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**ENCOUNTER AND EPIPHANY:
RECONSTRUCTING LITERARY CONSCIOUSNESS THROUGH FILM ADAPTATION**

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I assert my moral right to be identified as the author of this work.

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Abstract

Many discussions of adaptation continue to be underscored by assumptions of hierarchical relations, with films positioned as colonies serving the sovereignty of literature. But if we understand why and how we tell stories, then we understand why the adaptation process corresponds with and deviates from its source text; we understand how one story produces many. This thesis explores how film adaptation facilitates our understanding of film narrative construction. It does this by considering how, through the important process of retelling, film adaptation plays an instrumental role in the wider endeavour of giving innovative, artistic form to human consciousness through narrative. The transition between literary and filmic character is an opportunity to engage with and explore dimensions of a written text and thus cast new perspectives on narrative through the cinematic unfolding of a character's journey. How film realises a character's internal and external realities also casts an interesting light on the internally conjured world of literature.

These ideas are explored through close analyses of a range of film adaptations of literary texts. Four popular film and TV adaptations of novels by Jane Austen are first discussed as specific instances of how the adaptation process restructures the unfolding of narrative events and how it utilises the multiple signifiers of film to evoke and explore "the self" and the narrative's thematic dimensions in line with the strengths and sensibilities of film. These ideas are then explored in closer detail through more focused discussions of *The Reader* and *An Education*, which are analysed in terms of how they handle climactic narrative events involving encounter and discoveries or realisations which can be read as forms of epiphany. These close readings illustrate how, in conversation with their source texts, films construct scenes to illuminate "the self" of character and to explore the wider, thematic implications of the narrative. *An Education* and *The Reader* exemplify how the adaptation process cinematically restructures the turning points in a character's journey to propel the narrative through character and plot discoveries.

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**“I exist ... as the tension between all my ‘versions’,
for that tension, too (and perhaps that above all) is me.”**

-Václav Havel

**“Our anticipation –
The spectator’s concentration on the tight rope -
was a mixture of rather cruel curiosity and a vague unease.
We felt as if we were seeking to trap this woman,
who faced us alone.”**

-Le Testament Français, Andreï Makine