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Foreign Films in the Context of Hollywood

A Look into Adaptations and Remakes from Foreign Cinema

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An interesting chasm between film and literature has developed over the past thirty years when it comes to the younger generations: more people will turn towards television or the internet before they are willing to pick up a book¹. This may be because their ideals and standards are more geared towards content in the mainstream media, which relies on screens opposed to pages, or it could be that television is prone to stimulating the orienting response – which is “our instinctive sensitivity to movement and sudden changes in vision or sound”² –, while internet simply mimics similar qualities of television, thus making it more appealing than hours spent on recreational reading. With this in mind, there has also been an influx of page-to-screen adaptations, particularly in the Young Adult Fiction section, whether it be television or silver screen. As society in the United States has changed over the years, there has been a decrease in education, which has also led to a decrease in the interest of books.³ According to Robert Sternberg, the professor of Human Development at Cornell University and a well-renowned psychologist, there are myths, mythical countermyths, and truths behind the aforementioned statement which may cue the reader into thinking that our levels of education are not decreasing or being harmed in any way. The myth: “We as a society are getting stupider because of the dysgenic effects of stupid superbreeders.”⁴ The mythical countermyth: “We have no reason at all to fear any decline in intellectual abilities among successive generations.”⁵ The truth: “We have some reason to fear loss of intellectual abilities in future generations, but the problem is not stupid superbreeders.”⁶

Sternberg goes on to explain that it is not the superbreeders – those who only reproduce if the outcome is exceptional genes, for example, IQ, lack of mental and physical disabilities or illnesses, and physical attractiveness or well-being – that are impacting the younger generations of America, but “the dumbing down of textbooks in the United States,”⁷ that is impacting them

the most. Comparing the texts that are currently in circulation to those from previous years, ranging from ten to thirty years ago, one can see “a progressive deterioration in our standards for what constitutes an acceptable level of reading difficulty for students of a given grade level.”⁸ This does not only pertain to those in their elementary years, though. This is also occurring in books at the college level as well, where the “pressure is to keep reading level low, not high.”⁹ It has also been shown in studies that there has been falling literacy rates in America.¹⁰ From these studies, we can conclude that these falling literacy rates influenced the rise of page-to-screen adaptations. These adaptations come from the hinderance that is reading, whether it be too time consuming or because people are unable to understand what is on the page. When one creates a television show or movie from a novel, there is a world created from the novel that did not need to be created from scratch. They already had the basics of the setting, the characters, and the plot. With a page-to-screen adaptation, the fanbase for the show can increase because the show has the original fanbase of the novel to count on as well as the people who wanted to read the book but did not have time or those who simply could not read the book for other reasons. A film that is around two hours long will take up less time than reading the novel, which for some may take weeks, months, or years.

Despite the opportunity that page-to-screen adaptations have created for those who are unwilling to read novels, there is still something to be missed when not reading the source text. Films and television shows will have its own unique story and imagery that separates it from the source text, meaning that it can be a work independent of the source text despite having its foundation in it. This does not mean that the film has not lived up to the book in terms of plot, but some aspects of the book still remain unfilmable, even in the current times where Computer-Generated Imagery, or CGI, is a popular editing tool throughout Hollywood. By unfilmable I do

not mean that things cannot be captured on a camera and placed onto the silver screen or television. Rather, I would follow the definition that Kamilla Elliott proposed in their *Unfilmable Books* essay: “we are not referring to the incapacity of film technologies to represent books but to the resistance of various aesthetic, media, technological, economic, political, cultural, and ethical *conventions* to filming books.”¹¹ Elliott further references Béla Balázs in their essay, stating although “it is *technologically* possible to film a book, Balázs determines that it is *aesthetically* impossible to make a *good* film of a *good* book or to transfer literary content to film form.”¹² This statement claims that any novel can be adapted into a film, but the success of the novel, or the lack thereof, does not determine the success of the film. The main theory that Elliott focuses on throughout the essay is the “categorical and ontological division of books and films along word and image lines...undergirded by the belief that words and images are irreconcilable and untranslatable.”¹³ Unfilmability could also be thought of as a specific branch of medium specificity. Elliott states further that the medium specificity between words and images have been “disproven by every epistemology” and “robustly dismantled, the theory has been reinscribed in the wake of every new challenge.”¹⁴ This means that the arguments are adapted to follow the trends of film production by those who fear the immortalization that occurs in film. This being said, the reason medium specificity is feared by those who have these anxieties is that despite the medium specificity being presented in methodical ways, “it is clearly shot through with cultural values, ideologies, and agendas, a connection that becomes particularly evident in the censorship laws that have made some books legally unfilmable.”¹⁵ But how does the term “unfilmable” correlate to my paper?

One argument that I will be making throughout this paper is that although it is possible to make an adaptation of a foreign film, that possibility does not automatically make the adaptation

better than the original and some concepts in the adaptation will be lost in translation despite the efforts made to keep things similar. The stance from Balázs is important because, much like from page-to screen, the films that will be discussed in this essay are films that have been popular or have received praise from critics or the audience in the country of origin, but when translated by Hollywood, the films had mixed receptions due to unfilmable aspects. What is it that made these films unfilmable? Not only is it the inability to translate complex structures, aesthetics, cultural values, and ideologies from the source text to a Hollywood film that makes these films unfilmable, but also Hollywood's ignorance towards the foreign film market makes these films unfilmable.

With the United States and Europe or Asia being separated by an ocean, the audience centralized in the United States is unable to integrate the European and Asian film market into their lives mainly because Hollywood films are typically the only films picked up by movie theatres. This is because these films are the mainstream films that the audience wants. In this way, the audience has limited knowledge of another country's releases and are unable to see films unless they are somehow in the know of those releases in the foreign market. With limited access to other countries' works, perhaps Hollywood producers and executives feel that they have a meal ticket that carries from the success of those films that are in the foreign market. The limited access has become less limited in the recent years due to streaming services, such as Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon Prime. These streaming services provide those who pay for their subscription services access to content from all over the world and has targeted more niche audiences. Due to this, the United States' audience has become aware of films and television shows that have been released around the world when such streaming services have paid for the rights to stream such films. But why is this important?

With the United States having more of a connection to the other side of the world, this eliminates the need for Hollywood to adapt foreign films since the original is at the hands of the audience. With Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon Prime being able to tailor to niche audiences, Hollywood cannot afford to do so. Hollywood's films must reflect what the general population desires, so they are able to make a profit off of their production, opposed to making a niche film with a high budget that has the possibility of failing. Prior to proposing any research, we can speculate that Hollywood wants to ensure a monopoly within the global market but falls short in some attempts of their own as well as when they attempt to translate films for their audience. If Hollywood were to focus on their own content, opposed to adapting those films that have already been made, they would be able to monopolize the market with their original content or page-to-screen adaptations, while capitalizing on backend profits, which are the profits that are made through viewing and streaming licenses. We can make these claims about Hollywood wanting to create a monopoly and that they would be capitalizing on the backend profit since, in the past, Hollywood has been notorious for control of the movie monopoly, not only with the concept of the star system and the Big Five back in the Golden Era of Hollywood, but also the fact that they are unwilling to introduce films from other countries into their streamline media market currently, and are content with only Hollywood films or those that are highly acclaimed films in the English language. But even if Hollywood were to focus on adapting novels into films without remaking or adapting a foreign film that has already done the same thing, there would be more of an opportunity to create an equal global market opposed to a Hollywood monopoly.

ANALYZING FILM ADAPTATIONS

There is a difference in the process of analyzing a film of original content – those that have no source text in novels, comics, plays, and so forth – and analyzing a film that has origins in another medium. For the sake of this paper, we will solely be looking at films that have origins in other mediums. This essay will compare and contrast cultures of other countries to the United States’, while also attempting to discern if the Hollywood remake is an adaptation of the film itself or the novel that it is based on.

There are many observations made during the study of adaptations when we explore the concept of adaptation theory in relation to the current phenomenon of page-to-screen media, but how are we able to discern the difference between two texts that are within the same medium? By this, I am referring to the primary texts being both films or both novels. How do such adaptation theories translate from, say, a foreign film to a film produced through the Hollywood system? Specifically, how do we analyze and address the adaptations between two films that have the same source text, yet the outcome and cultural context of the films vary drastically? In order to approach these questions, we must first define what certain terms and phrases mean. To explain such terms, I will incorporate Marjo Vallittu’s essay *Context in Film Adaptations*. I will be doing this to create similar lexicons between this paper and Vallittu’s. By creating this bridge between the essays, referencing Vallittu’s paper and terms will be easier later on in the discussion and allow us to create a unified language. By creating a similar lexicon, it will be easier to understand key concepts and points that are drawn between the two.

First, we must address the concept of adaptation theory, and more specifically, what the term adaptation means, how it is constructed and can be deconstructed in order to analyze film, and how it will be used throughout my argument. According to Vallittu, adaptation’s “contemporary definition seeks to crystallize the way the story is transformed when it is adapted

from one sign system into another.”¹⁶ To put it in simpler terms, adaptation is the process that occurs when one text is reproduced as another text – for example: novel to film, play to film, and so on –, but Vallittu addresses a problem with this definition which resides in the process. This problem has to deal with the fact that situations and events must be changed because they are unable to be reproduced – such as historic accounts of stories that current-day creators and audience members have no way of knowing every fact of said event. Due to the inability of recreating the historic account word by word and step by step, this then causes the audience to receive such events or stories in “mediated form,” but this can only be done because film is an adaptable form of media.¹⁷ Mediated form, in the words of Vallittu is “when the [authentic] events are re-enacted both in [the audience’s] memories and in a new medium,”¹⁸ where the previous source relies in history and the new medium is anything that retells such a tale. From this definition of adaptation, we can come to the conclusion that the theory of adaptation is the study and process by which texts are adapted into different mediums, focusing solely on the primary texts. For this paper, we must understand how to contextualize the study of adaptations, which means learning what context is in this field of study.

When it comes to analyzing film, whether it be adaptation or not, we must know what the context of the film is. Having an understanding of a film’s concept and the context of the film allows us to understand their influence within the film’s form and creation and their influence out of the film’s reception and outcome. This aspect of film adaptation theory will be pivotal in later arguments when we will put the original foreign film into conversation with the Hollywood remake or adaptation. Context will always play a major role in interpreting and analyzing adaptations simply because the context that exists in the outside world will impact the audience’s view of the piece and will be in a constant motion of change as the world grows and expands.

Vallittu also uses a particular term for the time and space that surrounds the film and its source material: “cultural context.”¹⁹ Vallittu describes the phrase cultural context as “the contexts inside the textual world, what I call the intertextual context, the roots of which are in the idea and concept of contextuality,”²⁰ and lists it as a code of theory of adaption, which will be discussed later on. This context will be extremely crucial later on in the paper because the understanding of this context will help garner an understanding as to why the source material – the foreign film – and the adaptation have distinctive narratives, styles, or themes.

Vallittu has three separate categories for adaption. The first is the product of which is being adapted, meaning what is being changed either through the medium, genre, or frame of context. The next stage is the process of creation, which is how the product is redefined or recreated in order to be an adaptation. The third and final stage is the process of reception, which mainly pertains the concept of intertextuality, which means the relationship that exists between the text. With these three stages, it is easier to pick apart the two texts and see where they differ from one another and see where they relate, meaning that we can tell the difference between their modes of narration, genre, and aesthetic style. As it happens, these categories can influence the interpretation of the film by the audience, but it also can influence the way a piece is adapted from the source text. But there is an issue that remains when drawing in Vallittu’s work in with this paper.

The main issue is that Vallittu’s arguments mainly support adaptations from one medium to another, meaning from novel to film or vice versa. The predicament that this argument will run into is that the adaptations we are discussing are happening within the same medium with the same source material, but from two different cultural contexts. In this paper, I will primarily be arguing against Hollywood’s attempts eliminate foreign film industries by piggy-backing off of

the international success of a movie and remaking it as their own. We will be looking at films with foreign origins and Hollywood remakes, which will include: *A Girl with A Dragon Tattoo*, *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, *The Secret in Their Eyes*, and *Old Boy*. Whether this is intentional is not known at this point, but we will be evaluating the aesthetic differences, as well as the differences within the process of creation and process of reception. I believe that Vallittu's arguments and theory supports my arguments, but there will need to be a slight adaptation from their work to mine in order to create a larger scope of mediums.

When looking at the films side by side, we can see obvious differences when it comes to themes and concepts that are portrayed between the original and the Hollywood remake. It could be said that Hollywood wants to censor the content that makes its way into American households. Since the beginning of film and television, guidelines have been set in place in order to prevent certain depictions of acts or situations from being represented on screen. These guidelines existed from the 1930's to the 1960's and were known as the Motion Picture Production Code or the Hays Code. This code prevented the portrayal of concepts that were against the standards of the United States, such as: crime, sex, vulgarity, obscenity, indecency, profanity, and the ridiculing of religion.²¹ Other countries currently tend not to have as strict guidelines when it comes to what they can show on television and what they cannot, or what is more leniently shown in the graphic sense of violence and sex. Delving into these topics of violence, sex, and nudity from the Hollywood standpoint versus the source materials will help garner an understanding of where our cultures differ, which in return will create a starting point from where one can strengthen their reading of an adaptation between the two films in the same medium. This means that when analyzing the film, we can give rhyme and reason to Hollywood and their recreation of a piece due to the content and graphics that would be unbearable to the

eyes of American viewers. We will also address the time-frame between the release in the original and the remake as well, because I believe that has a strong standpoint against a film being an adaptation of the novel and really just being a remake of the film. Within the paper, I will make arguments against the films and their source context, meaning the Hollywood remake and the source film, and state why these films are more of remakes of the original films, opposed to the novels that they find their origin in, or vice versa. After analyzing the films and comparing the original and adaptations, the statistics from the films' receptions will be introduced, which will include the gross of the film worldwide and domestically, as well as ratings from online forums. The three stages of adaptation are important, for we will take a look at the product, which will be our origin content, then we will look at the process of creation, which will be the adaptation or remake, and finally we will look at the reception.

This essay will be split into five different sections after this section. Four of the sections will pertain to the films that will be discussed throughout the paper: *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* from both Niels Arden Oplev and David Fincher, *Purple Noon* from René Clément and its remake *The Talented Mr. Ripley* from Anthony Minghella, *The Secret in Their Eyes* from Juan José Campanella and Billy Ray, and finally *Old Boy* from Park Chan-Wook and Spike Lee. These films were picked so that there was a variety of films from different cultures and time periods, meaning a different method of filmic style for each country, as well as their reception by the audience. They all also have foundations within a source novel or comic and will make it easier to differentiate between adaptation and remake. Due to this, we will be able to examine why Hollywood has recreated such a similar or dissimilar story when one previously exists or does not exist in the cinematic global industry. In each of these sections of analysis, the films

will be analyzed aesthetically, thematically, and in relation to pacing and content. The final section will be the conclusion of the paper, which will draw my points together.

In order to analyze these films, I will use the five cultural conventions that Vallittu sites in their paper from Roland Barthes. These five codes include: the hermeneutic code, in which an element of the story is not completely explained allowing for mystery in the plot; the proairetic code, which forms tension and refers to the actions or events that indicate something will occur, allowing the audience to guess at the plot; the semantic code which is the kind of connotation in the story that produces meaning within the film; the symbolic code which expands upon the semantic meanings to broaden it to deeper level; and finally the cultural code which is anything that is found within the source texts and are assumed to be the foundation for truth within canon.²² Since this is an analysis of film to film adaptation and not page-to-screen adaptations, the fifth category will only apply to the Hollywood version.

In this paper, the genres that will be primarily focused on are horror and thriller, due to the fact that these types of novels are more often adapted into film than say something in the comedic genre. The first film discussed will be *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. We will begin with a short summary of the film and move into the analysis of themes and styles, taking note of the pacing and the content that is shown throughout the film. After the starting point of the original has been discussed, the paper will then transition into the Hollywood remake or adaptation and from there similar things will be discussed. When discussing each work in the comparison, or lack thereof, of the two films, I will refer to each work by their director in order to not get the films confused from the titles.

THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo was originally released in 2009 in Sweden and directed by Niels Arden Oplev, but exists as a Swedish-Danish co-production.²³ It was then remade by David Fincher in 2011 by Hollywood. Out of the films examined in this essay, this has the shortest rebound time with only two years separating the Swedish-Danish version from the Hollywood version. The film is a thriller filled with drama and violence and is based off of the novel *Män Som Hatar Kvinnor* by the Swedish author Stieg Larsson. This novel, and film, is the first in the series. The film follows the story of Mikael Blomkvist and Lisbeth Salander as they both work on separate assignments that are assigned by the same man, Henrik Vanger. Mikael is hired to investigate the disappearance and assumed murder of Harriet, Vanger's niece, thirty-six years prior. Lisbeth, who is a hacker, is hired to investigate Mikael, while she also has to deal with her own personal issues of being declared incompetent by the state. During the timeline of the movie, Lisbeth is forced to perform sexual acts, is raped by a man, avenges the man who has wronged her, and helps Mikael with the investigation of Harriet's disappearance. In the end, everything is solved, and all turns out, but the costs that were paid by the characters to do so are large.

Between the two films, there are major changes to the plot, yet they do not impact the final product. In Oplev's film, the initial conflict, and the kick off to our observation of Vallittu's semantic code, is caused by a difference in political positions. Mikael is a reporter for a small, independent magazine that is being sued by a large company for false implications in an article. In the end, Mikael was set up and it all turns out for the better, but he is still sentenced to jail time. Before he is to serve his time, he has six months to work on the assignment given to him by Henrik, but the Vanger Group, of which Henrik used to be the president of, had views that opposed the magazine's. This did not matter to Mikael, due to the fact he was working for

Henrik and not the company. Vallittu's semantic code applies here because giving these people different political positions provides a deeper meaning in the film and develops positions throughout the film, such as the magazine or the Vanger group. This also engages the symbolic code, since we clearly have a motive for Mikael against the large company that sued him, but it also gives an explanation as to why Lisbeth is willing to help Mikael with gathering information against the company: because she does not like the corruption that exists within the company, which exists in both films. This concept of political difference does not exist within Fincher's film, nor does the jail time or sentence, thus ridding itself of this semantic code, but it exists elsewhere and that is in Lisbeth's constant attention to Mikael's accounts even after her job has completed. She has grown a connection to righting the court system and proving that the man is innocent. This could be due to the fact that American media does not want to lobby different political parties against each other, or that the film reflects what happens in scenarios like these: the reporter is charged a significant fine but is off the hook to continue writing as if it was not a big deal. Not only do these differences exist between the two films, but what encourages Mikael to help Henrik is solely depicted in the Swedish-Danish film.

Mikael is driven in Oplev's film to help Henrik because Harriet was his babysitter when he was a child. This form of connection ties him to the case because he knew her and felt a bond with her when he was a child. This does not exist in Fincher's film, but a lot of aspects of family relations changed in order to make it more appealing to the American audience. Perhaps this is because family is a core value in the United States and allows the normal audience member to suture with a character that has more of a family connection. In the Swedish-Danish film, the audience knows that Mikael has gone through a divorce, but we don't know if a child was produced in this relationship. In Fincher's film, Mikael's marriage is destroyed by an affair and

he has a single teenage daughter who is very religious, but this simple change introduces a hermeneutic code because it allows the audience further along in the film to guess at their relationship and what may happen to her in the future. In Oplev's film, Lisbeth is in a similar position to the daughter. A connection is created towards the end of the film between her and her mother that is in a nursing home. We discover through this connection that Lisbeth set her father on fire to protect her mother from harm, when previously the audience continuously had to guess as to who she had set on fire, which implies Vallittu's hermeneutic code. It is also from her mother that she learned that she should never fall in love, which is implied when she leaves Mikael at the end of the film. This relationship with her mother does not exist within Fincher's film, and it is not made known to the audience whether she has any family living. By the very end of the film it is revealed that Lisbeth set her father on fire and watched him burn through her telling Mikael, but the audience learned this information in Oplev's film from a flashback. This made the ending of her leaving Mikael tricky but was quickly fixed up with him continuing his affair with his coworker. The difference in reveal from Lisbeth discusses more of her character in each film than anything else.

Lisbeth's character between the two films is very different within her mannerisms. In Oplev's film she is reluctant to share information with anyone and she is blatantly aggressive towards everyone. She refuses to share personal information with anyone and gives off a cold vibe towards those she is not working with or is forced to converse with. In this film, as well as Fincher's film, we experience the proairetic code when Lisbeth first meets her new probation officer. He asks her a series of questions that allude very heavily to sexual actions. From this, the audience can guess that there will be at least one incident involving a sexual exploitation, but the responses Lisbeth gives to the questions differ between the Swedish-Danish version and the

Hollywood version. Within Fincher's film, she is more outspoken and vulgar. Her only connection that is truly developed is the one with her first probation officer, or guardian as they call it. This connection is what shows the audience that she is human, and is willing to open up about her emotions, but she is unable to because he has been rendered a vegetable due to cerebral hemorrhaging, but by creating this connection invites Vallittu's hermeneutic code to be applied. By being able to form this connection, the film suggests that Lisbeth will be able to form another connection with a man that gives her freedom and protects her. The relationship to Mikael is also not explored in the Hollywood film, but perhaps Fincher was banking on people watching the Swedish-Danish film or reading the novel and accepting that the relationship between them existed in canon, or as the cultural code that is defined by Vallittu. In Oplev's film, it appears that these two bonded over investigating Harriet's disappearance along with a string of murders that happened in the forties, fifties, and sixties. In Fincher's film, there is very little teamwork between them, thus not developing a relationship between the two. This could be because Fincher does not wish to develop the romantic aspect of the film, or perhaps he was more focused on family relations. When Mikael and Lisbeth first engage in intercourse in Fincher's film, it seems as if it is just out of the blue. There is no development and feels as if it is a forced relation due to the fact that it would further the plot in some way. But there is another difference between the plot of the films that questions cultural differences between both countries.

In the Swedish-Danish film, after Mikael finds out who is behind the murders, we see something change within him after Martin, the prodigy son of the original murderer who followed in his father's footsteps, reveals why he kills women. Of course, this is happening while Mikael is tied up and on the chopping block, but that still does not change his reaction at the end of the film. When Martin runs off after Lisbeth attacks him, he engages in a car chase with her.

He ends up losing control of his vehicle and running off the road, causing the car to flip several times. He is still alive when Lisbeth reaches the car and is begging for help. Lisbeth stands and watches as the car catches fire and shows him no mercy. When she gets back to Mikael, he discovers that she has let Martin die even though she was in a position to help. It is at this time when Mikael starts to posit Martin as a victim of a corrupt father, claiming that he was brainwashed and had a sick mind. Mikael chastises Lisbeth for allowing him to die, but she stands her ground knowing that a rapist and a murderer should not walk free and deserves this punishment.

In Fincher's film, this scene plays out differently. By the time Lisbeth has made the rescue, she asks Mikael if she can kill him, to which he agrees. After the car chase scene, his car, yet again, flips several times and catches on fire. As she is walking to the car with a handgun to kill him, the car explodes, and he dies. This happens as if it is fated by God. In the Swedish-Danish film, Lisbeth is in the position to play God and deal out Martin's punishment. By this I mean she is in control of Martin's fate. In the Fincher's film, Martin is punished by God for his sin, or his villainous actions, meaning that Lisbeth has no reason to cause any harm to Martin. A plausible reason behind why Lisbeth is in the position to play God in the Swedish-Danish film is because she is getting her opportunity of redemption for the things that have gone wrong with in relation to man, while also punishing the man who did wrong to other women as well. Lisbeth did not have it easy throughout her life and leading up to the discovery of Martin her life didn't get easier. She had been raped in the past so she could get her allowance, but the only thing she could do to that man, her probation officer, was do what he did to her and use it against him. Now that she has caught a murderer and a rapist, it only makes sense that what he did to others – a number of girls that he can't even remember – is done upon him, since the bible is heavily

referenced throughout the film. This topic of Lisbeth's life brings up an interesting observation between the films: the content that each country is willing to present on the screen.

When it comes to explicitly graphic topics, such as rape, both countries really have no restrictions. By rape, I am referring to any sexual act that occurs in a party of two, where one of those parties is unwilling, or if the sexual act is used as a bribe. In both Oplev's version of the film and Fincher's, Lisbeth is first made to perform oral on her new guardian in order to get advancements on her allowance for a new computer. When she does not listen in Oplev's version, she is smacked across the face. After this, the audience in both cases is shown her head bobbing back in forth, not by her control, but by her guardian's. The next time that she meets her guardian in his apartment. She has come with a hidden camera to record whatever she must endure next. When she arrives, she tells him she just wants her money and will not do this every time she needs it. In Oplev's version, in order to get a handcuff on her, Lisbeth's guardian hits her. This aspect of domestic violence is not found in Fincher's version explicitly, but it is implied after the scene when her body is bruised. Previously in Oplev's film, we see that Lisbeth gets into a fight with a group of drunk men and nobody in the subway moves to help her as she gets hit and kicked. From this, we can conclude that this concept of hitting women in Swedish culture is more acknowledged and either: 1.) does not impact the audience, or 2.) the issue is already prevalent in the Sweden that depicting it in a film is more of a cautionary tale than a new idea. The lack of this concept in American media could be due to the fact that our media does not want to influence men to hit women, or that such an issue is too graphic for Americans to watch, despite domestic violence being common.²⁴ The plausible reasoning behind the absence of this concept is due to the fact that media influences the audience. It is implied, that since both films do explicitly show acts of rape on screen that nudity is not an issue for either country, but it is

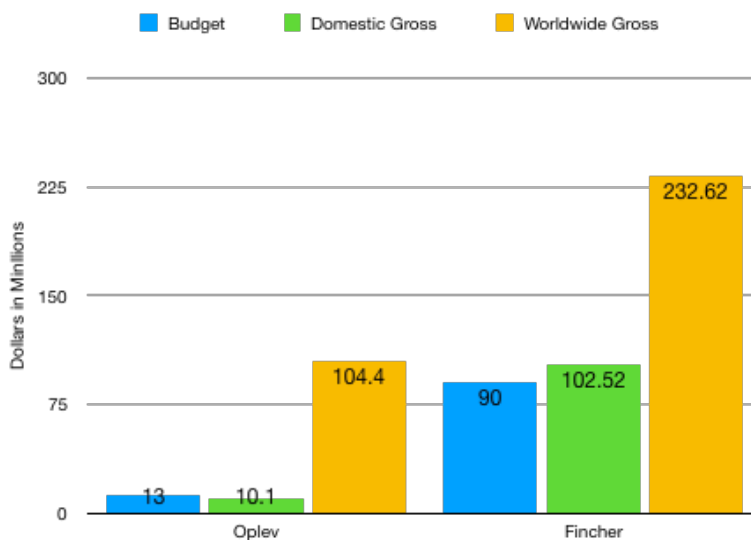
more common that we will see the naked female body, opposed to the naked male body. Despite having no difficulty of display heterosexual coitus, Oplev's version has difficulty when it comes to homosexual lovers.

When depicted in Oplev's film, we only see that Lisbeth is sharing the same bed with a woman and they are both naked. Without turning this into a cultural study of Sweden, I cannot *not* make a statement of their attitude towards same-sex relations. It is important to point out, though, that in 1995, Sweden introduced a same-sex registered partnership that did "not deviate much from the concept of marriage."²⁵ It is also important to point out that same-sex marriage was legalized in May of 2011 which is after this film came out. The reason why such ideas of same-sex relations may not be shown is that in Sweden a study conducted showed "that religiosity is clearly connected with negative attitudes toward same-sex marriage,"²⁶ and the themes within the film are heavily religious. Perhaps Oplev wanted to appeal to a large audience and did not want to explicitly prompt a religious group into taking issue with the film. Although same-sex marriage was nowhere close to being legalized within the United States, the vivid depiction and implication of a hook-up between Lisbeth and another woman is unmistakably shown. The reasoning behind this goes back further into American film theory that it appeals more to a man to see the female body naked, due voyeurism and the idea of the male gaze. But when it comes to concept of voyeurism, we need to look at the film piece as a whole, not just the sexualized scenes.

When watching Oplev's rendition of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* there is the sense of neo-noir filmic style, but strictly in the Nordic sense. Nordic Noir is defined as, "the cinematic film noir genre and highlights the way Danish producers employ colours in the blue and grey end of the scale, climatic elements such as rainy cold autumn days, and bleak urban cityscapes,

reminiscent of the film noir genre.”²⁷ First of all, this is film acts a crime thriller, but takes a more modern style where our investigator is not a cop or private detective, but a hacker and a journalist. Cinematically, it is dreary in the harsh winter and is littered with low-key lighting. There is heavy use of flashbacks within the film and serve as pieces of information for the audience to ponder over, but as more connections are made throughout the film, the memory becomes clearer and information that was not previously allotted to the audience is now made clear. Fincher strays away from this style of Nordic Noir in his version. There is no lowkey lighting or bleak cityscapes. The film resembles traditional Hollywood cinematography. The Hollywood version has a stylistic sense of heavy metal music and rarely has moments of silence. The pacing between the two films is very similar. Only their cinematography and theme differs significantly. It can be deduced based on this analysis, and by the quick turnaround between the two movies, that Fincher’s film is an adaptation of Oplev’s, and changes style and cultural significant aspects of the film to make it appeal to the American audience. But was this adaptation cost-effective to Hollywood?

According to the statistics of the budget, domestic gross, and worldwide gross, the money says that it was worth it.^{28,29} To put the statistics into a visual, I have created a graph compromised of the three criteria and put the numbers from Oplev’s film next to Fincher’s:



Despite Oplev's domestic gross being low, the reception internationally of the film is what carried over his gross. The payoff for Fincher's film was great, but their budget was almost seven times larger than Oplev's allowing more leeway when it came to production costs, which includes cameras, sets, and other aspects of production. One could argue that the release of the Hollywood version halted the continuous gross of the Swedish-Danish version, simply because it was readily available to those in America and surrounding areas. The Swedish-Danish version had very limited releases and continued to be released all the way through 2012,³⁰ while the Hollywood version had finished its release within three months from the initial release date.³¹ Archer argues that "the English-language version of a foreign-language film is for some a form of acquisition, enacting and enabling the disproportionate exposure and globalized aesthetic that maintains Hollywood's hegemony."³² Archer's argument is that the Hollywood adaptation belittles the original due to the fact that Hollywood has a monopoly throughout the industry, but the existence of the adaptation is extraneous when the world is exposed to other cinemas and has the ability to obtain subtitles for foreign films. Despite there being a redundancy within the two films, both films were highly acclaimed and nominated for several awards and each won some.^{33,34} On *IMDb*, both films ranked 7.8 out of 10 by the users of the site. Roger Ebert, a film

critic from Chicago Sun-Times, gave the original film a rating of four out of four, while he reviewed the Hollywood version at 3.5 out of four.³⁵

PURPLE NOON/THE TALENTED MR. RIPLEY

Purple Noon, directed by René Clément in 1960, starts off with quick and witty dialogue, but the music in the opening title sequence suggests that there is some sort of suspense or thriller aspect to the film that will be incorporated. After the title sequence, the audience is introduced to two men, Tom and Phillippe, who are sitting at a café in Rome, Italy while Tom practices signatures. Phillippe then sees Freddy, his only friend in Rome, and the audience discovers that Tom is a man of many talents, including forgery, and hasn't seen Phillippe in five years. The audience also discovers that Tom has been sent from San Francisco to retrieve Phillippe and bring him home, and in return he will get \$5,000. From this, the audience can conclude that Tom's abilities will be used for something during the film by implicating Vallittu's proairetic code. Once these two men return to Marge, Phillippe's fiancée, the comedy has been lost and the film has taken a serious undertone. Marge and Phillippe fight, but make up with sex, Phillippe catches Tom in his clothing pretending to be him, and then Tom discovers that Phillippe never wrote to his father that they will return together. It is at this point where Tom discovers that he is in big trouble, but it also leaves the audience in suspense of what may happen which induces the hermeneutic code that Vallittu describes. Will someone die? Will some grand theft scheme come out of Tom to get this money from Phillippe's father? It is unsure at this point, but there are several viable options.

After going sailing to Taormina, which is assumed to be Tom and Phillippe's last trip together outside of Rome, the audience learns about their supposed past and about how Tom

does not come from a distinguished family, but a poor family. Tom says that he “worshipped the ground [Phillippe] walked on,” thus confessing an admiration that possibly still exists for Phillippe, but in what sense? During this sailing trip, that Marge has attended, Phillippe and Marge begin canoodling, but Tom goes into a fit of jealousy and turns the boat sharply, as if to make a mess of things. But who is he jealous of: Marge or Phillippe? Within this question we can tie in the semantic code, giving the audience an understanding that there may be other connotations within Tom’s sexuality and questions to what extent he will go to in order to get what he wants. The dinghy then falls off the deck of the boat and Tom must jump in so they do not lose it and so it does not scrape the hull. Phillippe then decides that it is time to “exile” Tom for behaving so rashly and lengthens the rope on the dinghy so Tom is following from a distance. Tom attempts to get back on the boat because he is terrified of the water and does not know how to swim, but the dinghy pulls back and the rope attaching it to the boat snaps and Tom hits his head and passes out.

After Phillippe and Marge engage in intercourse, Phillippe returns to the deck of the ship to find Tom missing. He then, in panic, turns the boat around in search for Tom. From this we see that Phillippe treats Tom very poorly, despite the audience being under the assumption that they are childhood friends. With this in mind, we can further explore Vallittu’s codes and implement the symbolic code: why would Phillippe frantically search for his friend if there was not such a bond that reached further than just being friends. This happens not to be the case, as Phillippe reveals after they rescue Tom. Tom made up the story and Phillippe went along with it. Now that the audience is aware that the story is a false pretense, some may begin to draw on the tension that resides between both of the lead men. Anything could happen now that we know the

two have not known each other previously and there may be ill-will behind one of them, or maybe both.

While Tom is recovering for the sailing mishap, Marge tells him to return home and not to spend any more time with Phillippe. Also, during this time, Phillippe discovers his bank transaction notes and assumes that Tom took them. This instance engages the audience in the hermeneutic code, because where did these bank transactions come from? Why are they on the boat? Phillippe goes to Tom the next day on the boat and asks if he wanted to kill him after the incident from the previous day. Tom then says, after Phillippe thinks it would be complicated, that he has plenty of imagination to pull something like that off. It is after this that Marge reveals she found an earring, which Tom planted in Phillippe's coat pocket, and Phillippe and Marge get into an argument. Phillippe throws all of Marge's writing off the boat and into the water, yet tries to salvage what he has done with his love, but Marge refuses to listen. Clearly distressed, Marge wants to leave. At this point of the film it is unclear whether Tom has sabotaged the relationship between Marge and Phillippe because he is interested in Marge or because he wants to spend more time with Phillippe. Both options, as of right now, are very feasible.

Once they leave Marge ashore, they set off again. Phillippe continues to ask how Tom would go about killing him and taking over his life. The audience can see the discomfort in Phillippe once he figures out how much thought Tom has actually put into this idea. During a game of poker, Phillippe makes a wager for \$2,500 and attempts to throw the game, but Tom recognizes this and calls him out on it. Once Phillippe leans down to pick up the card he threw on the ground, Tom leans over and stabs him in the chest, taking Phillippe's life. There is a look of fear and surprise etched across Tom's face while he tries to navigate the boat away from another boat. It is during this time that the film becomes frantic and chaotic. The boat has

become unmanageable and Tom is struggling to cover up the body of Phillippe. After succeeding in his murder and hiding of the body, Tom returns to Mongibello to find Marge and to tell her that Phillippe has not returned with him. Once Tom has shared the news with Marge, the audience witnesses the process that Tom goes through in order to take over Phillippe's life. The pace of the movie has completely changed and has become more methodical, as if Tom is being cautious so he is not found out by anyone. But in all of his attempts to not get found out, he is still discovered by Phillippe's old friend, Freddy.

Freddy arrives to the place that Tom has rented in Rome and searches for Phillippe. While he looks around, he notices that Phillippe is either leaving or has just arrived and that he is writing a break-up letter to Marge. He suspects nothing until the maid of the house calls for Mr. Greenleaf while Freddy is leaving. Once Freddy confirms that the man the maid is looking for is, in fact, Tom, he rushes upstairs at once. Tom waits in anticipation, gripping a statue that will bring death to Freddy. With two deaths under his belt, Tom no longer has the same frantic and scared response to Freddy's murder as he had to Phillippe's. In fact, Tom is calmer. This is most likely because he had no real attachment to Freddy and had no connections with him. Or perhaps he has grown accustomed to the idea of killing people. But this lack of remorse in Tom allows the audience to question just how far Tom is willing to go to avoid being discovered.

Tom's lack of remorse is further shown to the audience when he says, "Wait a second. Phillippe is the killer! I had nothing to do with it. Not a thing." Tom believes at this point that he has only killed one person, while Phillippe has killed the other. We can pull from this that Tom now has two different identities: Tom Ripley and Phillippe Greenleaf. They do not interact with each other anymore – like the original Tom and Phillippe –, but they are now identities within the same person. It is the same person who must run from the police when they come searching

and has to scramble as they draw in closer to him. Unfortunately for Tom, he must sacrifice one of the identities by the end of the film, and it has to be Phillippe so he can continue to live without the constant fear of being discovered. But with this fear of being discovered comes the anxiety that exists within the audience and the proairetic code that is constantly allowing the audience to question the plot.

At the end of the film, Tom returns to Mongibello and Marge. It is clear by the end of the film that he was not only interested in the money that Phillippe had tied to his name, but also Marge. He sweeps in at the time of her mourning for Phillippe and makes her fall for him because he is the only connection to Phillippe that will ever remain for her. But as soon as he believes that he has gotten away with everything, it is all swept from under him when Mr. Greenleaf goes to sell the boat and they find Phillippe's body caught on the back of it. Through all of his running and sneaking around, Tom is unable to get away with his murders, but the movie ends without finalizing his punishment, but it is assumed that, after the police arrive to the sandbar he is at, he will end up with two murder charges on him. It is safe to argue from *Purple Noon* that the only cultural code that exists within *The Talented Mr. Ripley* is the barebones of the plot.

From the beginning of *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, directed by Anthony Minghella in 1999, we can see that this film will be very music-centric or music-themed, but also that the main focus will be on regret, opposed to the comedic opening of *Purple Noon*. This judgment is based on the opening line from Tom Ripley, played by Matt Damon: "If I could just go back." This judgement is also supported by the opening shot, which is edited to piece together Ripley's face while he is sitting in what appears to be a room. After observing the hermeneutic code, and by the end of the film, we will all recognize this as the exact shot where we hear Ripley's lover Peter Smith-

Kingsley say, “Tom has someone to love him. That is a good thing. Tom is crushing me. Tom is crushing me.” During this final scene, Ripley is sobbing as he strangles the man he loves after he has been discovered on the boat by Meredith Logue, who knows him under his assumed identity in Europe as Dickie Greenleaf. Ripley then, by accident, has revealed to Smith-Kingsley that “Dickie and Peter together? That’s just too good gossip.” With the audience realizing what has happened, we begin to question how he will handle this situation and what will happen, otherwise known as the proairetic code. Smith-Kingsley then corrects Ripley’s blunder, but at this point Ripley has realized that he has revealed his big lie and decides that he must kill Smith-Kingsley. After this opening shot, Ripley’s voice continues as a voiceover, asking if only he could go back and not do what he did, starting from when he met the real Dickie Greenleaf’s father, which is what started this whole thing off. From this we can draw that sense of regret for what he has done throughout the movie.

Throughout the movie there is rarely a silent moment, whether it is music or dialogue. Perhaps the reasoning behind this is to keep the audience engaged throughout the film or to note the themes throughout the film. From the second shot in the film we know that Ripley is musically inclined because he is playing piano at a party with someone who is singing. After this, we see him working as a bathroom servant in an opera house. After the show has ended and everyone has gone home for the night, we see him on the stage playing the piano that is used in the show when he clearly is not authorized to be there. After meeting with Mr. Greenleaf, the prominent music of choice is jazz, which is what Dickie is a fan of and actually plays, as well as operatic music from time to time. Upon receiving the assignment to bring Dickie home, Ripley returns to his small apartment and packs his things while testing himself on the knowledge of jazz. With the knowledge that Dickie plays jazz, that creates the semantic code that jazz has

some significance, but the fact that most of the non-diegetic and diegetic music that is incorporated in the film becomes symbolic of how jazz is related to Ripley and Dickie, especially in the homoerotic sense.

As soon as Ripley arrives to Italy, he meets Meredith and tells her that his name is Dickie Greenleaf. She then questions why he is standing in the 'R' line at the baggage claim. He quickly comes up with the lie that he travels under his mother's name and then he leaves. Once he leaves, we are introduced to Dickie and his girlfriend in swimsuits while Ripley focuses on the both of them while Ripley learns to speak Italian. It is unclear at this point as to why Ripley is doing this, but we can speculate that since he comes from New York and wants to find a way to make himself familiar with Dickie's habits, Ripley wants to appear on the same social level as Dickie. The very next scene we see Ripley approach Dickie and his girlfriend on the beach and how awkwardly he interacts with the two as he attempts to remind Dickie of their acquaintanceship, that we will shortly discover is falsified and Dickie is not willing to play along with him.

It is after this, when Ripley is invited over to their villa, that we discover Dickie is cheating on his girlfriend and Ripley just happens to be in the area to see. Ripley chooses not to tell Dickie's girlfriend, Marge, what is going on behind her back. It is at this point, when Dickie, Ripley, and Marge are having lunch, that it is revealed that Dickie and Ripley did not know each other, and that Ripley has a nifty party trick that persuades Dickie to keep him around: Ripley has the ability to imitate anyone's voice in an eerily accurate way. With the audience having this knowledge, we can again begin to speculate how this movie will play out, especially having the previous knowledge of *Purple Noon*. Once Ripley displays his party trick, Ripley and Dickie begin spending a lot of time together, bonding. These moments have underlying homoerotic

undertones, which differs significantly from *Purple Noon*. This is made apparent in the scene where Ripley and Dickie play a game of chess.

In this scene, it is not clear how the two will be positioned. If Minghella wanted to explicitly show homosexual relationships, it would be at this point that both men would be in the bathtub naked, but that is not how the scene plays out. Dickie, the phallic-centric protagonist – who is literally called dick opposed to Richard and works as the main sex appeal for all the characters –, is in the bathtub while Ripley is sitting outside of the tub fully clothed. During the scene, when there is a lull in the chess game, Ripley reaches into the water to feel the temperature. Once he feels the water, he asks if he can get in the tub. It is not explicitly stated that he wants to get into the tub with Dickie, but that is how Dickie takes it and rejects it. Ripley quickly recovers though and says, “Not with you in it.” Dickie leaves the tub, completely and unabashedly exposed. He walks to get his towel, which is placed across the room. In the reflection of the mirror, which is placed quite well within the shot so both the audience and Ripley can see Dickie, Ripley watches as Dickie dries his face. When the camera goes back to a shot of Dickie, he is basically flaunting his butt to Ripley. In a scene later, we can see Ripley’s fascination towards Dickie when he is dancing around wearing his clothes and singing in a mirror but is quickly ashamed when Dickie finds him in such clothes. Although the audience can make a guess and say that Ripley has an interest in Dickie that is more than just friends or another identity to steal, the intentions of Dickie, especially after this scene, are completely ambiguous. Does Dickie like to flaunt his beauty to everything breathing? Or is he actually trying to tempt Ripley to come on to him? Perhaps, an argument could be made that Dickie, unable to come to terms with his interest in men, has backed himself into the metaphorical closet

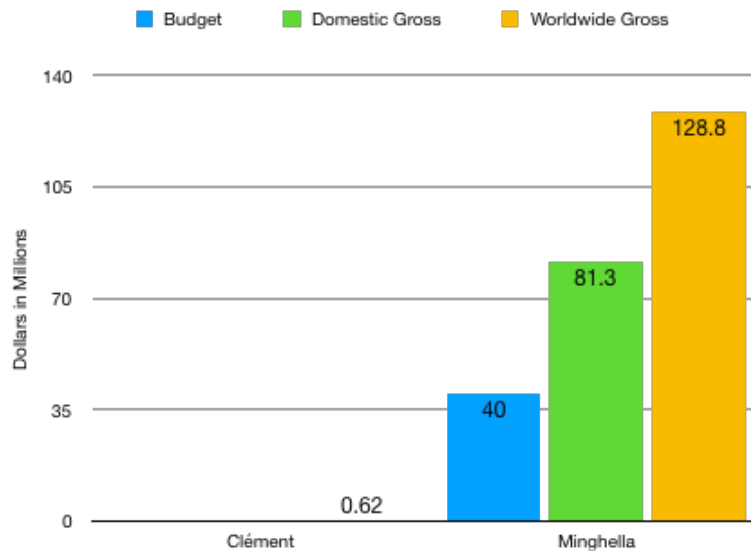
that prevents him from exploring this side of his identity, therefore making him overly sexual towards women who swoon over him with little effort on his end.

This idea of Dickie being so far in the closet that he is overtly heterosexual is quickly thwarted in a scene later in the film when Marge has become upset with him, after she has made it known to Ripley that she is aware of Dickie cheating on her. She goes on to state that he has cheated on her previously with many women. Dickie is quick to pounce on her, like a lion, even though it is just a few of them secluded on a boat out in the middle of the water. It could be argued, though, that Dickie has a genuine heart for all the women, and maybe even men, that he encounters. There is a scene during the film that is set during a festival of some sort. During this festival, a body of Dickie's lover floats to the top of the water and we are shown that he is struggling to hide his rage towards the whole situation. It is revealed later that she was pregnant and asking for money so she could either care for the child or get rid of it. When the body surfaces, we see that Dickie is attempting to hide his reaction from Marge, but is unable to do so and ends up violently kicking over a table at the ambulance's poor response time. Then he is shown playing the saxophone while clearly disgruntled. From this, we see that Dickie has good intentions, even if he has done something wrong, and from this whole situation that Ripley's devotion to him is much larger than anticipated when he offers to take the blame for the pregnancy.

Shortly after this incident, Dickie announces that he wants to move north in Italy, and will not return home, not even for a visit. This aggravates Ripley, but they still have one last escapade together. They will take a boat to their destination, but on this boat is where Ripley confesses his love for Dickie. When Dickie denies this love and starts to criticize Ripley for his odd and eccentric behaviors, Ripley's anger rises, and he attacks Dickie gruesomely. A small

battle occurs, but ultimately Ripley takes Dickie's life, for Dickie now knows Ripley's confession and Ripley could not live with the judgement he would receive for hitting his friend. It is at this point in the film that Ripley must now assume the identity and role of Dickie in order to not have his murderous deed found out. The film progresses similarly to *Purple Noon*, with minor changes in the plot, such as introducing Peter, Ripley's lover. Introducing Peter as a lover, opposed to Marge, gives a new twist on the film that solidifies Ripley's sexuality, allowing us to portray him as a monster, due to his monstrous fantasies. Some scholars have even made the connection that "homosexuality is a monstrous condition."³⁶ By viewing Minghella's film in this light, the reasoning behind Ripley's actions are clear: because he is unable to express his sexuality and must repress it, this repression then is expressed in fits of murder. What is different with this observation, though, is that since Ripley has been a closeted gay for most of the film, he can get away with the murder because he is able to separate himself from that part of himself which is the homosexual. Despite this, he will still feel the guilt and the grief from having to kill those who he had grown close to. With this homosexual connotation, it is difficult to see this film as a remake of Clément's *Purple Noon*, but as a reimagining on the original work, a book titled *The Talented Mr. Ripley* by the American author Patricia Highsmith. But neither of the films completely embody that work, yet they do incorporate major aspects of the novel itself. This is to say that they may have had the same source work, but their execution of said work is completely different and not at all dependent on each other. With this idea of having the same source material and being an independent work, we will now turn towards a couplet of films that are almost entirely the same, with minute differences in plot and style of storytelling. But, again, was the Hollywood remake necessary?

In all honesty, it is hard to conclude whether or not the Hollywood remake performed better financially than the original. There is not enough data from *Purple Noon* to determine the overall gross, due to the fact that the budget was never released and because there was no gross determined – the film’s success was reported in attendance numbers, opposed to money.³⁷ Regardless, we can still look at the numbers³⁸ from *The Talented Mr. Ripley* to gather an understanding of how it looked overall:



Seeing how well Minghella’s film did in the box office, the adaptation of the novel seems to be well off. With a new twist on ideas and concepts, *The Talented Mr. Ripley* as an adaptation of the novel has received high acclaim, as has *Purple Noon* which was released forty years prior. *Purple Noon* won the single award that it was nominated for, and also is a film featured in the Criterion Collection.³⁹ *The Talented Mr. Ripley* was nominated for five Oscars among many other awards and won ten of their nominations, which allowed it to have great acclaim in America.⁴⁰ Both films were strongly liked among the user reviewers, Clément’s film receiving a 7.8 out of 10 and Minghella’s film receiving a 7.4 out of 10. Ebert favored Minghella’s film over Clément’s, giving the prior a rating of four out of four, and the latter a three out of four.⁴¹

THE SECRET IN THEIR EYES

The Secret in Their Eyes, directed by Juan José Campanella, is an Argentine film released in 2009. Six years later, director Billy Ray released an American adaptation of the film that switched up the entire plot to make it more appealing to the American audience. Both of these films are based on *La Pregunta de Sus Ojos* by the Argentine author Eduardo Sacheri. Campanella's film follows the story of a retired legal counselor, Benjamin, as he tries to retell the story of a rape-murder case that still haunts him from 25 years ago, which leads him to solving the case. By doing this, it allows him to move forward in his life and let go of the past that has been holding him down for 25 years. In the Hollywood retelling of the story, the story follows a retired FBI agent, Ray, that specializes in counter-terrorism, as he tries to reopen the rape and murder case that took away his coworker's – and friend's – daughter, because he feels responsible for the daughter's death, even 13 years later. This transition between the present and the future in both films does not provoke the proairetic code because the audience inherently knows what will happen, but there is question of how everything will end. From the descriptions of the films, you can tell that they are already completely different, but there is more in this film that has been changed simply because it needed to appeal to the American audience.

Campanella's film pulls strongly from the conventions of film noir but creates its own style when it comes to the motif of color throughout the film. Frequently, there are Dutch angles and low angle shots that are found throughout the film. More often than not, a wide shot would be introduced in the film, but a person or object in the foreground would be blocking part of the frame. Opposed to the normal tripod usage that we find in Hollywood cinema, most of the film is shot via handheld cameras and has an excellent chase scene taken in one shot through a *fútbol*

stadium. One aspect that the film deviates from in the typical noir-esque style is with the color choices throughout the film. More often than not, Campanella had bright colors in each frame, following a trend of reds, whites, and blues. These colors pertained to specific feelings throughout the movie. These colors elicit a semantic code, which expands into symbolic code during the present time of the film. Benjamin is often attracted to a superior named Irene, who is dressed in shades of red, to symbolize his affection towards her, but when she is not in red, she is in white to symbolize her purity and lack of corruption that is running rampant through their work place. This is an important motif because most of the film is told through Benjamin's memory. Since it is from his point of view, the audience should be asking how reliable Benjamin is as a narrator. Can we trust him? This question alone provides the audience with the hermeneutic code that Vallittu describes.

Most of his memories are backed up by either Irene, the District Attorney, or Morales, the husband of the woman that was raped and murdered, which makes him seem reliable. But there are also times where we can question his knowledge since he is trying to write a novel about events that he was not present for, but we can also question the secrecy that exists within all the characters. Pablo, Benjamin's partner that was murdered, hid only one thing: the fact that he was not Benjamin the night of his murder. Benjamin theorizes that three men broke into his apartment when he left to get Pablo's wife because Pablo was inebriated once again. During this time, three men broke into his house while Pablo was resting. They questioned Pablo, and Pablo, still groggy from the alcohol, could not comprehend what was going on. When it was clear that these men were looking for his friend, he slowly moved towards the record player not only to play a song, but, more importantly, to turn down Benjamin's photo of himself so the intruders would not find out that Pablo was not Benjamin. When he hears the guns being cocked, Pablo

makes a run for the bedroom to hide the remaining photos, but his fate is soon sealed, and he is shot several times. Since nobody was there to witness this, the audience does not know what really happened that night with Pablo, but from Morales' memory of the day he captured Gomez, the killer of his wife, places the same three men at Benjamin's house earlier that day to survey the building. From this memory though, the audience discovers that Morales is lying and hiding a big secret: he has Gomez in a jail cell on his property.

Morales' wife was raped and murdered by Gomez, and when Gomez was convicted, he was given a life sentence since the death penalty was not an option in Argentina. He was released shortly after on good behavior because the District Attorney at that time thought Gomez could be of use. Morales was torn apart and sought after him, knowing that Gomez would be coming for Benjamin shortly after his release. When Benjamin goes to show Morales his novel in the present, we soon learn about the real events that occurred that day. At first, Morales tries to tell Benjamin that he shot Gomez and killed him, but Benjamin is suspicious and remains on his property to see if that is really the case. Benjamin then follows Morales to the back of his property and discovers that he has been holding Gomez hostage for 25 years yet has not said a single word to him. The idea of "an eye for an eye" is heavily implied in this film. Gomez killed his wife and should have received the life sentence, but since the justice system was corrupt, Morales captured him and gave him his own version of the life sentence. Knowing the truth, Benjamin is able to move forward in his life because he has finally received the closure that he needed. He can now visit his friend's grave and give him flowers and he can confess his love to Irene. They begin to have an affair, since she is married to the same man that she was engaged to during the flashbacks. Campanella's film is a crime-thriller-romance film, which technically does not differ from Ray's film, but it does execute the genre itself better than Ray's.

Ray's film attempts to recreate the story that is told by Campanella but needs to be modified significantly to represent the American population. It takes place during the current times when it is released and has only a 13-year difference from the case to the present day. The investigation occurs the year after 9/11, which allows the film to focus on terrorism. This focus on terrorism cues the audience that there has to be a tie in somehow, but in what way? Basically this is tying in the hermeneutic code from Vallittu. There is some homage to the concept of color motifs, but only when it comes to Irene and the color white, representing her angelic mannerisms, beauty, and purity. Most of the film is shot in the Hollywood standard of tripods and a steady camera but follows the idea of dark imagery and crime drama aspects. Many of the ideas specific to Argentina have been modified to represent the American population, such as switching the *fútbol* match to a baseball game. Many other differences rely on the narrative simply because it would resonate more with the American audience.

Ray is now an FBI agent assigned to a case in Los Angeles to work on counter-terrorism in order to prevent another 9/11 event. He is prohibited from working on the case of the daughter's death because counter-terrorism is their first priority currently, but also because the suspect that he is following is the "snitch" that has been feeding the department intel on the Mosque that they have been watching adamantly. One of the men that he works with, Siefert, has been in connection with the suspect and let him come to the office picnic that introduced him to the girl that was murdered. This theme of corruption begins to play a semantic role in the film and can even depict the title of the film as symbolic, since everyone is hiding the secret, but what are the secrets that everyone is hiding? The secrets within the film are different than those in the Argentine version. The one who hides the most is Siefert, and for that he pays with his life.

Siefert found the snitch for the counter-terrorism team, but he found a man who wanted to be a police officer one day, so he tried to make this man, Marzin, happy in order to keep his cooperation. When Marzin made a mistake or was in trouble, Siefert covered up his trails and even destroyed evidence that would have pinned Marzin as the rapist and murdered of his coworker's, Jess', daughter. His actions are punished later on in the film when he is shot and killed while Ray is tracking down a man that he believes is Marzin. This incident reveals the big secret that would have prevented this wild goose chase: Jess killed Marzin 13 years prior.

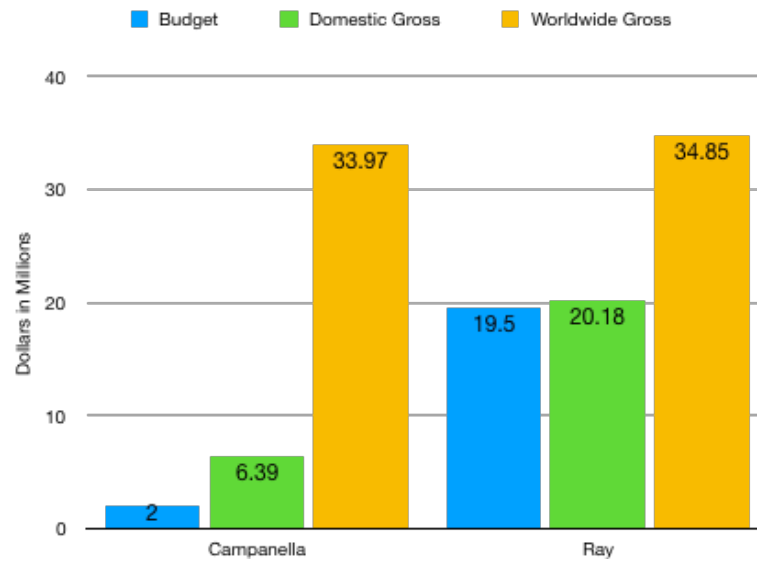
Jess confessed her crime to Claire, Ray's love interest and the District Attorney, and Ray. She tells them both that she shot and killed Marzin and buried him in her yard, but this isn't exactly the truth, as Ray finds out the next day. He follows her to where she is holding Marzin captive, but he does not approve. He leaves his gun on the basin and goes out to her yard in order to start digging a grave. Jess tries to get his attention before she returns to where Marzin is and shoots him. As she watches Ray from the inside of her house, there is this sense of closure between the two of them, but this closure creates a sense of fear for the unknown because they do not know what decision the DA will make for this crime. At the end of Campanella's film, we are given the romantic release and uplifting story, but at the end of Ray's we are only left with the murder of Marzin, the closure between Ray and Jess, and Claire's reclosing of the case, but no romantic closure. One begins to question why they introduced it in the first place if they were going to leave it open like that at the end. With the acknowledgement that the plot is extremely different in both films, we must also acknowledge the content that is shown on the screen that is different as well. I would argue once again that had there not been a source text that provided the plot, there would be no cultural code that could be applied to Ray's film.

There is not a lot of difference between the content that is shown in the Argentine film and the Hollywood film, but there are still some things that do change. In the Argentine film, nudity is no issue: the girl who is raped and murdered is shown naked several times and when the body is found, it is naked and beaten. The body is displayed in a manner that exposes everything. Constantly throughout the film, this sort of graphicness is not taken lightly. We see Pablo's body after he has been shot several times and we see his brains splattered on the window. Several times the flashback of the girl's rape is shown. They never went lightly on this, but this is not the same in the Hollywood version. We see the intent of rape once or twice, but her body is completely covered in clothing when she is found and there is no other aspect of nudity shown throughout the film. Even the scene during the confession where the murderer is defending his masculinity from the belittlement of Irene/Claire, in the Argentine version his penis is shown on the screen, while in the Hollywood version we are shown him walking away and unzipping his pants, but we are given a medium shot of his torso and head, cutting his penis out of the shot. Perhaps Ray deemed that it was inappropriate to show such scenes in the film because the victim was an officer's daughter, or perhaps America has shifted in its nudity showings in the past few years and did not want to rival with the ratings set forth after the Hays Code. Maybe the nudity did not advance the plot any further so it was omitted. Regardless of the content in either film, there is a large scene in the Argentine film that translated almost exactly into the Hollywood version that says more about men and their pride than anything else.

The confession scene from Gomez/Marzin is one of the most compelling scenes throughout the entirety of both films. Not only is it compelling, but it also reveals a side of men that is shared by most, if not all, men. In the confession scene, Benjamin/Ray is having a brief conversation with Gomez/Marzin, but when Irene/Claire enters the scene, we experience a

different type of interrogation that is more critical and harsher towards Gomez/Marzin. The female interrogator begins her observation, after the man in question has tried to sneak a peek through her shirt that is missing the top button, by saying that he couldn't possibly be the man who did it. In the Argentine version, Irene lists off all the reasons: he is not strong enough to cause the injuries, he has noodles for arms, he is a "twinkie," and that he is not well endowed enough to have done the rape. In the Hollywood version, Claire also lists off similar reasons, almost word for word: he is just a kid and not a man, he has "noodle arms," he is not an intellect or have the ability to think ahead, and that he is probably the size of a peanut. In both instances, both of the women, who are both superiors, are tearing down a man's dignity and manhood. They both belittle the man in question in order to aggravate him to a point of confession, which ultimately works: but how could they bank on this confession? Most men hold pride in their being, and when you start attacking them personally, especially in the sexual department, they are quick to anger. Both men aim their confession towards the women in order to prove that they are wrong. In both cases, it did not look like the men would confess until the woman in charge questioned their endowment. This creates an interesting comparison in men around the world. Does this differ in other countries where sex may not be as important? This is a question that I can't answer, but we can discuss the overall reception of both films.

If we look at the gross worldwide from both films, they both were received well in the terms of money, but Campanella's film⁴² had a low budget,⁴³ by American standards, making their success far greater than that of Ray's.⁴⁴



Looking at the numbers, it really does look like Campanella's film performed much better than Ray's and that is reflected by the user reviews on IMDb and even in Ebert and Susan Wloszczyna's, a contributor to Roger Ebert's website after he passed away, reviews. The users of IMDb gave the Argentine version an 8.2 out of 10,⁴⁵ while Ebert gave the film a four out of four,⁴⁶ as it also won the 2010 Academy Award for Best Foreign-Language Film, which is one win amongst 51 others and 41 nominations. Ray's film received a 6.3 out of 10 from the IMDb userbase⁴⁷ and a 1.5 out of four from Wloszczyna.⁴⁸ The large difference may come from the reception of the film or because the drastic change in plot between the film and narrative did not sit with the audience well, since the reception for Campanella's film came majorly from the international viewing, opposed to Ray's where most of the profit came from domestic viewing.

OLDBOY

Oldboy, directed by Park Chanwook in 2003 in South Korea and also directed in 2013 by Spike Lee in Hollywood, is a tale of a drunkard of a man who is held captive in a room for several years and is released one day with no explanation. Upon his release, this man is tasked with finding out everything that has to do with the person who locked him up and why he was

locked up. But there is a catch: he has to do this within a matter of days or else the female counterpart will be killed. Park's film, the original out of the two, is easily definable as a psychological thriller and mystery that pulls heavily from the neo-noir film genre. Everything that happens in this film is paced in a way that takes time and use it to its advantage, much like the clock motif that is used throughout the film. This motif provides a semantic code for the concept of time, while also developing it on a deeper, more symbolic level once the plot of the film is played out. While time is running out, everything must be done within a realistic time frame. On the opposite side, Lee's film takes on a new stylistic genre – one that follows his method of directing. Lee's film leans more towards an action drama but is also a race against time. Everything that happens is quickly paced with the underlying concept of "one and done." There are significant changes in the tone of the films as well.

In Park's film, the audience is first led to believe that Daesu, the male protagonist, is a hero. We are cued into this idea by the music that plays in the opening scene as he holds onto the tie of a man that is leaning over the side of the building. From the very beginning, the audience is observing the proairetic code, questioning what will happen next, but also they are engaging the hermeneutic code because what is happening in this scene. Daesu has a higher authority over this man, due to his position over the man, but we are led to believe that Daesu is trying to rescue this man from his death. The film then goes back in time and we are shown the 15-years that Daesu had to endure before making it to that point in time. Throughout the film it is clear that the camera, or the person behind the camera, has more knowledge than the audience does. It knows something that we don't at all times, and when it sees fit, it will reveal to us what has been hidden. There is a lack of linearity throughout Park's film that keeps the audience on their toes and reveals that Daesu is actually a smarter person than we are led to believe by his drunken,

sex-driven characteristics. Despite the animalistic behavior that Daesu exhibits, we are led to believe that his story is that of revenge and redemption, which is different than what is experienced when watching Lee's film.

There is only linearity within Lee's film. Everything that Joe knows, the audience knows. This does not offer much in the aspect of the proairetic code until the end of the film, which is the same for the hermeneutic concepts. We see everything as it plays out, opposed to the flashbacks that we receive in Park's film. The audience is led to believe that Joe is a heartless father, a drunk, and a man that will sleep with anything that has a female body part. While Park has his own themes and motifs that were shown to the audience, Lee's were centralized around religion and forgiveness. These, on the surface, are very semantic concepts. When we get to the very end and all Joe wants is to not be held accountable for all the deaths and the incest, there is a symbolic understanding of religion which allows the concept of forgiveness to step in. There was no feeling that once Joe was released after his 20-year stint that he wanted revenge on his captor. He just wanted to be a father to his daughter that he was forced to watch grow up through the television in his cell. His daughter had to grow up without a mother since the mother was murdered. This murder was pinned on Joe. We are shown this humanistic, fatherly side of Joe so that we will pity him. What sparks Joe's search of the man who held him captive is the search to find the daughter that is now under threat from said captor. This is different from how Daesu reacts when being let out, but then again, he was hypnotized along with Mido – his daughter –, while Joe was released and Mia – or Marie –, his daughter, was psychologically manipulated and nurtured to be the way she was.

With these two differences, it is clear to see how the situations pan out differently and why certain decisions by the end of the films were made. With Daesu and Mido both being

hypnotized, it prompted a higher level of falling in love while in this state. That is why by the end of the film, when this illusion is shattered, Daesu feels the need to hide the revelation that they are related from both himself and his daughter, and in order to do so, he opts to be hypnotized once again. This hypnosis will make the “monster” inside of him leave so he can remain with the woman he loves. This differs from Lee’s version simply because the love that they both feel for each other is genuine, but there is no way to hide or run away from the fact that they are related. They don’t have that easy opt out like Daesu, and to an American viewer it would still be viewed as morally corrupt and as an intrinsically wrong thing to do. This leads to the question of whether the punishment for the misdeed truly fit the misdeed done by our protagonists, and it also questions the way that Park presented the information to the audience and how Lee altered this information.

The punishments do not differ: the antagonist sought revenge in the manner of having a father fall in love with his daughter and for them, ultimately, to copulate. They were held in captivity until the daughter was of appropriate age and once the daughter was in a state that was more susceptible for falling in love. But what did the protagonists do to get such treatment? They both saw something that they were not supposed to see. Daesu witnessed an act of incest between a brother and sister and then brought it up with his friend who proceeded to tell the school that the sister was “a slut.” This started a whirlwind of rumors within a school and an imaginary pregnancy in the sister. From shame, she decided to throw herself from a bridge into a dam. Joe witnessed the captor’s sister having intercourse with a man he did not recognize, but that did not stop him from spreading a rumor through the school that the sister was “a whore.” It was not until the present time that he discovered that the man the sister was engaged with was their father. When the school discovered what was happening in the family, they moved to

Luxembourg, but this did not stop the events that followed: the father going through the house, killing his wife and daughter with a shotgun and shooting his son in the shoulder before taking his own life. Both Daesu and Joe are held accountable for the deaths of these family members, but does that mean that their punishments are deserved?

In the idea that what you do to others shall be done to you, one scenario is far more appropriately punished than the other, and that has to do with the American culture. Through American cinema, a common motif in films is the father-daughter incest dilemma. This motif follows a certain character structure, which is described succinctly by Kathleen Rowe Karlyn: “These character types, which have been familiar on the American cultural landscape for much longer than a decade, are intriguing in their own right but are even more so when viewed as a configuration: the midlife male, the adolescent female, and a working wife/mother who rather than being vilified is simply erased.”⁴⁹ This structure follows Lee’s film: we have a father, in both cases, who are well aged, a daughter of a young age, and a mother that is nonexistent within the film world unless it is to discuss their death or murder. As Americans, we are more exposed to this concept of incest, than that which is the brother-sister incestual relationship, and that is not just within the structure of films, but also in the real world. But are we more aware of this relationship because a relationship between a father and daughter is almost always pedophilic, while some relationships between brothers and sisters are not, thus not being brought to the attention of media? Regardless of the reasoning, Lee has purposely changed the incestual relationship between the two characters as father and daughter, opposed to brother and sister.

Having this difference is a main idea that sets the two works apart, but does not really change the endpoint of the film at all. Watching Lee’s *Oldboy* after seeing Park’s is really just a case study of what Hollywood deems appropriate on the silver screen opposed to what South

Korea has depicted on their own soil. Between the two we can draw conclusions of what are sensitive topics between each country's morals and values. Throughout Park's film, we are shown deep scars on Daesu's wrists that imply that he might have tried to take his life while he was locked up, or that he endured an injury while being held captive that caused him to have these scars. The idea of self-mutilation is not shown in the South Korean film, but in Lee's film, we watch as Joe loses his composure after breaking the mirror and he attempts to slice his wrist open with the broken mirror. The next day we see that the wound has been tended to and it is after this that he vows to change his ways, not for himself, but for his daughter and to garner her acceptance and forgiveness for being a horrible father. In both films we see things such as nudity, sexual intercourse, masturbation, and violence/body horror shown explicitly and with no hesitation, but when it comes to forced attempts of sexual intercourse, there is a difference in presentation.

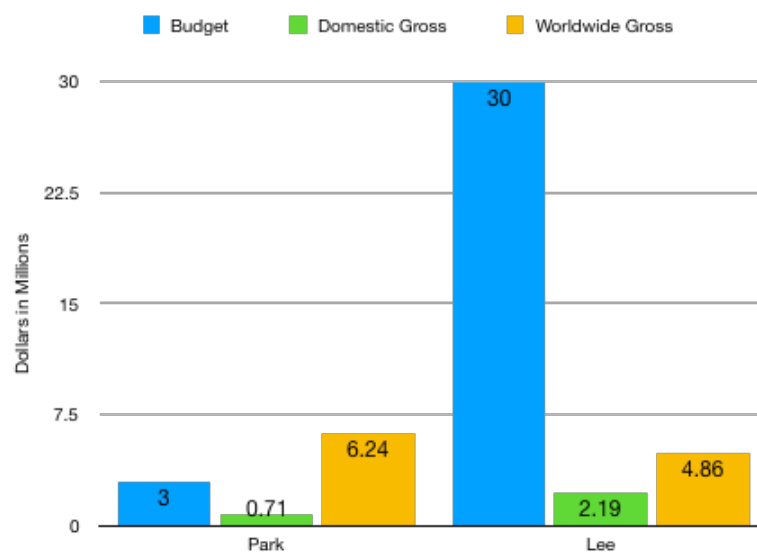
When Daesu first is released from being captive, he meets Mido and proceeds to pass out in front of her. When this happens, he is taken to her home and it is discovered that he has fallen ill. She tends to him and lets a complete stranger into her apartment, where she lives alone. She threatens him, since the lock on the bathroom door is broken, yet he still attempts to take her forcefully and would have succeeded had she not hit him with the butt of her kitchen knife. Often times, these situations are shown easily on the screen, and by the protagonist even, but it is not this way in the Hollywood version. Forceful acts of sex are seen are negative and villainous, therefore a protagonist could never do this. In Lee's film, the only implication of rape occurs when Marie has been taken hostage and is tied up while waiting for Joe to return home. There is a distinction within South Korean and American culture that subtly says that these things might

be more willing to happen in the separate countries, but not in both. Another instance of this exists in the torture scenes of both films.

In Lee's film, Joe is able to reach the compound where he is held captive and finds the man who runs the business. When he finds this man, he ties him to a table and begins to interrogate him. Once this interrogation begins to go south, meaning that Joe is not getting the answers that he wants, Joe marks a dashed line across the man's neck. He then starts to cut chunks out of the man's neck and when he has finished yet has not received any information that he wants, proceeds to pour salt in the wounds. This form of torture, then, in theory with American cinema showing tactics accepted in the mainstream media, must be popular in America, but not in South Korea. In the Park's torture scene, Daesu pulls out a man's teeth with the pick end of a hammer until he gives him the information wanted. After this, the audience for Park's film is introduced to an aspect of Daesu that the audience is never exposed to in Lee's film because it simply does not exist: mercy. But why does this concept of mercy exist in Park's film? Daesu is not out for blood and does not feel the need to kill unnecessarily. He is out for revenge on one person, and that is the person who locked him up for fifteen years. The men from the hallway scene are not hunting him, nor are they actively trying to kill him. He crossed over into their territory to find information and when he got what he wanted. He actively fought his way out so he could use that information to move forward against the man who locked him up. In Lee's film there is no mercy, simply because Joe does not want to waste time fighting people he has already gone against. If he kills them on the initial attack, he won't have to deal with such a large number of people in the future. Due to the differences in these films, I would argue once again that had theirs not been a source text, that the cultural code would cease to exist in the terms of Vallittu and that these films would both be recognized as separate independent films

with the same plot. With these differences in mind, and with the Lee's film being remade ten years after Park's, was it really necessary that it be remade when we have access to the Park's as it is?

Looking at the amount of money Lee spent on his film and the money that grossed from it, it is safe to assume that the reception of Lee's film was negative, to say the least.⁵⁰ Park's film, for when it was released and for its foundational standpoint in the new South Korean Cinema, has a better return than Lee's film⁵¹:



With Lee's budget of 30 million dollars, he lost a lot of money when the film was not received well. Even the user review on IMDb did not prove hopeful for the Hollywood version. Park's film, along with its 36 wins and 18 nominations in awards, received an 8.4 out of 10⁵² from the users, while Lee's film, which only had four nominations, received a 5.8 out of 10⁵³ in the ratings from the users. Even Ebert preferred the Korean version to the Hollywood, giving the prior one a four out of four and the latter a three out of four.⁵⁴ To put it simply, Lee's film was a flop from beginning to start and, odds are, probably shouldn't have made the adaptation in the first place, but what's done is done.

CONCLUSION

With oceans separating the global market, this paper worked to evaluate the lack of communication between the European and Asian market from the Hollywood market when it comes to film. By looking at the narrative, aesthetic, and pacing of films, we could draw in the customs and cultures of specific audiences to see how such themes played over in the United States and what would be needed to change in order to appeal to the American audience. Some concepts are unable to be translated from one film from the other, making such aspects unfilmable, despite having positive, as well as negative, reviews domestically and worldwide. With this paper, an argument has been proposed against adaptations that occur within the same media format to explore why Hollywood deems it necessary to remake films that already exist and whether or not that reason is because of their strive for power within the global film market.

As we looked into *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, *Purple Noon/The Talented Mr. Ripley*, *The Secret in Their Eyes*, and *Oldboy* hand in hand with Vallittu's cultural codes, we have been able to see the trends that have developed from the originals and the remakes. If there isn't a significant correlation between the mainstream plot, then the film has deviated so far from the original film that it has become an adaptation from the original source text, opposed to the original film – as seen in *Purple Noon* and *The Talented Mr. Ripley*. In other cases, the films have been Hollywood adaptations to the source films, giving them a cultural spin to appeal more to an American audience.

Looking at the budget and gross charts from the films, we can see that things that had heavy cultural significance, such as *Oldboy*, did not pan out as well, but in our observation of the American films, there were mixed responses to all four films. In the cases of *The Talented Mr. Ripley* the film was completely different in undertones that made it more appealing to the

audience once again but had the same plot to the original. Giving it a new revitalized look, as well as a few uprising and famous actors, the appeal for it grew domestically as well as overall. In the cases of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, the Swedish-Danish film had more gross internationally than it did domestically, perhaps suggesting that the Americans wanted to remake this in the Hollywood aspect. When the international gross for the Hollywood version, it may suggest that the Europeans that this film originated from wanted to see the Hollywood adaptation and compare it to their own, but it probably also helped that a James Bond actor was one of the leads. When we look at the significant difference in the international reception of *The Secret in Their Eyes*, and the fact that it won an Academy Award, it makes sense why Hollywood would try to Americanize it. If it succeeded on such a low budget elsewhere, why not on a Hollywood budget here? Why not Americanize the entire cinema market and eradicate any foreign media in our circle?

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