

HOW HOLLYWOOD FAILS IN DEPICTING WOMANHOOD
WHEN WOMAN-AUTHORED LITERATURE IS ADAPTED FOR
THE BIG SCREEN

by

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A THESIS

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In both historical and contemporary contexts, literature has served as a more hospitable avenue for women's creative and self-representational expression, relative to other forms of media. Hollywood cinema, in particular, has largely marginalized women and their stories until recently, often only incorporating women through perfunctory inclusion and misrepresentations. As will be explored in this thesis, the category of woman-authored, literature-adapted cinema serves as a valuable microcosm for studying women's misrepresentation in Hollywood, as these films can be directly measured against their source materials to observe precisely how misrepresentative portrayals manifest in the production of Hollywood films. To analyze book-to-film adaptations as a sample of broader representational issues, I engage a threefold strategy. I begin by reviewing existing scholarship pertaining to women's historical exclusion from filmmaking spaces and addressing conditions of the filmmaking industry that continue to perpetuate inequity behind the camera. Secondly, I employ techniques of statistical analysis to assess how monetary investment, a factor of greater significance in filmmaking compared to literature, may intertwine with conditions of women's representation on and off-screen. Lastly, I evaluate three book-to-film adaptations, comparatively analysing films against their source materials to discern how, and in what

ways, an author's intended presentation of womanhood or gender may become warped or diluted when literary works are adapted for the silver screen. Ultimately, I find that when adapted to film, woman-authored literary works are vulnerable to distortions in their source materials' presentation of women and gender, with such distortions following four identified patterns. These patterns of distortion correlate with my statistical finding that the higher an adaptation's budget, the less likely it is to center themes or experiences of womanhood. Departures from authors' intended portrayals of womanhood likely have far-reaching effects, given my finding that, as a film's budget increases, and thus (generally) so too its audience size, the likelihood of a film being directed by a woman filmmaker decreases.

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Introduction

Over the last hundred years, Hollywood and its messaging have established cultural sovereignty over the United States and beyond; its films wielding a specious mirror held up to the masses, for whom it only reflects a privileged fraction. Films shape the way we understand ourselves and those around us, condemning those who are misrepresented or excluded to be characterized through hollow portrayals, manufactured by filmmakers too distanced from disenfranchised groups to render them adequately. Misrepresentation can take many forms. Media may create a false sense of how someone of a certain identity should or does behave, think, or appear by only representing them through archetypes or character patterns constructed with negative, stereotypical, or unrealistic attributes. Though film does not always intend to be a perfect mirror, misrepresentative archetypes nonetheless influence our mentalities, especially as they are often the main vehicles in which historically underrepresented groups are presented to us on screen. Despite making up more than half of the population, women, who are repeatedly misrepresented on-screen, only accounted for one percent of directors working on the top 100 films in 1980, a statistic that has only risen 13 percentage points in the time since.¹ Where Hollywood films and other storytelling media have failed to provide women an avenue for self-representation, there has been another medium more accessible to both the souls and voices of women: literature.

Historically, literature has been a significantly easier media space for women creatives to break into as compared to film. The literary space has historically been more accessible to marginalized and oppressed groups, in large part due to economic factors of opportunity,

¹ Lauzen, Martha. "The Celluloid Ceiling: Employment of behind-the-Scenes Women on Top Grossing U.S. Films in 2023." Center for the Study of Women in Television & Film, January 1, 2024., 9.

Hollywood's stronger capitalistic undercurrents, and literature's pathways for anonymity. The breadth of written works by and about women is far larger than cinematic works of the same variety. Literature as a media type can also be more resistant to hegemonic forces like capitalism, racism, Christianity, and patriarchy, as economic conditions of the industry are less likely to shape an author's work in service of corporate, commercial, hegemonic, or 'family-friendly' messaging. These stories of women and their experiences can transcend generations, continents, and languages, yet, when the most widely loved among them are eventually adapted for the big screen, they are often reimagined through the same patriarchal lens that they were written to oppose.

Literature Review

One potential cause for distortions in book-to-film adaptations of women's literature is Hollywood's professional gender gap, where women professionals are vastly underrepresented behind the camera in the production of Hollywood films. The likelihood of a woman being hired for roles such as director or producer is dramatically lower with high-budget films as compared to lower-budget films. This has created a trend where the most widely screened and streamed films, a category where book adaptations typically fall, are simultaneously those with the fewest women behind the scenes.² The factors that influence the underrepresentation of women in Hollywood are multidimensional, involving the lasting legacy of the studio system, fears of economic and

² To explore how women's professional marginalization behind the camera can affect the presentation of women and gender in individual films, this study uses director gender orientation as one indicator of a production's dominant filmmaker gender composition. I choose to foreground the director role in my analysis as directors typically set the tone of filmmaking spaces, hold final decision-making power, and influence the proportion of women serving in key filmmaking roles.

respectability downgrades for fields deemed increasingly feminine, ‘boys club’ discrimination tactics, and several other conditions.

Exploring the current scholarship on the underrepresentation of women behind the scenes in Hollywood affirms the pervasive and intricate nature of this issue. The data-driven research work by Luis A. Nunes Amaral(et al.) in the research study, “Long-Term Patterns of Gender Imbalance in an Industry without Ability or Level of Interest Differences,” explores decades of film data to contextualize present-day and historical patterns of women's exclusion from roles of power in Hollywood. Through their investigation of Hollywood discrimination, Amaral’s study found a “significant negative correlation between movie budget and female representation.”³

For over 25 years, San Diego State University’s Center for the Study of Women in Television & Film has tracked the presence of women in Hollywood filmmaking for each major job category. Corroborating the findings of Amaral’s study, data from SDSU’s annual research study, “The Celluloid Ceiling: Employment of Behind-the-Scenes Women on Top Grossing U.S. Films in 2023,” by Dr. Martha Lauzen, suggests that in 2023, “85% of the 250 top grossing films last year had no women directors and 94% had no women cinematographers.”⁴ This is taking into account films with a large handful of directors or cinematographers, where all but one may be a man.

One reason often used to explain women’s underrepresentation across media industries is that women lack the availability for employment due to the responsibilities of rearing and bearing children. While this excuse for employment discrimination is certainly rooted in misogyny when applied to women universally, Amaral’s research suggests that such an excuse for women's

³ Amaral, Luis A. Nunes, Joao A. G Moreira, Murielle L Dunand, Heliodoro Tejedor Navarro, and Hyojun Ada Lee. “Long-Term Patterns of Gender Imbalance in an Industry without Ability or Level of Interest Differences.” *PloS One* 15, no. 4 (2020), 7.

⁴ Lauzen. “The Celluloid Ceiling,” 1.

underrepresentation in the film sector is inadequate for another reason. Even under the strict motherhood expectations of the early 20th century, women surprisingly found relatively ample employment opportunities in the film industry up until the 1920s.⁵ Evidence suggests that the rise and consolidation of the studio system in the late 1920s prompted “Female representation among actors, directors, producers, and writers to drop to extraordinarily low values.”⁶ While women were surprisingly present in the establishment of early Hollywood filmmaking, there are many cases in which female representation in current-day Hollywood has struggled to reach pre-studio system levels. Clearly, the underrepresentation of women behind the camera in Hollywood is not an issue of women’s preoccupation with motherhood, but rather is the result of discriminatory industry conditions.

Martha Lauzen’s “The Celluloid Ceiling” discusses just how small the gains in gender representation have been over the last two decades. Since 1998, there has only been an increase of five percent in the representation of women in the positions of directors, producers, executive producers, writers, cinematographers, and editors working on the 250 top-grossing films.⁷ While certain industries have been found to show a weak correlation between women in seats of power and increases in the general conditions for, and populations of, other women coming into said industry, this is not the case for Hollywood. The regression models conducted in Amaral’s study found that the presence of women in the seats of director or producer tends to lead to the career advancement of other women across the industry.⁸

Decades of women’s exclusion from filmmaking spaces have led to the reproduction of what film scholar Laura Mulvey terms “The Male Gaze,” in her seminal 1975 essay, “Visual

⁵ Amaral, et al. “Long-Term Patterns of Gender Imbalance,” 2.

⁶ Amaral, et al. “Long-Term Patterns of Gender Imbalance,” 1.

⁷ Lauzen. “The Celluloid Ceiling,” 5.

⁸ Amaral, et al. “Long-Term Patterns of Gender Imbalance,” 8.

Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.”⁹ According to Mulvey, film, and thus the camera itself, “produces pleasure in looking and being looked at.”¹⁰ In a culture structured upon gender roles and inequity, Mulvey claims that “pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female,” as narrative, visual, and storytelling power systematically and disproportionately favors men.¹¹ Women are thus encoded as passive objects rather than active subjects, their points of view often neglected, replaced with what Mulvey terms “to-be-looked-at-ness.”¹²

Although certain film scholars question whether a film can exist outside The Gaze, many feel that there is potential to oppose or return The Gaze, and that the degree to which The Gaze is present in any given film can vary. Crafting a film that dilutes or opposes The Gaze involves centering the perspective of women or gender non-conforming characters, emphasizing their active agency within the narrative, and refusing to sexualize such characters through voyeuristic lenses. Within an industry where conventions have been forged under the near-total exclusion of women, this is an intricate task, and one that demands the presence of women on and off screen. Films do not simply mirror the reality in which they are conceived; they shape the realities they imitate by informing our self-image, our concept of appropriate behavior, and our understanding of others’ experiences. Until the industry gives more women power over the lenses and narratives that shape their on-screen representation, cinema will continue to reproduce the inequitable society it mirrors.

Although the gender orientation of a director, or any filmmaker, does not inherently determine the quality of their film’s depiction of women, there is evidence to suggest that within

⁹ Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” *Screen* 16, no. 3 (September 1, 1975): 6–18, <https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/16.3.6>.

¹⁰ Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure,” 17.

¹¹ Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure,” 11.

¹² Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure,” 11.

the hypermasculine culture of Hollywood filmmaking, men directors¹³ are less likely to ensure positive portrayals of women than women directors. The Bechdel Test is a widely used film analysis tool developed by cartoonist Alison Bechdel in 1985, which serves to measure a film's representation of women at a very minimum level. To pass the Bechdel Test, a film must meet three basic criteria: it must have at least two named women characters, these characters must speak to one another, and they must speak of something other than a man. A statistical analysis by Lyle Friedman from the report, "Hollywood's Gender Divide and Its Effect on Films," revealed that when a film has a man (or exclusively men serving) in the director role, they fail the Bechdel Test 41% of the time, compared to just 10% of the time with a woman (or exclusively women) in the director role.¹⁴ Despite the Bechdel Test being a flawed scale, only capable of measuring a film's representation at the most rudimentary level, it provides insight into the underresearched relationship between filmmaker gender and baseline representational merits.

The Friedman report also discusses the impact of film writers, a critical role in the production process, even with book-to-film adaptations. Friedman's report demonstrates that when at least one woman is in the writing room, the chance that a film fails the Bechdel Test falls from 46% to just 17%. That statistic sits at just 6% when the writing team is exclusively women.¹⁵ This is significant, as the Celluloid Report found that on films with a woman director (or at least one woman on a directorial team), women comprised 59% of writers on average, compared to just 13% of writers on films with a man (or exclusively men) in the role of director.

¹³ Throughout this thesis, I use language that may deviate from standard academic conventions when describing gender identities (e.g., "Woman Director" in place of "Female Director"). This is intentional, as I prefer to use language that denotes gender, rather than sex, when describing gender orientation as a means to avoid conflating the two.

¹⁴ Lyle Friedman, "Hollywood's Gender Divide and Its Effect on Films," The Pudding, 2015, <https://pudding.cool/2017/03/bechdel/>.

¹⁵ Friedman, "Hollywood's Gender Divide."

The Celluloid Report also found that films with a woman director (or at least one woman on a directorial team) “employed substantially higher percentages of women in other key behind-the-scenes roles than films with exclusively male directors.”¹⁶

Although gender discrimination creates barriers for almost all women in Hollywood, women of color face even more extreme hurdles in finding and retaining roles of power in the field of filmmaking. “Reese Witherspoon’s Popular Feminism: Adaptation and Authorship in *Big Little Lies*,” a paper by Sarah Louise Smyth, discusses the popular feminism employed by certain media that positions itself as woman-led and centered around sisterhood, yet fails in its portrayal of women of color in service of a more ‘digestible,’ commercial-friendly, and ‘non-radical’ form of ‘feminism.’ Smyth defines popular feminism as a feminism where “expressions are coded as friendly and safe, ensuring they remain accommodating and corporate-friendly.”¹⁷ In exploring how the themes and messaging of woman-authored literature can be wrongly interpreted when adapted for the big screen, one factor of interest is the commercialization of such stories.

Certainly, there are many woman-authored literary works that, before ever being adapted to film, promote the rhetoric of popular feminism. Many, however, have their content morphed to portray hegemonic, corporate-friendly messaging when adapted for the screen, which is unsurprising given the link between high filmmaking budgets, the unlikelihood of a film being assigned a woman director, and the capitalist conditions of the industry. While any director can be guilty of promoting this synthetic form of feminism, directors who lack personal experience with women’s issues are seemingly more likely to fumble in this way when adapting genuinely

¹⁶ Lauzen, Martha. “The Celluloid Ceiling: Behind-the-Scenes Employment of Women on the Top 100, 250, and 500 Films of 2019,” San Diego State University’s Center for the Study of Women in Television & Film, 2019.

¹⁷ Smyth, Sarah Louise. “Reese Witherspoon’s Popular Feminism: Adaptation and Authorship in *Big Little Lies*.” *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 22, no. 1 (2024), 302.

subversive material. The process of adaptation and the deployment of popular feminism is further complicated by the relationship between high-budget films and the economic incentives to employ corporate-friendly messaging. Within my discussion of adapted woman-authored content, I'd like to reinforce the importance of recognizing the difference between media that works to promote an intersectional and subversive gaze and media that only feigns such values as it disguises regurgitated hegemonic ideals.

While women's employment in Hollywood has received a rich body of research, this thesis is the first study to analyse how Hollywood adaptations of women's novels may alter the literature's intended presentation of womanhood or femininity. Scholarship that interrogates such questions with deference to women authors is seemingly nonexistent. That said, one piece of scholarship that asks questions similar to those of this thesis is Marion Krauthaker and Roy Connolly's paper, "Gazing as Medusa," which explores the cinematic adaptation of Jul Maroh's novel, *Le Bleu est une Couleur Chaude*.¹⁸ *Le Bleu est une Couleur Chaude* by Jul Maroh is a quintessential 2010 French graphic novel that, through an oppositional gaze, depicts an intricate story of revelation, romance, and heartbreak between two young women. Today, Maroh's masterwork is better known by the title of its filmic counterpart, *Blue is the Warmest Color*. According to Krauthaker and Connolly, this big-screen adaptation, created by Abdellatif Kechiche, hinges on the sexualized objectification of clichéd lesbian characters, sensationalized through a heteronormative and patriarchal lens, rather than the feminine self-subjectivity of the film's source material.

In Maroh's book, the diaristic, feminine voice of one of the two main characters, Clémentine, leads the readers' perspective and dictates the shifts between past and present, which

¹⁸ Krauthaker, Marion, and Roy Connolly. "Gazing at Medusa: Adaptation as Phallocentric Appropriation in *Blue Is the Warmest Color*." *European Comic Art* 10, no. 1 (2017), 24-52.

asserts her narrative control. In contrast, Kechiche's film tells the story through the stare of a gawking, third-person perspective. The new perspective reads as a fetishizing gaze, which is exemplified by the camera's obsession with the bodies of the actresses and by the director's own reported obsession with actress Adèle Exarchopoulos, who plays Clémentine's character.

Kechiche's fixation on Adèle Exarchopoulos goes so far, in fact, that he changes Clémentine's name to Adèle, and titles the original, French version of the film, *La Vie d'Adèle* or *The Life of Adèle*.¹⁹ *Blue is the Warmest Color* is a French piece rather than one of Hollywood, and based on a comic-style novel authored by Maroh, who today identifies as non-binary. Still, I find that Krauthaker's critique of *Blue is the Warmest Color* provides relevant context to how cinematic adaptations can distort the intended messaging of texts written by women, about women's experiences, within a hypermasculine filmmaking economy.

Abdellatif Kechiche, who directed *Blue is the Warmest Color*, is an obvious example of how filmmakers who lack education or experience with the issues and identities they're portraying through their adaptations can fail their audiences and source materials by misrepresenting their subjects. Krauthaker and Connolly discuss how Maroh's original novel constructs a point of view that asserts "feminine desires, emotions, and subjectivity against widespread heteronormative and male-oriented productions."²⁰

In conflict with such themes is Kechiche's adaptation, which is shot through a fetishizing, heterosexual lens, constantly fixated on the bodies of the actors with uncomfortable scenes that border on a leering perspective as the characters eat, sleep, and have sex. Maroh herself has commented on the lengthy sex scenes of the film, saying, "it is to me: a heartless, surgical, demonstrative and cold display of supposed lesbian sex, which turns into porn, and made me very

¹⁹ Krauthaker, et al. "Gazing at Medusa," 29.

²⁰ Krauthaker, et al. "Gazing at Medusa," 26.

uneasy.”²¹ In the instances where feminine sexuality is discussed within the film, the conversations are entirely held by men characters while the women stay silent, abandoning the most obvious of opportunities for women’s self-definition in a story where feminine assertion is intended to be a central theme. Books like *Le Bleu est une Couleur Chaude* give many women and queer people the rare opportunity to see themselves properly reflected in an industry that, until recently, has largely ignored their personhood. When such a novel is reimagined in a film that confines its characters beneath the condescending eye of the male gaze, it highlights the need for further inquiry into how the culture of film can affect the adaptation of similar stories.

²¹ Krauthaker, et al. “Gazing at Medusa,” 32.

Methods

WGSS Scholarship

Scholarly approaches in women's, gender, and sexuality studies have shifted significantly in recent years, as proponents of intersectional feminist theory and transfeminist theory have made meaningful headway in transforming discourses around identity, representation, and intersectionality. Those whose theoretical approaches remain centered in more exclusionary, conditional forms of feminism, like second-wave feminism, have slowly come to be seen as outdated. Considering the underrepresentation in media spaces of women of color and queer identities, it's unsurprising that few examples of BIPOC or queer representation arise in the pool of adaptations researched in this project. Consequently, there are too few examples of BIPOC and queer centered works within my research pool to run effective quantitative analyses that probe for discrepancies in the representation or presentation of BIPOC and queer identities. Nonetheless, I do find room, limited as it may be, to investigate issues of BIPOC and queer representation in the qualitative case study portion of this project.

While the specificity of my leading questions limits my ability to discuss gendered issues in Hollywood through transfeminist and intersectional feminist lenses to the extent that I would like, I still wish to bring a nuanced perspective. As I explore the relationship between representation behind the camera and representation on-screen, I would like to clarify that my approach does not intend to suggest that a filmmaker's gender inherently dictates the quality of a film's depiction of women and gender on-screen. Women and non-binary filmmakers, like everyone, are fully capable of promoting misogynistic or regressive gender ideology. To suggest otherwise would be to downplay the scale of hegemonic patriarchy. Rather, my theoretical framework in this project is rooted in discourses that examine Hollywood's culture of

hypermasculinity and masculinity culture more generally, as forces that permit the conscious and unconscious deployment of a male gaze.

The specificity of this project limits its scope to particular film adaptations, and the question of whose stories are chosen for the big screen is deeply tied to systemic discrimination. As such, while my discussion of Hollywood's problematic reinterpretations will use the available examples to highlight issues of misrepresentation that fall upon the intersections of gender, race, and sexuality, my thesis may be limited in its ability to approach issues of ableism, colorism, transphobia, and other issues underrepresented in mainstream media. Through this project, however, I hope to continue a dialogue pertaining to the expansion of whose stories we tell through film, and the importance of whose lenses we ultimately tell them through.

Several other disciplines often interact with the work and theory of women's, gender, and sexuality studies (WGSS) scholars when probing issues of gender in media representation. Cultural studies, ethnic studies, and disability studies all have both theory and practical applications that are deeply intertwined with current WGSS scholarship, which places an emphasis on intersectional approaches to combating systematic forms of oppression. Other fields, such as media studies, history, and political science, are commonly explored within WGSS, often through the lens of gender and LGBTQ+ justice. While WGSS-related issues have historically been sidelined within the mainstream scholarship of these fields themselves, exploring through a specifically WGSS lens allows for nuanced commentary surrounding whose narratives are being told in the context of mass media, history, and political action. This thesis aims to address this issue, examining the historic and ongoing misrepresentations of gender in media and exploring the political and intersectional implications of these shortcomings, particularly at the intersections of gender, race, and sexuality.

Data Analysis

To analyze the conditions of the film-making industry with respect to the factors that influence the quality of representations within book-to-film adaptations most effectively, I employ quantitative analysis techniques. By collecting a database of films adapted from woman-authored literature within a set of parameters, I am enabled to analyse conditions specific to filmmaking within the practice of adaptation, with an eye for factors that may lead to distortions of an original text's presentation of women and gender. Through this data analysis, I investigate potential correlations between factors such as film budget and director gender orientation, primacy of womanhood themes and director gender orientation, primacy of womanhood themes and film budget, and budget increases for sequel films in relation to changes in director gender orientation. To study these factors and their potential correlations, I employ both manual calculations and linear regressions, controlling for year fixed effects. Analytical questions requiring linear regressions are completed in the program R (version 4.3.1), an open-source programming language developed by the R Core Team for data analysis and visualization.²²

The pool of adaptations used in the quantitative analysis section of this project is curated based on a set of parameters meant to ensure relevance and continuity. Each adaptation considered in this research must be a feature-length, American film, based on a novel or book written by a woman author. Certain films that meet this criterion receive sequels that are built off of their original film's — and thus original novel's — story, but are not based on a literary work themselves. Such films are only considered for research in relation to their primary, literary-based film and are studied separately from the main dataset. Only 21st-century films are considered, to

²² R Core Team, R: A Language and Environment for Statistical Computing (Vienna, Austria: R Foundation for Statistical Computing, 2021).

ensure data analysis may be relevant in the present day and sustain relevance longer into the future. Films with a budget under two million dollars will not be included in my analysis, as films that fall below this benchmark are often more obscure, reach smaller audiences, and are less influential on the ideology of the general public.²³ Smaller-budget and independent films are also typically less susceptible to the creative obstacles presented by the social and economic structure of Hollywood. Made-for-TV films are excluded from this study for similar reasons, though made-for-streaming films are eligible, as streaming service production conditions have come to mirror those of traditional Hollywood films in recent years.

Past researchers who have collected quantitative data on women's representation in Hollywood have encountered methodological questions similar to mine, such as decisions on which films to consider, criteria that can be posed to narrow the selection pool, and controls to protect the data's legitimacy. For some of these questions, my project is aided by being situated in the digital age. Rather than scouring through physical records of film institutes, as has been required of past researchers, I have chosen to gather my pool of films from online databases like IMDb, so that I have immediate access to the most recent information. Considering that my research questions are based, in part, on investigating the culture of monetary influence in Hollywood, films that received small enough audience attention and budget such that they do not appear in online databases will automatically be excluded from consideration.

²³ A small number of films within the dataset do not have publicly available budgetary information, yet are created in collaboration with studios and/or production companies that suggest their budgets exceed the two million USD benchmark. These films are included within the dataset composition but are excluded from all analyses in which budget is a factor.

Case Studies

In the Case Studies section of this study, I aim to provide a qualitative analysis of representational differences between source content and cinematic renditions of woman-authored book-to-film adaptations. I analyze select adaptations for potential patterns in how filmmakers rework an original text, which constitute portrayal distortions or messaging alterations in relation to gender. To identify any such patterns, I have selected three adaptations from my research pool, relatively similar in their proximity to the median in budget, release year, and popularity, to perform three qualitative case studies.

Research and Data

The statistical analyses presented in this section are based on a self-compiled dataset I created, using the parameters outlined in the methods section above. The program R (version 4.3.1) was employed to explore relationships between film budgets, director gender orientations, and primacy of womanhood in films, with some questions utilizing linear regressions that controlled for fixed effects.²⁴ Questions relating to film series were addressed through manual calculations. When controlling for year, the release date of each title's cinematic debut was used to determine the year of its release. The main dataset²⁵ comprises 95 book-to-film adaptations, sharing a number of titles with a secondary dataset²⁶ created to analyze book-to-film series, which encompasses 40 titles. To the best of my knowledge, the main dataset, compiled based on my own research, includes all existing titles that meet my research criteria. Both datasets contain the title, film budget, film director gender orientation, film release year, and book publication year for each novel. An additional column also notes whether an adaptation's source material contains themes surrounding womanhood or centers a particular experience of womanhood.

Parameters of Statistical Analysis

Film Release Year	Year 2000-Present
Film Budget	Two Million USD+ (dataset values rounded to nearest million)
Film Production	American productions

²⁴ R Core Team, R: A Language and Environment for Statistical Computing (Vienna, Austria: R Foundation for Statistical Computing, 2021).

²⁵ Claire Bokovoy, Regression Analysis of Adaptation Research, unpublished data, July 2, 2025.

²⁶ Claire Bokovoy, Regression Analysis of Series Adaptation Research, unpublished data, July 2, 2025.

Film Distribution Strategy / Type	Feature length, theatrical releases or streaming originals
Source Material	Films adapted from novels or non-fiction books written by authors who identify as women

Dataset Composition

Across the titles within the main dataset, 85.3% of all adaptations are based on literary works that contain themes surrounding womanhood or center a particular experience of womanhood. Such a statistic is relatively unsurprising considering the gender orientation of the authors and the increased flexibility to center non-men in literary media as compared to other media spaces. Of these works in which femininity is a touchstone, 65.4% of their cinematic counterparts are directed by men directors. Within the entire main dataset, 69.5% of all film titles are directed by men.

Budget and Director Gender Orientation

An R linear regression model controlling for year fixed effects was run against the main dataset to analyze whether the size of a film's budget affected the probability of a specific gender orientation occupying the role of director. The results demonstrate that for every million dollars allocated to a film's budget, the likelihood of a film receiving a man director increases by 0.1%. This means that a film such as *The Kissing Booth* (Marcello, 2018), with a budget of \$ 3 million, is 24.7% more likely to receive a woman director than a film such as *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (Yates, 2009), with a budget of \$ 250 million.

(1)	
budget	0.001*
	(0.001)
Num.Obs.	90
R2	0.412
R2 Adj.	0.183
R2 Within	0.027
R2 Within Adj.	0.012
AIC	119.1
BIC	184.1
RMSE	0.35
Std.Errors	by: m_year
FE: m_year	X
+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Fig. 1. Regression of an indicator for men directors on budget in millions, controlling for film release year.

The standard error in this regression is 0.001, therefore placing the result within the range of the standard error. That said, the regression also displayed significance at the 5% level, meeting the threshold to be considered statistically significant by statistical conventions. Such results suggest that budget and gender have a correlated relationship, and with the absence of alternative explanatory factors, it is likely that the relationship between film budget and director gender orientation is causal.

Calculations were run in R to ascertain the proportion of men directors within each decile by film budget. In other words, the program organized all films within the main dataset into ten equal tiers (deciles) ordered by the size of film budgets, and output a value for each decile representing the proportion of films in that decile that were directed by men. There is also an 11th, N/A column for the few films that did not have their budgets publicly available. The results of these calculations are displayed in Figure 2 below.

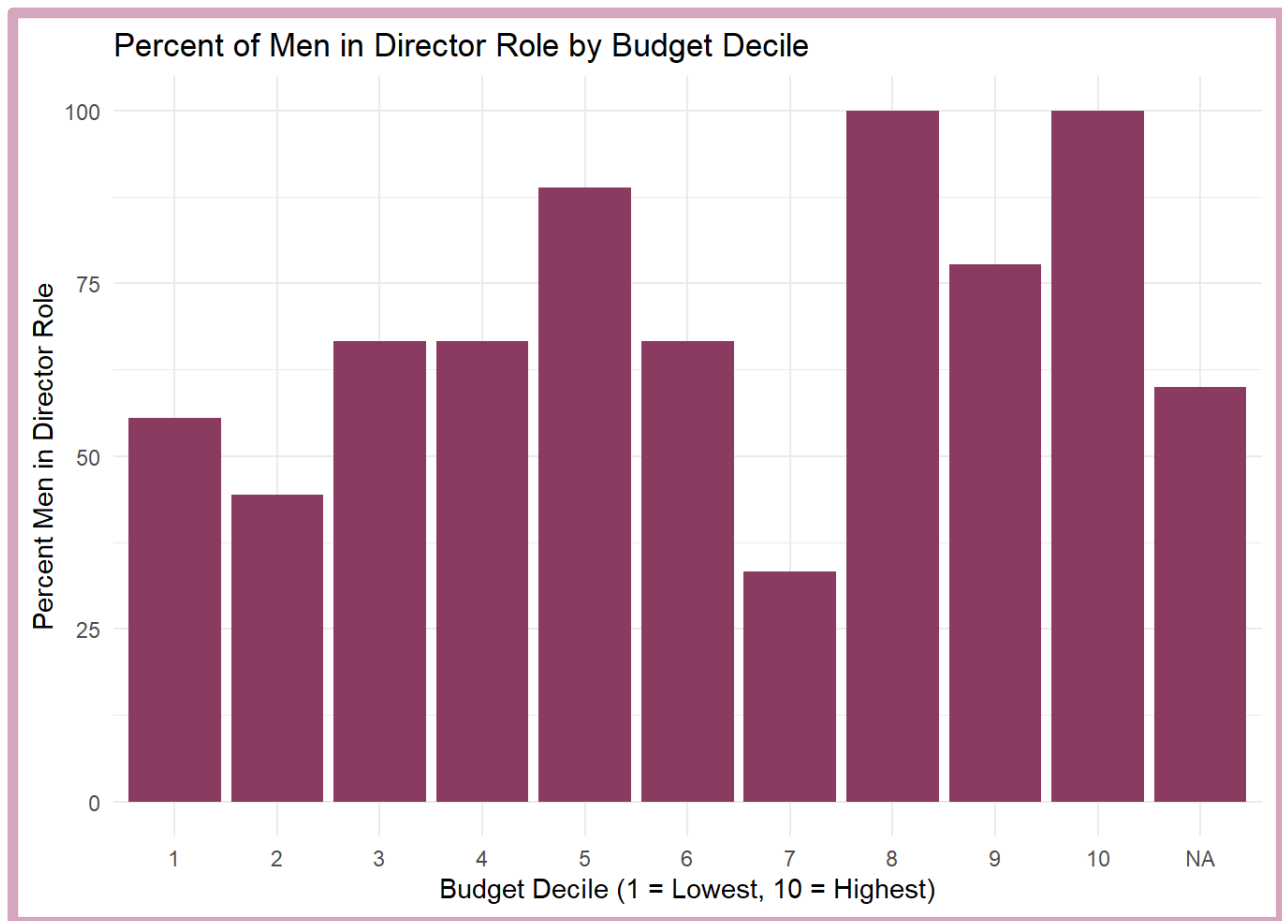


Fig. 2. Percentage of Men in Director Role by Budget. The Y-axis represents the percentage of men directors in each decile, with the X-axis denoting each decile. In this figure, Decile 1 represents the bottom 10% of films in the main database by budget, and Decile 10 represents the top 10% by budget.

As can be seen in Figure 1 above, films in the top decile by budget within the main data set are directed by men in 100% of cases. This is also true of the eighth decile. The seventh decile presents a potential outlier, as it contains several films that may be considered relatively

anomalous given the gender orientation of their directors, their budget, and the time of their release. Examples of such films include *Twilight* (Hardwicke, 2008), *Marie Antoinette* (Coppola, 2006), and *Julie and Julia* (Ephron, 2009). Regardless of outliers, it appears there is a dramatic upward trend in the proportion of men directors as the budget deciles increase, indicating a potential correlation between budget tier and the gender orientation of filmmakers selected as directors.

The precise percentage values for each decile are as follows: Decile 1 55.56%, Decile 2 = 44.44%, Decile 3 = 66.67%, Decile 4 = 66.67%, Decile 5 = 88.89%, Decile 6 = 66.67%, Decile 7 = 33.33%, Decile 8 = 100.00%, Decile 9 = 77.78%, Decile 10 = 100.00%, Budget Not disclosed (N/A) = 60.00%. For context, films in Decile 10 have budgets ranging from \$125 million to \$250 million USD, while films in Decile 1 have budgets between \$2 million and \$10 million USD.

Budget and Primacy of Womanhood

A different regression analysis was conducted to investigate any potential relationship between a film's allocated budget and whether the film's source material explores themes related to womanhood or centers on a particular experience of womanhood. The primacy of womanhood was denoted for each film in the main dataset on a Yes/No basis. The results of the regression analysis calculated that for every million dollars allocated to a film's budget, the likelihood of the film centering womanhood decreases by 0.4%. In practice, this means that a film within the dataset with a budget of \$2 million USD is 58.4% more likely to center women than a film with a budget of \$150 million USD.

(1)	
budget	-0.004***
	(0.001)
Num.Obs.	90
R2	0.582
R2 Adj.	0.418
R2 Within	0.296
R2 Within Adj.	0.285
AIC	46.3
BIC	111.3
RMSE	0.23
Std.Errors	by: m_year
FE: m_year	X
+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Fig. 3. Regression of an indicator for womanhood themes on budget in millions, controlling for film release year.

The regression analysis for Budget and Primacy of Womanhood has a standard error of 0.001 and displays significance at the 1% level, classifying the relationship between the two observed factors as statistically significant.

Film Series

In an attempt to understand why relatively so few women serve as directors on book-to-film adaptations sourced from women-authors, I look to identify any potential patterns in the directorship of book-to-film series. Observing patterns in a specialized dataset containing only film franchises or series adapted from literary works allows for a more homogeneous dataset and more controlled observations when examining any singular series. Yet, this specialized dataset is smaller than the main dataset and consequently holds less statistical power. The series-specific

dataset contains 39 titles, many of which are also included in the main dataset. The reason for the presence of titles in this specialized dataset that are not eligible to be included in the main dataset is that certain sequels within the specialized dataset are sourced from their series' initial novel or film, but are not directly based on a book or novel themselves.

One observation made was that women directors would at times serve as the director for the first film in a series, yet be replaced by one or several men directors for subsequent films. This is noteworthy as many book-to-film franchises begin with a lower-budget film for their initial debut, and upon determining profitability and popularity with audiences, pour greater resources into successive films. If there is, in fact, a pattern for replacing women directors with men when an adapted series proves profitable, that would be unfortunate, as positive audience reception to an initial adaptation often signals approval from fans of the source material. Replacing a well-performing woman director not only serves to potentially penalize a director for succeeding, but may also indicate low confidence in women to handle larger budgets by studios. Another potential reason a studio may replace a woman director is the tendency in the industry at large to view male audiences as primary customers, leading to the repeated prioritization of said audience over others.

Calculations run against the specialized dataset demonstrate that when a woman director directs the first film in a series, in 0% of cases does she, or another woman director, occupy the director position in subsequent films. Conversely, when a man director directs the first film in a series, in 89.5% of cases, he, or another man director, will direct subsequent films. Although there are a few cases within the data set of women directors directing sequel films within a series, there are no cases where women directors direct more than one film in a series. This discrepancy is of particular interest as, within our data set, secondary films in a series on average receive a budget increase of \$21 million USD between the first and second films. Additionally, when

examining only secondary films directed by women directors, the average budget increase between the first and second films is a mere \$9 million, compared to the average budget increase of \$27.86 million for secondary films directed by men directors.

The series of findings above indicates that in the category of woman-authored book-to-film adaptations, there is likely a bias towards selecting men to serve as directors over women, and said bias increases the higher a film's budget. This apparent bias is most dramatic above the 70th percentile of films within the main dataset. These findings are congruent with biases suggested by the body of research on women's employment in the industry as a whole.²⁷ My above findings also suggest that within the category of woman-authored book-to-film adaptations, films receiving larger budgets are less likely to center on themes or experiences of womanhood.

Considering my findings regarding the conditions in which adaptations are manufactured, I now look to understand the intricate implications of these biases on the portrayals of women and the presentation of gender in women-authored adaptations. In my qualitative analysis below, I investigate the changes made between three films and their source materials, in order to better understand how the Hollywood production process, with its above-mentioned biases, affects the intended messaging and presentation of women's stories. By investigating these adaptations for potential changes in their portrayals of women, relationships amongst women, men, and romantic dynamics, I seek to understand how the overrepresentation of men behind the camera and the apparent bias against stories of womanhood may affect how women's literature is reworked for the big screen.

²⁷ Lauzen. "The Celluloid Ceiling," 1-9.

Case Studies

To best analyze how, and for what purposes, women's stories may be altered when reworked from literary forms into the film medium, I examine three book-to-film adaptations of fictional and non-fictional novels written by women authors as case studies in my research. By interrogating the films *Hidden Figures*,²⁸ *The Devil Wears Prada*,²⁹ and *Women Talking*,³⁰ as well as their source materials, I hope to probe how conversion to film provokes deviations from original texts, and inquire if those departures facilitate distortions in the intended portrayals of women and their experiences.

The three titles selected for this qualitative analysis were chosen from the main dataset for a multitude of reasons intended to ensure proper conditions for a relevant comparative study. Part of the rationale for selecting this group of films is that they present a mixture of women and men serving in the director role, as investigating the effect of filmmaker gender is one of this study's intentions. To maintain relative consistency for comparison, the selection of these titles is also motivated by their similar proximities to the dataset's median in terms of budget and distance from the outliers in terms of book publication date and film release year. In choosing these adaptations, I also seek to create discourse that is relevant to the media consumption of a typical US consumer, and therefore avoid titles that would likely be obscure to such audiences. Yet, sensing that choosing only the most popular titles could likewise distort an analysis aimed at average consumer habits, *Hidden Figures*, *The Devil Wears Prada*, and *Women Talking* were selected based on their relatively high viewership and critical acclaim in addition to the aforementioned factors.

²⁸ Melfi, Theodore, dir. *Hidden Figures* (Twentieth Century Fox, 2017), DVD.

²⁹ Frankel, David, dir. *The Devil Wears Prada* (Twentieth Century Fox, 2006), DVD.

³⁰ Polley, Sarah, dir. *Women Talking* (Plan B Entertainment, 2022), DVD.

Reference Information for Case Study Adaptations

Book Title	Author	Publication Year	Film Director	Film Release Year	Film Budget
<i>Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Who Helped Win the Space Race</i>	Margot Lee Shetterly	2016	Theodore Melfi	2016	\$25 Million (~\$34 Million adjusted for 2025 inflation)
<i>The Devil Wears Prada</i>	Lauren Weisberger	2003	David Frankel	2006	\$35 Million (~\$62 Million adjusted for 2025 inflation)
<i>Women Talking</i>	Miriam Toews	2018	Sarah Polley	2022	\$20 Million (~\$23 Million adjusted for 2025 inflation)

The Nature of Adaptation

Adapting a work from literature to cinema necessitates inherent adjustments to the original text. Longer novels often have scenes cut or shortened to accommodate time, allowing the narrative to fit cinematic pacing. When interrogating these texts and comparing their associated adaptations, I was interested in identifying which scenes, characters, narrative elements, and other story components filmmakers deemed justifiable to cut, shorten, or alter. More specifically, I looked to observe in each film if there were diversions from the source material that amounted to contortions of the portrayals, experiences, or messaging behind women characters. Within the questions I seek to ask of each adaptation, I also wish to pinpoint which

diversions from source materials were made simply to accommodate the difference in medium, in contrast with changes made that ignorantly or intentionally alter the original messaging of the text.

In all three adaptations, I find departures from source materials by filmmakers that alter the presentation of womanhood and gender, with some filmmakers doing so more heavily and problematically than others. Upon scrutinizing the offending alterations in the texts for each film, I identify several patterns in how deviations from source materials manifest. Shared tendencies in how the filmmakers depart from their source materials are present in the depictions of women characters, the portrayals of relationships amongst women characters, the retexturing³¹ of men characters, and the romanticization of central relationships.

Subsequently, I ask the same four questions of each adaptation: (1) Does the film diverge from the text in its depiction of women characters? (2) Does the film present the interactions and relationships between women in a manner different from the text? (3) Does the film portray men characters in a different tone, or position them differently in the narrative as compared to the text? (4) Does the film depict romantic dynamics between characters in a way that diverges from the text? Below, I present my findings in relation to these four questions, working film by film to allow for comparative analysis.

To supply context for those unfamiliar with these films or their literary works of origin, I will provide a brief introduction to each of the works evaluated in my case studies:

³¹ Here, I am coining a new use of the term ‘retexturing’ with respect to adaptation and media analysis. In this context, I use retexturing to describe the way men characters are differently portrayed or positioned in the narrative, as opposed to a film's source material. Such retexturing becomes harmful when it occurs in a manner that displays filmmaker's prioritization of masculine audiences within stories originally intended to center women. The practice of retexturing men characters can also turn detrimental when filmmakers’ adjustments fundamentally or significantly alter a narrative’s messaging or portrayal of women characters in relation to remodeled men characters.

Hidden Figures

Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Who Helped Win the Space Race is a 2016 literary nonfiction book written by author Margot Lee Shetterly.³² This biographical work chronicles the experiences of black women working at NASA's Langley Research Center between the 1930s and the 1960s, during which time Katherine Goble Johnson, Mary Jackson, and Dorothy Vaughan — who worked as 'human computers' and serve as the book's protagonists — were forced to navigate the changing landscape of social and workforce, racial and gender segregation.

The Devil Wears Prada

The Devil Wears Prada by Lauren Weisberger is a 2003 novel that follows Andy Sachs, a recent college graduate and aspiring magazine writer, who secures a job as second assistant to the editor of the fictitious, famed fashion magazine, *Runway*.³³ The novel premises around Andy's struggle to keep up with the relentless demands of her boss, Miranda Priestley, her difficulties in acclimating to the pressure-filled workplace culture, and her plight in balancing personal relationships with an all-consuming work life. It is assumed that *The Devil Wears Prada* is loosely inspired by the author's experiences working at American *Vogue Magazine* as a personal assistant for *Vogue* editor Anna Wintour.

³² Margot Lee Shetterly, *Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win The Space Race* (New York, NY: William Morrow, 2016).

³³ Lauren Weisberger, *The Devil Wears Prada* (New York, NY: Random House, 2003).

Women Talking

Women Talking is a 2018 novel by Miriam Toews, presented as a “reaction through fiction to real-life events.”³⁴ The novel is based on true events that occurred in the Manitoba Mennonite colony in Bolivia, where, between 2005 and 2009, more than one hundred women and young girls were administered an animal anaesthetic and raped by men of their colony. Eight men were eventually found to be the perpetrators of these rapes, after many years of the assaults being dismissed by colony elders as punishment by god for the women’s sins, lies made for attention, or acts of “wild female imagination.” *Women Talking* imagines an aftermath of these events, in which the perpetrators are taken to jail after being attacked by one of the women, and the remaining men of the colony go into the city to post their bail. The women of the colony are left with 48 hours to decide whether to forgive the men or refuse and be barred from entrance into heaven. On behalf of the other women in the colony, eight women are selected to meet in secret to decide what recourse the women must or must not take in response to the abuses.

Hidden Figures

Depictions of Women Characters

The *Hidden Figures* film presents its women characters as decontextualized, less outspoken versions of their literary counterparts. An example of this can be seen in the *Hidden Figures* novel, when a colleague of the protagonists, Black computer Miriam Mann, steals a sign that demarcates the Langley lunchroom as a segregated space in silent protest.³⁵ This scene is erased and seemingly replaced in the film with a scene of Mr. Harrison, Head of the Space Task

³⁴ Miriam Toews, *Women Talking* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2018).

³⁵ Shetterly, *Hidden Figures*, page 44.

Group, heroically tearing down a sign labeling a “colored restroom” with a crowbar (more on this later).³⁶ The novel *Hidden Figures* similarly mentions that Catherine uses the — implied white only — unlabeled restrooms when working in areas of Langley that lacked colored restrooms, daring anyone to tell her not to.³⁷ In the film adaptation, Catherine runs across the large Langley campus in heels, all the way to the segregated West Computing Group each time she requires the restroom.³⁸ The rearrangement of these scenes exemplifies the subdued iterations of Shetterly’s women characters in the novel’s film adaptation; versions of the characters who may speak up when their frustrations reach boiling points, but who are generally far less emboldened than their real-life counterparts.

The *Hidden Figures* novel also emphasizes how, early on in Catherine’s career, she had received an offer to earn a PhD, an extremely rare opportunity for a woman of color at the time, which she was forced to refuse due to responsibilities following an unplanned pregnancy.³⁹ Despite the formative nature of this experience and the significance of this narrative in discussing the complexities of being a high-achieving woman of color within white male-dominated spaces, this entire plot point was cut from the *Hidden Figures* film.

Shetterly’s *Hidden Figures* also explicitly details historic examples of systemic injustices against women and POC enacted by the U.S. government, most of which are only passively intimated or simply omitted from the film. One of which is Shetterly’s discussion of the World War II labor market and the opportunities and social leeway the war presented for women’s and POC’s workforce participation in places like Langley. Shetterly challenges hegemonic forces by calling attention to the often glossed-over history of the large-scale dismissal of said workers after

³⁶ Melfi, *Hidden Figures*, 1:03:30.

³⁷ Shetterly, *Hidden Figures*, page 129.

³⁸ Melfi, *Hidden Figures*, 0:22:27.

³⁹ Shetterly, *Hidden Figures*, page 75.

the war's end, when soldiers (particularly white men soldiers) returned home. The *Hidden Figures* book discusses the relief these layoffs provided some women who preferred their housewifery, and the anger it brought out in others who had finally gotten a taste of opportunity and resented the instruction to return to the kitchen. Dorothy Vaughan was one of these women, who moved to nearby Newport News while still a temporary employee, wagering her wartime employee status would be converted to a permanent one.⁴⁰

Portrayal of Relationships Amongst Women Characters

Overall, the discrepancies between the *Hidden Figures* film and its source material in its portrayal of relationships amongst women characters are not hugely significant, yet notable. Although the film adds fictionalized scenes not present in the book that exaggerate the friendship between Catherine, Mary, and Dorothy, these scenes are seemingly added to provide narrative cohesion and are approached in a relatively appropriate manner. While the extent of the relationship between Catherine, Mary, and Dorothy, depicted in the film, is a deviation from Shetterley's book, the film does not hold the same biographical tone as its literary counterpart. As a result, this particular embellishment to the true story could arguably be classified as a positive or necessary alteration. That said, the film does omit several aspects of the main characters' lives and NASA work culture, relevant in establishing the characters' reverence for solidarity among women. Not present in the film is the book's extensive overview of Mary's immense volunteer work, as she supported young girls, especially girls of color, in fighting for a seat at the table.⁴¹

The film also omits the book's complication of interactions between White and Black women at Langley. According to the film's source material, the Black women at NASA

⁴⁰ Shetterly, *Hidden Figures*, page 80.

⁴¹ Shetterly, *Hidden Figures*, page 96.

experienced racism from some White women colleagues but also relative neutrality and camaraderie from others.⁴²

The Retexturing of Men Characters

Perhaps some of the greatest liberties taken in the adaptation of *Hidden Figures* are revisions made to the actions and plot significance of men within the story. A notable example is the fictionalized character Al Harrison, the Head of the Space Task Group, created by Melfi for the film. The character of Harrison is far more relevant to the plot of Melfi's *Hidden Figures* than any man, especially a white-man, character in Shetterly's version. Harrison's presence contradicts the source material through his plot significance, framing, and behavior, as his actions are quite uncharacteristic of any white-man character in the original story. Breaking down "colored restroom" signs, ensuring the inclusion of Black women characters, and making poignant anti-racist speeches are just some of Harrison's heroics in the film⁴³ – all plot points invented and written in by the filmmakers. In interviews, Melfi has defended these directorial decisions, claiming that audiences need to see "white people who do the right thing."⁴⁴ The insertion of erroneous scenes and characters depicting white men as heroes within this story of Black women's resistance and agency strongly calls upon white-male savior tropes and reads as a falsification of history. Such changes constitute harmful retexturings, displaying a prioritization by filmmakers for masculine and white audiences within a story intended to center the lived experiences of Black women.

Melfi's unapologetic rationalization of the film's questionable alterations is indicative of systemic blindness within the industry to the importance of sharing accurate depictions of

⁴² Shetterly, *Hidden Figures*, page 197, 199.

⁴³ Melfi, *Hidden Figures*, 1:03:30.

⁴⁴ Da'Shawn Mosley, "Hidden Racism," *Sojourners*, May 18, 2021.

struggle, especially in depicting women of color. These industry-wide patterns display a systemic aversion to narratives that are potentially discomfiting to masculine and white audiences, a tendency that reflects the demographic terrain of Hollywood power structures.

Romanticization

Melfi's *Hidden Figures* features discrepancies between the film and its source material that notably romanticize the state of the main characters' relationships. The film neglects to mention the eternally strained nature of Dorothy's marriage to Howard, which nonetheless remained intact until Howard's death and was discussed significantly in the source material.⁴⁵ James Johnson, Katherine's second husband, is depicted rather generously in the film, as he is portrayed as surprisingly supportive of Katherine's career for the time.⁴⁶ Yet, this image of Katherine and James' relationship reads as perhaps unearned, as the film precludes Shetterly's discussion of Katherine's desire to follow NASA to Houston when the space program was relocated in 1961, for which she was denied, as James preferred not to move.⁴⁷ NASA's Houston Johnson Space Center began the Apollo lunar missions later that year, which eventually landed humans on the Moon in 1969.

The Devil Wears Prada

Depictions of Women Characters

Weisberger's women characters in *The Devil Wears Prada* are stifled in a similar fashion to that of Shetterly's. In Weisberger's novel, protagonist Andy is introduced as a sassy, cigarette-

⁴⁵ Shetterly, *Hidden Figures*, page 22, 64.

⁴⁶ Melfi, *Hidden Figures*, 0:53:33.

⁴⁷ Shetterly, *Hidden Figures*, page 210.

smoking, independent, aspiring magazine writer, yet in the film, is portrayed as a nervous, soft-spoken girl who views magazines as an unserious medium despite applying to work at one.^{48,49} While the novel opens with a prolepsis scene of Andy attempting to drive Miranda's convertible through Manhattan,⁵⁰ the film is set in motion by shots of half-nude, extremely thin, polished women (who we learn are *Runway* employees) dressing for the day, juxtaposed with shots of Andy dressing.⁵¹ These preliminary scenes establish Andy as a flawed counterpart to her future *Runway* co-workers, a theme that reappears until Andy's 'makeover' scene. Contrary to the tone found in the novel, which emphasizes Andy's viewpoint, scenes evoking The Male Gaze in which the bodies of Andy and other women characters are sexualized are plentiful in the film.⁵²

Andy's best friend, Lily, is a major character in the novel, but is essentially cut from the film on account of her receiving only a handful of lines and having little more than a name in common with the original character. Despite her huge plot significance, the erasure of Weisberger's version of Lily necessitates a massive reworking of the film's conclusion (additional discussion below), a departure that is likely related to the character's unabashed promiscuity, drinking habits, and general dissimilarity from traditional gender expectations.⁵³

One character in *The Devil Wears Prada* film who *does* negotiate gendered expectations is Miranda Priestley. Miranda doesn't participate in niceties and leads her staff with a dominant and demanding personality. She has been divorced several times and works extreme hours with her twin daughters at home.⁵⁴ All of this is also true of Miranda's character in the book, and while the

⁴⁸ Weisberger, *The Devil Wears Prada*, page 2.

⁴⁹ Frankel, *The Devil Wears Prada*, 0:10:00.

⁵⁰ Weisberger, *The Devil Wears Prada*, page 1.

⁵¹ Frankel, *The Devil Wears Prada*, 0:00:59.

⁵² Frankel, *The Devil Wears Prada*, 0:01:30, 0:35:40.

⁵³ Weisberger, *The Devil Wears Prada*.

⁵⁴ Frankel, *The Devil Wears Prada*.

novel makes no attempts to hail her as a hero, Weisberger's Miranda is a far cry from the downright cruelty depicted in the film's spin on the character. The novel uses Miranda's character to illustrate the merciless side of the fashion industry, a woman made unappeasable by the unrelenting demands of her career over the course of decades.⁵⁵ By contrast, the film's depiction of Miranda tropifies her as a villainous woman, one who takes pleasure in constantly torturing her employees, lashing out not because of the toxic insatiability of the industry that's shaped her, but because of her failing marriage and inherent malevolence.⁵⁶

While some nonconformist facets of Miranda's character in *The Devil Wears Prada* film were taken from the book, many were invented by the filmmakers, such as her ongoing divorce,⁵⁷ her willingness to backstab friends for job opportunities,⁵⁸ her limited time spent with her children, and her method of pitting employees against one another.⁵⁹ Although these additions to Miranda's narrative are not inherently problematic, the film's magnification of Miranda's antagonist role, coupled with characterization edits that reaffirm her nonconformity with gender expectations, work in tandem to refashion Miranda's character into a mold that villainizes women who are willing to negotiate traditional feminine roles.

The Devil Wears Prada film also excludes multiple narratives found in the novel that problematize destructive social pressures imposed unevenly upon women. The film contrasts Andy with others in the fashion world by emphasizing facets such as her being a size 6 and one who eats as incongruous with her peers at *Runway*, yet fails to challenge the problematic nature of the fashion world's toxic diet culture,⁶⁰ evident in Andy's incongruity. In the novel, audiences are

⁵⁵ Weisberger, *The Devil Wears Prada*.

⁵⁶ Frankel, *The Devil Wears Prada*, 1:20:31.

⁵⁷ Frankel, *The Devil Wears Prada*, 1:20:31.

⁵⁸ Frankel, *The Devil Wears Prada*, 1:35:01.

⁵⁹ Frankel, *The Devil Wears Prada*, 1:08:07.

⁶⁰ Frankel, *The Devil Wears Prada*, 0:25:23, 1:24:04.

privity to Andy's inner voice, which constantly critiques the toxicity of fashion industry culture.⁶¹ Though these moments of internal disapproval are constant throughout the novel, a poignant example is when Andy reads a fan letter addressed to Miranda from a young girl named Anita, who begs Miranda to give her a makeover, desperate to emulate the women she sees in *Runway*. Recognizing Anita's highly-dysmorphic relationship with her body, evident in her letter's tone, Andy thinks to herself: "I wanted to cry, for Anita and all her friends who expended so much energy trying to mold themselves into Shalom or Stella or Carmen."⁶² In the film, the absence of Andy's critical inner voice to contend with the incredibly dangerous eating habits and dysmorphic comments of the *Runway* employees only serves to make a potential-Anita out of every young girl watching.

Portrayal of Relationships Amongst Women Characters

Frankel's *The Devil Wears Prada* omits many positive and consequential relationships between women characters found in the novel, deleting aspects crucial to the source material's depiction of feminine relationality. In the film, Andy accompanies Miranda to Paris for Fashion Week, replacing Emily, who desperately wants to go, because Miranda is unimpressed with Emily's work performance.⁶³ The climax of Andy's character development in the film comes when Miranda backstabs James and dubiously convinces Andy that she has betrayed Emily in a similar fashion. Fearful of mimicking the villainized life choices of Miranda, Andy quits *Runway*, leaves Paris, pleads forgiveness from her ex-boyfriend, and gets hired at a newspaper.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Weisberger, *The Devil Wears Prada*, page 168.

⁶² Weisberger, *The Devil Wears Prada*, page 243.

⁶³ Frankel, *The Devil Wears Prada*, 1:08:07.

⁶⁴ Frankel, *The Devil Wears Prada*, 1:41:35.

Contrasting the film's conclusion, which marks Andy's personal development through her disapproval of Miranda (who acted in defence of her career) and her return to her ill-supportive boyfriend, the novel's conclusion is predicated on Andy's renewed prioritization of feminine friendship. In the novel, the opportunity to attend Fashion Week is forced upon Andy after Emily falls ill, ruining Andy's plan to spend Fashion Week away from *Runway*, tending to her personal relationships, which have become strained by her relentless work hours.⁶⁵ As mentioned previously, the film adaptation almost entirely erases the character of Lily, Andy's best friend, and in doing so, must dramatically rewrite the entire climax of the story. Originally, the novel's culmination hinges on Lily falling into a coma after a drunk driving accident while Andy is in Paris for Fashion Week. Andy remains in Paris for a short time after hearing of Lily's accident, as Miranda has promised to land Andy her dream job upon the trip's conclusion. Miranda compares Andy's work ethic to her own, causing Andy to question if she desires a career that demands such isolation and disinvestment in her relationships with friends and family.⁶⁶ Soon after, Miranda speaks mockingly at Andy when she cannot deliver on an impossible request, and Andy publicly quits on the spot – realizing she cannot allow the toxicity of the industry to turn her unappeasible and unattached, as it has Miranda.⁶⁷ Andy's eventual rejection of *Runway* comes as she reconciles her misaligned priorities after almost choosing the toxicity of *Runway* over her best friend, realizing the demands of the industry have made her blind to Lily's preceding downward spiral. This is distinct from the film's version, where Andy's revelation is premised on her abhorrence of Miranda's villainized career devoutness and Andy's disoriented feelings from losing her unsupportive boyfriend over *Runway*.

⁶⁵ Weisberger, *The Devil Wears Prada*, page 278.

⁶⁶ Weisberger, *The Devil Wears Prada*, page 338.

⁶⁷ Weisberger, *The Devil Wears Prada*, page 342.

Distinct changes from the novel are also found in the film's closing scenes, as the filmmakers have Andy return from Paris to make amends with her ex-boyfriend, rather than to care for an injured Lily.⁶⁸ After reuniting with her boyfriend, the film concludes Andy's story with her interviewing at a fictional newspaper, the man who becomes her boss claiming that Miranda recommended her.⁶⁹ In Weisberger's version, after tending to Lily, Andy begins freelance writing about her experiences at *Runway* and her breakup, eventually bonding with an important woman magazine editor over their shared work experience at, and animosity for, *Runway*. This bond with editor Loretta and the creative writing material Andy forges from her *Runway* and relationship journeys becomes key to her eventual career success. Such a conclusion serves as a message, particularly to young women, of the power to be found in feminine friendships and the value of women's shared experiences.

The Retexturing of Men Characters

Although men in Frankel's *The Devil Wears Prada* are not as heavily retouched as those in Melfi's *Hidden Figures*, the adaptation still fails to properly frame the behavior of its man characters. Andy's boyfriend Alex, who is renamed to Nate in the film, has less integrity and is far less kind to Andy in the film, despite the film's positive framing of the character and the narrative concluding with Andy and Nate's reunification. The novel's Alex character is a passionate teacher for disadvantaged students who, like Andy, spends much of his time at work,⁷⁰ while the film's Nate is an 'aspiring chef.'⁷¹ Nate is significantly less approving of Andy's

⁶⁸ Frankel, *The Devil Wears Prada*, 1:41:16.

⁶⁹ Frankel, *The Devil Wears Prada*, 1:41:45.

⁷⁰ Weisberger, *The Devil Wears Prada*, page 99.

⁷¹ Frankel, *The Devil Wears Prada*, 1:16:24.

Runway job, criticizing and mocking her work from the beginning, compared to the novel's Alex, who takes issue with the job when it begins to consume all of Andy's time.⁷²

The film's iteration of Andy/Nate uncritically presents him as highly, even misogynistically, critical of the fashion world, faulting Andy when she expresses respect for *Runway*, and attacking her for wearing new work clothes he dislikes despite Andy's preference for them.⁷³ The two break up in the novel, somewhat amicably, when Andy is forced to go to Paris instead of a couple's trip, reading the constant scheduling conflicts as a sign to take a break. Yet in the film, the split occurs after a Paris-prompted fight, with Nate laying into Andy for no longer making fun of the "*Runway* Girls" and, in his words, "becoming one."⁷⁴ The retexturing changes to Alex/Nate's character by the adaptation's filmmakers are far from flattering, yet what makes these changes significant to the film's presentation of gender is the addition of an approving tone framing the character's new attributes. Far more than in the novel, Alex/Nate is portrayed as a grounded character in the film, one whose new objectionable qualities are the very same characteristics used to paint him as faultless in the film's conclusion.⁷⁵

Romanticization

As previously mentioned, *The Devil Wears Prada* film diverges from the novel with the reconciliation of Andy and Nate's relationship in the film's final scenes. Considering the couple's multitude of incompatible factors in both the novel and film, and the film's unintended depiction of Nate as a substandard boyfriend (discussed above), the pair's recoupling in the conclusion of the film appears as dangerously romanticized. As mentioned previously, the novel portrays the

⁷² Weisberger, *The Devil Wears Prada*, page 248.

⁷³ Frankel, *The Devil Wears Prada*, 0:36:54.

⁷⁴ Frankel, *The Devil Wears Prada*, 1:16:24.

⁷⁵ Frankel, *The Devil Wears Prada*, 1:41:16.

breakup between the two as unfortunate yet peaceful and amicable. The pair never rekindle their romantic connection, and by grieving the dissolution of their relationship, Andy is able to rediscover herself and strengthen her voice as an aspiring writer.⁷⁶ Also mentioned previously is the key change made in the conclusion of the film compared to its source material. While the novel illustrates Andy's growth through her rejection of a poisonous work culture and her renewed commitment to the women in her life, the cinematic adaptation wraps up Andy's journey with her return to her lackluster ex-boyfriend.

Women Talking

Depictions of Women Characters

The film *Women Talking* is significantly more aligned with its source material in its depiction of women characters than the titles discussed above. Although there are several divergences between the novel and film that are not inherent to the change in medium, many of the departures from the text work to enhance, rather than degrade, the portrayal of women characters. One of the major deviations from Toews's text that affects the portrayal of women in the film is the choice to switch narrators. The story in both the original and the adaptation is primarily told through the "Minutes of the Women Talking," a written transcript detailing the secret meeting in which eight women are selected to decide whether the women of the colony should leave or stay.⁷⁷ August, the colony's kindhearted schoolteacher and one of the only remaining men, is asked to take the "Minutes of the Women Talking" as the women of the colony are not taught to read or write. In the novel, such circumstances make August the most practical

⁷⁶ Weisberger, *The Devil Wears Prada*, page 357.

⁷⁷ Miriam Toews, *Women Talking*, page 1.

and congruous character to serve as narrator, despite the organic advantages of having a woman narrate these accounts of gender violence and reclaimed agency.

Whilst conditions of the literary medium make August the most suitable narrator for Toews's novel, the cinematic adaptation of *Women Talking* and the addition of audiovisual storytelling remove the need for a literate narrator. In turn, the filmmakers of *Women Talking* use the narrative voice of Autje, a young girl victimized by the attacks, to deliver the soul-stirring tale.⁷⁸ In doing so, the filmmakers demonstrate the potential of cinematic adaptation to enhance, rather than devalue, stories from disempowered or marginalized communities.

Polley's *Women Talking*, although it generally diverges little from its source material, takes advantage of the visual medium to show audiences new perspectives not found in the novel. Through B-role, audiences see glimpses of the colony's young men as the hayloft women debate the reversibility of the rape culture ideology possessed by the men in their community.⁷⁹ The film and novel use the term "do-nothing women" to describe the women in the colony who voted to do nothing in response to the attacks. In Toews's *Women Talking*, readers have limited exposure to the do-nothing women as August, the narrator, interacts with them little. Film audiences are privy to the tensions between a grandmother who seeks to stay put in the colony, and granddaughters who yearn to leave, with the film deviating from the novel by having certain characters leave their relatives behind.⁸⁰ In the film, the more flexible perspective orientation paired with the capacity for B-role allows audiences to see the full spectrum of the colony's women and their myriad viewpoints on fleeing violence.

⁷⁸ Polley, *Women Talking*, 0:00:10.

⁷⁹ Polley, *Women Talking*, 0:40:44.

⁸⁰ Polley, *Women Talking*, 1:36:13

The film *Women Talking* concludes with the women's decision to leave their colony in search of a life free from violence and patriarchal rule. In the novel, readers are left uncertain of the women's fate as the book's perspective is tied to August, who stays behind.⁸¹ The adaptation, however, features the women's perspective, with the final scene of the film confirming main character, Ona, escaped and delivered her baby safely. Concluding with a final frame of Ona's baby, the film ends with Autje's narration, who remarks, "Your story will be different from ours."⁸²

Portrayal of Relationships Amongst Women Characters

As there are few changes to the storytelling of *Women Talking* between the book and film, there are likewise scarce alterations in how the film presents relationships among women. One plot point diminished in the film that does relate to such relationships, however, is the role of the Koop brothers. Men from a neighboring Mennonite colony, the Koop brothers, present a potential hindrance to the women's escape as they have possession of Greta's horses and may prevent the women from leaving. The Koop brothers create tension between the hayloft women in the novel, as discussions of purity play out, resulting from the suggestion that Autje and Neitje, two young teenage girls, should lure the Koop brothers with promises of sex into the hayloft in order to drug them.⁸³ While the omission of these scenes resulted in the exclusion of a relevant conversation between the women about internalized judgment, the filmmakers seemingly skipped this plot point to remain consistent with their avoidance of any sexualizing tone. It is also quite likely that the luring scene was cut as a result of the actresses' ages.

⁸¹ Toews, *Women Talking*, page 215.

⁸² Polley, *Women Talking*, 1:37:39

⁸³ Toews, *Women Talking*, page 174.

The Retexturing of Men Characters

The most significant deviation from the source material in the presentation of men characters in Polley's *Women Talking* is the removal of August as narrator, as discussed above. This edit results in the removal of flashes of August's backstory, present in the novel. August's flashbacks from Toews's *Women Talking* mainly serve to inform readers of the factors that allowed August to be raised without the prejudices and patriarchal entitlement of the colony's other men. Readers are privy to August's time spent away from the community, his journey back, and most relevant, his true parentage. The novel describes how, by the time August was 12, he bore a "striking resemblance" to the colony's leader, Peters, rather than August's father, and thus from then on, became a symbol in the colony of "shame and violence and unacknowledged sin and the failure of the Mennonite experiment."⁸⁴ August is thus representative of both the horrors of the colony's deeply patriarchal society and, simultaneously, the reversible nature of the colony's conditioning.

Though the intricacies of August's past and the resulting symbolic value imbued in his character would have been advantageous to the film's overall messaging, it is disputable whether their inclusion would have been worth losing the power of Autje's narrative voice or scenes that would have otherwise been cut for time. Although August's original position as narrator raises interesting questions around women's lack of autonomous voice, even in their own stories, maintaining August's POV in the film would require the context of his backstory, a lengthy addition that may have subsequently decentered the women within the narrative. Relative to most adaptations, *Women Talking* is arguably a story more likely to generate a visceral emotional reaction from audiences than other narratives. The addition of audiovisual components in the story's film adaptation can only serve to intensify such reactions, specifically when considering

⁸⁴ Toews, *Women Talking*, page 212.

the deep accessibility of this story, particularly with women audiences.⁸⁵ As such, it is noteworthy to consider the distinction between knowing a narrator is a man when reading, and hearing a man's voice as narrator when visually consuming such a dark story of gender violence. With this in mind, the choice to replace August with Autje as narrator is debatably a prudent one, given *Women Talking*'s overarching themes of self-determination.

Romanticization

The only romantic tension in both the film and novel *Women Talking* is between August and Ona, and is depicted relatively similarly across both versions. While there are a few small differences from book to film in the dialogue between Ona and August, there are no discrepancies that truly alter the content of their interactions. August holds quite romanticized feelings for Ona, yet in both versions of the story, the dynamic between the two is underlined by Ona's clear nonreciprocal and strictly friendly feelings for August.⁸⁶ As such, the one-way feelings August holds for Ona in the novel remain just that in the film's depiction. In contrast to the varying degrees of added romanticization displayed in the adaptations of both *Hidden Figures* and *The Devil Wears Prada*, Polley's *Women Talking* exemplifies an alternative route.

The ways in which the filmmakers of *Hidden Figures* and *The Devil Wears Prada* adjust the characterizations of women in their cinematic adaptations are multifaceted and reflect hegemonic ideals such as adherence to gender expectations, rejection of self-actualization, and

⁸⁵ Polley, *Women Talking*, 0:01:17.

⁸⁶ Polley, *Women Talking*, 0:45:41

villainization of non-compliant women, values that are often reinforced by Hollywood media.

Women Talking was the one film within the case studies that did not significantly alter the presentation of its women characters, and it is perhaps vital to recognize that this title is the only film within the case studies to have a woman in the role of director.

Similar to the findings of the first leading question, *Women Talking*'s adaptation made far fewer dramatic changes to the relationships amongst its women characters than the other two films studied. The *Hidden Figures* film adaptation made alterations to the relationships among women characters, yet did so in a manner that did not dramatically hinder a positive portrayal of feminine relationships. In contrast, Frankel's *The Devil Wears Prada* omitted bonds between women characters crucial to upholding a positive example of feminine relationality and solidarity.

When interrogating how literary stories may have their presentation of gender altered when reworked into film within hypermasculine filmmaking spaces, observing potential changes to the attributes or narrative roles of men characters can help reveal which audiences or perspectives filmmakers may be prioritizing. The addition of noncanonical, heroic white men who serve as main characters in Melfi's *Hidden Figures* is a dramatic deviation from the source material, one that makes clear which audiences filmmakers intended to please, regardless of the historical distortions generated by such fabrications. *The Devil Wears Prada* film adaptation also presents divergencies from its source material in its construction of men characters, framing the poor behavior of men as valid and reasonable through tone and story structure. The *Women Talking* film also makes certain departures from Toews's novel relating to the roles of men, yet these changes serve to center women in moments where such alterations read as quite appropriate.

I argue that in the first two adaptations analyzed, relationships original to source materials were romanticized to varying degrees, potentially to increase the 'likability' of women characters and to provide 'feel-good' endings to these films. In the case of *The Devil Wears Prada*, the

romanticization of the original story, whether internally or not, also served to validate the poor behavior exhibited by men in the narrative. *Women Talking* demonstrates how the instinct to supplement women's stories with overindulgent heteronormative romance narratives is both unnecessary and counterproductive for the creation of entertaining and sophisticated cinema. Furthermore, I argue that the propensity in film adaptation to ornament women's stories with such narratives is to dismiss the value those stories hold in the absence of men's narrative participation.

Conclusion

For the greater part of the Hollywood film industry's existence, women have not been given a seat at the table for creative contribution. As a result, stories of women, by women, have been largely excluded from popular film for over a century. In recent decades, women have fought to increase their voices behind the camera, yet are still vastly underrepresented, especially in key decision-making roles. Subsequently, women may be represented on-screen more often in recent years, yet the quality and accuracy of these depictions frequently reflect the lackluster representation of women behind the screen. Yet, for hundreds of years before the rise of cinema, women creatives have been carving out space for more authentic forms of self-representation in the literary medium. Considering the increased room for accurate depictions of women in the literary space, the study of woman-authored book-to-film adaptations can provide insights as to how and where misrepresentations of women in film manifest within a hypermasculine filmmaking industry.

To understand how the uneven conditions of the Hollywood filmmaking industry affect the behind-the-scenes representation of women in the category of book-to-film adaptations, I compiled a dataset of 96 book-to-film adaptations of woman-authored novels and ran linear regression models in the program R. I found that for every million dollars allocated to a film's budget within my dataset, the likelihood of a film receiving a man director increases by 0.1%. Moreover, in the eighth and tenth deciles by budget within my dataset, none of the titles have women in the role of director. Furthermore, when investigating how film budget size may interact with the primacy of womanhood themes in a given film, I found that for every million dollars allocated to a film's budget, the likelihood of the film centering on womanhood or an experience of womanhood decreases by 0.4%. While there is a body of research to suggest an overrepresentation of men in filmmaking roles across the industry, the results of my quantitative

analysis suggest that this issue is present at appalling levels even in films written by women (largely) about women's experiences.

I contend that the findings of my qualitative analysis, in tandem with my quantitative findings and previous research in the field, suggest a direct correspondence between the overrepresentation of men in filmmaking roles and the misrepresentation of women in women-written stories. As discussed in the literature review, while the gender orientation of a director, or filmmaker serving in any role, does not inherently dictate the quality of a film's depiction of women, evidence suggests that increasing women behind the camera increases the likelihood of positive portrayals of women. Subsequently, it is noteworthy that the directors responsible for *Hidden Figures* and *The Devil Wears Prada* are both men, while *Women Talking* has a woman director. All films created within a hypermasculine movie-making industry and patriarchal culture at large can arguably reproduce forms of hegemonic gender ideology to some degree. However, the findings in my qualitative analysis suggest that misrepresentative portrayals of women and gender dynamics in woman-authored book-to-film adaptations are more likely to arise in films with men serving as directors.

In investigating how these misrepresentative portrayals manifest, I identified four major categories where deviations from a film's source material were most likely to appear. Distortions to the presentation of women and gender dynamics appeared most significantly in the portrayals of central women characters, relationships and dynamics amongst women characters, texturing of central men characters, and romanticized dynamics involving central women characters. Considering my quantitative findings, which suggest these patterns of misrepresentation may be more exaggerated in films of higher budgets, there is additional cause for concern as films with higher budgets tend to have wider releases, reach far larger audiences, and therefore maintain ideological influence on larger scales. While I can only confidently apply my statistical and

qualitative findings to the category of woman-authored book-to-film adaptations, these findings are suggestive of broader trends in Hollywood filmmaking. Further research is required to understand how the patterns identified in my above findings may apply to, and be addressed in, these broader contexts.

Of course, the issues raised above, regarding misrepresentation in adaptation and the potential broader implications of my findings, are intricate systemic issues that require intricate solutions to address concerns at systemic levels. Central goals for action aimed at combating these issues of misrepresentation should be increasing the number of women behind the camera across the industry, especially in key decision-making roles and in high-budget projects. On an academic level, future research could be directed towards uncovering which studios are most culpable for excluding/lacking women in high-level roles or relegating women to lower-budget films. Such findings could be useful for spreading consciousness around these issues, creating public awareness around top offending studios, or organizing social media campaigns and boycotts. On an individual scale, simply keeping in mind the patterns discussed in this research when watching your next film, deciding to read the book before watching your next adaptation, or directing your consumer dollars away from offending films and their studios, are all small steps in the right direction.

To continue addressing issues of misrepresentation in adaptation at the systemic level, further research should explore how similar issues of filmmaker-diluted portrayals may be present in other forms of film adaptation, such as films adapted from traditional plays, short stories, etc. Further research could also address distortions to the presentation of gender occurring at other stages of the film production process, such as films adapted from screenplays. In my quantitative and qualitative research above, director gender was used as an indicator of the dominant gender makeup of those occupying the top behind-the-scenes roles in a given film.

While I consider this proficient for the goals of this analysis, given research suggesting the influence of director gender on the gender makeup of other behind-the-scenes roles,⁸⁷ further research could benefit from exploring the effects of filmmaker gender orientation on representation quality with greater nuance.

⁸⁷ Lauzen, “The Celluloid Ceiling.”

Appendix 1

Statistical Analysis, Main Dataset

Title	Film Budget (In Millions)	Book's Publication Year	Directors Gender	Film Release Year	Is Womanhood Central?
"Northanger Abbey"	5	1817	M	2007	Y
"Precious"	10	1996	M	2009	Y
"The Bling Ring"	8	2013	W	2013	Y
"The Help"	25	2009	M	2011	Y
"To All the Boys I've Loved Before"	10	2014	W	2018	Y
"A Beautiful Mind"	58	1998	M	2001	N
"A Wrinkle in Time"	103	1962	W	2018	Y
"All The Bright Places"	20	2015	M	2020	Y
"Along For The Ride"	N/A	2009	W	2022	Y
"Aquamarine"	12	2001	W	2006	Y
"Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret."	30	1970	W	2023	Y

"Beautiful Creatures"	60	2009	M	2013	Y
"Blonde"	22	2000	M	2022	Y
"Bridge to Terabithia"	20	1978	M	2007	N
"Can You Ever Forgive Me"	10	2008	W	2018	Y
"Carol"	11.8	1952	M	2015	Y
"Chemical Hearts"	N/A	2016	M	2020	Y
"Dumplin'"	20	2015	W	2018	Y
"Emma (2020)"	10	1815	W	2020	Y
"Enola Holmes 2"	50	2008	M	2022	Y
"Enola Holmes"	20	2006	M	2020	Y
"Everything, Everything"	10	2015	W	2017	Y
"Fifty Shades Darker"	55	2011	M	2017	Y
"Fifty Shades Freed"	55	2012	M	2018	Y
"Fifty Shades of Grey"	40	2011	W	2015	Y
"Flipped"	14	2001	M	2010	Y

"Freaky Friday"	20	1972	M	2003	Y
"Girl on the Train"	45	2015	M	2016	Y
"Gone Girl"	61	2012	M	2014	Y
"Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets"	100	1998	M	2002	N
"Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows - Part 1"	125	2007	M	2010	N
"Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2"	125	2007	M	2011	N
"Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire"	150	2000	M	2005	N
"Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince"	250	2005	M	2009	N
"Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix"	150	2003	M	2007	N
"Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban"	130	1999	M	2004	N
"Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone"	125	1997	M	2001	N

"Hidden Figures"	25	2016	M	2016	Y
"Howl's Moving Castle"	24	1986	M	2004	Y
"I Know What You Did Last Summer"	17.5	1973	W	2025	N
"If I Stay"	11	2009	M	2014	Y
"In Her Shoes"	35	2002	M	2005	Y
"Jane Eyre"	13	1847	M	2011	Y
"Jojo Rabbit"	14	2008	M	2019	N
"Julie and Julia"	40	2005	W	2009	Y
"Legally Blonde"	18	2001	M	2001	Y
"Little Women" (2019)	40	1869	W	2019	Y
"Love, Rosie"	15	2004	M	2014	Y
"Marie Antoinette"	40	2001	W	2006	Y
"Me Before You"	20	2012	W	2016	Y
"Mean Girls"	17	2002	M	2004	Y
"Mr. Malcolm's List"	N/A	2009	W	2022	Y

"My Sister's Keeper"	30	2004	M	2009	Y
"News of the World"	38	2016	M	2020	Y
"Pride and Prejudice" (2005)	28	1813	M	2005	Y
"Ramona and Beezus"	15	1955	W	2010	Y
"Rebecca"	N/A	1938	M	2020	Y
"Room"	13	2010	M	2015	Y
"She Said"	32	2019	W	2022	Y
"Still Alice"	5	2007	M	2014	Y
"The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes" (The Hunger Games Series)	100	2020	M	2023	Y
"The Descendants"	20	2007	M	2011	N
"The Devil Wears Prada 2" (upcoming)	125	2013	M	2026	Y
"The Devil Wears Prada"	35	2003	M	2006	Y
"The DUFF"	8.5	2010	M	2015	Y

"The Giver"	25	1993	M	2014	Y
"The Hate U Give"	23	2017	M	2018	Y
"The Hunger Games: Catching Fire"	130	2009	M	2013	Y
"The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 1"	125	2010	M	2014	Y
"The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 2"	150	2010	M	2015	Y
"The Hunger Games"	78	2008	M	2012	Y
"The Jane Austen Book Club"	6	2004	W	2007	Y
"The Kissing Booth 2"	N/A	2020	M	2020	Y
"The Kissing Booth"	3	2012	M	2018	Y
"The Last Thing He Wanted"	100	1996	W	2020	Y
"The Lovely Bones"	65	2002	M	2009	Y
"The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones"	60	2007	M	2013	Y
"The Nightingale"	2	2015	W	2018	Y

"The Princess Diaries"	26	2000	M	2001	Y
"The Secret Garden"	20	1911	M	2020	Y
"The Secret Life of Bees"	11	2001	W	2008	Y
"The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2"	27	2007	W	2008	Y
"The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants"	25	2001	M	2005	Y
"The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part 1"	110	2008	M	2011	Y
"The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part 2"	120	2008	M	2012	Y
"The Twilight Saga: Eclipse"	68	2007	M	2010	Y
"The Twilight Saga: New Moon"	50	2006	M	2009	Y
"To All the Boys: Always and Forever"	15	2017	M	2021	Y
"To All the Boys: P.S. I Still Love You"	18	2017	M	2020	Y

"Twilight"	37	2005	W	2008	Y
"Water for Elephants"	38	2006	M	2011	N
"Where the Crawdads Sing"	24	2018	W	2022	Y
"Whip It"	15	2007	W	2009	Y
"Wild"	15	2012	M	2014	Y
"Women Talking"	20	2018	W	2022	Y

Appendix 2

Statistical Analysis, Series Dataset

Title	Film Budget (In Millions)	Book's Publication Year	Directors Gender	Film Release Year	Is Womanhood Central?	Number in Series	Based On Literary Work/Sequel?
"To All the Boys I've Loved Before"	10	2014	W	2018	Y	1	Y
"Enola Holmes 2"	50	2008	M	2022	Y	2	Y
"Enola Holmes"	20	2006	M	2020	Y	1	Y
"Fifty Shades Darker"	55	2011	M	2017	Y	2	Y
"Fifty Shades Freed"	55	2012	M	2018	Y	3	Y
"Fifty Shades of Grey"	40	2011	W	2015	Y	1	Y

"Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets"	100	1998	M	2002	N	2	Y
"Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows - Part 1"	125	2007	M	2010	N	7	Y
"Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2"	125	2007	M	2011	N	8	Y
"Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire"	150	2000	M	2005	N	4	Y
"Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince"	250	2005	M	2009	N	6	Y
"Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix"	150	2003	M	2007	N	5	Y
"Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban"	130	1999	M	2004	N	3	Y
"Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone"	125	1997	M	2001	N	1	Y
"I Know What You Did Last Summer" (1997)	17	1973	M	1977	N	1	Y
"I Know What You Did Last Summer" (2025)	15-20	1973	W	2025	N	2	Y
"Legally Blonde 2: Red, White & Blonde"	45	N/A	M	2003	Y	2	N
"Legally Blonde"	18	2001	M	2001	Y	1	Y
"Mean Girls 2"	N/A	N/A	W	2011	Y	2	N
"Mean Girls"	17	2002	M	2004	Y	1	Y
"The Ballad of Songbirds and	100	2020	M	2023	Y	5	Y

Snakes" (The Hunger Games Series)							
"The Devil Wears Prada 2" (upcoming)	100-150	2013	M	2026	Y	2	Y
"The Devil Wears Prada"	35	2003	M	2006	Y	1	Y
"The Hunger Games: Catching Fire"	130	2009	M	2013	Y	2	Y
"The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 1"	125	2010	M	2014	Y	3	Y
"The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 2"	150	2010	M	2015	Y	4	Y
"The Hunger Games"	78	2008	M	2012	Y	1	Y
"The Kissing Booth 2"	N/A	2020	M	2020	Y	2	Y
"The Kissing Booth 3"	N/A	2021	M	2021	Y	3	N
"The Kissing Booth"	3	2012	M	2018	Y	1	Y
"The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement"	45	N/A	M	2004	Y	2	N
"The Princess Diaries"	26	2000	M	2001	Y	1	Y
"The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2"	27	2003-2007	W	2008	Y	2	Y
"The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants"	25	2001	M	2005	Y	1	Y

"The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part 1"	110	2008	M	2011	Y	4	Y
"The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part 2"	120	2008	M	2012	Y	5	Y
"The Twilight Saga: Eclipse"	68	2007	M	2010	Y	3	Y
"The Twilight Saga: New Moon"	50	2006	M	2009	Y	2	Y
"To All the Boys: Always and Forever"	15	2017	M	2021	Y	3	Y
"To All the Boys: P.S. I Still Love You"	18	2017	M	2020	Y	2	Y
"Twilight"	37	2005	W	2008	Y	1	Y

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