



Article

Teaching Screenwriting as Translation and Adaptation: Critical Reflections on Definitions and Romanticism 2.0

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Abstract: This essay discusses teaching screenwriting in terms of translation and adaptation. Realigning terminology with everyday language, translation is redefined as an invariance-based phenomenon while adaptation is reconceived as a variance-based phenomenon, which entails better fit. More specific working definitions follow specifying what one could be teaching or learning in more precise terms. The acceptance of these proposals remains a matter of contention. One major obstacle involves the current Western Romantic view on art and culture. Having driven a rift between art and craft, Romanticism 2.0 opposes the aforesaid working definitions and disparages screenwriting, translation, and adaptation, lest they comply with the Romantic rule. Suggestions follow to re-open the Romantic view to its pre-Romantic stance and to revalue both art and craft values in screenwriting, translation, and adaptation. Finally, conclusions highlight some caveats foreshadowing resistance also against nudging back Romanticism 2.0 to its pre-Romantic views.

Keywords: screenwriting; adaptation; translation; art versus craft; Romanticism; teaching



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1. Introduction

In discourses about screenwriting, “adaptation” typically means literary film or TV adaptation. As such, it represents the subject matter of literary film adaptation studies (henceforth LFAS).¹ Since most film and TV adaptations are based on a screenplay, the topic touches screenwriting studies as well. However, so far LFAS has shown little interest in screenwriting, and screenwriting studies focusing on adaptation have also remained scarce (e.g., [Sherry 2014](#), pp. 87–88). While teaching screenwriting has built a tradition since the 1910s (e.g., [Curran 2015](#)), lit-film scholars acknowledge that so far they have not yet developed models on how to teach (literary film) adaptation (e.g., [Cutchins et al. 2010](#), p. xiv; [Leitch 2010](#), p. 1; [Cartmell and Whelehan 2014](#); [Cobb 2014](#), p. 11; [Sherry 2014](#), p. 87). Different critics suggest different explanations for this situation. Introducing their *The Pedagogy of Adaptation*, [Cutchins et al. \(2010\)](#), p. xiv) state that teaching is about “repeatable processes”, while (literary film) adaptations are “more of an art than a repeatable process” (*ibid.*). Hence, the editors suggest that teaching adaptation cannot be “broken down into bite-sized steps”, and conclude that the “only legitimate response to art is more art”. On the other hand, [Sherry \(2014\)](#), p. 87) claims:

The lack of attention to the teaching of processes of adapting can be seen as a more general tendency to overlook the many useful theoretical and creative functions of adaptation studies’ methodologies beyond comparative case-study analysis. ([Sherry 2014](#), p. 87)

A serious discussion on teaching adaptation in screenwriting meets with more challenges than one essay can handle. By way of introduction, this essay discusses two obstacles that hinder such a debate. One deals with definitional issues: How does one define adaptation? (How) Is it different from other types of text processing, such as translation, for example? The question about translation may surprise in an essay on screenwriting, but it emerges when translation and adaptation scholars use both terms interchangeably. This

raises yet another question: What is one teaching more exactly? Some translation and adaptation scholars have suggested redefining translation as the accurate reproduction of the meaning of an expression and adaptation as change that obtains or maintains relevance (Cattrysse 2018a, 2020). The acceptance of these proposals remains a matter of contention. One major obstacle involves what I hereafter call Romanticism 2.0.

This ushers in the second part of this essay, which explains why a Romantic view on art and culture rejects the foregoing definitional proposals and restricts rather than expands options to assess screenwriting in terms of translation and adaptation. Suggestions follow to re-open the Romantic view to its wider pre-Romantic stages.

Finally, the conclusions highlight some caveats foreshadowing resistance against the proposals made in this essay.

2. Definitional Issues

“Translation” and “adaptation” represent at once common parlance and academic terms. However, whereas in everyday language, both terms refer to relatively distinct sets of phenomena, translation and adaptation scholars tend to use them interchangeably.

2.1. Defining Translation and Adaptation

Laypeople as well as professional translators and academics working outside the field of translation studies typically define “translation” as *the accurate rendition of the meaning of a verbal expression in another natural language*. Even if the word is used in a metaphorical sense, people still tend to distinguish it from translation “proper” (e.g., Jakobson 1959; van Doorslaer 2020, p. 1). However, when post-modernism also hit literary translation studies in the late 1970s, some ambitious literary scholars have inflated the common parlance concept of “translation”, first to include all intertextual types of processing (e.g., adaptation, parody, periodization, modernization) and make it synonymous with intertextuality and then to step beyond the linguistic paradigm and become synonymous with “culture” (e.g., Trivedi 2007) or “semiosis” (e.g., Steiner 1975; Torop 2002; Gorlée 2007; Marais and Kull 2016). Today translation scholars study translation as any intersemiotic and multimodal type of verbalization (e.g., Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001; O’Halloran 2008), including phenomena such as audiovisual translation and audio-description.

In everyday language, “adaptation” typically means *change that obtains or maintains relevance*. However, as indicated above, lit-film scholars have claimed the term to study screen representations of literary texts. Traditionally, they have translationalized the common parlance concept of adaptation and understood it as *the more or less faithful screen representation of a (preferably canonical) literary text*. In other words, they have conceived of adaptation as *(more or less) free translation*, where “translation” is understood in its common parlance sense as *the accurate rendition of the meaning of an expression*, and “free” is assessed in translational rather than adaptational terms, i.e., based on source (con)text-related conditions of fidelity or accuracy rather than on target (con)text-based requirements of “better fit”.² This is not to say that film adaptations have not been studied in cinematic terms, only that the word “free” looks “backwards”, not “forwards”. Interestingly, in common parlance, adaptation is neither more nor less free than translation, only determined by different (rather than opposed) conditioners. In this view, both translation and adaptation may be more or less “free” but for different reasons.

As film and media studies evolved into legitimate disciplines of their own, lit-film studies has evolved into a direction similar to the one described above with respect to TS: first, the (in)fidelity debate has opened the translational view on adaptation and inflated the intertextual subcategory adaptation to comprise every type of text processing, including translation, parody, and so forth, thus making it synonymous with intertextuality too; then, as more new media emerged, (cultural) adaptation scholars have widened their scope even more, stepping beyond the lit-film paradigm to include all forms of cross-medial text processing, such as cinematization, novelization, gamification, musicalization, and so forth (e.g., Leitch 2017, p. 13).

Hence, the intertextual and inter- or cross-medial inflation of the words “adaptation” and “translation” renders their meaning vacuous and their use tautological: film adaptation equals film translation equals filming (e.g., [Cattrysse 1990](#), pp. 326–27; [Stam 2005](#), p. 45), and at best, to teach screenwriting in terms of translation or adaptation suggests teaching screenwriting with an eye on past, present, and future (i.e., to be expected) conditioners.

2.2. What Is One Teaching?

To define adaptation or translation is one thing; to describe how people have interacted with these phenomena is another. Critics have already distinguished between different user-groups displaying different needs, for example, screenwriters, teachers, and scholars (e.g., [Batty 2016](#); [Bailey 2019](#)), but there are more categories to consider. If we represent screenwriting, translation, and/or adaptation as x , we may distinguish between practicing x (A), teaching x (B), and studying x (C). Since A, B, and C also represent patterns of behavior, one may in addition practice A/B/C, teach A/B/C, and study A/B/C. Following this, one may reflect on some of the following statements:

- An excellent (screen)writer is not necessarily a good teacher or researcher.
- An excellent researcher is not necessarily a good teacher or writer.
- An excellent teacher is not necessarily a good writer or researcher.
- The best method to teach is not necessarily the best method to write or conduct research.
- The best method to study is not necessarily the best method to write or teach/learn.
- The best method to write is not necessarily the best method to study or teach/learn.
- My best teaching, learning, and studying method is not necessarily your best method, etc.

These statements suggest that even though performing a practice and teaching/learning (T/L) and studying that practice represent closely interrelated practices, they require, at least in part, distinct sets of talents, knowledge, skills, training, and experience. A native French speaker does not necessarily know how to teach someone French, nor does a successful (screen)writer per se know how to teach screenwriting. At best, the writer may show or explain “how s/he does it”, and that may not be everyone’s best way of learning.

So-called hybrid or hyphenated practitioners are people who put on multiple “hats”, so to speak: writer-teachers, scholar-teachers, or scholar-writers. Innate talent is a limited resource, which like most things in life, is unequally distributed among humans. So are environmental studying, teaching, and learning opportunities. Consequently, for most people, expertise in one area is more accessible than in two or more, hence the choice to “specialize”, i.e., to focus study, training, and/or practice on one subject matter rather than on two or more. Does specialization offer the perfect solution? Not necessarily. But since the “perfect” solution, i.e., to know everything about everything, is beyond everyone’s reach, one must do with second-best solutions. The jury is still out on the debate between generalists, so-called hyphenated experts, and degrees of specialization. However, pending their verdict, the aforesaid conceptual distinctions are useful if one is to even start such a debate.

In the meantime, the expression “teaching screenwriting, translation, and/or adaptation” signifies many different things depending on the user-groups (e.g., writers, readers) that are involved.

2.3. Definitional Proposals

This section repeats some definitional proposals that were made more recently in LFAS (see [Cattrysse 2018a, 2020](#)). In a way, they suggest going back to basics, starting with two key notions that help commence any making process: if ideas pop up in one’s mind, wherever they came from, one can either drop or keep these ideas. With respect to the ideas one keeps, one may decide to either adopt or adapt them during their execution. Not surprisingly, the distinction between adopting and adapting mirrors the aforesaid common parlance distinction between translating and adapting. The reader who resents any distinction, and especially binary distinctions, may be ready to stop reading right now.

That is why, before moving on, a few heuristic a priori require reiterating first, albeit in summary form. They should be common knowledge by now in LFAS, but they may still be less well-known in screenwriting studies.³

2.3.1. Heuristic A Prioris

Comparative studies teach us that common parlance expressions such as A is “the same” as B or B is “different from” A are counterproductive when they essentialize perceived phenomena, i.e., when they present them as if from a perspective-less perspective. Since perception, knowledge, and communication are always partial, perspectival, and time-based, a more practical approach consists in discerning and describing (dis)similarity relations between two or more *comparanda* in terms of patterns or categories.

(Dis)similarity relations, such as patterns or categories, emerge or disappear depending on multiple factors, including a subject’s previous knowledge and experience, memory and memory retrieval, awareness, intention and focus or level of analytical detail (“zooming in” or “zooming out”), expectations conditioning future experiences, available research tools (e.g., a telescope versus a microscope) and methods, and so forth. Consequently, two analysts can compare any two items along an unlimited number of dimensions and spot both similarity⁴ and dissimilarity relations.⁵ However, when adopting a critical realist point of view (e.g., Blackburn 2006), this does not imply that “anything goes” (Cattrysse 2014, pp. 56, 182). “Unlimited” does not mean “boundless”. The unlimited number of perspectives is still bounded by what exists in the world. Consequently, if two or more individuals may endlessly discuss similarities and dissimilarities, it is also possible for them to agree on (dis)similarity relations between *comparanda*, based on sharing one or more of the above-listed parameters. In that case, they can start comparing research results and build on each other’s acquired knowledge.

Patterns are conceived as probabilistic rather than Aristotelean “all-or-nothing” categories (see Aristotle’s “Organon”). They leave space for gradient category-membership (cf. Wittgenstein’s notion of “family resemblance”). In this view, clear-cut binary conceptual distinctions facilitate the perception and description of intermediate “gray” zones. Moreover, empirical findings in cognitive psychology show that human interaction with the world improves when occurring at a “basic” level of mental representation, i.e., the level which, according to the beholder, maximizes within-category coherence or similarity and maximizes between-category dissimilarity (Minda 2015, pp. 68–72). These findings suggest one should favor narrower categories over wider ones, since the former tend to display more homogeneous sets of category-members and sharper category boundaries, whereas wider categories tend to present more heterogeneous sets of category-members and fuzzier between-category boundaries. Finally, theories of categorization distinguish between the sharp/fuzzy and rigid/flexible divide: one may conceive of both sharp and fuzzy boundaries as static and dynamic entities. The distinction depends on a synchronic versus diachronic analytical point of view.

2.3.2. Translation, Adaptation, Working Definitions

If one accepts these a priori, it is possible to study translational and adaptational phenomena as two (relatively) distinct sets of phenomena. Following Cattrysse (2018a, 2020), one may describe “translation” and “adaptation” in intermedial and intertextual terms. In medial terms, both translation and adaptation represent medium-agnostic superordinate categories, which assemble numerous medially applied forms of translations and adaptations as subordinate family members. Since a screenplay typically prepares a film or TV production, it makes sense to focus on translational and adaptational phenomena as applied within the medium-specific contexts of literature and film or TV. However, since “new” media developed with the coming of the Internet and the World Wide Web, written preparations for “new” media productions have been needed as well. This has launched thinking about screenwriting for these “new” media. Since these “new” media and the technologies that materialize them continue to evolve, discussions about compartmental-

izations of these media and working definitions are ongoing. However, when a community of scholars can agree on a temporary conceptual and terminological snapshot of medial boundaries, they can start studying intra-, inter-, trans-, and cross-medial interactions and compare notes with each other.

In intertextual terms, translational phenomena hereafter point to invariance-orientedness with respect to the translated. Adaptational phenomena imply change with respect to the adapted, entailing “better fit” within the hosting context(s). Both variance and invariance are treated as patterns, which emerge or disappear depending on the aforesaid conditions. Suggestions regarding how to assess “better fit” have already been made (e.g., [Cattrysse 2020](#), 31ff.) and require further debating.⁶

2.3.3. Screenwriting as Translation and Adaptation

Following the above, teaching screenwriting as translation and adaptation means teaching screenwriting with an eye on past, present, and future conditioners. These conditioners operate as internal (e.g., ideas spontaneously popping up in one’s mind) and external cues (e.g., a conversation with another person, a book one read, a movie one saw), triggering ideas, which, if they reach the level of consciousness, allow the (screen)writer to decide whether to drop or keep the idea, and if s/he decides to keep it, whether to adopt (or translate) or adapt (or change) the idea. The conceptual distinction between adopting and adapting concerns a what-question, and is considered to precede how-, why-, when-, and where-questions (see below).⁷ Indeed, both adopting (i.e., similarity relations) and adapting (i.e., dissimilarity relations) may play (dis)similar roles in a target context. For example, when the makers of *Satan Met a Lady* 1936 came across Dashiell Hammett’s successful novel *The Maltese Falcon* (1930), they must have thought that the bleak and dark world represented in the novel did not suit their film audience. Perhaps, they thought common folks suffered already enough hardship in those days, and they did not need paying to see more of that hardship on the screen. Hence the filmmakers turned Hammett’s fictional world upside down, i.e., they “adapted” it to better fit and continue the then-fashionable gentleman-screwball-detective movie. Conversely, when four years later, World War II broke out, different filmmakers found themselves in a different world making different plans. This time, they adopted (i.e., translated) rather than adapted the main features of Hammett’s social world and thus innovated the detective film into what later would come to be known as *film noir*. In other words, whereas in the 1930s, adaptation served the continuation of a then-successful film genre, in the early 1940s, translation served innovation of the contemporary film detective genre. Similarly, when Mankiewicz and his team accepted the assignment to make a movie based on Graham Greene’s 1955 *The Quiet American*, they too turned Greene’s fictional world upside down, not so much to conserve or to innovate an existing film genre as to teach Greene and the likes of him a geo-political lesson. Graham Greene’s “good guy”, the British journalist Fowler, became the bad guy in the 1958 film adaptation, and the novel’s bad guy, the quiet American Pyle, became the movie’s hero. What was read in the novel as criticism of contemporary US foreign policy was turned into anti-communist propaganda on the screen. When four decades later, different filmmakers made a different movie based on Greene’s novel, they adopted (i.e., translated rather than changed or adapted) the novel’s visionary premonitions vis-à-vis the US imperialist plans in the East. Translation taught the audience a different geo-political lesson.

The purpose of these examples is not to reduce the position and function of a movie to three or four sentences but to show how, once two or more practitioners, teachers, or scholars agree on a working definition (e.g., the what-question about translation or adaptation), they may tackle why-, how-, where-, and when-questions. Moreover, once agreement is reached on a common meta-terminology, stakeholders may compare findings, verify or falsify hypotheses, and if that is the goal, notice if they are making progress or not.

3. Romantic View on Art and Culture

The acceptance of the aforesaid working definitions—translation as sameness or accurate reproduction of (mostly) heterogenic discourse and adaptation as change contingent on relevance—runs into yet another obstacle: the Romantic view on art and culture.⁸ A first part of this section briefly reiterates how a wider, pre-Romantic view on art, which included craft, has evolved into a narrower Romantic view on art, which redefined the concept as “fine” art, and expelled craft from its territory. This narrower view on art and culture, which I call Romanticism 2.0, hinders screenwriting and/as translation and adaptation in more than one respect.

However, before moving on, a preliminary caveat is required. This section does not claim that all stakeholders in the fields of screenwriting, translation, and adaptation unanimously uphold a Romantic view, and that none have contested its workings. Opposition against the Romantic view is as old as Romanticism itself, and efforts to bridge the art/craft divide are ongoing today.⁹ The direction of this fight remains unclear and its final result undecided. However, evidence shows that for now, the Romantic view on art and culture continues to prevail in the West: if craft manages to pass as art, it does so more often by replicating than by resisting the Romantic rule (e.g., [Weiner 2000](#), p. 113; [Shiner 2001](#), p. 3; [Mattick 2003](#), p. 1; [Sawyer 2006](#), p. 11).¹⁰

Hence, a second part of this section argues that Romanticism 2.0 pervades the fields of screenwriting, translation, and adaptation as well. Examples show how critics who judge screenwriting, translation, and adaptation, whether positively or negatively, use a restrictive Romantic lens and use it uncritically, i.e., without questioning its limitations or legitimacy. For practical reasons, the following focuses on two problems. Firstly, a Romantic bias renders the aforesaid working definitions of translation and adaptation unacceptable; and secondly, a Romantic view disparages craft-based values. Artworks can no longer be valued in terms of efficient and well-made tools. In doing so, the Romantic bias narrows the scope of acceptable art utilities and thus diminishes the concept of aesthetic value. Consequently, a Romantic bias imposes a view that is at once segregative and elitist (e.g., [Shiner 2001](#), pp. 75–77; [Mattick 2003](#), p. 2; [Hyland 2017](#), pp. 305–6; [Kiriya et al. 2020](#), p. 2).

The final part in this section argues in favor of nudging the more exclusive Romantic view back to its more inclusive pre-Romantic stages, allowing stakeholders to re-integrate traditional craft-based values into the set of legitimate art utilities, and thus widening again the notion of “aesthetic” value.

3.1. Romanticism 2.0

Art historians and sociologists agree that the Romantic view on art and culture is a recent Western invention that is barely two hundred years old (e.g., [Shiner 2001](#), p. 3; [Hyland 2017](#), p. 306).¹¹ First traces appear in the late 1400s, when in Italy, some architects, painters, and sculptors working for the rich and powerful demanded more money¹² and therefore argued they deserved a higher socio-cultural status than their fellow trade and craftsmen ([Shiner 2001](#), p. 12). The Romantic value system establishes and peaks between 1800 and 1850 (e.g., [van Gorp et al. 1991](#), p. 355). It then continues to evolve, trading traits with more recent fashions such as postmodernism and neo-liberalism (e.g., [Gielen and Bruyne 2012](#)). Today an evolved version of the Romantic bias—which one could label as Romanticism 2.0—continues to propagate some of its original values—sometimes even with greater fervor than two hundred years ago (e.g., [McGann 1983](#), p. 91)—while at once defending some newer ones it acquired along the way. This may also explain some of its inherent contradictions ([McGann 1983](#), p. 2).

The Romantic values are commonly known today, even though less often questioned. Art creation is about free, individual self-expression. The onus is on the individual rather than the collective, the self rather than the other. Freedom signifies my freedom before yours, ours before theirs. Interestingly, self-centeredness may point to the author as well as to the audience. In the former case, the maker is glorified as a God-like genius creating out of nothing and oblivious of his (rather than her) audience, lest he be branded as

commercial. In the latter case, the postmodern “death of the author” redirects its focus onto the audience, who must be empowered to interpret artworks in their own way (see below). The Romantic view does not consider an in-between position where a sender and receiver communicate, by sharing commonalities. Sharing and commonalities suggest sameness, which in a Romantic view represents an impossibility (e.g., Goodman 1972, p. 437) or an inferior quality (e.g., Catrysse 2014, 149ff.). Uniqueness, individual self-sufficiency, and personal freedom also imply total independence. Independence means strength; dependence signifies weakness. An artwork is self-sufficient and complete; its making process does not submit to outside influences, and its end-result has no ordinary social obligations,¹³ hence the importance of related Romantic values such as originality and newness, difference, and change for the sake of change. The past is what one must discontinue. Life is one big zero-sum competition: “first is first, second is nobody”.¹⁴

Following this, the development of the Romantic ideology has created a rift between art (now understood as “high art”) and craft, promoting the former and demoting the latter. It has done so, for example, by devaluing common use and limiting the set of acceptable art utilities essentially to aesthetic contemplation, collection, ostentatious display, and investment and pecuniary gain (Becker 2008, p. 278). Since artworks are not to be used as people have been accustomed to using them, a common Romantic tactic has consisted in “de-instrumentalizing” an artifact. To de-instrumentalize actually means to *re-instrumentalize*, i.e., to detract something from its common societal use in order to ascribe it an autonomous status and aesthetic value.¹⁵ In addition, Romanticism has demoted maker’s skills. For example, as Becker points out:

What the older artist-craftsman has spent a lifetime learning to do is suddenly hardly worth doing. People are doing his work in the sloppiest possible way and being thought superior to him just because of it. (Becker 2008, p. 279)

Oftentimes, an artist’s or critic’s exegetic skills may take over, cover for the lack of making skills, and dazzle or shock audiences,¹⁶ thus foreshadowing the classic divides between the mental and the physical, the idea and its execution, and the academic and the vocational.

3.2. Romanticizing Screenwriting, Translation, and Adaptation

This paragraph presents some examples of how critics who assess screenwriting, translation, and adaptation, whether positively or negatively, adopt the Romantic value system without questioning its limitations or legitimacy.

The Romantic value system does not stop at dictating to practitioners which practices are valuable, and which are not; it rules and stratifies the whole of society and therefore touches not only screenwriters and/as translators and adapters but also teachers, learners, and researchers (see above “what is one teaching?”). This is where Romanticism understood as a set of cultural values becomes an ideology that is used to legitimize socio-cultural, political, and economic power (e.g., Eagleton 2005, p. 36).

3.2.1. Romanticizing Screenwriting

The Romantic bias appears when critics look down on screenwriting as a utilitarian practice, and when they treat the screenplay as an intermediary, i.e., dependent text, “a signpost rather than a destination” (Harper 2015, p. 111). It shows when it demotes skills and a well-made script, i.e., one that shows professional skills and efficiency (in its preparing the work for the production team), and trivializes it as a “mere blueprint” (Baker 2016, p. 71), a “prototype”, “guideline”, or “outline” for the production (Ksenofontova 2020, pp. 2–3).

The Romantic bias emerges also when in order to promote the screenplay or themselves, directors, producers, and writers compete for auteur-ship, a battle between egos that started well before Astruc’s (1948) “caméra-stylo” in the early 1900s (Dupont 1919, pp. 7–14; Paech 1988, p. 33). It shows when stakeholders “de-instrumentalize” screenplays (e.g., the

closet screenplay) and publish them as stand-alone works to be contemplated on their own (e.g., Baker 2016, p. 71; Ksenofontova 2020, 45ff.),¹⁷ when critics borrow Romantic values from other, adjacent (e.g., literary) art forms to assess screenplays as “worthy” objects (e.g., Balázs 1939; Winston 1973; Corliss 1985; Koivumäki 2010; Geerts 2014; Ksenofontova 2020), and when writers (e.g., Derek Jarman) and like-minded critics deliberately write and discuss screenplays in terms of unique and poly-interpretable expressions in a hybrid or fluid, and therefore mystical and un-categorizable, genre (e.g., Mota 2005; Geerts 2014). I refer, for example, to Alexandra Ksenofontova, who in her study of *The Modernist Screenplay*, distinguishes between a “literary” and a “functional” reading of a screenplay, one that contemplates the script as a complete and autonomous artifact and another that treats the screenplay as an instrument serving an external goal. A published screenplay is “worth of” (sic) a literary reading if “it demonstrates a pluralism, ambiguity, and complexity of possible meanings” (Ksenofontova 2020, p. 9) and “presumes the power of the reader to interpret the script in their own way” (Ksenofontova 2020, p. 5). A functional reading applies when “the screenplay is univocal and cannot be misread” (ibid.). In the Romantic view, “pluralism”, “ambiguity”, and “complexity of possible meanings” are assumed as superior values, “univocal interpretation” as inferior.

3.2.2. Romanticizing (Lit-Film) Adaptation and Translation

Romantics look down on literary screen adaptation for the same and additional reasons. They do so when screen adaptations are seen as dependent on the literary values they represent on the screen and demoted as utility tools when they serve to teach or propagate literary values (e.g., Cutchins 2010; Gould 2017). Romanticism emerges also when artistic creation is reduced to self-expression and critics search for individual “auteurs” in (film) adaptation (e.g., Boozer 2008) or when adaptation is conceived as a derivative, i.e., un-original and therefore inferior phenomenon. Interestingly, the originality rule allows Romantics to criticize adapters for both being faithful and unfaithful to the text they adapt, in spite of claims about artistic freedom. The correlated debate pro or contra the compare/contrast approach (e.g., Hudelet 2015) depends on the same Romantic reflex, which is triggered by the anxiety of influence and belatedness, and consists in attributing primacy to the pre-text. In order to solve (or dissolve?) this problem, some Romantics propose to de-hierarchize pre-text/post-text relations. As discussed above, one strategy applied to achieve that goal consists in inflating the term “adaptational” to include all intertextual variants.¹⁸ Another consists in “dialogizing” the concept of adaptation (e.g., Bruhn 2013). The strategy consists in pointing to the fact that a translation or adaptation allows for a “new” reading of the source text. While this conception of “rereading” represents an efficient tactic to rob the source of its authority, and to reassign it to a target text, it applies to all rereading, not just to the rereading of translated or adapted texts. In addition, both practices, the inflating and the dialogizing, generally entail redirecting the focus from “adaptation” understood as a one-directional and irreversible time-based process to “adaptation” conceived as a dynamic, networked, i.e., poly-centric and multi-directional, end-product, functioning in its ad hoc time-space context(s).¹⁹ A third Romantic strategy, used, for example, in intermediality and inter-art studies, de-hierarchizes, or rather discards, pre-text/post-text relations by avoiding or rejecting the derivative term “adaptation” and by focusing only or mostly on simultaneous co-creation (e.g., Edgerton 1988; Jenkins 2003, 2008).

When looking at the world through a Romantic lens, translation finds itself in an even worse place. Imagine a Romantic confronted with a phenomenon that is meant to accurately re-produce (mostly) heterogenic discourse: no self-expressive author (unless one translates oneself), re-production signifying the opposite of originality, with the additional prescriptive rule of accuracy cutting authorial freedom altogether. It should therefore not surprise that already in the 1970s, translation scholars fought to break free from this “slavish” notion of translation and urged their peers to re-think the concept as a productive, authorial act of interpretation creating something new.

3.2.3. Romanticizing Didactics

When looking at higher education (mostly) within the art worlds, Romantic values prevail in a variety of ways. Romanticism rules when art appropriates teaching art, and deifying a maker implies mystifying the making process, and thus its T/L processes. In that case, teaching art becomes an art in itself (see [Cutchins et al. 2010](#), p. xiv above), i.e., a practice that remains as mysterious as the one it teaches. If artistic practice is conceived as resulting from an inborn and mysterious talent, teachers find themselves in the curious situation of having to teach the unteachable ([Kristeller 1951](#), p. 498). In that case, one “cannot train or develop teachers” (e.g., [Knights 2014](#), pp. vii–viii); teachers, like artists, are born, not made. A Romantic bias also rejects any notion of didactic control or planning (e.g., [Hall 2010](#), p. 105) because it infringes on the Romantic concept of freedom, which means “my gratification first”.²⁰ Pushing individual independence to the next level triggers “no one tells me nothing” behavior, which hinders any teaching format that relies on sharing information and motivates today’s Western fashion—in my experience, more common in English language settings than in other cultural environments—of unconditionally bashing lecture-based teaching and its corollary blind faith in individual learning-by-doing. In this view, any advice, however delicately formulated, is interpreted as oppressive ruling and policing. Rules not only hinder freedom but preclude uniqueness (e.g., [Cattrysse 2021](#)). Uniqueness highlights the not-repeatable and contributes to the conception of art (e.g., screenwriting, literary translation, literary film adaptation) as un-learnable and un-teachable (see above).

Finally, I mention the Romantically biased re-instrumentalization of practices and products, which justifies privileging the notion of the intellectual (seen as creation) over the physical (seen as execution), and therefore the academic over the vocational and the “disinterested” over the utilitarian (e.g., [Hyland 2018](#)). The Romantic bias appears when literary translation is given a higher social status than technical translation²¹ or when academics call screenwriting teachers “gurus”, when instead they could help develop more serious (i.e., evidence-based) meta-didactic reflection.²² The situation is somewhat different in the world of film adaptation because adapting is not institutionalized as an official profession. However, the Romantic discrimination between idea and execution or the intellectual and the physical exists here too. As indicated above, it appears when lit-film scholars discuss the craft-oriented, physical rather than mental topic of medium-specificity and dispute its relevance, or even deny its existence, whether for epistemic or for social reasons (e.g., [Elliott 2020](#)). The impact of Romanticism on vocational training in screenwriting and adaptation deserves a study of its own, but it shows when high-profile “script gurus” such as Linda Seger simply state that the “best” (sic) remakes or adaptations are “those where the writer was not afraid to change the original” ([Seger 1992](#), p. 70).

3.2.4. Romanticizing Research

Romantic parameters condition research both within and beyond the humanities. For example, epistemologists, philosophers of science, and interdisciplinarity scholars agree that the Romantic ideology has been instrumental in installing and maintaining strained relationships between the humanities and the natural sciences,²³ leading to the 1990s science wars (e.g., [Van Bendegem 2009](#), 19ff.; [Davidson and Savonick 2017](#), 163ff.; [Jasanoff 2017](#), 173ff.; [Klein and Frodeman 2017](#), 45ff.).²⁴ Romanticism prevails again when academics ascribe more prestige to “disinterested” or “fundamental” research than to “applied” or instrumental knowledge (e.g., [Jasanoff 2017](#), p. 181) or when (intellectual) academic research ranks higher than (practice-oriented) vocational research. A Romantic bias emerges when, mirroring Théophile Gautier’s “art for art’s sake” mantra, the humanities, as opposed to the STEM disciplines, propagate knowledge for knowledge’s sake and consequently have difficulties in justifying their social impact convincingly ([Frodeman 2017](#), pp. 6–7).²⁵ It rules when academic culture prizes individualism over teamwork (cf. the individual genius-scientist Albert Einstein who invents out of nothing) and reduces the history of science to great-man accounts, a trend that has remained more common in the humanities than in the

sciences (e.g., [Crow and Dabars 2017](#), p. 475; [Dennett 2018](#), pp. 375–76). A Romantic bias motivates academics (in the humanities rather than in the sciences) to privilege idiographic over nomothetic knowledge (e.g., [Jasanoff 2017](#), p. 178; [Krohn 2017](#), p. 41).

One could argue that beyond the humanities, Romanticism survives only in its weakest form. However, when zooming in on the humanities—which concern the topic of this section—its force increases when Romantically biased stakeholders assign a higher or lower social status to the many fields that constitute the humanities. Romanticism decides whether or not certain topics are worth studying and how. For example, the above has shown that in a Romantic view, screenplays represent legitimate objects of study only if they represent independent, original, and polysemic expressions of individuals (see above). Following Jens Haaning, one may even hand in a blank page, provided that it comes with a new, shocking, or otherwise satisfying explanation. Similarly, translation and adaptation represent acceptable research objects dependent on originality conditions. Pre-text/post-text relations are banned, as are intertextuality studies in general, if conceived in terms of dependencies and influence. Medium-specificity is called “pseudo-scientific” when considered inconvenient (e.g., [Elliott 2020](#), pp. 54–55). The endless accumulation of case-based studies in adaptation studies (see [Sherry 2014](#) above) complies with the Romantic search for uniqueness, but it prevents scholars from discerning more general patterns and may deceptively suggest they do not exist. It makes it also impossible for researchers to compare research results or to establish if the discipline is making progress or not (e.g., [Cattrysse 2014](#), p. 15; [Semenza and Hasenfratz 2015](#), p. 9). Romanticism shows when theories are “de-instrumentalized”, i.e., invented for the sake of newness rather than as problem-solving tools that serve an investigatory purpose.²⁶

Romanticism intensifies within the humanities as one approaches the art worlds (e.g., [Davidson and Savonick 2017](#), pp. 163–64). Shifting the analytical focus from the humanities to the arts extends the gap with the sciences. Romanticism peaks when art not only appropriates teaching but also research, i.e., when in line with the conception of teaching art as an art itself, research is redefined as art, and art is conceived as research (e.g., [Frayling 1993](#); [Macleod and Holdridge 2006](#); [Busch 2009](#); [Yeates 2009](#); see also [Sherry 2014](#), 99ff. on this). These debates include the fields of screenwriting, translation, and adaptation and scuttle the aforesaid definitional and user-group distinctions (see “What is one teaching?”). Different critics defend different standpoints in the art-as-research-as-art debate, and the debate goes under different names (e.g., “practice-based research”, “practice-led” research). The Romantic bias prevails when critics redefine the concept of “research” rather than the concept of art (e.g., [Frayling 2006](#), p. xiv). [Busch \(2009\)](#) explains very succinctly how epistemology, a field of expertise that builds on more than two thousand years of persistent and systematic study, is turned into a “poetics of knowledge”. If traditionally, research aims at “scientific knowledge”, a poetics of knowledge inflates the concept to include other types of knowledge (e.g., artistic knowledge), and the word “knowledge” is blown up to signify *any experiential effect*.²⁷ Following this, every practice triggers an experience and thus produces “knowledge”, even though within a research-as-art approach, only “artistic” experiences matter as defined under the Romantic rule.

3.3. Restoring a Pre-Romantic View

The above shows how an assessment that remains within the boundaries of the Romantic framework inhibits rather than enhances developmental opportunities. The argument of this section builds on the assumption that if one can inflate the semantic fields of “teaching” and “research” to include art, one can extend the Romantic concept of “art” to its pre-Romantic artisan conception as well. This paragraph discusses if and how one could open the Romantic view to reassess craft-based values. I repeat: these proposals are not new ([Kristeller 1951](#); [Becker 1982](#), 272ff.; [Shiner 2001](#), pp. 33–34; [Mattick 2003](#); [Clowney 2008](#); [Cattrysse 2021](#)). To restore the pre-Romantic view on artisanship does not mean to return back into history but to look for new opportunities in the future. To break free from a segregative and elitist view on artisanship might be a goal that reunites all stakeholders

involved. Since it took the Romantic value system more than half a millennium to install, reopening its views will not succeed overnight. Change might start with a few steps that benefit the practice, teaching, and study of screenwriting and/as translation and adaptation. These steps may help remove the standard objections raised against the aforesaid working definitions (e.g., translation as sameness-based; adaptation as change contingent on better fit; screenwriting as an interstitial instrument). As an additional collateral advantage, they may help increase rather than decrease the number of legitimate art utilities and thus reinstate a more inclusive and egalitarian ideology.

Re-opening the Romantic lens involves among other things recalibrating the weight of and the interdependencies between the traditional Romantic values. A full analysis of such a reorganization deserves a separate study. By way of introduction, I hereafter briefly discuss revaluing use and skills. Moreover, revaluing use and skills renders certain values, which are mandatory in the Romantic view, optional in the pre-Romantic view. As examples, I briefly discuss individual self-expression and newness.

3.3.1. Revaluing Uses

To revalue use invites one to distinguish between what things are (said to be) and what they are for to whom. It involves considering different user-groups interacting with things in terms of different means and ends and thus reintegrates art and culture into society (see above).²⁸ One artifact may serve multiple purposes; it may be made for one purpose, yet be used for another, and one user's end may be another user's means. Consequently, all artifacts may be seen as instrumental (means) or as autonomous (end-goals), contingent on their use and users. This observation does not answer the question why so-called "autonomous" artifacts would be superior to instrumental ones, but it does challenge the Romantic rule that disparages screenplays, translations, or adaptations as intermediate or instrumental texts. In this view, a screenplay is neither more nor less instrumental or autonomous than the production it prepares; its use is only different. One may assume that the screenplay represents the complete and finished end-goal to the screenwriter, irrespective of the fact that subsequently different users may use it for different purposes.²⁹ If the screenwriter is lucky, a production team may use the script to make a movie or TV program, and an audience may then use the latter to experience a media event, and yet other interested parties may use media experiences as a means to achieve their goals. The aforementioned screenings of Hammett's and Greene's novels illustrate how the same logic applies to translations and adaptations: reproducing sameness (i.e., translation) may entail innovation; adaptation or change may accomplish preservation.

While what things are and what they are for to whom vary across time and space, it is also true that certain usages are more common in certain communities than others. A tennis racket is typically made to play tennis, even though in the movie *The Apartment* (1959), C.C. Baxter (Jack Lemmon) uses it to dry his spaghettis; and at times, community members even professionalize certain uses (e.g., screenwriting, translating, but not adapting) as if to socially officialize their end-goal status. As indicated above, to *de-instrumentalize* in a Romantic context actually means to defamiliarize, i.e., to *re-instrumentalize* for (high) art purposes, and to exclude common use from the artistic arena. As such, the strategy consists in restricting the set of acceptable art utilities (see Becker 2008, p. 278 above). Conversely, a pre-Romantic approach to art and culture does not a priori exclude common use as a negative value but matches it with values such as efficiency, reliability, and sustainability of the artifact. Hence, in doing so, a pre-Romantic view extends the judgmental view on use.

Once it is understood that the autonomous-instrumental distinction is context- and user-dependent, there are no a priori grounds to uphold the traditional dualisms and to favor the academic over the vocational, the mental over the physical, and the intellectual over the practical. In that case, practice-based research is neither more nor less instrumental than so-called fundamental or "disinterested" research, and one type of knowledge cannot be said to be superior or inferior to another without accounting for their use and users. To do so is like claiming that the microscope is a better tool than the telescope, or vice versa,

without considering who shall be using them and for what purpose (e.g., study subatomic particles, study galaxies). Similarly, in this view, theories are not “de-instrumentalized” as interchangeable candy but as tools that serve an investigatory purpose. In the meantime, user-groups still can and do use these judgmental distinctions in terms of cultural, socio-political, and economical capital to identify their in-group as distinct from and superior to other out-groups.

3.3.2. Revaluing Skills

Once an individual or a community has selected a legitimate goal, the next step consists in judiciously selecting tools and adequately applying them (see [Cattrysse 2021](#), 12ff.). Both selecting and applying tools require specific skills and competence, which are unequally distributed among humans. Some (e.g., writing or reading) practices are therefore more or less difficult to perform than others. The distinction between “more-or-less-difficult-to-do” suggests opportunities with respect to didactic planning. For example, when designing step-wise T/L paths, it makes sense to start with the less difficult and then to move on to the more difficult. While this is probably the most obvious statement one can make in any field of human behavior (including art forms such as music or painting), it is not in storytelling. Moreover, as indicated above, when discussing teaching and learning, one should specify first which practice one is considering. For example, regarding the aforementioned distinction between univocal and ambiguous writing, it should be clear that the latter may be challenging a reader’s interpretive skills, but it is the former that defies writerly skills. Any beginning writer knows how to write ambiguously; few know how to write univocally. This example illustrates at once how a pre-Romantic approach reverses the interdependency between freedom and skills. Whereas in the Romantic view, makers’ skills and competence are taken for granted or belittled, and the main concern is creative freedom, in this (pre-Romantic) view, freedom is understood as dependent on competence: the more competence, the more options available, the more creative freedom, for both the writer and the reader.

3.3.3. Recalibrating Romantic Values

To revalue use in terms of skills and grace renders some compulsory Romantic values optional. I refer, for example, to self-centered individualism and mandatory newness. Once again, these values limit rather than broaden legitimate options in screenwriting as translation and adaptation.

Individual Self-Expression

A pre-Romantic view allows all stakeholders involved in the practice, teaching, learning, and study of screenwriting as translation and adaptation to stretch their focus beyond the individual and the self. Art(isan) behavior includes also collective expression and multiple-author works. Artworks may result from individual and group-level cooperation and competition, and many details of the artifact may remain only partially understood by each author (e.g., [Becker 2008](#), p. 1; [Dennett 2018](#), pp. 375–76). A pre-Romantic approach does not detract from the fact that some individuals have been luckier than others in terms of being born more talented and stumbling into more fortunate circumstances. Other-orientedness, (e.g., considering the audience) is not automatically conflated with and discarded as commercialism but complements self-centeredness, and accurately repeating valuable heterogenic discourse at the right time and in the right place (e.g., translating) can be valuable as well. An interest in the uniqueness of an experience (i.e., idiographic knowledge) may be complemented with an interest in more general patterns (i.e., nomothetic knowledge), and the preference for one or the other depends, once again, on use (e.g., my next year’s ceramics exposition; your national statistics). Following more recent findings in social neuro-science, one may consider relativizing the anthropocentric views on authorial intention, free will, and desert and thus create space to appraise (e.g., machine-made) artifacts from different points of view.

Newness

Firstly, one might point out that the concepts “new” and “original” represent problematic terms. What appears as new or original to one person may not do so to another. Like magic, originality relies heavily on masquerade and ignorance. Secondly, when use comes first, newness and originality may represent an end as well as a tool, and when used as a tool, its assessment will depend on how well it allows users to achieve their goal.

Considering newness or originality as an option rather than an obligation offers more than one advantage. It no longer stimulates “Me first” and other types of socially disruptive behavior (e.g., the Jens Haaning case). It mitigates the incessant urge to behave in ever-more eccentric ways, an urge that is unsustainable in the long run (like continuous growth is in economics) and has led to mental illness in the past.³⁰ It liberates the Romantic critic from ignoring or compulsively hierarchizing pre-text/post-text relations. Adaptation and translation studies may be seen as part of intertextuality studies again; the word “influence” no longer represents a taboo one should not discuss, let alone study, and dependency may signify solidarity rather than weakness and supersede newness or originality. Difference and change (e.g., adaptation) are no longer intrinsically superior to sameness and maintenance (e.g., translation). People who love to relive a past experience (e.g., the success of reruns) are not per se inferior to people constantly needing something new; “repeating”, or “re-making”, or “restoring”, or “repairing” can be valued on a par with making something “new”. In the pre-Romantic view, one is not forced to fix what is not broken, and the past is not just what one must discontinue. Communication can be about more than just I, Me, and Myself. At times, accurately reproducing heterogenic discourse may be more important. Both fidelity and infidelity with respect to the processed may represent legitimate options depending on their use.

Within the Romantic frame, newness often serves surprise. However, when materializing use in an efficient way, virtuoso skills and competence may surprise as well. Consequently, in this view, one may appraise a screenplay, translation, and/or adaptation because they are well-made rather than because they are new.

4. Conclusions

If one adopts the extended pre-Romantic view on art and culture, one can accept the aforesaid definitions of translation and adaptation, and one can look at some old (film) adaptation studies offering research suggestions that could also help set up teaching screenwriting as translation and adaptation. These proposals were developed in the late 1980s and published in the early 1990s (Cattrysse 1990, 1992, 2014). For practical reasons, the focus is restricted here to that of the maker (i.e., the screenwriter). A first set of questions could refer to a selection policy: What items to select and why? Unlike the traditional lit-film approach, writers select items (or not) from any medium for whatever reason they see fit. Answering the why-question prepares the next set of questions dealing with the actual translation and adaptation process. The above suggested already some possible answers: to innovate a dying genre or style or to continue a successful one, to convey a different political message or to reaffirm a previous one, and so forth. Classical research tools mentioned in these studies (e.g., the *tertium comparationis*, the accuracy and fidelity issues) may be useful as well: Do I select (elements of) a novel, painting, game, etc., to adopt or to adapt actions, characters, settings, themes, aesthetic styles, or others? And why? To trigger an equivalent experience in the screenplay? To obtain a different experience? Something in between? What, how, and why more exactly? Time and again, choices depend on competence first and on freedom second. Hence, the first question is not “Am I allowed to be faithful or not?” but “Am I capable of materializing that choice?” Then come the why- and how-questions. Since no screenwriter works in a void, restrictions of freedom remain relevant. There are the obvious copyright issues but also the various individual and collective stakeholders’ tastes and conventions (e.g., whether more popular, industry-based or more elitist, art-oriented, or somewhere in-between), which will condition creative

choices. I refer, for example, to the practice of “cultural orthodoxy” (e.g., [Cardwell 2002](#), p. 18; [Cattrysse 2014](#), 121ff.).

To revalue use and skills entails revaluing medium-specificity. As more new media develop and evolve at an ever-faster rate, medium-specificity becomes more, not less, relevant. It is no coincidence that disciplinarization aligns with medial boundaries (e.g., [Evans 2020](#), p. 21). To acknowledge the relevance of medial borders is not to disregard transmedial features, i.e., features that transcend those medial boundaries. Transcendence (whatever its definition) cannot exist without something *to* transcend. Hence, a training program for screenwriting as translation and adaptation cannot overestimate the challenges raised by the media one is going to work in. Some of them are obvious, at least to practice-oriented minds: learning how to write a novel is very different from learning how to write and produce a movie. Other medial boundaries may be as challenging but remain hidden. One particularly difficult obstacle I have seen many beginning writers struggle with concerns the old saying: “show, don’t tell”. It involves the *drama*-tization of verbal concepts, i.e., the translation of verbalized concepts such as “He is poor”, “She is forgiving”, “They became best friends” into dramatic action: someone (character) doing something (action) somewhere (setting), and where denotational accuracy is the challenge, not writing something everyone can interpret in their own way. Following this, one may reconceive of screenwriting as medium-specific dramatization, irrespective of whether it was based on a novel, a game, a painting, real life, or imaginary experiences. To be more precise: if screenwriting concerns the written preparation of an audiovisual production, verbalized ideas, wherever they came from, need dramatizing in the screenwriter’s mind, i.e., translating and/or adapting into actions, then verbalizing those mentally dramatized actions onto the page, by way of preparing their reenactment on the screen.

Needless to say, there are many more problems to tackle before starting a serious discussion on how to teach screenwriting and/as translation and adaptation. Studies in science as a social practice (e.g., [Frodeman 2017](#), p. 3) reveal evolutionary behavioral patterns, which dampen the optimism about the foregoing proposals, especially those regarding the extension of the Romantic views, which need accepting before the definitional proposals can become operational. Romanticism 2.0 aligns in many respects with (post)-Darwinian evolutionary urges, and since human nature changes only over longer stretches of time, it is not likely to do so overnight. One may therefore assume that, since *Homo Sapiens* represents a social species consisting of unequally talented, self-serving members, power-related tensions and hierarchies between individuals and groups shall be around for many centuries to come. In the meantime, Romanticism may continue to change its colors (i.e., its identifying and segregating values), but it is unlikely to change its nature (i.e., social purpose) anytime soon. Nevertheless, to reveal some of the less sympathetic features of the Romantic ideology may stir more awareness. Optimists claim that the first domino tiles have already started to topple. Who knows if and when others follow?

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Notes

- ¹ When for practical reasons, I hereafter only mention film, I intend TV and media studies to be included. For the same practical reasons, I hereafter use LFAS and “lit-film studies” interchangeably, even though not all lit-film studies investigate interactions between literature and media in adaptational terms.
- ² In fact, a more thorough comparative study of AS and TS might show that for decades, translation scholars have adopted a more adaptational stance when studying translation than many (e.g., fidelity-oriented) lit-film scholars have when studying a translationalized conception of adaptation.
- ³ For a more extensive treatment of these notions, see [Cattrysse \(2014, 263ff.; 2018b, 2020\)](#).
- ⁴ See the raven and the writing desk in *Alice in Wonderland*.
- ⁵ See the Heraclitan view on the world as a continuous flux.
- ⁶ See various studies on memetics (e.g., [Blackmore 1999](#); [Chesterman 2016](#); [Dennett 2018](#)).

- 7 The suggestion to structure research according to what-, why-, how-, where-, and when-questions is not new in (film) adaptation studies. See [Cattrysse \(1990, 1992\)](#).
- 8 There are many definitions of “Romanticism” and more Romantic views on art and culture than I can discuss in one essay (e.g., [Lucas 1948](#); [Larissy 1999](#), p. 1).
- 9 For more information on how growing tensions between the two value systems have entangled their division in terms of assimilation and resistance processes, see [Shiner \(2001, 269ff.\)](#). For more on how attempts have been made to reconcile both value systems, see [Kristeller \(1951\)](#), [Shiner \(2001\)](#), [Clowney \(2008\)](#), and [Cattrysse \(2021\)](#).
- 10 [Shiner \(2001, p. 3\)](#) points out that “like so much else that emerged from the Enlightenment, the European idea of fine art was believed to be universal, and European and [North-]American armies, missionaries, entrepreneurs, and intellectuals have been doing their best to make it so ever since”. See also [Weiner \(2000, pp. 112–13\)](#) and [Sawyer \(2006, p. 11\)](#) on globalization as the colonizing exportation of Western values across the planet.
- 11 Previous scholars have used different names to denote more or less similar sets of values. [Kristeller \(1951\)](#), [Shiner \(2001\)](#), [Mattick \(2003\)](#), and [Clowney \(2008\)](#) distinguish between a “modern” and a “pre-modern” system. [Lotman \(1977\)](#) distinguishes between the old and the new as an aesthetics of identity and an aesthetics of opposition. [Bourdieu \(1998\)](#) distinguishes between an aesthetics of continuity and an aesthetics of discontinuity. [Abrams \(1989, p. 140\)](#) speaks of a disinterested “contemplation” model that replaced a purposeful “construction” model, and some creativity scholars study similar judgmental patterns in terms of Rationalism and Romanticism (e.g., [Sawyer 2006, 15ff.](#)).
- 12 [Weiner \(2000, p. 63\)](#) quotes the German painter Albrecht Dürer, a contemporary of Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo when Dürer says: “a wonderful artist should charge highly for his art . . . no money is too much for it”.
- 13 It is interesting to note how depending on whether or not art is included in their study, creativity scholars define their concept of “creativity” in more or less utility-based terms (e.g., [Weiner 2000](#); [Boden 2004](#); [Sawyer 2006](#)).
- 14 A quote from the gangster character Mr. Brown (Richard Conte) in *The Big Combo* (1955).
- 15 Hence, Viktor Shklovsky’s more accurate term “ostranenie”, i.e., “defamiliarization”, or Bertolt Brecht’s “Verfremdung”, i.e., “alienation”.
- 16 A more recent illustration of this type of behavior appears in today’s newspapers (September 2021) about a Danish artist called Jens Haaning, who took EUR 72.000 from a museum as payment and sent two blank canvases with the title “Take the money and run”.
- 17 The issue rekindles the literary legitimation process of theatre (see [Jahn 2001](#)).
- 18 Intertextuality studies owes its very name to Romanticism, which in the 1960s was determined to eradicate any hint to influence studies and “source hunting” (e.g., [Orr 2008, pp. 15–16](#); [Juvan 2008, 54ff.](#); [Cattrysse 2020, p. 42](#)).
- 19 Anglophone lit-film studies often conceive “intertextuality” as a state of being, not a process of becoming (e.g., [Schober 2013, 101ff.](#); [Cardwell 2018, 8ff.](#)). A diachronic view may apply to existents as well as to events.
- 20 Romantically biased meta-didactic aversion seems stronger in storytelling than in other art forms such as music or painting. However, more consistent comparative research is required to substantiate this hypothesis.
- 21 See also [Price \(2010, p. 27\)](#) who regrets it when screenwriting teaching is skewed toward a vocational rather than a scholarly or historical approach, or [Pym \(2013\)](#) and [van Doorslaer \(2020, p. 1\)](#), who express similar reservations with respect to translation. See also the discussion triggered by practitioner-scholar Brian Mossop’s vocational reflections ([Mossop 2017a, 2017b](#); [Katan 2017](#); [Pym 2017](#); [Scarpa 2017](#)).
- 22 [Sherry \(2014, p. 92\)](#) shows diplomatic talents when he restricts the use of screenwriting manuals to introductory courses and dodges potential Romantic attacks when he specifies more advanced didactic goals only in the fuzziest terms: “improving screenwriting skills”, “empowering students”, and “creating interesting art”.
- 23 The very term “natural science” does not predate 1834 ([Klein and Frodeman 2017, p. 145](#)).
- 24 For a discussion on more recent attempts to bridge the gap between the humanities and science, see [Davidson and Savonick \(2017\)](#).
- 25 [Frodeman \(2017, p. 7\)](#) agrees that to assess social efficiency only in economic terms is questionable but adds that the need to develop a convincing philosophy of impact is pressing.
- 26 One adaptation scholar compares theories with candy to be chosen from a candy store ([Westbrook 2010, p. 43](#)). For an extensive study of the “uselessness” of theorizing with respect to adaptation studies, see [Elliott \(2020\)](#). The arguments apply also to the study of translation and screenwriting.
- 27 See, e.g., the special issue of *Journal of Research Practice*, Volume 6, Issue 2: *Research Practice in Art and Design: Experiential Knowledge and Organised Inquiry*.
- 28 For example, the activist screenwriter is no longer excluded from the art worlds for being activist (e.g., [Williams 2006](#); [Beker 2013](#)).
- 29 Moreover, [Atchity and Wong \(1997\)](#) explain how, in the 1980s and 1990s, certain writers made a living writing and selling story ideas or treatments. To them, they constituted complete and finished end-products.
- 30 Studies on Romanticism, newness, and mental illness go back to the 1920s (e.g., [Becker 2000](#); [Sawyer 2006, 84ff.](#)).

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