Superman.	2013	$225
	The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug Based on the book *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien. (Series of several films.)	2013	$225
16	***The Avengers*** Based on the Marvel Comics' superhero team the Avengers.	2012	$220
17	***Men in Black 3*** Based on Lowell Cunningham's *The Men in Black* comic book series published by *Marvel* and *Malibu Comics*.	2012	$215[*]
	Oz the Great and Powerful Based on the *Oz* series of books by L. Frank Baum	2013	$215[*]
19	***X-Men: The Last Stand*** Based on *Marvel Comics*' superheroes the X-Men.	2006	$210
	Transformers: Age of Extinction Based on Transformers toy line (and later comics and animated Television series).	2014	$210
21	***Battleship*** Loosely inspired by the classic board game.	2012	$209[*]
22	***King Kong*** Remake of 1933 film *King Kong*.	2005	$207
23	***Superman Returns*** Based on *D.C. Comics'* character Superman.	2006	$204[*]

Rank	Title	Year	Cost (est.) (millions)
24	***Titanic*** Not an adaptation. Fictionalized account of historic event (written for film).	1997	$200*
	Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen Based on Transformers toy line (and later comics and animated Television series).	2009	$200*
	2012 Not an adaptation.	2009	$200*
	Spider-Man 2 Based on *Marvel Comics'* superhero Spider-Man**.**	2004	$200
	Quantum of Solace Based on book ***Casino Royale*** by Ian Flemming.	2008	$200
	Terminator Salvation Fourth installment of *Terminator* film series.	2009	$200
	Toy Story 3 Third installment of *Toy Story* CGI film series.	2010	$200
	Green Lantern Based on D.C. Comic's superhero Green Lantern.	2011	$200
	Cars 2 Second installment in ***Cars*** CGI film series.	2011	$200
	The Amazing Spider-Man Based on *Marvel Comics'* superhero Spider-Man**.**	2012	$200
	The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey Based on the book *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien. (Series of several films.)	2012	$200
	Iron Man 3 Based on *Marvel Comics'* superhero Iron Man**.**	2013	$200
	Monsters University Sequel to *Monsters, Inc.* CGI film.	2013	$200
	The Amazing Spider-Man 2 Based on *Marvel Comics'* superhero Spider-Man**.**	2014	$200
	X-Men: Days of Future Past Based on *Marvel Comics*' superheroes the X-Men.	2014	$200
39	***Guardians of the Galaxy*** Based on *Marvel Comics*' superheroes the Guardians of the Galaxy.	2014	$195.9*
40	***Transformers: Dark of the Moon*** Based on Transformers toy line (and later comics and animated Television series).	2011	$195
41	***World War Z*** Based on novel *World War Z* by Max Brooks.	2013	$190*
	Furious 7 Installment in *The Fast and Furious* film franchise*.*	2015	$190

Most expensive films			
Rank	**Title**	**Year**	**Cost (est.) (millions)**
43	*Brave* Not an adaptation. Is CGI film.	2012	$185[*]
	Jack the Giant Slayer Based on English fairy tale *Jack and the Beanstalk*.	2013	$185[*]
	Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull Installment in the Indiana Jones film franchise.	2008	$185
	The Dark Knight Based on D.C. Comic's superhero Batman.	2008	$185
	Star Trek Into Darkness Sequel in *Star Trek* TV and film franchise.	2013	$185
48	***The Golden Compass*** Based on Phillip Pullman's novel *Northern Lights*.	2007	$180[*]
	Pacific Rim Not an adaptation.	2013	$180[*]
	The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe Based on *The Chronicals of Narnia* books by C.S. Lewis.	2005	$180
	WALL-E Not an adaptation. Is CGI film.	2008	$180
	Tomorrowland Based on Disney Theme Park.	2015	$180
53	***Troy*** Based on Homer's *Iliad*.	2004	$175[*]
	Evan Almighty Sequel to film *Bruce Almighty.* Loosely based on *Biblical* story of Noah's Ark.	2007	$175
	Monsters vs. Aliens Not an adaptation, but is CGI film.	2009	$175
	Up Not an adaptation, but is CGI film.	2009	$175
	A Christmas Carol CGI adaptation of Charles Dickens' novel *A Christmas Carol*.	2009	$175
	47 Ronin Not an adaptation.	2013	$175
	Maleficent Prequel to Disney cartoon *Sleeping Beauty*, based on based on *The Sleeping Beauty* by Charles Perrault and *Little Briar Rose* by The Brothers Grimm.	2014	$175
	Edge of Tomorrow Not an adaptation.	2014	$175
	Jupiter Ascending Not an adaptation.	2015	$175

Most expensive films			
Rank	Title	Year	Cost (est.) (millions)
62	*Waterworld* Not an adaptation.	1995	$172*
63	*Snow White & the Huntsman* Based on the German fairy tale *of Snow White.*	2012	$170*
	Thor: The Dark World Based on Marvel Comics' character Thor.	2013	$170*
	Wild Wild West Remake of the *Wild Wild West* Television series.	1999	$170
	G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra Based on G.I. Joe toy franchise (and later comic and cartoon series).	2009	$170
	Iron Man 2 Based on Marvel Comics' superhero Iron Man.	2010	$170
	Tron: Legacy Sequel to film *Tron*.	2010	$170
	Captain America: The Winter Soldier Based on Marvel Comics' superhero Captain America.	2014	$170
	Dawn of the Planet of the Apes Sequel to remake of Planet of the Apes.	2014	$170
71	*Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines* Installment of *Terminator* film series.	2003	$167
72	*How to Train Your Dragon* Loosely based on British book series *How to Train Your Dragon*.	2010	$165
	Wreck-It Ralph Not an adaptation, but is CGI film.	2012	$165
	Big Hero 6 Based on *Marvel Comics'* superhero team Big Hero 6.	2014	$165
	Interstellar Not an adaptation.	2014	$165
76	*Cowboys & Aliens* Based on Scott Mitchell Rosenberg novel *Cowboys & Aliens*.	2011	$163*
77	*Sahara* Based on book *Sahara* by Dirk Pitt.	2005	$160*
	Fast & Furious 6 Installment in *The Fast and Furious* film franchise.	2013	$160*
	Van Helsing Based on character from Bram Stoker's book *Dracula*.	2004	$160
	The Polar Express Based on book by Chris Von Allsburg.	2004	$160

Most expensive films			
	Poseidon Loose remake of 1972 film *Poseidon Adventure*.	2006	$160
	Shrek the Third Third film in *Shrek* CGI film franchise.	2007	$160
	Inception *Not an adaptation.*	2010	$160
	Godzilla Remake of Godzilla film franchise.	2014	$160
85	***Robin Hood*** Based on the British Robin Hood legend.	2010	$155[*]
	Terminator Genisys Fifth installment of *Terminator* film series.	2015	$155[*]
	Alexander Based in part on the book Alexander the Great by Robin Lane Fox.	2004	$155

[*] Officially acknowledged figure.

Appendix B

Artwork Which Should Not Have Been Adapted

The following are examples of adaptations of artwork which probably should not

have been done and which the artist probably would have hated.

In an article for *The Guardian* by Lizzie Davis (2014). Italians were enraged over an

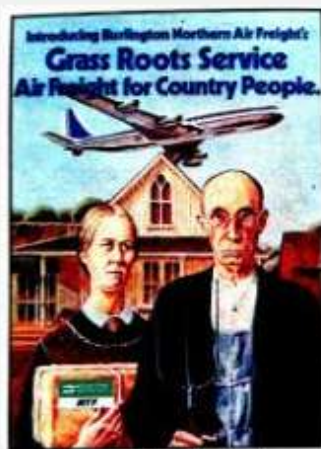advertisement by the American company, Armalite.

Original Work: *David* by Michelangelo

Original Work: *The Mona Lisa* by Leonardo DaVinci *(Google Web images, n.d.)*
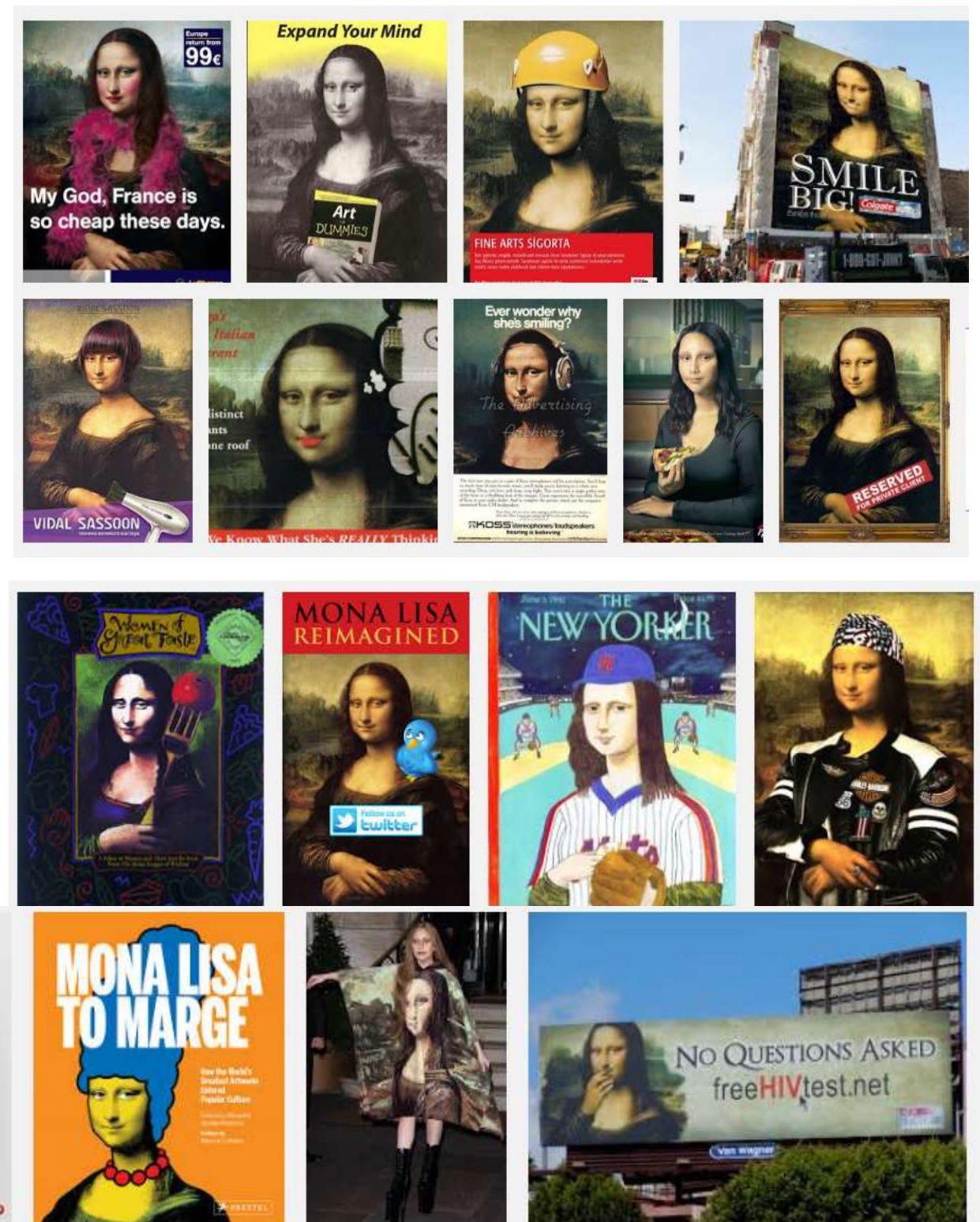
Original Work: *American Gothic* by Grant Wood (*Google Web Images, n.d.*)