



UNIVERSIDAD DE JAÉN
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Trabajo Fin de Grado

FROM CHILDREN'S BOOKS TO CHILDREN'S FILMS: CULTURAL ADAPTATION

Estudiante: Marina Arboledas Merino

Tutorizado por: Prof. Dr Luciano García García
Departamento: Filología Inglesa

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Abstract

This Degree Dissertation will be informed by the study of children's literature as a literary genre and the adaptation of children's book to children's film affected by extralinguistic factors. We will focus on the process of adaptation, its origins and how Disney influences most of the adaptations based on children's books. The main objectives are to show how cultural values are integrated in books and consequently in films and to compare different versions and adaptations of a story through history and its changes.

Key words: children's literature, adaptation, values, film.

Resumen

El principio que informa este Trabajo Final de Grado es el estudio de la literatura infantil, considerada como un género literario, y la adaptación de historias infantiles a películas infantiles, las cuales son influidas por factores externos. Nos centraremos también en el proceso de adaptación, en su origen y en cómo Disney influye en la mayoría de las adaptaciones basadas en los cuentos infantiles. Los objetivos principales son mostrar los valores culturales de los libros y, en consecuencia, de las películas y finalmente comparar las diversas versiones y adaptaciones de una historia y sus cambios a través del tiempo.

Palabras clave: literatura infantil, adaptación, valores, cine.

1. Introduction

Nowadays we find a great number of films which have been based on books. This provoked a huge interest in studies about adaptations of books to films. The adaptation of a book could be seen as a reconception or reformulation of the story. Therefore cinema and literature were two ways of telling a story.

Hence, as the title of my final project indicates, the objectives are to show how cultural values in society and their development have changed literature but mainly we will focus on the comparison between written literature and its adaptation to films and what changes take place in that adaptation.

The adaptation of books to films was a change in the way of transmission, from written medium to narrated or oral one. However, this was a controversial topic which continues in discussion nowadays.

In the field of cinema, we have seen how classic literature, children's literature or even fantasy novels play an important role in cinema, since many films were inspired by these literary genres. For that reason the analysis of written versions will help us to study their adaptations to films.

Thus, to achieve all these goals, we have divided the project into the following steps:

Firstly, we will analyze what children's literature is, what are their features and what distinguishes it from other genres within literature. In addition, we will deal deeply with the origin and historical background of children's literature.

Secondly, after the previous theoretical explanation about children's literature and its origin, we will focus on adaptations where we will pay attention to why, how and what types of adaptations we can find, and how they link literature with cinema.

The next chapter will show how the role of Disney was a very influential factor in the adaptation of classics, and its role in children today, according to the transmission of cultural values. Within this step we will consider some of its major works.

And the last section will show the conclusions achieved after the study. Finally the sources and bibliography used for the study of adaptation will follow.

2. The concept of children's literature: Historical background.

According to Fadiman (2014:1) children's literature is:

“the body of written works and accompanying illustrations produced in order to entertain or instruct young people. The genre encompasses a wide range of works, including acknowledged classics of world literature, picture books and easy-to-read stories written exclusively for children, and fairy tales, lullabies, fables, folk songs, and other primarily orally transmitted materials”.

However, apart from Fadiman, Romea Castro (2007:124) defined tale as:

“el género literario más antiguo, y por su final, frecuentemente con “moraleja [...] es una herramienta educativa que permite explorar, comparar, reflexionar, plantearnos hipótesis, relacionar. Los cuentos infantiles se caracterizan por su brevedad. Los hay de muchos temas y de variados estilos. Todos tienen una presentación, un planteamiento, el nudo, el clímax y el desenlace. Con pocos personajes, con caracteres que muestran claramente sus cualidades y defectos y un final feliz, después de haber superado unas peripecias, de haber pasado angustias y resuelto problemas que permiten hacer crecer psicológicamente al protagonista”.

“Pueden ser de ficción popular o legendaria, anónima o de autor conocido. Podemos tener en cuenta los temas, las funciones de los personajes de Propp o los motivos de Aarne-Thompson. Muchas son las clasificaciones posibles. En el cuento tradicional infantil, los personajes suelen ser príncipes buenos y valientes, brujas malas y feas, monstruos terribles, princesas buenas o enanos simpáticos y divertidos. Los valores siempre son relevantes: fuerza, belleza, bondad, amor... Son fáciles de entender porque los personajes y los temas son bastante simples; en ellos la magia y la lucha por la superación de las adversidades forman parte de la vida. El cuento moderno se desarrolló en el siglo XIX, y a ello contribuyeron las publicaciones de cuentos más o menos breves. Un buen cuento despierta la sensibilidad, muestra el mundo; es un espejo en el que el lector ve y se ve: se identifica con lo que le pasa al protagonista; eso le crea empatía, solidaridad con lo contado y el cuento llega a ser inolvidable”.

To set the origin of fairy tales was a controversial and difficult issue. *“Fantasy literature, and the fairy tale, are amorphous and ambiguous genres, whose boundaries are actually very difficult to set”* (M. O. Grenby)¹

Today, many researchers continue discussing this topic. Children’s literature was not considered a genre within literature (but it improved throughout history). From the very beginning children were not considered as an audience for tales and it provoked that tales were not considered a literary genre. All this was initially based on society, culture and history. That is to say, literature reflected the society where it took place:

“history was singular and operated as a background to the reading of a work of literature (the foreground); and culture was something which the work reproduced or expressed, or could be set against” (Hunt 1999:30)

However it was not until 17th century that some works about fantasy (based on myths, legends and tales) were compiled in order to preserve popular culture from old generations to young ones. Tales were recognized by other names: folk tales or fables. Folk tales made reference to the concept “Folklore”. Folklore was a compound word whose meaning can be divided in two terms at the same time: “folk” (people) and “lore” (knowledge). They were well known recognized by their oral transmission from generation to generation, from one mouth to another.

In the following century with the literary movement called Romanticism, children’s literature boomed. At that time there are many writers who wanted to publish their works for a young audience. The Victorian period was the Golden Age of English children’s literature, it provoked a change in the vision about the past, where groups of people who had been unnoticed, now gain importance, such as children and women.

¹ Grenby, M. *Fantasy and fairytale in childrens literature. The British Library*. Retrieved 14 July 2015, from <http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/fantasy-and-fairytale-in-childrens-literature>

In the 20th century tales underwent a great change, they were accompanied with images and illustrations to link the story. And in our century (21th century), tales are a consolidated literary genre with a great number of sales.

We have seen how literature changed along with society, history and culture. For that reason we will go back to the features which provoked the appearance and development of children's literature. Firstly we will focus on the evolution of educational system and consequently the reduction of the rate of illiteracy. Society changed its perspective about literature, it was not only a tool which reflected social status but also something that can be used for pleasure or for entertainment. Many centuries ago books were only accessible to high social classes who could pay for them. However this changed with the amelioration of the printing press during the industrial revolution.

Hence, children's literature was considered an important factor, according to Reynolds (2012:9), for several reasons:

- Reading is bound up with language and language acquisition and it is through language that we understand and construct the world
- While we are reading, we are trying out new languages, experimenting with different kinds of subject positions and identities, and encountering different ideas about what the world feels like.
- Reading is an activity highly valued by the population.

2.1. Kinds of tales

According to Ruiz (2001), tales were divided into two groups depending on their origin: folk origin and tales of authorship. In the first group those works that have been transmitted orally and dealt with topics about folklore are placed. On the other hand, in the second group, we include those works that have been written by a particular author and their transmission is mainly written. At the same time, Ruiz (2001) also divides these two groups into other three subtypes: lyrical poetry, drama, and prose fiction. And, consequentl, tales are placed in prose fiction.

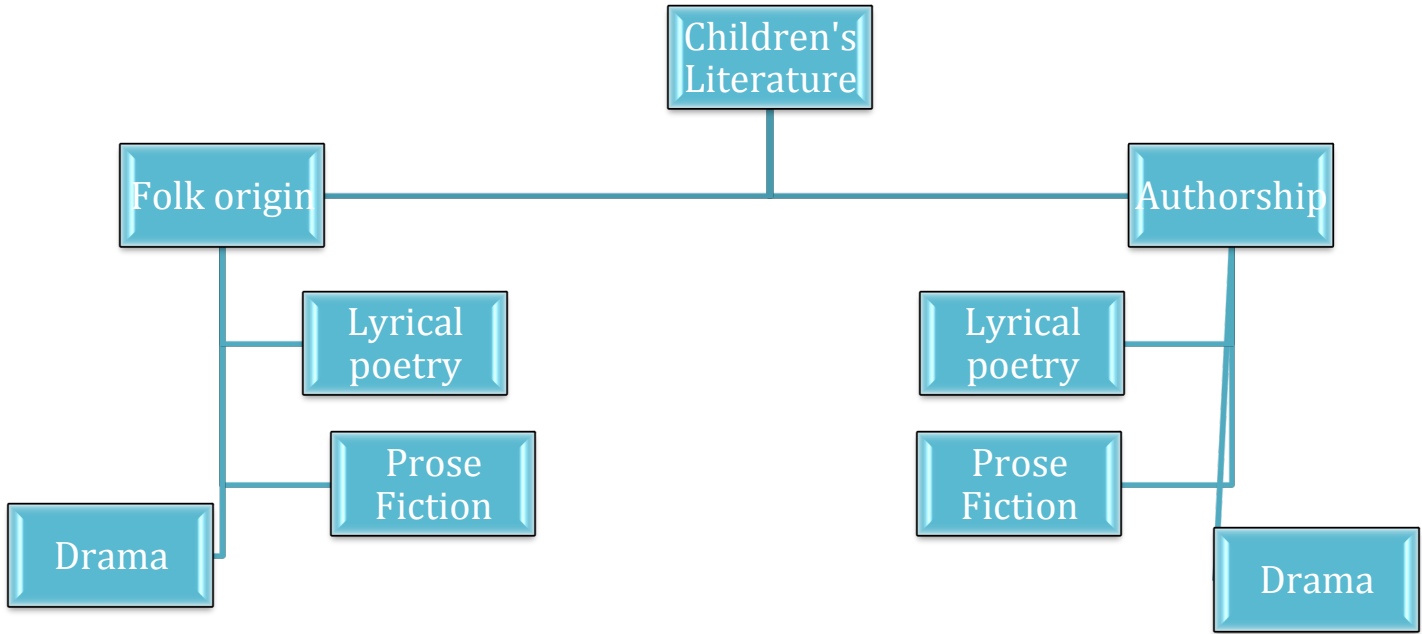


Image 1. Division of Children Literature according to Ruiz (2001).

It was difficult to establish a single model of division of tales within folk tales and tales of authorship. Therefore, many writers decided to proceed in a personal way, providing numerous ways of classifying tales. Firstly we will deal with subclassifications in folk tales:

Rodriguez (1989) established a division of tales into:

- Animal tales: their protagonists are animals which apparently behave as human beings.
- Customs tales: Tales which are characterized by a realistic point of view and they reflect society customs.
- Magical tales: tales where magical and fantastic elements appear.

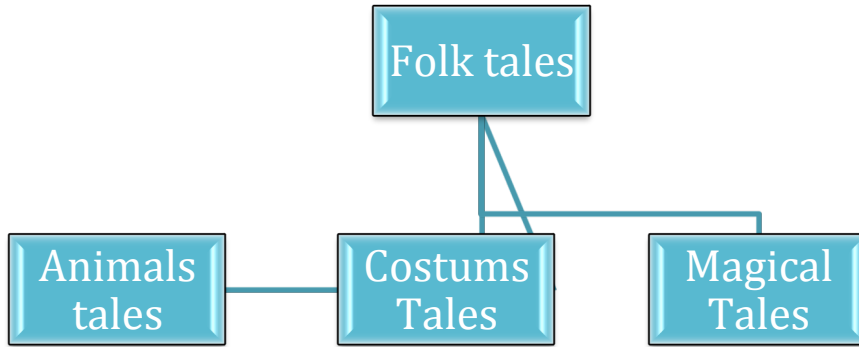


Image 2. Division of Folk tales according to Rodríguez (1989).

On the other hand Pelegrin (1982) divided folk tales into:

- Formula tales: they were characterized by a narrative structure. They were also called “never-ending tales” and “minimum tales”.
- Animal tales: this subtype is the same as Ruiz’s one (previous division).
- Magical tales: they are classified depending on their structures.

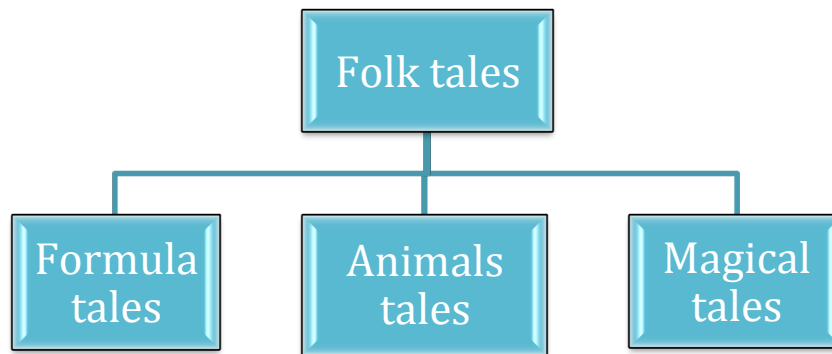


Image 3. Division of folk tales according to Pelegrin (1982).

On the other hand, tales of authorship were divided into a further hierarchy: according to Ruiz (2000), this kind of tales can be subdivided into:

- Re-created folk tales: they are those based on folk tales but the author rewrites them from her/his own point of view.
- Romantic tales: they are characterized by sentimentality or melancholy.
- Realistic tales: within this kind of tales we can find four subtypes:
 - Realistic tales of animals
 - Costumbrist tales
 - Science fiction tales
 - Adventure tales.
- Surrealistic tales: they are witty and excessive actions which provoke laugh or reflection.

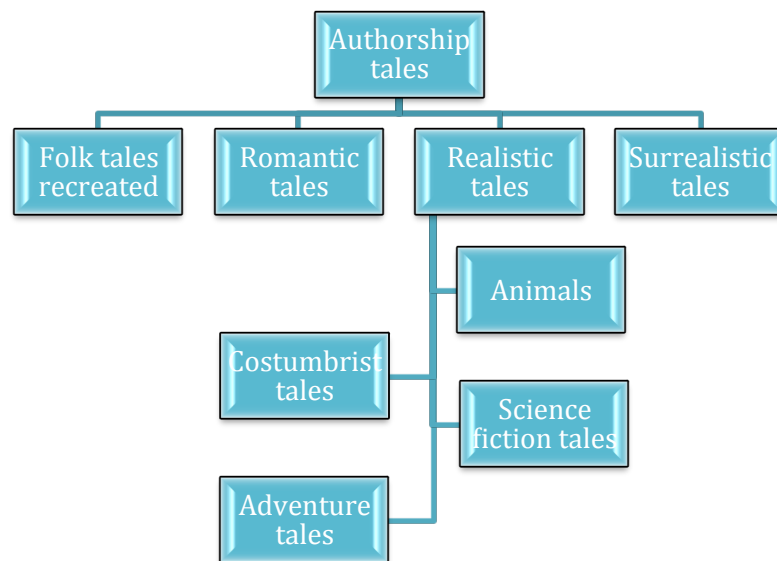


Image 4. Division of authorship tales according to Ruiz (2000)

2.2. Transmission of values

Values were understood as:

“creencias básicas a través de las cuales interpretamos el mundo y damos significado a los acontecimientos e, incluso, a nuestra propia existencia. Forman parte de nuestra cultura subjetiva y hemos de considerarlos como realidades dinámicas, sometidas a cambios condicionados en su manifestación y realización por el espacio y el tiempo” (Yubero et. al. 2004: 10).²

For Salmerón Vílchez (2004: 85), values in tales:

“se van a encontrar en la cultura y se van a manifestar en las personas [...] dentro de un momento histórico y un contexto concreto. De esto modo los cuentos van impregnados de cultura y valores, y van a participar en la construcción de una visión del mundo por parte de los que los usan o están en contacto con ellos”.

But apart from Salmerón Vílchez, Marín Ibáñez and Cervera defined values as:

“toda perfección real o ideal existente o posible que rompe nuestra indiferencia y provoca nuestra estimación, porque responde a nuestras tendencias y necesidades” (Ibáñez 1976:21) or *“es todo aquello que no nos deja indiferentes, que satisface nuestras necesidades o que destaca por su dignidad”.* (Cervera 1991:298).³

² Quoted in Etxaniz, X. (2008). Investigación en torno a la literatura infantil y juvenil. *Revista De Psicodidáctica*, 13(2), 97-109.

³ Quoted in Sousa, S. (2008). Valores y formación en la literatura infantil y juvenil actual. *Espéculo. Revista De Estudios Literarios*, 39.

Values are going to be found in culture and they will manifest in people depending on a particular historical period and context. In this way the stories are going to be steeped of culture and consequently of values.

The main feature in tales was its didactic use, they state lessons about everyday. Tales transmitted cultural, moral, religious values or simply how to behave in certain situations. In that way, tales should have an easy-to-read and easy-to-understand form in order to be understood by children. All these lessons usually are located at the end of the story, for example in the fable *The Ant and The Grasshopper* from which we can obtain the lesson: You have to be consistent with your actions.

Which of us has not been a listener of a story or fable told in any time of our life?, for example by our grandparents when we were children, or legends of our city, for instance. With this I want to reflect how tales, legends or myths have surrounded every aspect of our lives. It demonstrated that it is not necessary a formal education to learn. As Albert Einstein used to say: *“If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales. If you want them to be more intelligent read them more fairy tales.”*

From seventies with the feminist critique and the emergence of critical realism as a literary trend which offers works of great literary value and contributes to the education of children, the studies about the children’s literature and the transmission of certain values in their texts have been numerous.

Literature has always been used as a tool to train or transmit ideas; from the moment in which literature of oral tradition became written, the change of audience (from illiterate people to educated middle class) provoked a series of censures.

Literature has been an instrument that settled traditional ideas in society for years, showing today an unreal society. From the role of women as housewives to the exclusive presence of people in our streets, schools, parks ... Literature conveys a very specific action model, so it is necessary to know, study and propose alternatives.

As a result of our research so far, we can state that in the books most frequently offered to children, there is a traditional family model presented; the real labour world is not showed (over 50% of women went out to work... while in the books this reality is drastically reduced), etc. That is, as in many of the texts of children's literature, books reflect a more traditional society, with very marked stereotypes.

Hence, we will find values in the culture and all this will be manifested in people depending on a particular historical moment and context. The classic tale has a well-consolidated status. Since they are usually part of the cultural repertoire transmitted orally from adult generations to younger ones.

This has caused concern throughout the history of children's literature about what was appropriate or not for the child, offering different opinions in their assessment.

2.3. The contribution of printing

Our aim here is to focus on all extralinguistic factors that helped the birth of children's literature. The most influential fact was the invention and development of the printing press. This meant a big change in literature and at the same time in children's literature, since it provoked a change in the way of transmission (oral previously and now written), although it did not mean the total change in the way of transmission; some of them continued being narrated orally.

It was a revolutionary fact in that period because it meant an *opening* for society towards a new age, facilitating books and documents to everyone. For this reason it turned into something extraordinary since only rich people and upper classes could have access to read literature.

In addition before this invention books were transcribed manually by monks, who took around ten years to finish a transcription. Therefore this invention meant a change in the speed but also in the cost of elaboration.

After the invention of the printing press narrated tales from mouth to mouth could be transcribed in paper, thus it would be permanently fixed throughout history and generations. It would allow their reader to re-read them as many times as readers wanted to.

3. Adaptations

Adaptations did not only mean to transform a book into films. Throughout the history tales have changed or have been adapted, reflecting how society was changing too, since as we have said before tales were based on culture, history and context. All these changes led people to worry about tales and the values transmitted. From the very beginning in children's literature, tales were used to encourage obedience and submission but it changed to a more liberating and less strict perspective. This perspective used tales to develop social and emotional child's system.

Therefore we can see with the passage of time how tales's functions were changing. However three of them were considered fundamental (Colomer, 1999):

- Desarrollar el aprendizaje de las formas narrativas, poéticas y dramáticas a través de las que se vincula al discurso literario
- Iniciar el acceso a la representación de la realidad ofrecida a través de la literatura y compartida por una sociedad determinada.
- Ofrecer una representación articulada del mundo que sirve como instrumento de socialización de las nuevas generaciones.⁴

⁴ Quoted in Salmerón Vilchez, P. (2004). *Transmisión de valores a través de los cuentos clásicos infantiles* (Doctorado). Universidad de Granada, 106, 107.

As we know, most of tales were originally written for adults. It meant that an adaptation was required. Values transmitted in tales for an adult audience had to be adapted to a new children audience.

There are many topics dealt in adults's literature considered complex, for that they are usually adapted or deleted in order to be understood by children. For example in the work *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, the stepmother is obsessed with beauty, it symbolized narcissism but maybe it was a topic difficult for children, for that Disney decided to reflect this aspect with the figure of a stepmother who has been punished because she was concerned with beauty. Another example would be reflected in *Beauty and the Beast*, where sexuality and the animality of human beings would be the main interpretations for adults and on the contrary the Disney's version for children reflects the power of love and the "happy ending". These were some of the many examples which reflected how values in literature had been changed or adapted for children.

Concerning to adaptation from books to films we must bear in mind how the beginning of a new age characterized by the power of telecommunications and technological development, tales have been adapted to the new society's demands.

The influence of the media affects children, making them to prefer some books over others. Thus we can find different ways in which a tale can be presented: from different means of dissemination, films, films sold on DVD and video, creations adapted as television series, video games... to web pages dedicated to stories and characters. This has had a great impact on the enhancement of the classic tale.

The adaptation of books to films is an interesting field of study in order to understand the relationships between literature and cinema.

3.1) Origin

The foundations of the films are not located in a very distant time since its first debut was in 1895 with the Lumiere brothers in Paris. His first movie was *The sortie des Usines Lumière*, Lyon, 1895. At the same time it meant a way of advertising for their business.

In the sixties, adaptation seemed to reach its peak. Many literary critics began to study this phenomenon and from that date the analysis and study of adaptation continues being a controversial topic.

Béla Balázs was considered the first person who dealt with adaptations directly although he was questioned because he based his ideas on formalism, through the comparison between form and content and it seemed to go against adaptation.

After this debut, the film industry has tried to find stories on which to base their films. According to McFarlane this process depends on a variety of reasons:

“Tan pronto como el cine empezó a ser considerado un entretenimiento narrativo la idea de saquear la novela en búsqueda de material narrativo se puso en práctica y el proceso ha continuado sin disminución desde entonces. Las razones que se esconden detrás de este fenómeno continuado parecen moverse entre los extremos del craso comercialismo y el noble respeto por las obras literarias. Sin duda existe el atractivo de un título ya vendido, la expectación de que la respetabilidad o popularidad conseguida en un medio pueda contagiar la obra creada en otro” (McFarlane, 1996:7).⁵

⁵ Quoted in María Elena, R. (2003). *Novela y cine, Adaptación y comprensión narrativa de las obras de Jane Austen* (Doctoral). Universidad de Granada. Departamento de Filologías Inglesa y Alemana.

However, it is impossible to establish a concrete answer about why adaptations take place. For this reason, Gidding, Keith and Wensley (1990) stated:

“No es posible dar respuestas definitivas porque las adaptaciones se llevan a cabo por muy diversas razones que van desde el intento por reproducir una novela tan fielmente como sea posible hasta el empleo de la fuente simplemente como estímulo para la película. En ocasiones, el objetivo de una adaptación es dar a conocer una obra literaria a una audiencia más amplia, o tal vez intente aprovechar la respetabilidad cultural o popularidad del original. En otros casos, la adaptación pretende comentar o desarrollar un aspecto del texto original. Y por último, la falta de buenos guiones originales es otro de los motivos por los que los cineastas deciden llevar a cabo la adaptación de una obra literaria” (Giddings, Keith and Wensley, 1990:23-24).

3.1.1. The development of cinema

As we have mention in previous pages, the origin of cinema is located in 1895 with the brothers Lumière in Paris. After their presentation, cinema became a successful invention around the world. The brothers Lumière produced more than 500 films in one single year, but spectators soon got bored because of the absence of actors and natural settings, its brevity, lack of staging and the fixed camera position. This caused that George Melies went in depth into producing fictitious stories for the first time. He began to develop the new film techniques. As a consequence, cinema began to improve markedly.

But it was in 1927 when a film included sound for the first time, with the film *The Jazz Singer*. From this first movie, cinema such as it was known, passed away and more complex scripts were created. Moreover, it was in the same year when Paramount Pictures created the film technique called dubbing.

3.1.1.1. Silent film

The silent film lies in the projection of moving images without any sound. However the projections in cinemas were accompanied by the music played by a pianist or a small orchestra and discussed by the voice of a person who tried to explain the film, an essential figure that made it possible for illiterate or immigrants to understand the film. Besides, film producers arranged specific scores for their films. This shows that silent films were not silent at all.

3.1.1.2. Talkie

In 1926, producer Warner Brothers introduced the first effective sound system, consisting of the recording of the musical soundtracks and texts recorded in discs that were synchronized with the action on the screen.

3.1.1.3) Cinema in colour

Experiments with films in colour had begun since 1906. The tested systems such as the Technicolor of two colours were disappointing and failed in an attempt to impress the audience. But by 1933, the Technicolor had been refined, with a system of three colors, employed in the film "Vanity Fair".

3.1.1.4. The change after the Second World War

After the Second World War, the invention of television reduced the audience by half. The film industry responded by offering more entertainment.

On the one hand, film technology has evolved greatly from the early silent cinematograph of the Lumiere brothers, to the digital cinema of the 21st century. On the other hand, the cinematic language had evolved, creating film genres. And, finally, films had evolved with society, resulting, in that way, in different cinematographic movements and national cinematographies.

3.2) Types of adaptations

There were many opinions and classifications of adaptations. Many authors classified them according to their own opinions and the similarities between the film and the original book. However McFarlane (1996) in his work, paid attention to Wagner's classification:

“Geoffrey Wagner suggests three possible categories which are open to the film-maker and to the critic assessing his adaptation: he calls this (a) transposition, ‘in which a novel is given directly on the screen with a minimum of apparent interference’; (b) commentary, ‘where an original is taken and either purposely or inadvertently altered in some respect...when there has been a different intention on the part of the film-maker, rather than infidelity or outright violation’; and (c) analogy, ‘which must represent a fairly considerable departure for the sake of making another work of art’.”
(McFarlane, 1996:10-11)

3.3. Theoretical analysis about adaptations.

It will be in 1957 when the first academic analysis of film adaptation appears in America, with Bluestone's work *Novels into Film*. The basis of this work is the distinction between books and cinema, where the first term is characterized by a linguistic nature and the second one has a visual nature. But this was not enough, both means (literary and visual) had different origins and ways of production. It was a fact which accentuated the difficulty.

“La novela acreditada, hablando en términos generales, ha sido apoyada por un público reducido y culto, ha sido obra de un escritor individual y ha permanecido relativamente libre de una censura rígida. Por otro lado, el cine ha sido apoyado por un público masivo, es el producto de un trabajo de colaboración en condiciones industriales y ha sufrido la censura del Código de Producción” (Bluestone, 1957:8).

Bluestone also noticed how some adaptations reflected a change from books to films. It sometimes meant a gap between the original and its film adaptation. This gap was described in terms of fidelity, concept covered by Daniela Berghahn (1996). Therefore adaptations can follow two possible ways: preserving the essence of the original one or adapting the original to create a new work. In this way Daniela Berghahn stated that the term fidelity only could be applicable when the first option takes place.

Elvira Lindo, a Spanish writer and scriptwriter, also commented about the idea of fidelity between original stories and their adaptations to films:

“Si un director compra los derechos es porque una novela le gusta y normalmente no querrá cambiarla de arriba abajo[...] Más que si estoy siendo fiel a la novela, me importa si a su autor le gustará mi adaptación o no. Yo le tengo mucho respeto a la persona que escribe un libro” (Varela, C. 2013:1)

The figure of D.W. Griffith was important in this field:

“He was important for having discovered montage, the fluid integration of the camera’s total range of shots, from extreme close-up to distant panorama, as to produce the most coherent narrative sequence, the most systematic meaning, and the most effective rhythmic pattern. In doing so, Griffith had contributed to the development of a cinematic language and invented the distinctive art of the film”. (Braudy, L., & Cohen, M. 2004:1).

3.4. The linking between literature and cinema.

The history of cinema is riddled with disagreements between writers and scriptwriters. As Beja (1979) says:

“desde que el cine surgió como un arte de narración de historias, ha existido la tendencia a asociarlo con la literatura tanto por parte de los cineastas, escritores y críticos como por parte del público, y al mismo tiempo mucha gente ha insistido en señalar que esa asociación es falsa o quizás engañosa”. (Beja, 1979:51).⁶

For him one of the most fascinating aspects is this controversial association, for which he wants to study the relation between cinema and literature although many writers and film-makers oppose this.

But apart from Beja, Romea Castro (2007) also thought that literature and cinema was linked, and she has stated:

“El cine y la literatura se alimentan mutuamente. Muchas películas de las carteleras se inspiran en obras literarias, reescritas con nuevo formato y otra mirada. Si la consecuencia atrae, excita la curiosidad del espectador satisfecho, por el texto literario original. Esta situación se produce desde los orígenes del cinematógrafo, con las discusiones permanentes de si es mejor la obra literaria inspiradora o la adaptación cinematográfica”. (Romeo Castro 2007: 121).

⁶ Quoted in María Elena, R. (2003). *Novela y cine, Adaptación y comprensión narrativa de las obras de Jane Austen* (Doctoral). Universidad de Granada. Departamento de Filologías Inglesa y Alemana.

Many writers agreed with her, and decided to contribute with their own opinion. Herbert Read (1945) opined:

“Those people who deny that there can be any connection between the scenario and literature seem to me to have a wrong conception, so much of the film as of literature... If you asked me to give you the most distinctive quality of good writing, I would give it to you in this one word: VISUAL. Reduce the art of writing to its fundamentals, and you come to this single aim: to convey images by means of words. But to convey images. To make the mind see... To project onto that inner screen of the brain a moving picture of objects and events... That is a definition of good literature... It is also a definition of the ideal film”. (Read 1945: 230-231)⁷.

Nevertheless, many other writers saw Read’s emphasis on VISUAL as the main difference between cinema and literature. In that connection Ollier said:

“It seems sometimes that there are certain correspondences in the construction, the development, the transitions, but that is purely superficial: they are false analogies... The idea of description, for example, has no equivalent in the cinema. What some people call description in the cinema is even the opposite of description: signs, suggestions, and meaning do not all function in the same way, and of course, all that is very confused” (Ollier n.d: 26)⁸

Hence, we see how some authors agree to use the concept VISUAL as a means whereby literature and cinema perform a common function: the function of storytelling. By contrast others totally disagree, since they consider both ways of transmission as totally independent.

⁷ Quoted in Morrissette, B. (1985). *Novel and film*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (2:22)

⁸ Quoted in Morrissette, B. (1985). *Novel and film*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Films are usually neglected because of the complexity of a literary text which has been disregarded by images. Literary texts are usually full of connotations, expressions, references, emotions and many other features which apparently have been reduced in films.

But the previous paragraph cannot be considered as a generalization. There are cases in which the reverse occurs. Audience can evaluate a film more interesting than the original work, or there may be cases in which audience wants to read the original work after watching the adaptation.

In Lafont (2009), Javier Marías⁹ reflected on how the adaptation of a text into a film can be considered as a reduction of its contents:

*"El planteamiento suele ser cómo empequeñecer la obra, cómo reducir y, por tanto, es un empobrecimiento. Eso no quiere decir que las películas adaptadas sean peores; a veces es al revés: de una novela mediocre sale una gran película. De lo que sí soy partidario es de que se guarde fidelidad al espíritu de la obra literaria. Pero eso es algo evanescente y, ¿quién lo define? Quizás los propios autores. Yo creo que al cabo del tiempo se olvidan los argumentos, pero lo que quizás permanece es una especie de clima, una atmósfera" (Lafont, I. 2009).*¹⁰

⁹ Javier Marías Franco (Madrid, 20 September, 1951) was a Spanish writer, translator and editor.

¹⁰ Source: http://elpais.com/diario/2009/01/29/cultura/1233183601_850215.html

Alcántara Meléndez (2012) justifies the reduction of details in the following way:

“El lenguaje literario, independientemente del estilo y la temática, siempre cuenta con un poder más reflexivo y detallado. Es común encontrar que las novelas, los cuentos y las historias cortas se construyen a través de la descripción tanto de espacios, situaciones, sentimiento y pensamientos. Cuando un libro es adaptado a la pantalla grande, el guión, por su parte, lo constituyen escenas y diálogos, perdiéndose en el proceso de adaptación el análisis que el autor deja en libros y que ha plasmado en su obra”. (Alcántara Meléndez 2012).

4. The role of Walt Disney in adaptations

Romea Castro highlighted the role of media (adaptations) in order that children know some books, thus she said:

“Importa recordar que para la mayoría de los niños no lectores, o poco amantes de la lectura, los medios audiovisuales son los principales narradores de historias. Conocen la mayoría de relatos clásicos o modernos por una película que lo ha recogido rememoran, de forma fiel o con gran libertad, obras literarias clásicas y modernas, y algunas novedades de última producción Sólo una parte menor de los relatos les llega por medio de libros, álbumes y otras lecturas, lo que nos induce a preguntarnos por las consecuencias de esa supremacía del cine como medio de conocimiento de la literatura infantil y juvenil”. (Romea Castro 2007:123)

Marcia R. Lieberman affirms in her work *Some Day My Prince Will Come: Female Acculturation through the Fairy Tale*:

*“Only the best-known stories, those that everyone has read or heard, indeed, those that Disney has popularized, have affected masses of children in our culture. Cinderella, the Sleeping Beauty, and Snow White are mythic figures who have replaced the Old Greek and Norse gods, goddesses, and heroes for most children”.*¹¹

¹¹ Quoted in Haase, D. (2004). *Fairy tales and feminism*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Walt Disney Picture has staged almost all tales of our childhood; it has provoked their dissemination among a young audience, bringing them closer to many of the works they had read, they were reading or they will read.

4. 1) Delition in adaptations

In previous steps we have seen how children's literature from its very beginning was not considered a genre for children but tales were intended for adults. However these works were adapted to children for their didactic content.

These adaptations were realized through the reciprocity of structures presented in both systems (adults and children). If a structure is presented in both systems the story will not suffer changes however if the structure is absent in children's system, the adaptation from adults' version to children's version will suffer alterations.

Disney introduced some elements, which were absent in the original text, because they were common in popular and children's literature. For example in the work of Andersen *The Little Mermaid*, Disney shows alterations in its film: the figure of the hero: the prince's life is saved by the little mermaid. However, he did not know it because he was unconscious and when he woke up he saw another woman, he fell in love immediately with her, and they married later), the strong figure of the father (scarcely mentioned in the work of Andersen, where the central figure is her grandmother). Here we see that there is an intention to transmit the patriarchal and familiar order.

These were some aspects which appeared in the film and did not take place in the original story, however, on the contrary, there are also elements which were reflected in the book and did not appear in the film such as the death (at the end of the story Andersen shows in his book how the little mermaid dies. This aspect is not reflected in the film because this topic maybe was not appropriate for children).

If we analyse a little bit Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* we will find mainly how this story was considered a tale for children. However, some people considered it as a novel because of its characters and actions.

Despite the fact that *Alice in Wonderland* was described as an appropriate reading for children, it contained a lot of hidden references related to author's family and friends but especially to Alice Liddell (was the girl on which Lewis Carroll inspired himself to write his book), which were unnoticed for children. He invented a new kind of poetry called "absurd poem". The aim of it, was to make us laugh, through invented words, extravagant and imposible situations.

We cannot finish our discussion about *Alice in Wonderland* without making reference to the situation around it. As we said before, each adaptation to children's literature reflected the development of childhood together with cultural, social, economical...values of that period. However, "Alice in Wonderland" apparently seems predicting the context and events which will take place in the following century.

Apparently Lewis Carroll was sick of children's literature which was moralistic and he did not want to further contribute to it. For that reason, *Alice in Wonderland* was seen as a new way of creating literature to encourage imagination and freedom instead of forbidding, as traditional literature tended to do. He thought that it only put pressure children and it did not promote creativity.

Maybe the aim of this work was to protect children in their confrontation with adults and give essential tools to face the environment around them. Most of people see this work as the step from childhood to youth. We could be analysing for many pages the metaphors, simbols, hidden meanings in *Alice in Wonderland* for that this work from its publication to today it continues being one of the most famous works in the world.

4.2. Major works

Originally, children's tales were created to educate them with useful lessons of daily life. Many years ago life was crueller than nowadays, truth uglier and lessons more ruthless. For all these reasons Disney decided to adapt their versions.

All of us have been children and we cannot ignore the fundamental role that Disney films have played in our lives, childhood and adolescence. Many of the works of famous writers have been known through their adaptations in a Disney film, but we will see that our beliefs and ideas based on these films were away from the original text.

From my personal situation, when I have been preparing this project I discovered many interesting facts that I did not know about the original text. I thought that Disney stories were based on the original texts, but after this analysis I have found many adaptations and deletions that Disney decided to do. Some of these differences are reflected in:

4.2.1. Sleeping beauty

- Disney: It is about a princess who sleeps eternally until she was kissed by a prince who loves her. After the kiss, she wakes up and finally they get married and live happily forever.
- Original work: The princess is not woken up by a kiss of a handsome prince but she wakes up when her newborn twins hit her. While she was sleeping a monarch had sex with her and she got pregnant. That monarch decided to take her and her twins into his castle. In his castle he lived with his wife (fact which caused a great controversy). When the princess and her two sons arrived, the monarch's wife tried to kill them but the monarch discovered her. This provoked that the prince got married with Sleeping Beauty and lived happy forever.

4.2.2) Cinderella

- Disney: It is about a young woman who is abused by her two stepsisters and her stepmother. One night she goes to a party which the prince celebrated. She was helped by a Fairy Godmother who allowed her to assist to that party without troubles only until midnight. When that time comes she runs off and lost a shoe. The prince found her shoe and looked in the village for the woman whose foot fits in that shoe. Finally he finds Cinderella and they live together forever.
- Original text: There are various versions of this book and Disney decided to represent Grimm's version. However, in the Italian version there are two stepmothers. The first one treats Cinderella (here she is called Zezolla) cruelly, and the housekeeper persuades Zezolla to kill her. After this murder the housekeeper got married with her father becoming Zezolla's second stepmother. Her second stepmother had two daughters and finally she behaved as cruel as the first one.

In the original text her stepsisters cut their fingers to fit their feet in the shoe and therefore to get married with the prince. A dove communicates this sham to the prince and he discovered that Zezolla was the person whom he had been searching for. They get married and in the ceremony, many doves go there and gouge her stepsister's eyes out in order to punish them.

4.2.3) Snow White and the seven dwarfs

- Disney: This film was the first one portrayed by Disney. In this version Snow White has to escape from the castle where she lived because her evil stepmother did not bear Snow White being more beautiful than she was.
Snow White had to take refuge in the seven dwarfs's shack. However, her stepmother found her and poisoned her with an apple, she fell in a deep sleep and could only be awakened by a prince.

- Original text: this was the Grimm's version. It was very similar to Disney's version but the end was different. The prince in order to punish the evil stepmother ordered to prepare iron shoes which will be heated up until they were red hot. Later the prince forced the stepmother to put the shoes on and dance. Finally the stepmother cannot continue dancing and dies.

4.2.4) The Hunchback of notre Dame

- Disney: It is about a hunchback who is abused by people who live in his village because of his appearance. However, this situation changes when he meets Esmeralda and they become friends.
- Original text: It was called *Notre-Dame de Paris* in its original version by Victor Hugo in 1831. In this version, rascals try to free Esmerald and the archdeacon, taking advantage of this, takes her outside the cathedral with the condition of requitting his love or die on the gallows. Esmeralda refuses his proposal and the archdeacon gives her away. Esmeralda's mother tries to save her but she fails and both of them die. Quasimodo pushed the archdeacon to the void from the beflry of the cathedral and Quasimodo sies embracing Esmeralda's body.

4.2.5) The Adventures of Pinocchio

- Disney: It is about the story of an old man called Geppetto, who had a puppet made of wood with the form of a boy. He desired the puppet to be a human boy. With the help of the Blue Fairy the puppet (called Pinocchio) comes to life. This Fairy designates Jiminy Cricket as Pinocchio's conscience, since he did not have his own faculties. When Pinocchio lied, his nose grew significantly.
- Original text: The book of Carlo Collodi was very similar to the adaptation of Disney. However, the author did not have the intention of writing a book for children. In the inital version Pinocchio is hanged by his faults and only in the following versions he would become a human boy.

5) Conclusion

The comparative study carried out between books and their adaptations to films has provided interesting results. There are aspects or actions in books which cinema has to adapt or search for solutions regarding to its own possibilities and abilities. And this is the real challenge for adaptations, people who are responsible for adaptations should make full use of each means' resources.

Moreover, we must consider extra linguistic or extra film factors, which affect adaptations, such as context, ideologies, economy and so on so forth, because all these factors will play a decisive role in the way of adapting. Thus we can wonder why in order to analyze films we have to base on books. That is to say, we could analyze novels as an independent aspect which uses all possible resources to transmit a story and stop at that point the comparison between films and books. But this affirmation will be correct if films do not give importance to the work in which they are based. However, this does not seem possible, since films are constantly harking back to it, either by means of advertising in order to attract satisfied readers or even in the end when credits are shown.

But the most characteristic conclusion is the evidence which this analysis can show: how cinema and books are different means with a same goal: to transmit a story.

These were our objectives and they were carried out after the analysis of tales as a literary genre, we dealt with the transmission of values through tales, with the adaptation of literary works to films and the transmission of content from this written medium to the other one, and finally with the role which Disney has played in tales and consequently in children.

With resultant conclusions we can even plan the classroom management, using this tool to encourage children and place tales or adaptations of these works in class where certain educational units where the collaboration of them could be useful, taking advantage and helping children's understanding.

Finally, my opinion was very optimistic about tales, if we know how to involve them in our lives. Literature is more than a couple of books and children's literature is more than illustrations. Literature, independently of whether they are meant either for adults or for children, is a resource which provides children or adults entertainment, makes them to feel free and alive, linking learning with pleasure.

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