

Understanding the Market for Hollywood Scripts Adapted from Books

An Interactive Qualifying Project Report

submitted to the Faculty

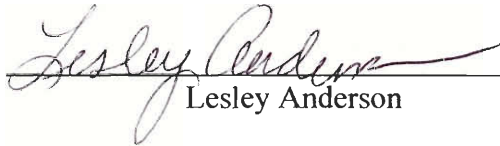
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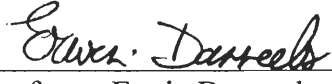


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ABSTRACT

This project examined the market for Hollywood scripts adapted from books. Using research through book, internet, and semi-structured interviews with directors, producers, and scriptwriters we found that the value chain in script marketing usually consists of a producer selling an adaptation to a studio, then hiring a scriptwriter. Otherwise a screenwriter must promote himself more than his script to gain a solid reputation. Without an agent, the success rate of a producer seeing a script is significantly reduced.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Hollywood script market is a complex and difficult process to characterize. To “break into” the market is considered nearly impossible (Schwartz, 9/8/04), requiring a high caliber portfolio of work containing scripts that could produce Academy Award-winning films. The process of producing a script can vary widely along the spectrum from a screenwriter successfully pitching a script on the one end to a producer choosing to option the rights to a novel’s content and hiring a screenwriter to perform the adaptation on the other end. Cataloguing the process for adaptation of a novel into a script and discovering the workings of the subsequent market it enters can be difficult, since every script comes into being through a different series of circumstances. We found the script market in particular to deviate from normal marketing expectations.

Marketing in general contains such elements as marketing research, which can be conducted through surveys, questionnaires, U.S. Census Bureau data, as well as numerous other sources. Moreover, marketing requires the initial investigation decision regarding which market to target, what the most effective methods for targeting that audience are, and the actual process of advertising to the audience. The marketing process for a Hollywood script involves no such actions. And while successful marketing relies on a carefully segmented market whose traits can be described simply, the script market’s target audience is quite narrow so that *defining* it offers less of a problem than selling to it. In marketing, products must be imbued with a “personality” that makes them unique in the minds of consumers; this process is known as branding, the consistent association of a product with a certain set of circumstances. We discuss the instance of Toyota promoting itself as “environmentally friendly” in this way. The script market was found to involve some amount of branding, although not in the same way that other markets think of it.

Hollywood as an industry is an exclusive enclave that does not accept unknowns willingly or lightly. Because the moviemaking process can easily have a budget of \$80 or \$100 million, it is considered unwise to entrust this budget to one single person, even one single scriptwriter. Thus scripts are often not *sold*, but are *manufactured* at the behest of a producer whose interest was piqued by a story, an idea, or a pitch. Most frequently book-to-script adaptations are written in “story conferences” that allow numerous different people to influence the script’s design. Nearly all adaptations occur this way, in conjunction with a producer and studio, because often obtaining the rights to a previously successful literary work can be both prohibitively expensive and complicated for a single aspiring screenwriter.

To market a script in such an environment is nearly impossible. This study has established that scripts are rarely marketed, and of those that are marketed independently, almost none are noticed let alone produced. Script adaptations of books do not often occur independent of a producer’s or studio’s sheltering wing, although numerous sources within Hollywood have emphasized that nothing in their business can be accurately generalized. When they are marketed, traditional marketing methods are not utilized or fail due to the immensely high competition between scripts and the extremely small target audience of a few thousand producers and studio executives. An effective scriptwriter, instead of attempting to break into Hollywood independently, will hire an agent who is a known entity in the filmmaking industry and who has contacts within production companies and studios. The marketing of a script, if it was not commissioned by a producer, relies entirely on the agent’s ability to contact producers and “pitch” the script once a producer’s attention is caught.

Thus the market for Hollywood scripts adapted from books is quite small, highly competitive, and an extremely difficult one in which to successfully survive.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This project has been designed so as to assess the market for Hollywood scripts with a survey of scriptwriting generally as well as suggest methods for improving the process. It explores not only the process of how a book is chosen for a script and the creation of the screenplay from that source, but whose hands that script passes through in the journey to becoming a motion picture. The project examines marketing strategies from various stages of development including the book's role in adaptation as well as the script and motion picture market. These areas play off of one another to enable many different people to collaborate and make or break. The script is the backbone of a film's production, and the pages ahead will discuss in detail what decisions are made and who makes them regarding the creation and marketing of an adapted Hollywood script.

Scriptwriting and script marketing are very competitive fields of work. Aside from the process of selling a marketable script, the greater issue at hand is the Hollywood marketing environment in general. The entertainment business is such that without connections, it is nearly impossible to gain success and recognition in the business. Networking is extremely important in Hollywood so that often less well-known authors and screenwriters are glanced over with preference to big names and previous blockbuster writers. This preferential mindset in producers and directors is essential due to the fact that so many writers are competing for the producers' attention, it would be nearly impossible to read all of the proposed writing samples.

Essential as the Hollywood system of networking appears, however, it also proves to be a biased system that leaves little room for budding writers to make a name for themselves. It is this issue that rises to the surface in the analysis of the Hollywood script market. There must be

a way for writers to have sufficient chances at marketing their scripts and adaptations. When a door is closed to a potential success, the industry forgoes a potentially tremendous gain for the quality and quantity of blockbuster films.

The potential for any storyline to yield a success exists because Hollywood is an unpredictable business. Producers have no way of knowing ahead of time what kind of story will captivate an audience more than another. Some of the most expensive and extravagant films have been incredibly unsuccessful, whereas other diamonds in the rough emerge and top the box office. Luck seems to play a large part in the success or demise of a Hollywood film based on a book.

The goals of this project are to investigate what has the potential to make a Hollywood script successful when adapted from a book. We conducted research via literature as well as through personal interviews in an attempt to determine the workings of the script market and what strategies the people involved use to attempt success. This project explores what changes are made from the original work's storyline during the script conversion and why these changes are important to the overall impression of the finished film. Also investigated were the opinions of producers and scriptwriters; the results are explained in a comparison of each group's goals and the interaction between production teams. This project serve as a means to explore the script's role in the success of a film including its use by producers to sell the finished project.

Findings include marketing in general, and the market of the entertainment business and fine arts. Results discuss the jobs of those involved in the Hollywood script marketing process, and how the interaction between these different people impacts the marketability of a script.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.0. Marketing

Marketing combines human nature and behavior with mathematical descriptions of that behavior in order to predict future outcomes with a goal of utilizing a firm's resources most effectively. It meshes human resources skills with an understanding of mathematics, as well as utilizing a marketer's intuition. According to Hiam, "Marketing in all its varied forms, is concerned with attracting customers, getting them to buy, and making sure that they are happy enough with their purchase that they come back for more." (1) Alternatively, Kotler and Scheff describe marketing as "the process by which an organization relates creatively, productively, and profitably to the marketplace, with the goal of creating and satisfying customers within the parameters of the organization's objectives" (31). Each definition emphasizes the importance of satisfying customers to produce increased revenue.

While not all of marketing is applicable to understanding the script market, we will discuss such key areas as marketing programs, advertising and customers, researching target markets, and product differentiation. We will discuss these aspects of marketing with relation to the Hollywood script-selling process in the Results section.

2.0.1. Marketing Programs, Segmenting, and Positioning

Marketing programs are defined as any coordinated effort on a group's part, be it an established Fortune 500 company or an internet startup, to convince potential customers that a certain product is worth buying initially and worth buying again in the future. An important part

of a successful marketing program is coordination. Regardless of staff size, if each person works individually on his or her own good idea, rather than working collectively as a group, the product will not sell successfully.

Marketers face a tough and highly competitive field. Target audiences have become jaded and difficult to reach, focusing on the very best, most creative marketing strategies. Customers have come to distrust many companies for various reasons: they keep marketers “at an arm’s length” (Hiam, 29), knowing that one product can usually be replaced easily with a comparable product. Hiam describes this as the fickleness of customers (29). Because of this, marketers must spend large amounts of time and money courting customers, earning their trust, and convincing them to return to a certain product in the future.

A marketing program must focus on targeting a particular segment of the population and combine the efforts of the whole marketing team to produce one single cohesive campaign. The campaign must be unique (Hiam, 25) to draw the attention of people who see thousands of advertisements of all different forms daily. Mainly, marketing relies on creativity. However, creativity alone will not produce an effective marketing program, for much of marketing involves analyzing data. To be effective, selling

must be preceded by several marketing activities such as needs assessment, marketing research, product development, pricing, and distribution. If the marketer does a good job of identifying consumer needs, developing products, pricing, distributing, and promoting them effectively, those products will sell more easily. (Kotler and Scheff, 34)

The first major decision to make is which market and target segment to attempt to compete in. Once those are decided upon, the “customers to be served, the rivals to surpass, and the key success factors (KSFs) [a company] must master” (Day, 7) are essentially chosen for the producer of a product. In his book *Market Driven Strategy: Processes for Creating Value*,

George Day notes that the choice of whom to target is often made “by default,” which often proves ineffective. He attributes this to the misguided logic that says that “since we make hydraulic hoses, semiconductors, or frozen food, we serve all the customers for these products. Serving every segment with a common strategy is seldom the best choice.” (Day, 7) Instead of assuming a certain market segment because of a company’s product, a marketing team needs to decide based on other factors whether that initial instinctual market is truly the one and only market to aim for.

For example, Medtronic Physio-Control is a Washington State-based company that specializes in producing defibrillators. For many years they have competed successfully in a market segment made up of hospitals and first-response emergency medical teams. Recently, however, the company designed a new, smaller, lighter product that they began advertising to large businesses, airlines, and nursing homes. Selling defibrillators to individual homes in the future is a goal for expanding their potential market significantly. Thinking outside of the conventional box is crucial for all organizations desiring to continue to compete in the marketplace today.

A marketer can choose to segment its target market (see Section 2.0.3) in almost any way imaginable, although generally that simply involves groups that “share a common perspective on the product and the need that product fills.” (Hiam, 49) According to Chapter 5 of *Standing Room Only*, some examples of common segmentations are:

- Age
- Gender
- Race
- Class
- Sexual orientation
- Geographic location
- Lifestyle
- Past consumer behavior (heavy user vs. light or non-user)

Studies have been conducted for each of these divisions and many others so that a classification will be associated with certain traits. For example, the Young Literati are a group of “upscale urban singles and couples without children, most of whom are college graduates... They earn a median household income of \$52,100 and own...multi-unit housing in urban uptown areas.” (Kotler and Scheff, 97) A small part of the description of the Young Literati states that they are “likely to rent foreign videos, travel to Japan, Asia, go jogging, watch *Entertainment Tonight*, read the newspaper business section, read *Time*, buy hardcover books, eat Wheaties, [and] own a CD player.” (Kotler and Scheff, 98 – 99) This information is compiled for all different market segments and can indicate preferences that allow marketers to appeal effectively to that particular segment.

Positioning within a market segment is a key aspect of marketing. Positioning is defined as “the position your product holds in the customer’s mind.” (Hiam, 49) The positioning strategy addresses the particular segment of the market chosen and focuses on communicating what Item X does for the customer, how Item X fills that need, and why Item X is better than the competitor’s Item Y. In other words, “positioning involves (1) creating a real differentiation and (2) making it known to others.” (Kotler and Scheff, 115) The danger in positioning is that a marketer’s choice of position may already be filled by another company. It is also quite possible that, although an opportunity exists, marketers fail to utilize it fully through poor communication (Kotler and Scheff, 115). Care must be taken when positioning a product in a previously-established marketplace. Nevertheless, a desired position can be achieved through use of a well-developed market program and effective advertising.

2.0.2. Customer-Oriented Marketing and Advertising

Marketing has been described both as a method of segmenting a particular market, discovering the needs of a particular segment, producing a product to meet those needs (Kotler & Scheff, 30) and as “a very handy abstraction that gives useful insights into customers’ requirements, the behavior of competitors, and strategic issues.” (Day, 97) Advertising plays an important role for marketers who work to keep a product or service clear and in the fore of the public consciousness. However, as Philip Kotler and Joanne Scheff caution in *Standing Room Only: Strategies for Marketing the Performing Arts*, marketing is not advertising. While advertising one process used by marketers to promote their product, its various attention-getting methods have the sole purpose of convincing a customer to buy a product. The aim of marketing, on the other hand, “is to know and understand the customer so well that the product or service fits him and sells itself.” (33)

With that caution aside, advertising plays a significant role in all organizations’ marketing departments. Every company has a

necessity for an external orientation. Every part of the organization must be market-driven by consciously working to put customers first while staying ahead of the competition. (Day, vii-viii)

Yet even the finest-quality product will fail to sell if the public does not know that it exists to fulfill a particular need of theirs. The ultimate goal of marketing is to “influence behavior” (Kotler & Scheff, 31), and advertising is the way to influence behavior. In other words, marketing must know its customers and advertise to them appropriately.

Before running any advertisements, however, marketers work on defining a brand’s “personality.” Hiam writes that “a brand’s image or personality can be an important part of what advertising communicates. A strong brand identity, or personality, can become a living entity,

something that the marketer creates and gives to the world.” (68) The best advertising campaigns incorporate characters that customers feel they can know and trust. For example, McDonald’s Ronald McDonald has connected with children for decades, successfully increasing revenue for the McDonald’s Corporation. A brand need not be a person or animal, however. To create a strong sense of brand, all that is needed is to consistently place a product in a certain setting so that consumers think of it as associated with that setting. Currently Toyota has emphasized its environmental aspects, publishing ads featuring green trees, leaves, and their hybrid car the Prius. Through this tactic the Toyota logo is established to somehow represent environmentalism.

Additionally, the focus of marketing must be on the customers. Before putting out ads, the organization offering the product or service must have a “customer-centered mind-set” that Kotler and Scheff describe as “the essence of the modern approach to marketing” (34). All marketing stems from understanding what customers need and want, and offering a product that fills those needs and wants. Once marketers have decided on a brand’s personality and operate with a customer-oriented, “outside-inside marketing” (Kotler and Scheff, 34), then the advertising campaign can truly begin.

If a product satisfies a need for food by selling bread at a supermarket, customers will come to the product. However, the second level—wants—is crucial in determining which *type* of bread a customer chooses. Advertising for any type of bread has to emphasize how the product satisfies the need for nutrients, and to offer compelling reasons for choosing one bread over another. It is clear then that marketers must “think about [a] product offering on both levels. What basic needs does [the] product compete to satisfy—and how well does it satisfy them? Also, what specific want does [the] product satisfy, and how well does it compete with

alternative ways of satisfying that want?” (Hiam, 29) Advertising must emphasize being able to meet a need or want or both, while additionally overcoming the “noise” produced by competing products.

Advertising noise is everywhere. Noise can be referred to in this way: “the constant din of marketing messages creates background noise” (Hiam, 36). Each product or company needs to advertise to compete successfully. With the number of competitors in each target market so high, even a relatively narrow range of advertising may have a great deal of noise that must be overcome to make a particular product stand out. Hiam states that a product’s advertising will “have to be pretty loud to cut through it.” (36) Not only do products compete within a market, but *advertisements* for those products also compete for attention.

Because of the necessity for overcoming competing ads, a company must be especially creative in its advertising campaign. The importance of creativity cannot be overestimated, according to Hiam (55): “Only the most creative [advertisements] are able to cut through the clutter, attract attention, and make a permanent mark on the consumer attitudes.” (Hiam, 65) Fundamentally every advertisement needs stopping power, the ability to make a consumer pause; and it must possess pull power-“the ability of a marketing communication to draw people to a place or event.” (Hiam, 84) Merely putting advertisements out for the target market to see will increase sales. If the consumer reads enough information, and retains that information, later that positive advertising experience will influence buying choices.

To produce stopping and pull power, every advertisement must have five main components:

- Intrinsic drama to appeal to all audiences
- Draw the audience in through participation

- Elicit an emotional response from viewers
- Stimulate interest

(Hiam, 83-ff). In addition to these basic building blocks, a marketer should be able to communicate the key product information without it appearing dull or trite. Designing a unique advertisement that fulfills all of these requirements presents a challenge to marketers.

2.0.3. Researching Target Markets

Research plays a particularly large role in the advertising side of marketing. According to Barton Weitz and Robin Wensley in *Handbook of Marketing*, “research in marketing has been strongly influenced by the nature of the databases that have been made available, as well as the emergence of new analytical tools in such areas such as statistical modeling and structural equation analysis.” (560) As Weitz and Wensley imply, much of the research conducted for marketing purposes relies on databases and previously collected data. Many larger companies will also conduct their own research studies to determine, for instance, the success of a set of ads or investigate the level of product recognition in a particular subgroup of the target market.

Researchers in marketing collect data in a variety of ways. Hiam suggests that marketing research is first reliant on “free data,” or information freely available online or from other sources (92). Such sources as the US Census Bureau and governmental or state web sites offer valuable information on demographics in easily accessible formats. While government web sites offer excellent collections of data on the general population, a company’s own sales data can also serve as an excellent source of information for researching marketers. Accessing these previously-collected sources is known as doing secondary research.

At times marketers need information on an unstudied subject, or one in which previous studies are irrelevant. In that case, the researcher has to conduct primary research. This type of research can be conducted in several different ways.

First, customer observation is a valuable and, Hiam asserts, a frequently-overlooked, “underrated” method of researching (98 – 99). Watching a customer interact with a product can provide valuable information on frequently-used features, frustrations, and the like. While using a product, the customer’s face displays emotions for the researcher to read. If numerous customers appear disgruntled at the packaging of a particular product, the observing researcher has learned that to increase customer satisfaction, that packaging ought to be redesigned.

Second, talking to customers through surveys can provide valuable insights into the public likes and dislikes of a service. Surveys are the “bread and butter of the marketing research industry” (Hiam, 100) for good reason: dialing up consumers and asking them questions is an effective and relatively easy method for determining public opinion in the marketing field.

Finally, sending out questionnaires, which is a sub-category of surveying, is a keystone to researching that will provide valuable quantifiable data when formulated correctly. However, many questionnaires produce bad results by asking respondents vague, leading, or otherwise incomprehensible questions.

With the correct and impartially-analyzed results from these and other more intensive research methods, organizations can gain valuable insight into their target audiences. The data collected can be utilized in redesigning products and focusing the organization more on customers as per Kotler and Scheff’s advice.

2.0.4. Product Differentiation

Product differentiation can be defined as the quality that distinguishes one product from another: Item A has a wingdoodle to improve its performance, while Item B offers a gadget as a free gift. When any service or product goes to consumers, they will compare it to similar products (Caves, 6). No two products are the same, so the job of emphasizing the differences in a positive light falls to marketers. Product differentiation in Hollywood is particularly important because the goods produced by different scriptwriters can be very similar, requiring careful distinctions when the scripts are marketed.

Differentiating a product in the realm of fine arts is also important because often consumers will “typically value it in comparison to similar creative products.” (Caves, 6) Thus one performance of *Phantom of the Opera* experienced on Broadway may be compared to *Phantom of the Opera* viewed at the off-Broadway show in a smaller city. When an audience member decides that the Broadway show was better than the off-Broadway show, the products have been vertically differentiated by the consumers. Vertical differentiation is a way of ranking products such that Item A is better than Item B. Because marketing is a company’s way of contending for “the consumer’s scarce resources,” (Day, 93) if Item A and Item B are equally priced, Item A will invariably sell better (Caves, 6). This is an effect of the consumers’ desire to obtain the greatest product value for the least cost.

2.0.5. Marketing in the Fine Arts

Although the fine arts are not initially thought of as businesses, establishments that aid in the propagation of the fine arts certainly can be thought of as selling experiences such as a night at the opera, an afternoon at a classical concert, or an evening at the ballet. Additionally, such

venues as art studios, where artists display and sell their works, certainly qualify as businesses. It has been firmly established that although many proponents and distributors of the arts fail to market effectively, marketing would benefit them. Increased market appeal can drastically improve a small studio or theater's opportunity to survive in a competitive market. As with marketing for major companies, this section cannot include all of the nuances of marketing within the arts. Therefore we will focus instead on major principles of marketing in the arts, with a special emphasis on the areas that pertain to marketing of Hollywood scripts. The actual marketing of scripts will be discussed in Section 4.1.3.

When marketing the fine arts it is important to realize that, unlike in marketing such items as food or clothes, a business selling the arts does not fill an immediate need. Instead, fine arts fill the second level, the "wants," which can be postponed. According to Richard Caves, the demand is constantly uncertain, so that nobody knows "how consumers will value a newly produced product, short of actually producing the good and placing it before them." (Caves, 2) Additionally the product received is intangible; the "creative product is an 'experience good'" (Caves, 3) that usually cannot be experienced again after the show has ended.

Marketing in the fine arts includes marketing similar to that of any major product. Marketers choose a market segment, design a marketing plan, differentiate their product, and advertise that product effectively. For a marketer positioning a fine arts group within a larger market, the use of niches can be very helpful. For instance, a theater troupe that goes into schools is utilizing the particular niche that necessitates educational dramatizations for school-age children. The Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, Oregon specializes in Shakespeare as the first part of its niche and emphasizes its location as the second part of its niche. Within its specialization, the OSF is well-known and has cultivated a specific feel, including period outdoor

theaters, which appeals to customers so well that many return year after year. The OSF is an excellent example of an organization that “establishes a distinct identity” and thereby “increases its chances to survive and prosper in the long run” (Kotler and Scheff, 115).

Additionally, fine arts marketers need to consider the expectations-performance theory “that a consumer’s satisfaction is a function of the consumer’s expectations and the perceived outcome” (Kotler and Scheff, 89) which any product is described by. The arts, however, cannot replace products such as a concert if the consumer felt dissatisfied with the experience.

Therefore, marketers must take care not to exaggerate their product’s value too greatly, as a larger “gap between expectations and performance” (Kotler and Scheff, 89) translates into greater dissatisfaction and possibly negative marketing by word-of-mouth.

It is unclear whether marketing is effective in promoting the performing arts. While Caves suggests that “research and pretesting are largely ineffective,” (2) Kotler and Scheff note that “arts marketers often survey their audiences to determine which information sources play a part in their decisions and to assess the relative importance of each source.” (87) Thus a kind of retroactive marketing occurs in which marketers gather data from audience members to determine future marketing plans. This is a strategy employed by marketers of every type of product and has been discussed previously.

2.1. Scriptwriter Selection

Although many different methods of selecting a novel for adaptation exist, we’ve found that Hollywood executives use very few of them. Hollywood’s culture emphasizes being a known entity so that to become a successful screenwriter, an aspiring writer must somehow become a significant factor in the producers’ and studio executives’ minds. Three major selection

tactics come to the foreground: writing a script on “spec,” being hired by a studio specifically for the production of one script, or pitching a script to the studio (Irving, 9/17/04).

The outcome of each process varies considerably for the scriptwriter. Often pitches are unsuccessful unless done by a hired agent, while speculation varies in acceptance rate, and contracting on to write a specific piece nearly always produces a script. We discuss each of these methods below. It is important to note that “[g]etting a job in the entertainment industry is not based entirely on who you know, but it doesn’t hurt to know a lot of people.” (Greenspon, 10) Therefore the best way to become a scriptwriter or to sell a script is to have contacts in the business. Barring that, the three options outlined below must suffice.

2.1.1. Pitching a Script

Each year many aspiring authors write scripts, some adapted from books, which involves an arduous process that includes obtaining rights from the writer. Rights are a key issue in adaptation that will be discussed in greater detail in Section 3.2. Whether adapted from a book or not, a scriptwriter on his own will sometimes go straight to the heart of the movie-production business and attempt to sell that script to a producer. This is called “pitching” a script; it has been described as “telling the producer a story.” (Irving, 9/17/04) Experts consider “the ability to deliver an articulate and enthusiastic pitch [an] invaluable skill” (Caves, 105) since pitching a script or idea is often the only way a writer can break into the Hollywood scriptwriting market. Writers go by this technique so often that production companies maintain a whole support staff just to sort through all the information. In her book *To See The Dream*, Jessamyn West illustrates this phenomenon. She describes an interaction she had with a producer’s representative who told her

‘A director,’ she said, ‘hasn’t time to read books. He reads treatments. Or resumes of treatments. A good resume can boil a book down to a single line.’ ...a director is handed a dehydrated novel which he, by an infusion of something or other, gives the shape and feel once more of approximately the real thing. (West, 6-7)

According to an executive quoted in *Creative Industries*, 20th Century-Fox receives an excess of 10,000 “screenplays, treatments, books, and oral pitches yearly,” while only 70 to 100 of them make it into development. Of those, 20th Century-Fox only makes about twelve films per year (Caves, 143). Extreme competition makes pitching a script difficult while the support staff’s methods of selection make it even harder.

The most effective way to overcome the odds is to hire an agent to pitch a script instead of the writer doing that himself. Hiring an agent, particularly a well-known agent who has an ‘established brand’ in Hollywood, is considered a wise move for a screenwriter hoping to successfully pitch a script. However, regardless of the professionalism of the agent or his contacts, ultimately the key to pitching a script with success is what is known as a “logline.”

According to Richard Krevolin in his book *How to Adapt Anything into a Screenplay*, he says

The key to marketing [a script] will be your ability to convey the story in a single sentence. If that sentence is compelling enough, agents, managers, and lawyers will want to read it, and if they like it enough, sign you. They will also rely upon that very same single sentence to entice their buyers to read it. So, like it or not, your script sinks or swims based on your logline. (15)

A person reading the logline of a script makes the first decision. If, at that point, the script is found wanting, the likelihood of it ever making its mark decreases greatly. In the unlikely event that a pitch successfully catches a producer’s attention, a writer may be hired and “put into development.” The author then develops various parts of the original script for pay. But even if a script makes it through the whole selection process, the original writer’s draft rarely becomes precisely what viewers see in theaters. Often changes are made by many writers in development

on the same script so that the “story changes hands and the original screenwriter loses hold” (Irving, 9/17/04) of his work.

To summarize, only a tiny fraction of pitches even catch a producer’s attention and few of those ever complete the movie-making process. Aspiring authors rarely find success by attempting to sell scripts directly to the producers.

2.1.2. Script Speculation

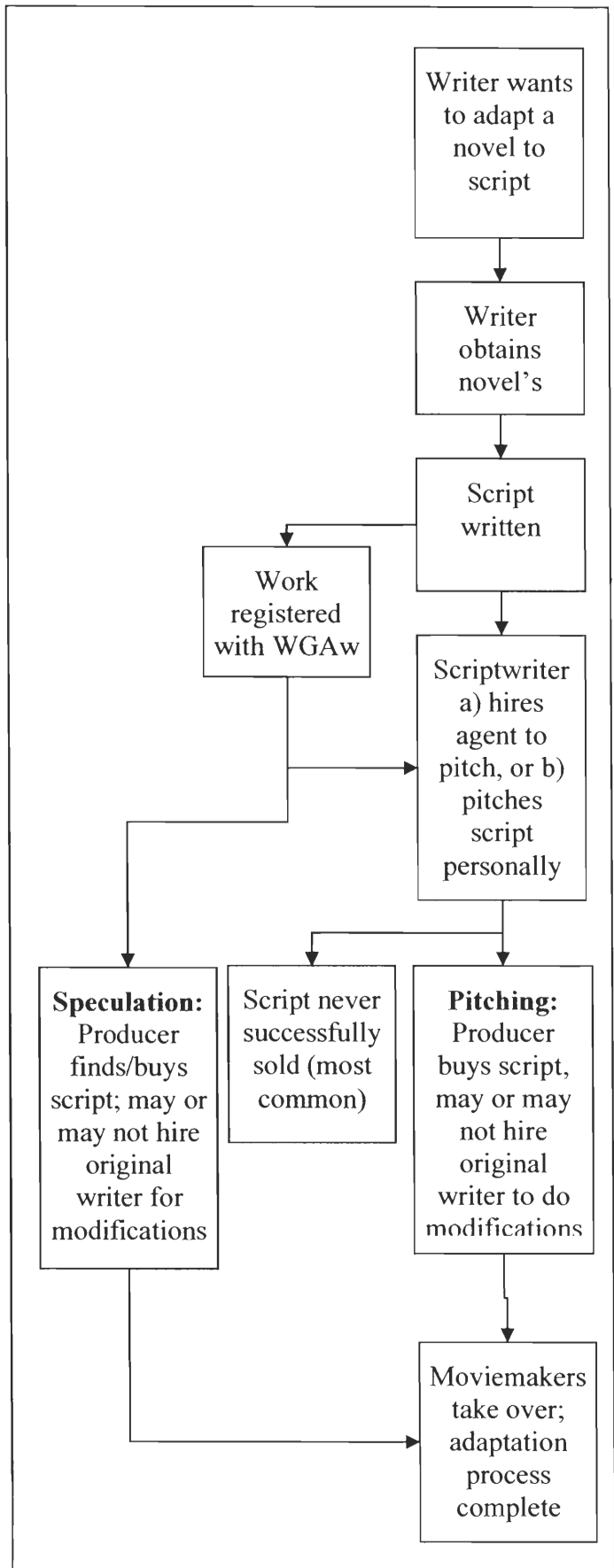
Writers who speculate with a script produce a complete written draft which is then registered with the Writer’s Guild of America, west (WGAw). Registration with the WGAw provides legal documentation of the script’s intellectual content, a safety measure against studio plagiarism; in the case of suspected plagiarism, the WGAw will “produce material as evidence” (WGAw site) in protection of the author’s rights. It is essentially a copyrighting system used to protect aspiring screenplay writers. In addition to protecting written works, the WGAw also serves as a distribution center for scripts.

Once registered with the WGAw, producers and studios gain access to the draft. Many producers read scripts that interest them from the WGAw in order to find original material for a film. Although many producers frequent the WGAw and read scripts registered there, a writer still has a poor chance of having his script chosen from among the 35,000 other works registered there every year (Schwartz, 9/8/04). With only a few hundred movies made each year, the odds of a particular script being picked is low.

Additionally, when writing a script on speculation, the writer receives no compensation for his work. Thus speculation is, as the name implies, a risky business and unlikely to produce reliable, significant results.

Figure 2.1.2. Script marketing flow chart

Figure 2.1.2 at right shows the possible paths an independent scriptwriter working on a novel-to-script adaptation can follow. The first major branching comes after the script is written, when the scriptwriter decides to register work with the WGAw or not. At that point, a producer or his staff may discover the script and push it through the moviemaking process. If this does not occur, the writer may choose to hire an agent to pitch the script or may pitch the script himself. The agent's odds of speaking to a producer are much higher than the



writer's if the agent is well-connected, but in either case the producer ultimately accepts or rejects the pitch. If it is rejected, the script is unlikely to become a movie, although exceptions may occur. If accepted, the producer takes over and begins the moviemaking process.

However, a different flow chart must be applied to the process in which most adaptations occur. Most adaptations are written by a scriptwriter hired by a producer or studio, as we will discuss below.

2.1.3. Hired Scriptwriting

If success is measured by number of scripts put into production, then a producer hiring a scriptwriter is by far the most successful of tactics to adapt a book into a screenplay. A script of some sort will definitely be generated when a producer hires a scriptwriter. Since production companies are usually the instigators of adaptations, and few aspiring scriptwriters will go through the arduous process of obtaining a book's rights, nearly the only way an adaptation occurs is in this way.

Usually only established writers will be hired by studios to adapt a book into a script, or to produce any script at all. This means that either the writer has had to have successfully pitched his skills some time earlier, possibly through the services of an agent, or that his writing has been chosen from the WGAw from among thousands of other choices, or that he fortuitously won his way into Hollywood through an alternative and less-established route. Most likely the writer successfully negotiated through the system by producing an excellent-quality script or portfolio on spec, then complementing with such a good pitch and logline that a producer took notice.

When a producer encounters a script with potential, he then contacts the studio he wants to work with. It is the studio that chooses the author; they maintain lists of favored scriptwriters

and will present that list to the producer. Thus follows an “arduous process much like auditioning,” (Schwartz, 9/8/04) in which various well-established writers are reviewed for the part, their merits discussed, and their writing samples analyzed.

Once production companies hire scriptwriters, they discuss contracts until both parties are satisfied. For the most well-known writers, these contracts involve “the kind of money you throw out the back of trains.” (Irving, 9/17/04) Contracts can prove difficult to write since payment on the basis of quality is not feasible, while hourly wages just “invites loafing on the job, haggling over performance, or both.” (Caves, 105) However, once contracts have been negotiated, the scriptwriter’s sole assignment is to adapt the chosen novel, which can vary from 300 pages to over 1,000 pages, into a 120-page screenplay.

Once established, scriptwriters have the opportunity to pitch their ideas with a greater degree of success than their unknown colleagues. With produced and successful films in the résumé, “an established writer gains access to producers for ‘pitching’,” (Caves, 105) the advantage a younger or more unfamiliar writer lacks. Thus the scriptwriting process is not linear, a progression from one pitch or lucky speculation into being hired and earning a decent salary by writing.

Vogel summarized the hiring process succinctly:

Bargaining power (in the industry’s jargon, ‘clout’) is the only thing that matters. A new, unknown talent who happens on the scene will have little if any clout with anyone. Top stars, by definition, have enough clout to command the attention of just about anyone. (Vogel, 104)

By hiring people whose ability to attract large audiences has already been proved, a producer can gain considerable financial leverage. It may be less risky to pay a star \$1.5 million than to pay an unknown \$100,000; the presence of the star may easily increase the value of the property by several times that \$1.5 million salary through increased sales

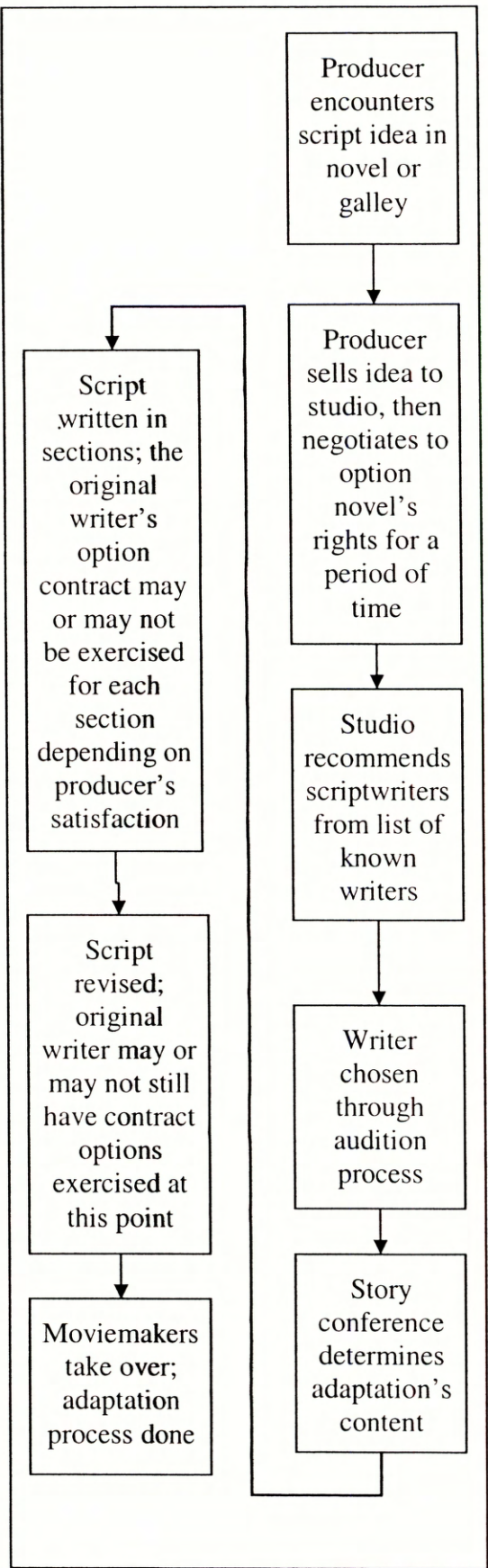
in theatrical and other markets, whereas the unknown may contribute nothing from the standpoint of return on investment.

As shown, the necessity of being known in Hollywood, or having a known agent make initial contact, is crucial in the hiring process. Although Vogel addresses the situation of an unknown actor, his explanation is equally applicable to screenplays and

Figure 2.1.3: Hired scripts market flow chart

scriptwriters. Hollywood is indefinable, as numerous sources have emphasized: “you can never generalize,” (Irving, Schwartz, Green) and that applies to the process of becoming a successful scriptwriter as well.

Figure 2.1.3 at right illustrates the flow of a novel-to-script adaptation begun by a producer. Rather than the chaotic path followed by scripts written by independent, unknown writers, the script adaptation process started by a producer can be shown in a linear manner beginning with



the producer’s encountering an idea and selling it to a studio. The possibility of failure to solicit a

studio's patronage is not taken into consideration since without that financial support, the producer will not make a film.

2.2. Obtaining the Rights to Novels

The author of a novel originally holds the copyrights to that work. If a producer hopes to begin a conversion from that book into a screenplay, he must first obtain the rights to the original written work.

For most books, this process will begin with the producer "optioning" the manuscript. The optioning process involves a payment of a fraction of the purchase price of the rights. A published work's purchase price increases in proportion to the author's fame. Negotiation between the producer's lawyers and the writer's lawyers generally produces a price reasonable to both parties. The writer can exert great control over the purchase price if he or she has written successfully before, while a new or unknown book's full purchase price is likely to be both low and less negotiable. Often the producer will agree to pay an author ten percent of the purchase price for the ability to option the work (Caves, 104); for highly-acclaimed novelists, even this small percentage can be a large number. The book author has a great deal of power in the optioning process, since he controls the rights and decides who ultimately buys them. Because of this, the optioning process is less of a buy-and-sell one than a negotiation between the writer and the producer.

An exception to the traditional negotiation is when a novel is a best-seller—which it often will be, as best sellers appeal to producers for various reasons to be discussed in Section 2.4.2. Instead of a simple discussion between deal-brokers, the optioning process becomes a "bidding war." An auction between producers is not unusual; bids are often

conditioned on the success of the literary work in its original form, for example, escalating with the number of weeks that a novel remains on the best-seller list, or the number of copies sold beyond some (high) minimum. The filmmaker's benefit lies in the interest that the novel's acclaim generates in the subsequent film. (Caves, 104)

Bidding rarely occurs for lesser-known works because their security-value is lower and often other producers will not have heard of a less popular novel or writer. Auctioning only occurs with "literary property with obvious potential for conversion into a motion picture" (Caves, 104). According to Frey (11/9/04), an agent's job is to start a bidding war between producers by sending the script out to multiple producers at once. The bidding war escalates the buying price for a script, which is otherwise set arbitrarily by what a producer offers the scriptwriter or agent.

Once the script is optioned, it is the job of the producer to sell it to a studio, find "basic funding" (Green, 9/24/04) for the potential film, and organize a possible cast. Usually the producer is given six months to one year to organize these details, although options can be renewed if the producer has not succeeded in getting all the parts together but still desires to convert the book into a movie. If the producer successfully draws together studio, funding, and cast, the rights for the book will then be bought fully for movie production.

2.2.1. Funding

Optioning costs can vary greatly, generally following a pattern approximately proportional to the author's fame. To option a work by a famous author like Tom Clancy, J.K. Rowling, or John Grisham a producer could pay millions of dollars, while optioning a work by a lesser-known author can cost as little as a handshake or \$1. Purchasing the rights follows a similar pattern.

Because producers want to make movies from books by famous writers, film budgets now can reach into the hundreds of millions of dollars. Funding for such a costly enterprise can be difficult to find, so the most successful producers are ones who have good contacts and can find the money for their projects.

Studios have traditionally provided large sums of money to pay for films, although the recent trend has been away from a single studio funding a film entirely. Still, producers initially go to a studio to sell the idea. The major studios are:

- Fox
- Warner Brothers
- Disney
- Universal
- Paramount

Some also add DreamWorks into the list, although they are smaller than the big five listed above (Green, 9/24/04). These studios will often finance part of a film, although money will also come from specific lending companies such as Stratus Films. Stratus Films is owned by producer Mark Gordon and exists solely to invest his money in “other people’s projects that he thinks will make money.” (Green, 9/24/04). Additionally, with extremely costly films such as *Titanic*, studios have been known to co-finance a venture because no one studio is willing to take on the whole financial burden alone.

According to Al Lieberman in *The Entertainment Marketing Revolution*, studios increasingly focus on reducing the risk of a movie bringing in low revenues “through creative co-financing, cutting costs, and creating movies that they know will appeal to the biggest audiences with the most dollars.” (46) For scriptwriters, this can mean decrease in demand for expensive, well-established writers and an increased demand for the newer, cheaper screenplay authors.

Consequently, co-producing and co-financing has become much the standard for producers seeking financial support for their high-budget films.

2.3. Contracts

Writing a contract between a screenwriter and a production company or studio presents unique challenges. According to Richard Cave's *Creative Industries: Contracts between Art and Commerce*, the initial step in any screenwriting situation, but particularly for adaptations, is "the preparation of the screenplay based on a contract between the dealmaker—usually an independent producer, but sometimes an agent—and the writer." (104). When the planned script will be based on a literary work such as a bestselling novel, negotiations may be more difficult and intense because of the novel's obvious appeal as a motion picture (Caves, 104).

Part of the difficulty in forming contracts between scriptwriters and producers is that "art" cannot reliably work a nine-to-five job. Paying a writer hourly wages gives the author the opportunity to cheat the employing company by wasting time, working at odd hours, and so forth. Additionally, while other contracts can be made on the basis of quality, a script's quality cannot be known until its film has been released and the public responds to it. Also, even the idea of "quality" is subjective enough that a producer might constantly demand another rewrite in order to avoid paying for the script (Caves, 105).

To avoid the difficulties discussed above, the scriptwriting process gets broken down into small sections, each of which a writer contracts to work on individually.

- First the hired writer produces a "treatment" that outlines the plot and offers sample dialogue.

- If the producer approves of the treatment, the contract will be extended to writing a complete draft (Caves, 105).
- Once the author completes a draft, the producer may or may not continue to renew their contract.

Each rewrite requires contract renewal. Contracts usually involve payment only for certain sections of a script, and when each section is completed, the employer may choose to renew the option contract another section.

This also allows companies to hire specialists or change writing staff frequently: “The producer may terminate dealings with one writer and employ another for a ‘rewrite’ or a ‘polish,’ or hire specialists in, say, jokes or dialogue.” (105) In this way many different writers may work on the same script, sometimes in succession and sometimes simultaneously. However, a screenwriter whose option contract is maintained can “glean large profits from a successful film—depending on the terms of the contract that are enabled if the option is exercised.” (105 – 106) Contracts can work strongly in the favor of writers; for them, even a small percentage of an enormously popular movie can mean vast personal wealth.

2.4. Book Selection

Thousands of books are published each year and many of them would make tolerable films. Many people read a book and think, “That might make a good movie.” Some of those people even consider writing a script from the book themselves, although as we have discussed above, the issue of maintaining legal copyrights proves prohibitive for many aspiring adaptors. In Hollywood the producer usually instigates the adaptation process by running across a book

they feel would make a good film: “Producers, who have dominated the movie industry since its inception, play the principal role in looking for suitable subject matter.” (Rapf, 13)

This section will discuss the qualities that a producer and writer look for in a novel that earmark a certain book as a potentially successful adaptation.

2.4.1. Criteria for Book Selection

Book selection is a highly arbitrary process. According to Frey (11/9/04), the major criteria examined when deciding what book will make a good screenplay are twofold: first, does the story have the potential to attract film stars? A movie involving stars will bring in fans of that star and is more likely to be a box-office success. Second, the story has to give the producer a good “feeling.” Producers make decisions by gut instinct, whether they feel that a story would prove a success in theaters. This applies to novel choice in adaptations, as well. Once a story has passed the “will a star do it” test, the producer simply analyzes his “gut reaction” and accepts or rejects a film on that basis.

We will discuss features of books that initially trigger the producer’s consideration in the following sections.

2.4.2. Qualities of Adaptable Books

Films have been made from a vast variety of books ranging from spy novels to romance novels, from Sylvia Nasar (*A Beautiful Mind*) to J.R.R Tolkien (*Lord of the Rings* trilogy), from

Chuck Palahniuk (*Fight Club*) to George Orwell (1984). But in every adaptation, the book must contain imagery.

The initial cue that a novel might adapt well to screen is whether it has appeal and lends itself to visual storytelling (Schwartz, 9/8/04). Visuals are the key to every moving picture; internal dialogue, inner thoughts, and emotions cannot be portrayed in any way but through imagery. A book with large swaths of landscape description may take pages of reading, but a camera can pan to reveal the whole description in moments. In the same way, fight scenes in novels translate easily into fight scenes in films, while novels containing a great deal of internal dialogue present extra challenges to adaptors.

Although a book that emphasizes ideas over interactions is unlikely to be converted into a good movie (Schwartz, 9/8/04), there are occasionally exceptions, as with the novel *Terms of Endearment*. The novel, written by Larry McMurtry involved Aurora Greenway's internal struggle with her sexuality. Adaptor James L. Brooks created an entirely new character in the form of Aurora's next-door-neighbor, Garrett Breedlove. Although not a character in the novel, in the adaptation process the scriptwriter made Garrett up as a way of visually illustrating Aurora's eventual acceptance of herself as a sexual person. Ultimately Aurora and Garrett consummate their relationship, which provides a perfect visualization of the struggle and acceptance described in the novel. We will discuss such situations as these more fully in Section 4.0.1, on streamlining the adaptation process.

A novel with a straightforward story line will appeal to producers. A film story must be concise, contain few characters, or have one central theme that can be plucked out and focused on during the film. With between one and a half and two hours to unfold an entire story, movies must utilize time quite effectively. They cannot "waste" time establishing exceedingly complex

plotlines, but begin establishing characters and setting even during the credits. A book following one character will naturally appeal to producers and scriptwriters because that reduces their workload. Novels with too many characters or carefully woven plots may sometimes prove too difficult to adapt, or the scriptwriter performing the adaptation may simply hack out all but what he or she considers the most important elements.

Finally, the story must have obvious appeal to the target market. The public accepts an enormous variety of stories as entertainment, but it will not accept a boring story. Romance novels adapt well because they offer a common and accepted plot: X loves Y, difficulties ensue, and love may or may not triumph. Producers are more likely to pick that type of story for an adaptation when they encounter it because there is a “clear appeal to a movie-going audience.” At least in Hollywood, “all great stories are love stories.” (Schwartz, 9/8/04)

2.4.3. Bestsellers as Adaptations

Bestsellers appeal to producers for the simple reason that an entire audience comes prepackaged with the title of a bestseller, therefore adapting a bestseller means that “there is a ready market for the movie.” (Schwartz, 9/8/04) Such novels as *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* and the Lord of the Rings trilogy attract an enormous following so that a film adaptation of such a novel has the potential to attract at least that many people to theaters. Often the author’s fame is the basis for a bestseller. The author as an established brand attracts publishers, a reading audience, and the audience attracts producers looking to adapt books. A well-known novelist such as J.K. Rowling has her own brand name and producers will immediately snap her work up.

Additionally, because a novel made it onto the bestseller list, and particularly if it stays on that list for an extended period of time, that tells producers that the story itself “works on

some level.” (Schwartz, 9/8/04) Other qualities to consider fade when compared to the vast crowds that can be drawn to a movie adapted skillfully from a bestselling book.

Thus, bestselling novels are risk-reducers in producers’ eyes. With films’ production costs running between \$50 and \$80 million, and sometimes into the hundreds of millions, Hollywood accepts any boons it can get. Bestselling novel adaptations are one of those boons—although Schwartz emphasized that nothing will completely reduce the enormous risk factor involved in filmmaking.

When a bestseller comes out, if the producer can obtain the rights to the story, a writer will be hired as soon as possible to produce an adaptation rapidly. To capitalize upon the bestseller-craze, which can vary tremendously with books staying on the New York Times bestseller list for years or only days, a movie adaptation must come out as soon as possible. Rapid turn-around in novel-to-script adaptation allows for brand-recognition in audiences, which producers count on to recoup the large movie-making costs.

Essentially, the philosophy with a bestselling novel adaptation can be described as “strike while the iron is hot.” (Schwartz, 9/8/04)

2.4.4. Classics as Adaptations

While the quality considered for bestsellers tends to be “how large is the audience?” and the time factor plays a crucial role in production, adapting classic books to the screen presents different opportunities. Books that could be called “literature” tend to be chosen for very different reasons than books that sell well.

Classic books have existed for hundreds of years; they offer quality and longevity that few bestselling novels could hope to achieve. Because of this enduring quality, time is less of a

factor in adapting a classic book into a screenplay. Producers prefer to slow their writers down to assure a higher script quality when they are adapting a book that has existed in the canon of literature for decades or even centuries.

Many classic books are chosen for adaptation because they are enduring stories that can be recast in a different light. *Titanic*, the 1997 blockbuster written and directed by James Cameron, was an adaptation of Shakespeare's classic *Romeo and Juliet*; Disney's *Lion King* was an adaptation of *Hamlet* (Schwartz, 9/8/04). Such classic stories have appeal because they have been time-tested and continue to maintain a reasonable market even hundreds of years after they were written.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0. Research Methods

We employed three major strategies simultaneously during the course of the project.

They were:

- Internet research
- Library research
- Interview research

To complete the objective of fully understanding the scope of the market for Hollywood scripts, we united these three methods. A combination of these research methods, with an emphasis on interviewing, maximized the efficiency as well as information value of the data collection process. Internet research allowed extensive, broad-range research that could then be narrowed down to library research as resources allowed; in addition, internet research provided extensive lists of potential interviewees that we subsequently contacted.

3.0.1. Internet Research

We utilized Web research initially as an effective method for both obtaining basic information on Hollywood's structure as well as information on specific Hollywood groups. The Writer's Guild of America, west (<http://www.wga.org/>) web site and the Producers Guild of America (<http://www.producersguild.org/>) web site both provided basic information on the workings of each guild. Additionally, the Producers Guild of America web site provided direct contact with the Director of Communications, who agreed to an interview.

We also utilized the Internet in relation to interview research. University web sites frequently list faculty and faculty interests; when the listed interests coincided with the project's goals, we contacted the professor. Schools contacted include Columbia University, University of California, Berkeley, Yale University, Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Loyola-Marymount University, New York University, the University of California, Los Angeles, Clark University, and Bryant University. Of the schools contacted, four responded:

- Loyola-Marymount University, <http://www.lmu.edu/home/>
- Harvard Business School, <http://www.hbs.edu/>
- Tisch School of the Arts at New York University, <http://www.tisch.nyu.edu/page/home>
- Columbia University, <http://www.columbia.edu/>

Of the four responses, two interviews were arranged and performed, as will be discussed below.

The Internet was also used to research articles via various search engines available through the Worcester Polytechnic Institute's library site (<http://www.wpi.edu/+library>). The databases searched included:

- ArticleFirst, <http://newfirstsearch.oclc.org/>
- EBSCO Business Source Premier, <http://www.ebsco.com/home/>
- Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com/>
- JSTOR, the Scholarly Journal Archive, <http://www.jstor.org/>

In addition to online extra-network databases, we searched intranet databases on the Humanities, Arts, and Literature. The most useful database was the EBSCO Business Source Premier, followed by Lexis-Nexis. Both of these databases provided access to Internet articles pertaining to the understanding the market for Hollywood scripts. Research for script adaptation

from books was conducted simultaneously, although no articles found online specifically addressed the project's topic in its entirety.

Finally, Amazon.com (<http://www.amazon.com>) was frequently accessed since it represents a larger collection of works than the college libraries. We purchased several books from Amazon.com, including *How to Adapt Anything into a Screenplay* by Richard Krevolin, *Standing Room Only: Strategies for Marketing the Performing Art* by Philip Kotler and Joanne Scheff, *The Movie Business Book* by Jason E. Squire, and *Selling Your Scripts from Hollywood to Hong Kong* by Andrew Horton. In addition to purchasing references from Amazon.com, we utilized its extensive database to find relevant resources, which we accessed through Worcester Polytechnic Institute's Gordon Library Interlibrary Loan system.

3.0.2. Library Research

We conducted research at the Gordon Library at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Initially our research included broad topics such as "marketing scripts," which returned results involving computer programming, and "Hollywood scripts," which yielded few results.

Once we determined that the Gordon Library did not contain any sources directly addressing the topic, we split research into three major sections: understanding the basics of marketing as a field, understanding the script-from-book adaptation process, and combining the two to understand the marketing of script adaptations. With this modification in search technique, we successfully searched the Gordon Library volumes via the online library catalogue. These searches produced references on marketing especially, while we focused on Interlibrary Loans to obtain resources from a variety of institutions' libraries regarding marketing for the performing arts, as well as books on the entertainment industry's economics.

3.0.3. Interview Research

We conducted interviews on the basis of response to Internet email solicitations. Through interviews, we hoped to obtain information not readily available in written resources. We found that information acquired during interviews was more useful and more effectively collected than that found in written sources.

The template for email solicitations followed two forms:

Hi Professor X,

My name's Lesley Anderson and I'm currently attending Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Worcester, MA. Part of the curriculum here is that each student is required to do a large project called the Interactive Qualifying Project, where we study a subject relating to how technology relates to society in some way. My project partner and I are doing ours on understanding the market for Hollywood scripts that have been based on books. So far we've been able to gather some information from people involved in the scriptwriting field of the topic, but we're always looking for more input and have yet to get the scoop from the marketing point of view. After reading of your achievements and experience in the field, we think your input would be very valuable to us! I came across your information on the XXX University website. Would you possibly be interested in an interview over the phone or even be able to answer a few of our questions via email? If you don't feel that you are the appropriate person, or aren't interested, would there be anyone else that you could recommend for us?

Thanks so much and I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Lesley Anderson

Figure 3.0.1: Email Solicitation Template A

Form 3.0.1 was used by Lesley Anderson. In it she provided an explanation of the project, and the rationale behind speaking to the professor with regards to their area of

specialization. This email solicitation was sent to professors at New York University and Bryant University.

The second template, shown in Figure 3.0.2, was used by Kathleen Ferguson. It directly requests an interview after offering a briefer rationale than Anderson's template. This email solicitation was sent to professors at University of California, Berkeley and Los Angeles, Yale University, Harvard Business School, Columbia University, and other applicable schools.

Professor,

I am a college student at Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Worcester, Massachusetts. I'm contacting you because currently a partner and I are researching a major project on the market for Hollywood scripts that have been adapted from books. We saw in your biography that you are interested in [insert appropriate interest here]. We would like to discuss some of the issues involved in our topic with you, which would involve us asking such questions as: [insert appropriate question here].

If you feel that you are not the appropriate person to contact, could you recommend somebody who can elucidate this topic. Would this be feasible? If so, would you prefer that we conduct a phone interview or converse via email?

Thank you for your aid,

Kathleen Ferguson

Contact Phone Number (123) 456-7890

Figure 3.0.2: Email Solicitation Template B

Both solicitation techniques produced positive responses, although regardless of template few professors responded to the emails. Although we contacted a broad spectrum of professors representing both marketing and scriptwriting, the majority of those contacted via email did not respond.

Three replied asserting that they could not provide the necessary information or that their schedules precluded an interview. We followed up on five positive responses:

- Dean O'Donnell, Administrative Instructor of Drama at Worcester Polytechnic Institute
- Mark Evan Schwartz, Assistant Professor of Screenwriting at Loyola-Marymount University and active Hollywood screenwriter
- David Irving, Associate Professor of Film and Television at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University
- Chris Green, Director of Communications at the Producers Guild of America
- James Frey, Hollywood scriptwriter, producer, and director

Interviews were conducted via speakerphone with one person speaking while the other took notes via the computer. Most frequently Kathleen Ferguson spoke to the subjects while Lesley Anderson took notes in a previously prepared Word document on the computer. The document contained all questions planned to be asked. If deviations from those plans occurred, Anderson recorded modifications in her transcript. Whenever possible, direct quotes were recorded to maintain integrity of information.

We used a semi-structured interview process in which a prearranged set of questions were discussed, although the responses were not limited to those questions. The direction of the conversation usually remained at the discretion of the interviewee, although the interviewer often returned to the questions prepared prior to the interview.

3.1. Hypotheses

Initially we hypothesized that scriptwriters drove the market for Hollywood scripts since we believed that script writers adapted novels into a screenplay and then proceeded to sell the

completed draft to a film studio. This also relied upon the studio's obtaining the rights to the novel, although at the outset rights were not considered at all.

We also hypothesized that a script converted from a high-status novel such as one remaining extensively on the New York Times Bestseller list would be immediately chosen for adaptation. We believed that script adaptations would mirror literary bestsellers, so that a savvy aspiring scriptwriter would adapt a script from a novel by such popular authors as John Grisham, Tom Clancy, and J.K. Rowling. However, knowing that adaptations take time, the script form of an adaptation was not expected to appear for some months after the novel's appearance.

Finally, we assumed that the market for Hollywood scripts follows patterns similar to those in marketing as a whole. Acting on that assumption, we initially put forward such questions as, "What is the effect of a script's marketability on the public if it is modified from a book?", "Are people more likely to watch a movie after reading the book, or vice versa?" and "Does a book's status make a script more marketable?" We later found these questions irrelevant to the script market and were thus discarded.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.0. Book-to-Script Conversion

The book-to-script adaptation process is an arduous one involving a large group of people. The alterations made during the conversion process are not often completed by the original author or one person alone. Various writers collaborate and discuss different directions the script can take and what the best path to follow is. The moviemaking process is a group effort (Schwartz, Irving, Caves); a studio would consider entrusting its entire \$50 million worth of investment to one single writer unthinkable. Instead, the process consists of collaboration between at least the story editor, the producer, development executives, and several screenwriters sit down together in what is known as a “story conference” to discuss and finalize what major plot points the movie will entail.

In a story conference, discussion will involve visuals such as scene cards, chalkboards, and whiteboards so that by the end of the meeting a sequence of events has been decided upon and can be written out in a straightforward, linear form. People involved in the story conferencing tend to be “high-energy, passionate, bright, emphatic” people who are asserting themselves on what direction they think the adaptation should take. As a result, one of the “most important gifts a screenwriter can have is the ability to collaborate.” (Schwartz, 9/8/04) Because the adaptation of a novel-length book often requires cutting major subplots, and all but the major characters, much debate can ensue on what a script ought to include or cut. The book undergoes a metamorphosis from its raw, unadulterated print state to its dramatization in front of millions of viewers only through arduous revision. The writers need to take storyline into consideration, then chip away at bits of the novel until the precise statue of a screenplay emerges. Deciding what

will stay and what will go can cause heated debate since these crucial omissions have the potential to make or break the finished product.

Modification to a story is alluring and sometimes necessary for filmmakers. While at times a scriptwriter will attempt to remain close to a novel's original storyline, often changes are implemented to make movies more appealing to today's audiences. However, a recent trend has emerged towards maintaining a story's integrity: "More and more frequently, movies that are rigorously faithful to the book reap a huge benefit out of having authenticity and faithfulness to the source material [presented] to an audience that really cares about it." (Green) When production teams deviate too far from a storyline, the essence of the story itself can get lost, and this often causes movies to flop. Deviating from the original plot of extremely well-recognized works, such as *Lord of the Rings*, presents a higher risk for failure than tailoring the story to what movie-going audiences expect.

Aside from changing the ending of a storyline for a movie's script, there are several other popular changes or "enhancements" that are made to improve a movie's marketability. Depending on how actors and others involved receive the modifications, the script may be revised back to the story's original plot, or new developments may occur due to simply having actors bring the storyline alive. Irving elaborates that "a book is a book. A script is a script, and a film is a film. Each one has its own needs to be successful. Script attracts actors and financing. A filmmaker may take a part of the script and elaborate the film. Quite often [this occurs] in the production of a film because once they get actors on the set, magic happens, and they change things. A screenplay is just a blueprint of a movie." (Irving) A screenplay is often regarded in much the same way as an architectural blueprint, setting the framework for the finished product;

embellishments and alterations can occur at any step along the way to produce a personalized outcome.

4.0.1. Modifications Due to Length and Streamlining

If a scriptwriter attempted to convert a novel word for word and included everything that occurred in its full length, audience members would fall asleep in their seats some time after the four hour mark. Instead of copying a novel directly, “The goal is to find the heart, the spine of the story. It comes down to streamlining.” (Schwartz) Scriptwriters believe that, instead of including every detail that the original author has mentioned, the essential goal of a novel-to-script conversion is to grasp the most compelling and passionate section of the original storyline and to make that into something that will draw in the audience just as a book draws in a reader. Movies “need to keep moving along. You can’t get sidetracked or bogged down with too many characters or subplots.” (Schwartz)

Where a book can explore the inner thoughts of a character, devoting page upon page to a single thought sequence, a film audience usually expects to be occupied for under three hours with a movie. Thus the screenplay must adapt that so that the audience understands a character’s thoughts without drawing out a scene longer than absolutely necessary. Since books often deal internally and with observation, the modification process must “find a way to externalize. Take internal emotion and externalize it” (Schwartz) in order for a movie to follow a steady pace.

In making that transition from the spine to the screen, “quite often the author/filmmaker has to make a decision of what to delete from the book, and whatever rises to the surface becomes the center line of the story. Because the book is long, and the screenplay is 120 pages, the real challenge for the filmmaker is making the translation from the book into a movie.”

(Irving) Method and volume of change, as well as modification implementation, varies from film to film. In some cases, a book may have several subplots or concurrent plots that would be too complex to weave into the cinematic time frame, so a screenwriter may remove the other plots completely and only focus on one. An example of this is the movie *Blade Runner*, which was based on the story *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* by Phillip K. Dick. The book contained three distinct plots but scriptwriter Wesley Scott only adopted one story line for the basis of his film.

Regardless of what section a scriptwriter chooses to remove, regardless of its relative unimportance to the “heart” of the story, any change to a novel’s original story line is sure to disgruntle the novel’s fans. (O’Donnell) Often there isn’t a way to appease all readers in the film adaptation. Characters may be altered, left out, consolidated into one, or in some cases, added, in order to fit the storyline into a more compact package for the big screen. Streamlining is important, and it is a matter of making the most beneficial alterations possible that will allow a movie to not be overbearingly complicated while simultaneously maintaining substance and depth.

4.0.2. Modifications Due to Marketing

Changes are not only implemented for time concerns and succinctness, however; according to Chris Green of the Producer’s Guild of America, “Things get changed and decisions get made for all kinds of reasons.” The personalities of the actors involved who play the roles can sway modification types to the storyline. The setting of the film may be altered due to its high price tag and may be filmed in an alternate location or in front of a well-fabricated Hollywood backdrop.

A great majority of the changes, however, are not aimed at those involved in the production of the film at all. The changes made are not for the sake of increasing the story's attractiveness to producers. The producers often will choose the book, or set up connections with publishing houses to be notified when a promising book is about to be published. Where there may be 100 people working on a movie together, it's important to remember that the people viewing the production will exceed that number 10 and 100-fold. Most of the changes occur to make a film more appealing to the *audience* because a film's success depends on its customers. Without producing a story that appeals to the target audience, be it teenaged boys or grandmothers, the movie will fail. Section 4.0.3 discusses modifications to appeal to audiences in more detail.

Important alterations ultimately determine a film's reputation and level of success. The changes are often aimed to give the audience what they want, and what they'll be pleasantly surprised by. Of course, not every audience member of one movie goes to see every other movie. Nobody in Hollywood knows how to predict what an audience will be in the mood for at a particular time of year, or even time of day. Determining the target audience is a crucial part of the adaptation process, as well as what changes to the script will enhance the appeal of the film to such an audience or open it up to a broader audience than the book alone might.

It is safe to conclude that more often than not, a book's story will be altered significantly in its process of going from paperback to blueprint. A successful book often engenders a successful movie, if only for the short term opening sales; since fans of a novel will often view a film adaptation thereof, a film team can count on a predetermined audience. A predetermined audience is a buffer for producers to use to their advantage when promoting and producing major motion pictures based on books. The changes made in the meantime can determine the ultimate

success of a blockbuster. Because of the Hollywood script market's unpredictability, it may be difficult to know if an adaptation may have worked better another way. All producers and their staff can hope to do is to maintain the essence of the storyline, trust their gut instincts, and give themselves "as many chances as they can to be lucky." (Green)

4.0.3. Modifications to Romance and Action Scenes

According to Schwartz, scriptwriters emphasize romantic scenes to provide "the emotional hook to hang your hat on." (9/8/04) Hollywood rarely produces a film, whether a traditional romantic drama or an action-packed, edge-of-your-seat thriller, lacking some form of a love story. Consequently, every film will likely contain at least one love scene. Love is a human emotion, and it provides an excellent connection for audiences, a gateway into developing empathy and compassion for a character or characters. Love can make a villain seem less evil. Love can accentuate a protagonist's heroism. Love plucks the viewer's delicate heart strings by stirring associations, either in their own personal experience, or experiences they hope to have someday. Hollywood idealizes love and tells the audience that no matter what is going on, love is important to this plot.

A book may mention a vague reference to a love scene between a couple, as with Arwen and Aragorn's interaction in the *Lord of the Rings* films. When it comes time to adapt that reference to the screenplay, Hollywood can turn even the subtlest hints into intense visual representations of physical and emotional intimacy. In J.R.R. Tolkien's original books, Arwen is a prize for Aragorn when he succeeds in his quest to become king; the relationship between the two of them is only explored in the appendix of the novel. In the film, however, the writers knew that audiences would want a romantic interest, especially to capture the female market despite so

many fighting scenes. This, and the dearth of female leads, drove the decision to enlarge Arwen's part from what was written in the original text.

Modifying romance scenes can serve as a method of turning the characters' internalization into visual interpersonal relationships as well as showing the audience that the characters have the ability for emotional attachment. Movies also provide the ability to further romanticize otherwise romantic situations, giving the impression of fantasy and the ideal connection that the viewers themselves should experience. People long to see these scenes as a basis for their own relationships and are willing to pay to see such idealizations, a situation that Hollywood studios, producers, and scriptwriters capitalize upon as they move to adapt a novel into a film.

Sex scenes in movies serve as a means to draw more people to see a particular film as well. It is not necessary to blatantly demonstrate what could otherwise be implied, but viewers have come to expect glimpses into the intimate lives of the characters. Often, movies will walk the fine line between suggestive romantic scenes and more explicit images. By holding the balance between the two extremes, movies are able to captivate their audience through intrigue rather than distaste. Additionally, intensely romantic scenes rarely have depressing overtones. By featuring these overdramatic, sensual passages, the audience is given more of a 'lift' that producers strive to create in all films. Since a happy viewer is a repeat viewer, using sex scenes to produce a traditional happy Hollywood ending is good business practice in novel-to-film adaptations regardless of whether the novel offers the happy-feeling lift.

The situation is extremely similar when dealing with action films. Where a book may describe a person being held at gunpoint, and then briefly mention that he was executed, the film adaptation will often take such a scene and dramatize it so that the audience nearly feels like they

are the hostages. Through use of tense music, dramatic dialogue and a great deal of suspense, a novel's brief scene can suddenly become a cover-your-eyes moment of fire and bloodshed. Viewers grow to expect blood and explosions and that heart-pounding suspense in action movies in the same way that an audience expects the softly-lit surrealistic love scenes in romantic dramas. Scriptwriters and producers exploit these expectations, filling the market's demand.

As with romance scenes, emphasizing the role of women or including strong women leads—unless the story hinges on a lack thereof—has become a requirement in adaptations. With so many women watching even action movies, the time is past when an all-male novel can be adapted straight, with no changes to the character-roster.

4.0.4. Modifications to Endings

Producers know that many people see movies as an escape, which explains the proliferation of “mindless” action movies, fantasy stories, and quintessential love stories: again, producers strive to fill the demand of their target market. There is little market for stark realism in the film industry. When a novel with a serious ending, such as the protagonist dying in the end, is optioned for adaptation, the producer and crew in the story conference face a decision: maintain integrity to the novel's original ending, or modify the ending to please audiences.

Since films incur such an enormous cost, and as such necessarily expose the financiers of the film to such huge risks, often various endings for the same movie are shown to test audiences. Producers “test a movie with a downbeat ending”: if the audience responds negatively, indicating that the film will lose money in the general market, “they may change the ending to a happy ending” (Irving, 9/17/04) just to guarantee recouping the producers' investment. Schwartz calls this “pandering to the moviegoing audience,” although Irving asserts

that such actions are “common financial sense to make people happy” (Irving, 9/17/04), even if that means an ending modification. Modifications occur “because making a movie costs millions of dollars, there’s a lot at stake. Once you get a hundred people making a movie, it’s not a wonder why lots of people try to change the common denominator to make money.” (Irving, 9/17/04) Studios, producers, and scriptwriters understand the importance of meeting the market’s demands and must weigh such knowledge with the importance of preserving a book’s original ending and how changes affect the audience.

There isn’t a solid answer that can determine the correct course of action in every case. Depending on a story’s popularity and traditionalism, sometimes it is best to leave it as it is, even if it may be sad. For example, there have been several adaptations to the story of *Romeo and Juliet*, one of the most highly-regarded and well-known dramas of all time. Scriptwriters seize on the very essence of the plot: two lovers struggle simply to be together, and in the end they are torn apart from each other forever by cruel irony. Although moviemakers aim to leave their customers with a “lift” at the end of their experience, modification of *Romeo and Juliet* to allow the happy couple to live happily ever after would cause uproar.

Cold Mountain offers a prime example of how retaining a sad ending can be a wise marketing decision. Although the audience missed the traditional Hollywood ending, by remaining true to the original story as written by Charles Frazier, people emerged from the theatre spreading by word-of-mouth—an advertising method not to be underestimated—their ultimate enjoyment of the film. In the case of *Cold Mountain*, a sad ending played a vital role in film’s success. Yet when a film takes a twist for the worst or leaves events unresolved at the film’s end, the viewers feel uncomfortable, dissatisfied. Often audience members will feel that

they have been tricked' by the plot. Again, depending on the particular story, this can be beneficial or detrimental.

For the reasons stated above, often filmmakers decide to modify the ending from sad to satisfyingly resolved. Moviemakers run a risk when promoting a film that deals with extremely controversial issues or unsettling plot twists; in an industry where millions of dollars are a sunk cost in one of production, all risks that can be avoided *are* avoided. According to Green, "Studio executives get nervous about having an ending like that. They want to do good work, but they're in it for the money. They don't want to hurt the marketability of the movie." Hurting the marketability of a movie through lack of story modification at the scriptwriting stage means cutting holes in the pockets of those involved in the production. Money may come in, but much of it is used to pay off copyright fees, actors' salaries, and various other expenses. If a film fails to yield sufficient revenue, production teams lose money overall. Thus, while some films benefit from maintaining a novel's complete integrity, often for marketing purposes the script must balance the importance of maintaining the *essence* of the story with the known market demands.

However, Hollywood scriptwriting and moviemaking is an unpredictable business; according to screenwriter William Goldman, "In Hollywood, nobody knows anything." Much of the success of films is seemingly random, regardless of their scriptwriters, adaptations, inclusions or exclusions. Producers cannot predict what will win their target market over. Sometimes the most fantastic novel-to-script adaptations can produce total flops, whereas 'lowbrow' films with shallow plots can be the most successful films of the year. Irving explains that all scriptwriters believe that his or her script will hit that key nerve with the audience, when in reality, very few do. In Hollywood, "luck is a big part of anyone being successful in the business." (Green)

One way of attempting to predict these successes and pitfalls is by filming several alternate endings to movies and prescreening them with trial audiences. Filmmakers “test a movie with a downbeat ending. If they lose money with high stakes, they may change the ending to a happy ending” to be sure of recouping costs. (Irving)

To those in the film industry, maintaining consistency with the original text is far less important than adapting an ending to make audiences happy. Happy consumers buy more, so a lift at the end of a movie may not be true to the original novel even as it is true to the producers’ pocketbooks. As a company, studios working with producers, scriptwriters, and others must follow the market’s desires for cheerful, upbeat endings according to the target market’s demands.

4.0.5. Modifications to Appeal to Audiences

Occasionally a movie will be altered so much from its original source material that the title remains the only resemblance between it and its literary counterpart. Although it may seem foolish to title a film after a book it barely resembles, according to Green there is very clever reasoning behind this. He uses the example of the recent blockbuster *I, Robot*, titled after the widely known novel by Isaac Asimov. In this case, the studio utilized the title’s familiarity and associations with the successful book to draw audience members in who were familiar with the novel. Many viewers believed that they knew film’s content quality based on its association with the book, and therefore invested their capital in a ticket to see the classic novel made into film. Instead, the film focused on Will Smith’s role and discarded the novel’s major plotlines, disappointing viewers expecting a film similar to their cover to cover experience.

I, Robot, however, is a prime example of a “high-concept” film. The term “high-concept” refers to several characteristics of a film. In brief, a high-concept film is one that is likely to be a summer blockbuster, a big-budget, an A-list actor bonanza; it is a film that has a catchy and perfect logline idea. It can be summed up in one idea, is full of special flashy effects and often a deficit of scriptwriting finesse. Rather than aiming for critical acclaim and Academy Awards, these movies aim to blast the box office during the first weekend with special effects, pyrotechnic fight scenes, and far-fetched concepts—anything to draw an audience for reasons other than plot depth and cinematic mastery.

Movies based on books are not often high-concept films rather than sensationalizing the scenes and impressing the audience with computer graphics and explosions, more often than not the book-to-movie market is aimed toward critics. The success of the book to movie industry is referred to more in nominations and receipt of specialty awards and reviews rather than ticket stubs and Happy Meal toys.

In the case of *I, Robot*, producers met the summer blockbuster moviegoers’ desire for dynamic battle scenes and loads of special effects. When hiring Will Smith to play the lead character in the film, the film instantly shifted from reflecting Asimov’s storytelling to a to meeting the credentials for a typical ‘Will Smith movie.’ Those unfamiliar with the novel see Will Smith on the commercials and recognize him, associating the movie with their preference of his films in general. Instead of using the storyline to market the film, producers used a Hollywood superstar since “stars have an immense amount of power in the industry.” According to Green, movie stars “make the industry work and happen. Nothing is a sure thing, but the closest thing to a sure thing is having those stars involved.”

Thus modifications to story lines in the novel-to-script adaptation process frequently occur as a concession to the market's demands. Appealing to an audience is crucial in film success, so that shifting a film's focus from a novel's story line to a movie star show, opportunity for a special-effects bonanza, changing an ending or even the whole plot are reasonable means to reaching the target audience. Modifications are *always* made in order to appeal to the target audience, although often removal of subplots and characters also works in the interest of shortening an impossible-to-film length novel.

4.1. The Hollywood Market for Adaptations

When studying a customer group, marketers must assume that their target audience ignores their advertising campaigns. In the same way, those with scripts to sell understand that producers—the target market—employ an entire staff of people to cull out nearly all the products aimed at the producer. Because the target market is made up of only a few thousand members (the producers), and competition between scripts can easily top 35,000 competitors a year, the script's marketing must be excellent and effective. Producers view the glut of products available to them skeptically, preferring to fall back on “old faithful” scripts produced by writers of known caliber.

That same principle is visible in application to scripts adapted from novels, as producers prefer script adaptations of books that were financially successful. High sales numbers for a book “makes the market for a script greater.” (Irving interview, 9/17/04) Additionally, script adaptations of novels by familiar, successful authors are common and considered an excellent, lower-risk tactic for reducing the risk involved. Movie marketing tactics for films adapted from books or authors familiar to the public is easier since the brand has already been established. The

marketing pressure on the studio is reduced as the book's publisher has already completed much of the educational work involved in marketing.

The producer's need for a product to sell forms the basis for the market for script adaptations in Hollywood. Because of the uncertainty in Hollywood's market in general, producers must seek involvement with films that have the lowest risk factor possible. Often this takes the form of "recycling" a story that has been widely accepted in a literary form.

Adaptations from best-selling novels provide some amount of surety for producers; as a result, scriptwriters will write many adaptations. Yet the process for scripts converted from literary works does not follow average marketing tactics, as we will discuss in the following sections.

4.1.1. Marketing Programs, Segmenting, and Positioning in the Script Market

If marketers generally regard target audiences as jaded and difficult to reach, the aspiring scriptwriter should consider his or her target audience for a script nearly impossible to contact. Producers specifically avoid coming in contact with many of the thousands of script-products available, regardless of the writer's diligence. Because of this, a marketing program for scripts consists of different tactics than marketing plans for regular products.

Since producers rarely option pre-written scripts, there is no known marketing program that should be implemented to promote a certain script *idea* or completed draft. Scriptwriters need not do marketing research aside from establishing which producers might express interest in a genre of film. If a script written as a sweet romantic story lands in the mailbox of a producer who primarily produces slasher films, that script will never see the light of day. However, even if the audience is targeted correctly and the writer gives an excellent pitch for a sweet romantic

film to a producer like Nora Ephron of *You've Got Mail* (1998), there is still little chance that the producer will option the script itself.

A scriptwriter, however, can work towards acquiring enough status in Hollywood that producers will “purchase, use, and repurchase your product” (Hiam, 10)—the product being the scriptwriter’s services. As in regular marketing, the effective scriptwriter must court customers as a crucial step towards success in Hollywood’s closely-entwined culture. Marketing by word of mouth and building a solid reputation as an excellent screenplay writer is the best marketing program a writer can have. If a writer wants a certain script produced, the best bet is to save that script while building trust with customers, then advertise the product with the appropriate producer-audience as an established writer.

Segmentation in the Hollywood script market occurs in the form of A-lists and B-lists, with A-lists containing what Hollywood considers high-quality people and B-lists comprised of second-tier people. Screenwriters fall into an A- or B-list category based on quality of writing, so that

Hollywood’s screenwriters, directors, and producers will largely agree at any one time who are the ‘A list’ and the ‘B list’ screenwriters. In the terminology of economics, these creative inputs are themselves vertically differentiated. This is the *A list/B list* property. (Caves, 7)

Although vertically differentiated, a market remains for scripts of a lower quality. Often moviemakers must choose between affording an A-list script or a well-known actor.

When such large sums of money are at stake as are frequently involved in filmmaking, “[t]he relevant economic concept is the differential one—the extra total amount that people will pay to see a movie with an A-list star over the same film with a B-list star.” (Caves, 7 – 8)

Although a scriptwriter such as William Goldman is a known entity in Hollywood and his

products are reliably successful for all involved, the cost to obtain one of his scripts can be prohibitive while the benefit of producing a film based on one of his works could vary greatly. On the other hand, an unknown scriptwriter will offer his or her script or scriptwriting services cheaply in exchange for the opportunity to have a script filmed. Thus the quality of script may matter less than its price tag. The market for scripts can vary greatly depending on the producer's budget: the producer must weigh his or her evaluation of the money-making ability of a high-quality but costly script with the possible revenue that could be obtained by the inclusion of a famous actor or actress.

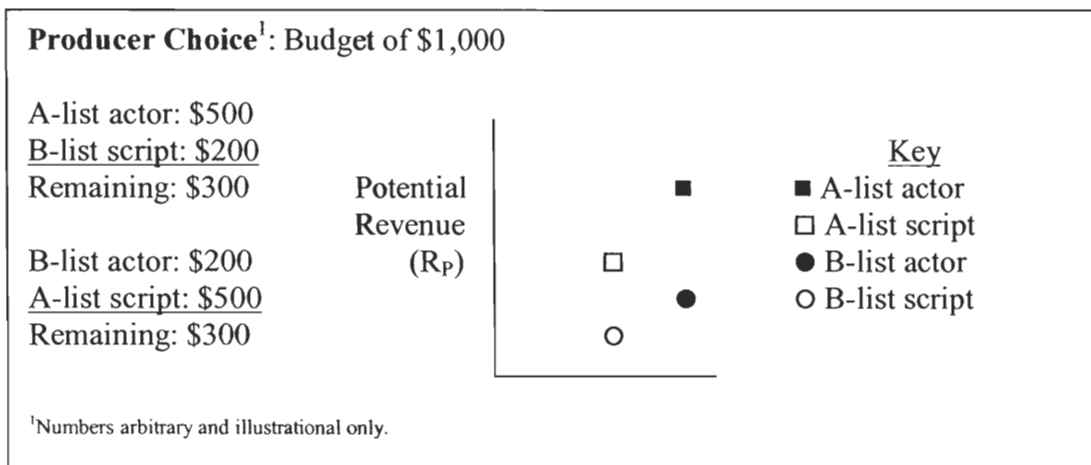


Figure 4.1.1: Actor/Script balance

Additional segmentation can occur along genre lines such that a script can be described as a romantic comedy, an action/adventure, a musical, a science-fiction, a western, or a horror movie (<http://www.filmsite.org/genres.html>). Producers may or may not consistently prefer scripts of a specific genre, but those advertising scripts via pitches or otherwise, must still tailor their message to a particular genre. The script as a product is only marketable to those producers who might express interest in the particular genre represented. In this aspect, the market for

Hollywood scripts is highly individualized, an epitome of the increasingly small target groups on which marketers have begun focusing.

While positioning plays an important role in marketing of fine arts as well as everyday products, its value cannot be overestimated in the Hollywood script market. But instead of positioning being the “act of designing the organization’s image” so that “it occupies a distinct and valued place in the target customers’ minds” (Kotler and Scheff, 115), positioning in the Hollywood script market occurs in relation to a *person’s* image.

Becoming an established scriptwriter with a specialty in adaptations is the only way to gain any assurance that an adaptation will have the opportunity to reach the silver screen. Very few scriptwriters independently adapt a novel to pitch to producers due to the prohibitive cost or complication of obtaining the rights to well-known books. Cost and confusion, combined with the low chances of a producer accepting any single unproduced scriptwriter’s work and producing it, clearly reduces the viability of a scriptwriter’s making money from adaptations. Therefore, ultimately script writers do not often produce script adaptations without a producer’s injunction to do so.

In order for a producer to option a script, scriptwriter, or story, the producer must *know* somebody involved. A scriptwriter must have positioned his or herself in such a way as to personally know and obtain the trust of a producer if he or she ever hopes to have a script produced. Agents attempt to aid in positioning the script and scriptwriter in a producer’s mind, but it is a difficult process since the target audience is highly suspicious and unwilling to trust unknown products.

4.1.2. Advertising in the Hollywood Script Market

Advertising in the normal marketing sense involves such media as television, newspapers, and radio advertisements; billboards, sides of busses, banners, fliers, brochures, T-shirts, and a plethora of other tactics. Marketing experts carefully craft and display each advertisement in places that the desired target market frequents. If advertisements are successful, the product will follow a curve that can be described as a life, with “birth” or introduction followed by growth, which involves heavy advertising and increased competition, followed by maturity in which competitors “fight tooth-and-nail” (Hiam, 42) to maintain market share, and finally “dying” with a decline in interest as newer products appear on the horizon.

Scripts pass through no such process. Although creative, no serious script writer would consider taking out an ad in a *Produced By* magazine, the official publication of the Producer’s Guild of America; the suggestion of a television spot is equally ludicrous. This is not considered the legitimate way of selling a script, and since “Hollywood only gives writers one chance” (Green), blowing that opportunity on a unique advertising campaign would be ill-advised. Instead, writers advertise themselves and their scripts through agents, through pitches, and through the writer’s personal networking. Agents play the primary role in advertising a script to the market. An aspiring writer will hire an agent who is a known entity in Hollywood as a first step to being “discovered.” The script’s success as a marketable product relies heavily on the agent’s ability to raise the awareness of appropriate producers of the script’s existence.

In marketing terms, the narrow target audience will respond only to a highly specific advertising campaign that involves either known brands or endorsements by known brands. Producers will heed only known scriptwriters (familiar “brands”) or agents (familiar “brands” endorsing an unfamiliar brand). The life-to-death cycle of a product does exist for scripts, but

their lifespans are much briefer than a regular product's because the movie industry's unusually rapid sales progression.

4.1.3. Product Differentiation

Product differentiation within the mainstream market occurs as consumers buy and compare similar products. And just as consumers classify any Product X as better than any Product Y, Hollywood insiders quickly sort new scripts and scriptwriters into the A-list, the B-list, or the rejected list. Vertical differentiation takes place for scripts even more harshly than in the common marketplace, however; once a script or writer received a label, the chances of breaking out of that stereotype are very low. If a producer dislikes a script or the script is simply ignored and left to languish for an extensive time, word will quickly get around that particular author's script is no good. When that happens, the writer will find the market closed entirely, and will be completely unable to sell the script at all—although, as in other markets, scripts and their writers can succeed through sheer persistence and sometimes through reinventing his or her image. Persistence is a trait crucial to Hollywood newcomers seeking to advertise their writing or their writing abilities.

As we have made evident in prior sections, the agent's pitching of a script is crucial in the marketing of that work. While the pitch is the major form of advertising for the script, it simultaneously performs the function of educating the consumer about the product's merits as well. An effective pitch, which should be based on the logline (Krevolin), will explain the product's appeal and its superiority to competitors' products. Thus when the producer, as the consumer, compares one script to another, the comparison and differentiation will occur based on the quality of sales pitch delivered by the agent.

4.1.4. Driving Forces of the Script Market for Adaptations

The driving force behind any market is money. Consumers want to spend as little as possible while producers try to make as much as possible. Hollywood script marketing is the confluence of the two, in which scriptwriters emphasize their product's value and consumers, the producers, weigh that value with their needs and desires. Producers "want to be able to return enough profit" (Irving, 9/17/04) to remain credible to studios as a producer and to continue making films. According to Andrew Horton in *Screenwriting for a Global Market*, "For all the talk in Hollywood about how important the screenplay is, the reality is that the projects are still basically producer driven," (Horton, 21) although shareholders drive the producers.

A producer and a studio in collaboration must generate enough money through a film to "deal with one's shareholders." (Irving, 9/17/04) Because the Hollywood movie business is for the most part reliant on the quality of stories it receives, the producers' need to have a story that audiences will connect with drives the current script market. Adaptations from books offer a slightly safer, less risky alternative to paying somebody to make up a story of their own.

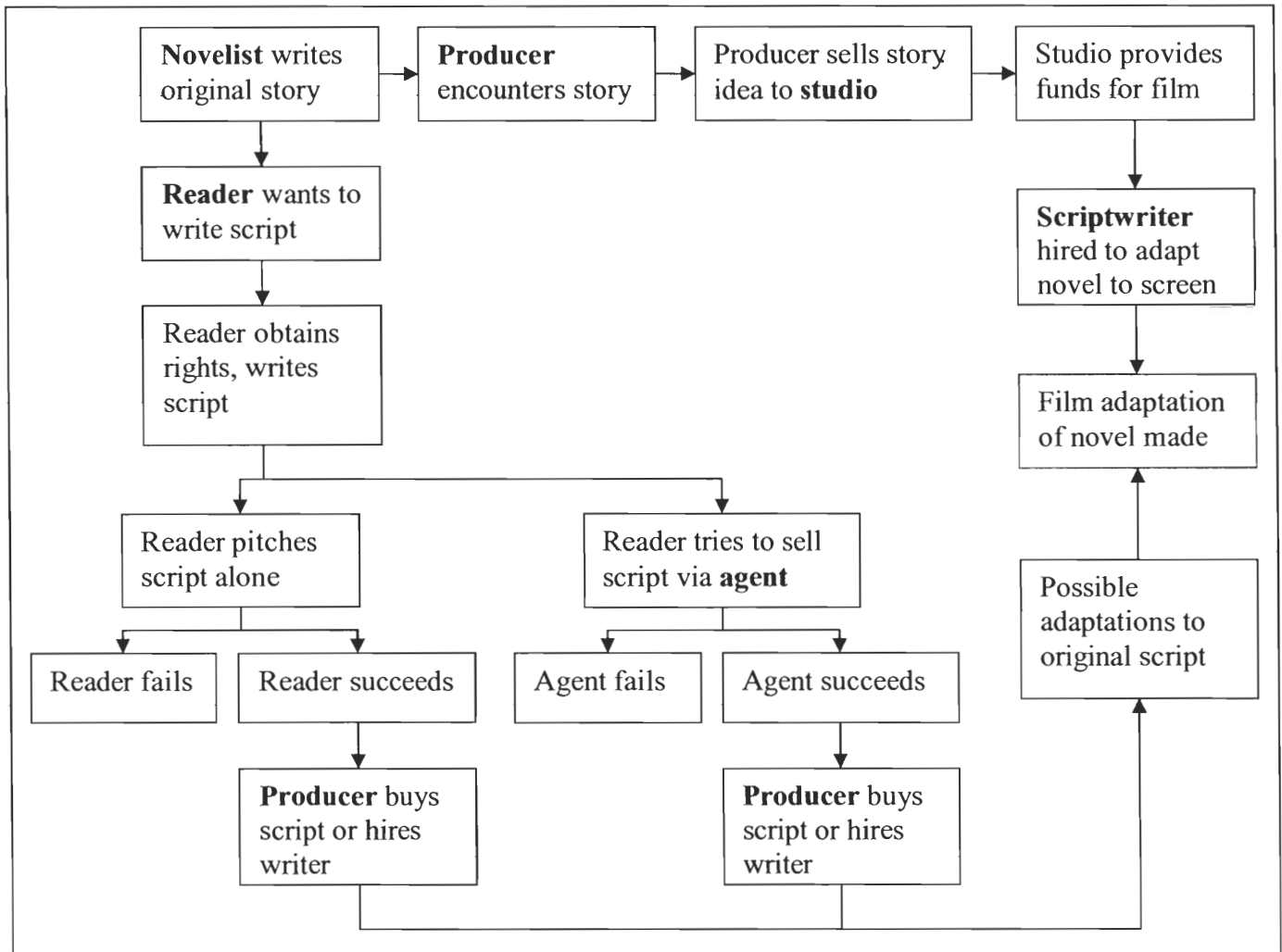
Bertolt Brecht said that "[t]he competition between individual films resembles a race between coach horses, the greatest attention being paid to the purple mountings and the color of the nags. No poet could keep up with this pace." The implication is that no true writer-artist could turn out scripts as quickly as filmmakers want them, so that with an adaptation can be thought of as both a reliable money-maker and as cutting out the time required for story development. By employing scriptwriters as adaptors, one step in the process might be sped up a little bit, and that small amount of extra time can be crucial in a film's success, particularly when

the adaptation is of a bestseller (see Section 2.4.2 for a discussion of the dynamics of the bestseller adaptations).

5. CONCLUSIONS

Figure 5.0.0 illustrates the novel-to-script adaptation process in a value chain diagram.

Figure 5.0.0: Summary of script adaptation process



The novelist begins the process by writing a story that catches a reader's eye. If the reader is associated with a film producer, the possibility of the novel being adapted to film exists. However, if the reader has no connections to Hollywood, the chances of the novel being adapted to a script are low, with even slimmer odds that the script's becomes a film. If a producer's

attention is caught by the idea of an adaptation, he begins negotiating rights to the novel (not pictured above) and will also attempt to interest a studio in financing the film. If the studio agrees, the producer and studio collaborate to hire a scriptwriter, who after much negotiation with regarding the script's content, writes the adaptation.

Without the producer's interest, the scriptwriter must market the script individually, with little hope of success. Writers hire agents to increase the possibility of a successful sale since agents know Hollywood and are known entities. It is at this point that marketing becomes a key issue.

The information collected for this project has proved to impart varying viewpoints and sources from which to work. We represent both the views of the scriptwriter and the producer as well as background information on marketing in the entertainment industry, and marketing as a whole. Understanding many of the principles of marketing is essential in order to fully comprehend the strategies and procedures of the scriptwriting market. This research has provided a broader understanding of the specifics of Hollywood's competitive script marketing and the steps that are taken to weave through the process.

Where marketing involves a careful process of analysis, planning, and investigation into a product's target market, the script market works rather differently. The screenwriter rarely promotes his script but rather promotes *himself* in order to gain a solid work reputation. Once his "foot is in the door," he may then be asked by a producer to participate in the filmmaking process. Just as participants in other fields of marketing attempt to emphasize their product's ability stand above competitors', so must scriptwriters emphasize their product's viability through a portfolio of excellent work, through their reliability, through their professionalism and

through their creativity. One of the safest and most productive ways of approaching this is to hire an agent to gain publicity and network with the ‘right people.’

We noticed distinct pros and cons regarding the fairness of who gets chosen to write these scripts. While it seemed logical that producers would want a reliable scriptwriter with whom they had had success previously, it appeared inequitable that certain scriptwriters get chosen before a story is even written when there are thousands of budding writers trying fruitlessly to promote their products. A writer’s fame cannot guarantee that he or she will necessarily write amazing scripts for every film project. Nor does this allow for new talent to enter the entertainment business with any degree of ease. There is a very thin break in the Hollywood wall to allow an unknown or lesser-known writer to present his or her piece to major producers.

Hollywood’s unpredictability as a business coupled with the fact that much of the success of any film is attributed a large amount of “luck,” there is no way to say that by preferring one writer’s name over the next that this will ensure a better script and a higher ticket rate at the box office. This bias in the industry raised a red flag during the process of research for this project.

5.0. Recommendations

We do not believe that the Hollywood script market offers a fair chance for competition. While normal markets are heavily studied and have large bodies of literature associated with them, the Hollywood script market has none; while normal markets are carefully regulated to avoid unfair monopolies, nepotism, and favoritism, the Hollywood script market is rife with such

practices. An aspiring scriptwriter, arriving in Hollywood with script in hand, has as much likelihood of having that script produced as he or she does of becoming an astronaut. Thus we offer recommendations for scriptwriters, for the selection mechanism, and for the system overall, based on what we believe our research has exposed as major weaknesses in the system.

5.0.1. Recommendations Regarding Scriptwriters

Scriptwriters deserve better chances to have their work examined by producers, at the least. These are suggestions we offer to improve opportunities.

1. Move to Hollywood. Frey contends that, just as it is impossible to work on Wall Street but live in Boston, so active scriptwriters must live near to the movie industry.
2. Develop a portfolio. Write a script and keep writing and revising until your script could actually win an Academy Award; producers only pick the best because there are so many to choose from.
3. Find an agent. Don't try to pitch your script on your own. Find an agent you get along with and use him or her to get your script known in Hollywood.
4. Network. Get to know people in Hollywood any way you can; get to know their friends. *Become a known entity* through whatever means necessary.
5. Be persistent. Rejection is part of Hollywood's modus operandi. If your script is rejected, keep trying other producers and keep writing.

5.0.2. Recommendations Regarding the Producer's Selection Mechanism

Hollywood misses out on numerous excellent scripts and ideas because of its overwhelming insularity. While insularity preserves quality, it fails to allow for major improvements as well. Thus we offer these recommendations to improve the selection mechanism as producers choose scriptwriters to hire.

1. Reduce insularity. Hollywood is a network of working relationships that play a major role in who gets what job. Changing this aspect to allow talented outsiders an easier “in” is necessary.
2. Reduce necessity for networking. As with (1), currently, networking through agents or other contacts is a necessity to succeed in Hollywood. Minimizing that aspect of the process would open the door to new talent.
3. Eliminate opportunity to option before a novel’s publication. This special negotiation gives producers or studios an advantage in choosing material that the general populace has not yet seen. This practice could be thought of as akin to insider trading of stocks.
4. Make obtaining rights to written work easier. A major stumbling block for aspiring novel adaptors is that obtaining rights can be costly and an enormous legal headache for any but the smallest authors. Adapting a major novel has thus far been left to established scriptwriters in the employ of well-moneyed producers. This does not necessarily produce the highest-quality product.

5.0.3. Recommendations Regarding the Script Market’s Workings

The script market is unfair to newcomers and difficult to understand. Talented but unknown voices vanish amid the clamor of known entities. These recommendations attempt to begin remedying that situation by suggesting ways that the entire conglomeration of studios, producers, scriptwriters, agents, and the numerous other people involved, could improve the script market.

1. Research the script market more fully. Beginning to accumulate a body of literature on the script market will provide independent observers and increase accountability in Hollywood.
2. Market scripts through a typical marketing process.
3. Establish a company to hire scriptwriters and market their work. Just as a company hires research scientists to come up with new designs that may or may not pan out, so this company would hire scriptwriters who wrote the script for a set salary; then the script would be the company's property to market
4. Increase number of producers. Although the number of producers is reliant on the general public's demand for movies, a greater number of producers would create more demand for scripts and ease the competition between scriptwriters.
5. Reduce number of scripts. Currently the market heavily favors the consumer; moving to equalize or reduce number of competitors in the script market would improve the opportunities for aspiring scriptwriters.

5.1. Final Words

Producers produce adaptations because they reduce risk, coming with a proposed audience, and eliminate the necessity for producing an original story. Depending on how a

particular screenwriter creates a script and what changes are made to this adaptation has a major impact on the movie's success. Regardless of a scriptwriter's choices, however, there is no way of guaranteeing success or failure in the film industry. Producers use a book as the training wheels to help guide an audience into a theatre.

With adaptations, since the basic story is already written, the writer essentially becomes an artist with a coloring book. Some choose to neatly color the expected hues within the lines, producing an accurate portrayal of a particular image while others use creative techniques to interpret the story's heart by using unusual colors and by branching outside the boundaries to create a unique and compelling piece of work. Neither of these is necessarily better than the other; scriptwriters believe that an original literary work holds little sway over their craft, while the public may desire a direct translation from novel to film. Thus each artist must know his audience, or at least attempt to target a particular audience so that his picture will be chosen over another's by the majority of those who wish to see it.

Many interesting discoveries were made in the production of this project. Assumptions were proven wrong. For instance, scriptwriters rarely sell their scripts directly, but tend to utilize scripts as samples of their skills and script adaptations of major novels or authors tend to occur *before* publishing, so the New York Times Bestseller list did not serve as a primary source for scriptwriters in search of viable adaptations. We uncovered facts that we never would have expected: adaptations are considered the easiest form of scriptwriting, and that scriptwriting is very much a group process rather than one lone genius pouring his or her soul on to the page. Finally, we gained a broader perspective of Hollywood in general through continued research and evaluation. Each personal interview revealed new clues regarding the "secret workings" of Hollywood's marketing system. One professional would be so sure of his views that it seemed

the only logical way to think of it, and then another would contradict the previous statements and draw the bias to the other side. We found that while producers readily admitted that modifications to a novel's story line during the script adaptation process was directly related to money, the scriptwriters themselves preferred to think of the changes as part of their art, the art of locating the story's heart and emphasizing that.

Attempts to make a generalized statement about the reliability and inner workings of the Hollywood script market for adaptations in general proved exceedingly evasive. In a sense, what is known is the unknown. Hollywood is a cryptic world of connections between people and places and the seemingly random happenings that brought them there. Some arrive to Hollywood under the direction of an agent who knows the right people. Others stumble in by the sheer luck of writing some lyrics on a napkin in a restaurant and producing a number one hit. Others are born into it. There seems to be no correct combination to unlock the mystery of the Hollywood Hills.

Frank Capra has been quoted as saying that "scriptwriting is the toughest part of the whole racket, the least understood and the least noticed." Without scripts and scriptwriters, Hollywood would not exist. But our research indicates that the competition in the Hollywood script market is exceedingly intense, while the target market is too small, so that of the 35,000 – 40,000 scripts submitted to the Writer's Guild of America, west, only a tiny percentage are optioned. We believe that producers and studios have too much power over their writers, who must do everything possible to promote and publicize, hoping to participate. Yet despite this project's attempts to elucidate some aspects thereof the deep workings of the Hollywood market for adapted scripts remains a puzzle for future researchers to piece together.

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APPENDIX A: WHAT IS AN INTERACTIVE QUALIFYING PROJECT?

The Interactive Qualifying Project, or the IQP, is a research project that each Worcester Polytechnic Institute student complete in order to receive a degree from WPI. This is one of three major projects that students complete during their undergraduate studies. The IQP is designed to demonstrate the links between technology and the structures of society, so that each student can understand as both professional and citizen how his or her studies can impact society as a whole. A specifically outlined and well-documented written report is submitted to the faculty as the final product.

Upon completion of the IQP, a student will have gained the understanding of the topic along with a broader understanding of the ways in which society functions. It will allow the student and those who view the project to come up with potential improvements and to analyze how much of an impact the given issue has on different areas of life. In the case of this project, we explore society through the realm of the entertainment industry and its market.

Through book and Internet research, and, most importantly, personal interview, the topic of the Market for Hollywood Scripts Based on Books has taken form and presented itself as a topic that not only impacts those directly dealing with the moviemaking process, but with the population as a whole. Society is filled with all forms of marketing, particularly in the media. This project is a means of exposing the impact of the Hollywood script market throughout society, either by posters, promotional commercials, or simply word of mouth. A successful script can affect every person from the scriptwriter himself to the members of the audience seeing the film produced from it.

This exploration of the inner workings of the script market help to formulate questions of ways in which the market works, and the ways in which it can be improved. Through these

questions and the discussion of their potential solutions, more information may be discovered regarding the focus of the marketing industry and the ways in which society can benefit or learn from its shortcomings.

This project meets the requirement of the IQP in that the research conducted on the subject has made way for further discussion of the impact of the subject on societal values. Topics are presented in a clear and organized manner through a written report to be presented to the advising member of faculty for evaluation. The goal is not merely to understand the topic as a new piece of knowledge, but to interpret that knowledge by applying it and its associations to every day life.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Could you explain your job for us? What does it entail?
2. How did you get into this position?
3. In Hollywood particularly?
4. Identify a story they think would make a good script?
5. Can you talk about the script optioning process a little bit? How do producers
6. We know that a lot of movies are made each year from books. What factors drive the desire to convert books into scripts?
7. Does the public tend to respond more readily to movies that have been made from books because of the familiar title/storyline? If so, is this part of the appeal for producers?
8. Is there a constant demand for scripts? Who usually fills that demand – established screenwriters?
9. Tell us about what the process is for getting rights to a book. Is it very involved?
10. How does one become a screenwriter in Hollywood?
11. If a book is in high demand – on the bestseller list for instance – will that make producers more likely to option it? If it's a “fancy” book like a Pulitzer Prize winner, would that make the book more appealing to turn into a script?
12. Why are movies changed so much? What changes are made, what reasoning?
13. How carefully do you pay attention to new movie releases?

14. You mentioned that writing the screenplay from your play was very easy. Could you talk about your experience adapting your play into a screenplay? What kinds of changes did you have to make?
15. Why did you have to change aspects of your play as it was converted into a movie script?
16. How would you say writing this script would have changed if your story had been a novel instead of already a play?
17. Do you know how the producer decided on your play to make into a movie? Did he tell you where/how he heard of it?
18. Overall, what's your analysis of movie scripts that have been adapted from books?
19. Speculation: Do you know anything about why a particular book is chosen to be made into a movie?
20. Similarly, what do you think of changes to story lines as they're converted from a book to a movie? Why do you suppose these changes were made?
21. What do you know about the economics of scripts? Who makes the choice to buy a script or have one prepared?
22. Where would you suggest we look for information along these lines? Is there anybody in particular we ought to talk to who would be helpful?
23. Do you find that the fact that Hollywood wasn't involved was more of a positive or a negative for you and why?
24. What kind of struggle did you face when getting your play published?
25. How did the filmmaker find your play? Did you publicize it broadly, and if so, what tactics did you use?

26. Is it often the case that the original writer of a book or play helps in writing the adaptation for a screenplay? (Assuming the author is still alive of course)
27. Do you find yourself more interested in a movie if it has been made from a book, or do you find that you have pre-expectations about it due to the fact that you've heard of it before?
28. Were there things about the process of published work to screenplay where you felt that your original work wasn't properly represented? If so, how did you manage such situations?
29. How does the current market drive the demand for scripts adapted from books?
30. What is the effect of a script's marketability if it is adapted from a book?—i.e., do scripts from books sell better to producers? a) How often is this likely to happen?
31. Does a book's status—as a bestseller, for instance—make a script more appealing to producers?
Or, How does the demand for a book affect the market for a script from that book?
32. What kind of script modifications makes movies more successful? —i.e., changing the ending to create lift, accentuating sex scenes, etc.
33. Tell us about the process of adapting. What steps are involved?
34. Does the author often get involved in this process?
35. What kind of book-to-script modifications make a movie more successful?
36. How does a book get chosen to be made into a script?
37. How does the current market drive the demand for scripts adapted from books? How does the demand for a book affect the market for a script? (ex: If super-hero movies are doing really well, does that make a script from a comic book more marketable?)
38. Does a script's coming from a book change the sales technique for that movie? What is the process for adapting scripts from books?

39. How does a book get changed as it's converted to being a script? What drives those changes?
Who decides on these changes?
40. What kind of script modifications to a book makes a movie more successful? (ex: emphasizing romantic scenes or changing endings)
41. How does the market for a movie change if the book is a popular one? Talk about the marketing for a book into a script a bit. How long can it take?
42. How does the current market drive demand for scripts adapted from books?
43. How could the scriptwriting process be improved/made more fair?
44. Tell us about the how scripts' audiences are chosen.
45. Could you give us more information on the criteria for the selection process?
46. Tell us how audience selection plays a role in the modification of the story.
47. What do you think of the idea of having to market yourself in Hollywood as opposed to marketing your own script?
48. What differences are there in the script market as a producer? As a scriptwriter?
 - a) When you're trying to sell a script as a writer, how do you do that?
 - b) When you're looking at scripts as a producer, what do you look for?
 - c) What are the selector's criteria when looking at a script?
49. What are some ways you think this system could be improved, to let unknown writers have a good shot at having their work produced?
50. What would you tell aspiring scriptwriters to do to get into Hollywood?
51. Do you feel that story lines are often sacrificed for being popular—that is, do you think it's a good marketing decision to promote a poorly-written script for the sake of profit? (Summer blockbuster/high concept films)
52. Can you explain the difference between optioning a property and buying it outright?

APPENDIX C: GLOSSARY OF HOLLYWOOD TERMS

A-list: top-of-the heap actors, directors, writers, and producers; big name people whose appearance in part of the film is likely to draw viewers. People on the A-list sell their services at very high prices.

Adaptation: process by which a novel is converted into a script (see below).

Agent: a “known entity” (see below) in Hollywood; hired by aspiring scriptwriters to market a script. Agents are trusted by producers. Their established reputations aid their ability to sell a script that a scriptwriter might fail to successfully sell by pitching it alone.

B-list: lesser-known actors, directors, writers, and producers; inclusion of these people will not draw more viewers. Their services sell more cheaply than those on the *A-list* (see above).

High-concept: a script or film based on a catchy idea and with broad appeal that can be quickly summed up in one line. High-concept scripts sell more quickly than *low-concept* (see below) scripts. Often serve as summer blockbusters. Ex: *Jaws*, *Jurassic Park*, *Braveheart*, *Terminator 2*. For a more complete definition, see <http://www.screentalk.biz/art043.htm>.

Known entity: a person with a developed reputation in Hollywood

Logline: one-line summary of a script’s story, such as is seen in a TV guide

Low-concept: a script or film with a complex or less intrinsically fascinating idea that may take some explaining to understand. Low-concept scripts sell poorly compared to *high-concept* (see above) scripts.

Option (optioning): a process of buying, in pieces but at a set price, a scriptwriter’s service or a piece of written literature. A process giving the buyer the right, but not compelling the buyer, to purchase from the seller.

Pitch: the scriptwriter or agent’s attempt to sell a script to a producer or studio; implies face-to-face meeting.

Producer: person who literally *produces* the film. This person organizes all the details, including hiring actors and scriptwriters, as well as selling the story idea to a studio to obtain funding.

Screenplay: used in this paper as a synonym for Script (see below).

Script: a written document portraying action and speech of a character or between characters.

Script marketing: the tactics which scriptwriters or agents use to sell to producers and other professionals in the field of the performing arts.

Scriptwriter: person who writes a script (see above).

Story conference: meeting in which story line of a script adaptation is determined; attended by producer, writer, story director, etc.

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW SUBJECT DATA

Name	Title	Organization	Date of Interview
James Frey	Scriptwriter, Producer, Director	Self-employed	11/9/2004
Chris Green	Director of Communications	Producer's Guild of America	9/24/2004
David Irving	Associate Professor of Film and Television	Tisch School of the Arts, New York University	9/16/2004
Dean O'Donnell	Administrative Instructor of Drama	Worcester Polytechnic Institute	8/31/2004
Mark Evan Schwartz	Scriptwriter, Assistant Professor of Screenwriting	Loyola-Marymount University	9/9/2004

APPENDIX E: ABBREVIATED LIST OF FILMS ADAPTED FROM NOVELS

D.1. Academy Award Winners/Nominees

Book Title	Film Title if different	Author
<i>Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring, The Two Towers, Return of the King</i>		J.R.R. Tolkien
<i>Snow Falling on Cedars</i>		David Guterson
<i>Cold Mountain</i>		Charles Frazier
<i>Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone</i>		J.K. Rowling
<i>Jurassic Park</i>		Michael Crichton
<i>The Lost World</i>		Michael Crichton
<i>Fight Club</i>		Chuck Palahnuik
"Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?"	<i>Blade Runner</i>	Philip K. Dick
"We Can Remember It For You Wholesale"	<i>Total Recall</i>	Philip K. Dick
<i>A Beautiful Mind</i>		Sylvia Nasar
<i>A Little Princess</i>		Frances Hodgson Burnett
<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>		Harper Lee

<i>Grapes of Wrath</i>		John Steinbeck
<i>The Firm</i>		John Grisham
<i>The Client</i>		John Grisham
<i>Pride and Prejudice</i>		Jane Austin
<i>Emma</i>		Jane Austin
<i>Clear and Present Danger</i>		Tom Clancy
<i>Hunt for Red October</i>		Tom Clancy
<i>True Grit</i>		Charles Portis
<i>The Time Machine</i>		H.G. Wells
<i>Great Gatsby</i>		F. Scott Fitzgerald
<i>Gone With the Wind</i>		Margaret Mitchell
<i>Christine</i>		Stephen King
<i>Carrie</i>		Stephen King
<i>The Green Mile</i>		Stephen King
<i>The Shawshank Redemption</i>	“Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption”	Stephen King
<i>Stand By Me</i>		Stephen King

D.2. Other Adaptations

Book Title	Film Title if different	Author
<i>Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets</i>		J.K. Rowling
<i>Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban</i>		J. K. Rowling
<i>I, Robot</i>		Isaac Asimov
<i>The Bourne Identity</i>		Robert Ludlum
<i>The Bourne Supremacy</i>		Robert Ludlum
<i>1984</i>		George Orwell
<i>The Joy Luck Club</i>		Amy Tan
<i>Needful Things</i>		Stephen King
<i>Cujo</i>		Stephen King
<i>The Shining</i>		Stephen King
<i>IT</i>		Stephen King
<i>Firestarter</i>		Stephen King
<i>Salem’s Lot</i>		Stephen King
<i>The Rainmaker</i>		John Grisham
<i>Runaway Jury</i>	<i>The Runaway Jury</i>	John Grisham
<i>The Pelican Brief</i>		John Grisham
<i>The Chamber</i>		John Grisham
<i>A Time to Kill</i>		John Grisham
<i>Patriot Games</i>		Tom Clancy
<i>Sum of All Fears</i>		Tom Clancy

D.3. Adaptations of Classics

According to the Internet Movie Database, Herman Melville is credited with 26 adaptations of various stories of his, including *Moby Dick*, *Typee*, *Billy Budd*, *Benito Cereno*, and *Bartleby*. Jane Austen has had 22 adaptations made of her stories, including being credited with nine adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice* and three adaptations of *Emma*. There have been 187 Charles Dickens adaptations, including 57 adaptations of *A Christmas Carol* and 25 adaptations of *Oliver Twist*. Emily Bronte had 16 adaptations of her novel *Wuthering Heights* made. Finally, William Shakespeare tops the list of adaptations with 558 films made of his stories, including 55 adaptations of *Hamlet*, 17 adaptations of *Taming of the Shrew*, and 10 adaptations of *Much Ado about Nothing*.