

Childrens' Book
and Graphic
Novel
Adaptations –
A Review of Film
and
Documentary

Emma Stevens

Contents

Coraline by Henry Selick.....	03
Fantastic Mr Fox by Wes Anderson.....	04
Where the Wild Things Are by Spike Jonze.....	05
James and the Giant Peach by Henry Selick.....	06
Blood Splattered Adaptations – Coraline VS Coraline by Joshua Langland.....	07
V for Vendetta by James McTeigue.....	09
From Hell by Albert and Allen Hughes.....	10
The Making of Coraline by Henry Selick.....	11
The World of Peter Rabbit and Friends by Dianne Jackson.....	12
Peter Rabbit by Nickelodeon	13
Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs by Phil Lord and Chris miller.....	14

Title of Film: Coraline

Year: 2009

Director: Henry Selick

Screenwriter: Henry Selick

Location: Portland, Oregon, USA

Production Companies: Focus Features, Laika Entertainment, Pandemonium.

Type of film: Stop Motion Animation

Synopsis: The story centers on Coraline Jones voiced by Dakota Fanning as she saunters around her new home being neglected by her mother and father. Left to her own devices she finds a magical portal behind a small, locked door, that sends her into an alternate universe where she finds her "other" mother and father in a more loving and caring environment. However, there's a catch; they have buttons for eyes and on top of that things seem just a little too perfect in this "other" world, and they are. Every time Coraline falls asleep in the alternate universe she finds herself waking up in her real world bed as the portal to the other world closes. What Coraline doesn't realize is that the one time she doesn't wake up in her own bed will be the one time she wished she did. She encounters all the characters from her own world, but each have been 'tweaked' by the 'Other Mother' aka. The Belldam – to represent Coraline's idea of interesting and fun. Each seek to keep her in their world, but with the help of her annoying neighbor 'Other Wybie', and a maverick cat who can talk, Coraline manages to beat the Belldam at her game and save not only the lives of herself and her real parents, but the souls of the children stolen before her.

I enjoyed this film very much, as it was visually amazing, and the storyline was brilliant. Although it is fairly easy to guess that things in the Other world are not as they seem, it still amazed me at how much of it was fabricated just to entice Coraline. So much detail has been put into this film by Henry Selick's team of animators that one could admire it on that basis alone. It was also the first film to be film originally in 3D, which works to create such depth in various scenes of the film, ie. Travelling to the other world, escaping the Belldam's clutches. The absolute best scene in this film was not part of the original book, but not only is it entertaining, it showcases the brilliant skills of the animators – The Mouse Circus Scene. Coraline is also based on the fantastic book written by Neil Gaimen, and although it isn't completely true to the book, this in my opinion, makes it the great film it is. It is vital to my research as it is one of the books/films I will be comparing and analyzing later on.



Title of Film: Fantastic Mr Fox

Year: 2009

Director: Wes Anderson

Screenwriter: Wes Anderson and Noah Baumbach

Location: Three Mills Studios, London, UK

Production Companies: Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, Indian Paintbrush, Regency Enterprises

Type of film: Stop Motion Animation

Synopsis: For 12 years, Mr. and Mrs Fox have lived a peaceful life in the wilderness with their son, Ash. Shortly after their young nephew Kristofferson arrives for a visit, Mr. Fox's long-suppressed animal instincts begin to take over and the faithful family man resorts back to his old ways as a cunning chicken thief, endangering not only his family but the entire animal community as well. When evil farmers Boggis, Bunce, and Bean force the animals underground in a desperate attempt to capture the audacious Mr. Fox, dwindling food supplies force the frightened animals to band together in one last attempt to fight for the land that is rightfully theirs.

I also enjoyed this film too. Despite also being stop motion animation, it has a totally different feel to it, and that is not a bad thing. Whilst Coraline's colour palette ranges from the dull boring grey of a rainy day to the mystical purples and blues of the other world, Anderson's film has a limited colour palette – a trademark of his so it seems. The limited colours work well, especially as it is set in the British Countryside. With the characters, you can see the rough details such as their fur, whiskers, even their teeth – while the environment is equally well imbued with detail. They do not have a refined look like the characters of Coraline, which adds to their charm, since they are wild animals after all. This being Andersons' first venture into Stop Motion, it was extremely well executed and would have made Roald Dahl – a man renowned for being cautious of adaptations of his books – extremely proud indeed. It does not entirely stick to the original story, but the additions made by Anderson and Baumbach only add more depth to an already perfect tale. They also received the blessing of Dahl's widow, which speaks for itself really.



Title of Film: Where The Wild Things Are

Year: 2009

Director: Spike Jonze

Screenwriter: Spike Jonze and Dave Eggers

Location: Central City Studios, Melbourne, Australia.

Production Companies: Warner Bros. Legendary Pictures, Village Roadshow Pictures.

Type of film: Live Action

Synopsis: This is the tale of a young boy (Max) who feels very neglected by his mother and sister (who appear to be too busy with their boyfriend/friends) to pay him any attention. One night during dinner with his mothers' boyfriend, dressed as a wolf, he begins to play up, bites his mother, causing her to send him to bed without any tea. It is at this point that he runs away to a wooded area with a lake, climbs into a boat that happens to be moored there and sets sail for the amazing world of the Wild Things. When he reaches their island, he stumbles upon a group of Wild Things trying to smash things to pieces (things which look suspiciously like the ornaments etc. On his bedside table). Instead of screaming with horror and astonishment at these extraordinary talking animal-giants, or in any normal way freaking out, Max calmly takes them at face value. They are, perhaps, hardly less scary than the grownups and bigger kids who intimidate him all the time. He joins in and when they threaten to eat him, he tells them that his is a King where he lives, and that he has magical powers. The Wild Things take him in as their own, and make him their king, after the quarrelsome beasts finally agree.. They agree to Max's plan to build a big hideaway structure where they can all live and sleep together in a huddle. Max soon finds, though, that ruling his kingdom is not so easy and his relationships there prove to be more complicated than he originally thought. Eventually he is revealed to be a fraud, and when one of the creatures helps him to escape the much angered 'Leader' of the pack, Max eventually manages to sail home again, into the arms of his mother.

I was cautious about watching this film, as it wasn't something I had particularly looked at before. I decided to not read the book first, as part of an experiment for this research project into whether a watching an adaptation first affects your reading of the original material. I haven't read the book yet, but I already know that the film has greatly expanded on a lot of Sendaks' original work. The use of costumes instead of CGI gives this film a wonderful handmade feel – the creatures aren't streamlined and polished, they are rough, and real looking – just like creatures should be. There appears to be a better relationship between Max and these creatures than there would be if they were CGI made. The environments are visually stunning, and cover everything from leafy wet jungle land to dry and desolate desert. It seemed slow to start, and at the beginning I strongly disliked Max for his behaviour. He just seemed like a very naughty child, but as I followed his journey with the Wild Things, I realised that he was just looking for attention and love from the people he is closest to. This film will be very useful in my research as it is a great example of how a very short picture book can be stretched to a full length film. Whether that has had a detrimental effect remains to be seen.



Title of Film: James and the Giant Peach

Year: 1996

Director: Henry Selick

Screenwriter: Kary Kirkpatrick, Jonathon Roberts, Steve Bloom.

Location: San Francisco, California, USA

Production Companies: Walt Disney Pictures, Allied Filmmakers, Skellington Productions Inc.

Type of film: Stop Motion Animation, Live Action, CGI

Synopsis: James Henry Trotter is left orphaned at the start of the film after his parents are killed by a ghostly rhinoceros, and is sent to live with his wicked and greedy Aunts Spiker and Sponge. Unwanted and forced to perform cruel and demeaning chores, he dreams about going to New York City—a place, his father once told him, where dreams come true. Whilst cleaning the garden one day, James meets a mysterious old man who gives him a bag of magical glowing green things (crocodile tongues) and is told that marvellous things will happen. Racing home, James accidentally spills the contents of the bag at the base of a barren old peach tree. To his astonishment, a peach instantly appears on the branch and grows and grows until it reaches 20 feet in diameter. Spiker and Sponge intend to profit from this and begin charging admission to see it. After the first show day, the garden is left filthy with rubbish and James (who wasn't allowed to socialise) is ordered to go and clean it up. When he catches a glimpse of a remaining 'tongue' he follows it to the peach, where it jumps inside of a piece that James has broken off to eat. A glowing tunnel appears in the bottom, and the frightened boy ventures inside and meets Centipede, Earthworm, Ladybug, Glowworm, Grasshopper and Miss Spider. When the Centipede gnaws away at the stem of the peach in order to escape Spiker and Sponge, they end up rolling out to sea, crushing the aunts' car and launching the peach and its crew into the ocean. They encounter a large machine shark, catch a hundred seagulls to help the peach fly, drift off course into frozen waters where the Centipede is attacked by Pirate Skeletons and James eventually encounters the ghostly Rhino again, which knocks him, the insects and the peach off course (New York). James ends up landing on top of the Empire State building and is hoisted down, along with the peach by a crane. A large crowd comes to investigate, including a police officer, who takes James' story with a pinch of salt, until the Aunts turn up, claiming all ownership of the peach and James. When they threaten to harm him, the Insects arrive, aided by the seagulls captured earlier, and prevent any harm coming to James. He is finally believed and at the end it is revealed that he now lives in the peach stone in Central Park, whilst the insects went on to become famous in their own rights.

Although I greatly enjoyed this film, and, once again, Selick's brilliant direction, there are certain parts of the book that were missed out, which would have enhanced the film, ie. The part where the peach flies through some clouds and they see cloud people making rain, thunder, lightning bolts and rainbows, before smashing through one with the peach, and the real school of sharks instead of a mechanical one. The insects are each a different stereotype, but that didn't really matter to me, as it gave them character and stopped them from all being the same boring English stereotype. The one thing I wasn't keen on were the musical elements. They simply weren't that great, although I suspect they were included to fill up time in the journey to New York. Overall it was a well made film, despite problems from Disney's side over how to make it, and it has managed to retain the charm and innocence that Roald Dahl's book did. Another film ready for comparison to its book counterpart as part of my research.



Title of Documentary: Bloodsplattered Adaptations – Coraline Vs. Coraline.

Year: 2012

Director: Joshua Langland

Screenwriter: Joshua Langland

Location: USA

Type of Documentary: Comparison of Book vs. film.

Source: Online, <http://blip.tv/BloodSplatteredCinema/blood-splattered-adaptations-coraline-vs-coraline-6166409>

Synopsis: This documentary by Joshua ‘The Guru’ Langland takes Neil Gaiman’s original story of Coraline and Henry Selick’s film Coraline. He compares them on four levels – The story – The film follows the book closely but adds a few scenes and characters and also a lot more detail. In the book Coraline visits the other world only twice, yet in the film, she visits three times before she even becomes aware of the sinister reason behind the magic, and then once more to save her parents.

The second level of comparison is the Characters. He discusses how Coraline’s interaction between the other characters in the film is vastly different in the book. She is completely ignored by most of the characters in the book, and it mainly consists of her internal monologue, but since this wouldn’t really work in the film, the character of Wybie was invented – not to give her a saviour, but someone her own age to talk to. Coraline is also not a quiet shy girl like in the book, she is rather loud and obnoxious. The dynamic between her and her parents has completely changed due to this detail, and that is not a bad thing. In the book, her parents are just shown as busy, whilst in the film they actually get annoyed with her, and send her on pointless discovery trips around the house just so they can work. She seems more relatable as a normal child, who is very much alone as opposed to a quiet girl whose parents are just too busy to talk to her. The book parents show genuine love for her, but in the film they just treat her rather less than well. However, the film Coraline feels much more real since she is flawed and more realistic.

The third comparison is between the prose. Gaiman’s writing style allows adults to read it and feel like a child reading it, whilst a child will feel a genuine bond with Coraline since they can understand her thoughts and feelings as if they were their own. The book focuses on the differences within interactions. The film however not only does this, but also on the spectacle that is the Other World. There are a lot of interesting visual links running through the film, and the scene in the garden (which does not exist in the book) is one perfect example of this.

The fourth round is a comparison of the ‘horror’ elements of Coraline. The film adds an element of uncomfortable humour on top of the genuine scenes of ‘horror’ ie. The scene where Coraline is given a present which turns out to be a needle, thread and two black buttons. Gaiman manages to create times of great suspense in some scenes (the final showdown with the Other Father), whilst the film shows the showdown as him chasing her on top of a praying mantis. Gaiman also uses spiders as a metaphor for the other mother a fair amount, whilst the film takes this metaphor and turns it into a reality towards the end. Langland argues that the film takes all of the horror elements within the book and cranks

them up to eleven, even adding in their own horror scenes such as the one where Coraline is nearly eaten alive by the very garden that was made to entice her.

Whilst the first round of comparison was a tie between the two, the film steals the show with the other three comparison points going to Henry Selick. This documentary has been invaluable to my research since it has pointed me in the right direction and given me umbrella comparison terms to begin looking at. Langland goes into real depth, using not only scenes from the film, but taking parts of the book and reading them along side so you can get a feel for both. Whilst his overexcitement and acting seem a little odd, he does a brilliant job at comparing the two and justifying his reasons for liking or disliking certain elements.



Title of Film: V For Vendetta

Year: 2005

Director: James McTeigue

Screenwriter: Andy and Lana Wachowski

Location: London, UK

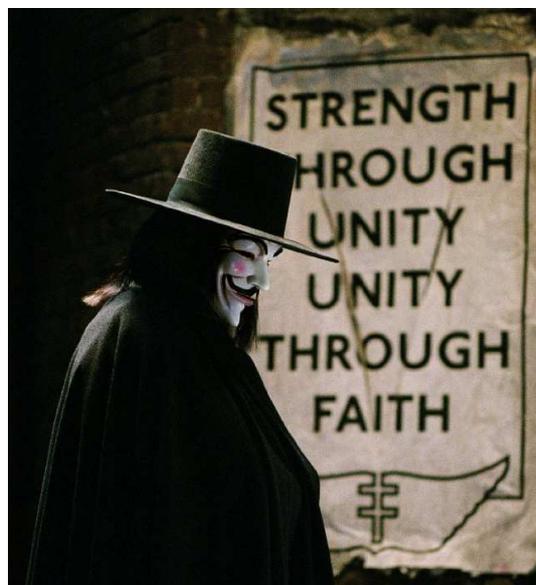
Production Companies: Warner Bros. Virtual Studios, Silver Pictures

Type of film: Live Action

Synopsis: Set against the futuristic landscape of totalitarian Britain, V For Vendetta tells the story of a mild-mannered young woman named Evey who is rescued from a life-and-death situation by a masked vigilante known only as "V." Incomparably charismatic and ferociously skilled in the art of combat and deception, V ignites a revolution when he detonates two London landmarks and takes over the government-controlled airwaves, urging his fellow citizens to rise up against tyranny and oppression. As Evey uncovers the truth about V's mysterious background, she also discovers the truth about herself - and emerges as his unlikely ally in the culmination of his plot to bring freedom and justice back to a society fraught with cruelty and corruption. Based on the Graphic novel by Alan Moore

V for Vendetta is one of my personal all time favourite movies. The suspense and fear that is intertwined with the actual plot bursts through in every scene, and leaves you feeling like justice will prevail and a change will come. It is beautifully filmed, with a fairly limited colour palette – the main and strongest colour being red (to perhaps represent the communist-esq rule of the government). The only real changes in colour come when Evey is reading a letter from an executed woman, who describes what her life was like before the Government took over. She notes that her favourite flower is the rose, which crops up as a metaphor for freedom and justice several times throughout the film. At the start of the film you start to think that V is an oddball, who is out to cause trouble, but by saving Evey, you realise that there is much more to his character than just a pyromaniac. When you follow the story you realise how awful the government is treating the country and suddenly you are on the side of V. Even when it is revealed that he was responsible for an ordeal Evey is put through, you still side with him. You realise at the end that V himself was a metaphor – he is the freedom, the hope, and the future. He is every one. This is shown in a very poignant scene at the end, where Evey stumbles onto a rooftop and embraces the rain – harping back to an old saying that 'If you can feel the rain, then you know you are alive'. The ending also features a huge ensemble cast, including all those innocents who have died during the film, all wearing V masks. It is a very cleverly crafted film which really makes you feel like this could well be the future of Britain, and despite the story's original writer Alan Moore condemning it as Hollywood trash, I personally think it hits harder than the graphic novel. It is easier to follow, and focuses on the relationship between V, Evey and herself. It is a film of self-discovery and freedom, yet Moore's novel doesn't always make it easy to see.

Title of Film: From Hell



Year: 2001

Director: Albert and Allen Hughes

Screenwriter: Terry Hayes and Rafael Yglesias

Location: London, UK

Production Companies: Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp. Underworld Entertainment

Type of film: Live Action

Synopsis: Based on the Graphic novel by Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell, *From Hell* is based on the true life events of the Jack the Ripper Murders. In 1888, a ruthless and cold-blooded killer begins hunting prostitutes in East London, and while the murderer's work is savage, the mutilation of his victims suggests the fiend has an extensive medical background. Amidst a background of political unrest and barely contained scandal among the royal family, the murderer's grisly exploits shock and frighten all of England, and one of Scotland Yard's top inspectors, Frederick Abberline, is put on the case, along with his partner, Peter Godley. Abberline, depending on one's viewpoint, is either blessed or cursed with second sight, and while he blurs his ability to see future events with opium and other drugs, he still has an uncanny ability to ferret out dangerous criminals, which is put to the test as he and Godley search for the Ripper. As Abberline and Godley investigate the neighborhood where the crimes occur, they become acquainted with the prostitutes and street people who were friends and compatriots of the victims, and Abberline finds himself falling in love with Mary Kelly, a beautiful Irish streetwalker. As Abberline tries to identify the killer before Mary Kelly can become the next victim, he and Godley have to contend with Sir Charles Warren, their superior who is keen to pin the murders on a culprit who isn't British, and Sir William Gull, a respected physician who has his own ideas about the murders and the benefits of psychosurgery.

I have not got very far into Alan Moore's very hefty 600 page Graphic novel *From Hell*, but it is easy to see that most of the storyline has been changed in order to make it flow better on screen. Within the book, the police are complicit with the murders, with full knowledge that Sir William Gull is the murderer, covering up a misdemeanour that directly affects the royal family. The character of Gull is kept pretty much the same, including his fate, whilst Abberline and the rest of the Police are unaware of what is going on. The film becomes a much better investigation into what may have happened in 1888 than Moore's book, which he admits he made up. The Hughes Brothers have taken this story and turned it into something that is easy to follow, makes sense and is visually interesting. Again, it is a fairly limited colour palette – used to represent the effects of the Industrial revolution at the time, but the detail that has gone into the environment is simply stunning. You really feel that you are in Victorian London. And the ever versatile Johnny Depp is perfectly cast as Abberline, giving you a sense that despite eras, this could easily have been a sequel to *Sleepy Hollow* (wherein he also plays a detective). Much stronger than Moore's work, although his fans strongly disagree, as does Moore himself, I feel that it is the best portrayal of the Jack the Ripper story ever made. It has been useful to my research, because although I have chosen to focus on Childrens' book adaptations, it has allowed me to see how a graphic novel, which has seemingly been completely storyboarded for the director already can be turned into something completely different. It also allows me to look at an author who dislikes the adaptations of his work, which is an invaluable opinion.

Title of Documentary: The Making of *Coraline*



Year: 2009

Director: Henry Selick

Screenwriter: None, comprises of various opinions from people working on the film

Location: Portland, Oregon, USA

Production Companies: Focus Features, Laika Entertainment, Pandemonium.

Type of Documentary: The Making of Coraline

Source: DVD – Coraline.

Synopsis: This documentary features sections discussing the following:

- The Evolution of the Story
- Inspiring Design: Character Design and Art Direction
 - Directing the Voice Sessions
 - Making Puppets
 - Coraline’s Closet
- Setting the Stage: How Does Your Fantastic Garden Grow?
 - It’s Alive
- I’ve Seen Fire and I’ve Seen Fog
 - The Eyes Have It
 - Wrapping up Coraline

It is a wonderfully extensive look into the processes involved in adapting a children’s book to the big screen. It features Henry Selick discussing how he developed the script with the help and support of original Author Neil Gaiman, how they designed the characters and setting with the original illustrations in mind, the process involved in stop motion animation and why certain things were added/deleted or changed. This is more invaluable than I can possibly say, since it answers a lot of my questions relating to this specific film, and leads me to possible answers about adaptations in general. I have also written up notes on what is discussed in this documentary as part of my research.



Title of TV Programmes: The World of Peter Rabbit and Friends; Peter Rabbit

Year: 1992 / 2012

Director: Dianne Jackson / Nickelodeon

Screenwriter: Dianne Jackson / ??

Location: London, UK / USA

Production Companies: TVC London, Frederick Warne & Co. N.Y. & London, BBC / Nickelodeon

Type of film: Live Action and animation / CGI

Synopsis: The 1992 version of Peter Rabbit consisted of 9 episodes, each telling 2 stories intertwined with one another or 2 separate stories. They were straight adaptations of Beatrix Potter's original stories.

1. The Tale of Peter Rabbit and Benjamin Bunny (May 13, 1992)
2. Peter Rabbit and Mrs. Tittlemouse (June 24, 1992)
3. The Tale of Tom Kitten and Jemima Puddle-Duck (July 22, 1992)
4. The Tale of Samuel Whiskers, or the Roly-Poly Pudding (May 19, 1993)
5. The Tailor of Gloucester (June 9, 1993)
6. The Tale of Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle and Mr. Jeremy Fisher (July 7, 1993)
7. The Tale of Mr. Tod (May 18, 1994)
8. The Tale of Pigling Bland (June 29, 1994)
9. The Tale of Two Bad Mice and Johnny Town-Mouse (June 21, 1995)

The 2012 version has only aired once so far (a Christmas special in Dec 2012), with a series due to be aired in March 2013. It follows Peter as he overcomes obstacles, outwits predators and avoids danger. Peter wants to grow up to be just like his late father and carries his journal (a guide on how to be a good rabbit) on his adventures with his friends Cousin Benjamin Bunny and new character Lily Bobtail. The show is aimed at preschool children in an attempt to teach them important life lessons and skills.

I shall first discuss the 1992 version of Peter Rabbit, as it is the one I grew up with. This series is one of the biggest reasons I wanted to become an Illustrator, since every single scene was like it had jumped straight out of Potters' books. The animators have done an amazing job of mimicking her style, so much so that when watching the program, you feel as if Beatrix Potter (played by Niamh Cusack) really is there telling her stories and illustrating them as she goes along. The stories are completely faithful to her originals, which to me is marvelous, as they are simply classics that should not be interfered with. My particular favourites include The Tale of Peter Rabbit and Benjamin Bunny, The Tale of Pigling Bland and the Tale of Samuel Whiskers (Roly-Poly-Pudding). They look like they are animated children's picture book pages – something I have not really seen before or since. They are charming, and children can easily recognise their favourite characters because of how closely they resemble Potters' own illustrations. This series is a thing of beauty and is an extremely faithful adaptation of the book series, proving that wholly faithful adaptations can sometimes work.



However, that is certainly NOT the case for the most recent reincarnation of a classic childrens' series. Nickelodeon – the American Childrens' Broadcaster – have decided to create a new series of Peter Rabbit, based so loosely on the original books that you'd have to dig up the entire of Mr McGregor's garden just to find out which parts. The fact that Peter's father has been killed by Mr McGregor is still the same, although Nickelodeon deemed this 'too horrific' for today's children to watch; Benjamin Bunny still exists as Peter's best friend, with a fairly close resemblance to his 1992 voice (which is my only applaud for this adaptation) but they have also been joined by a character created by Nickelodeon – Lily Bobtail – who is there represent a strong female. Peters' mother is now also been used as a tool to show children that a single mother can cope with being left with so many children to look after – which although is a modern view of things, it is not what Potters' books were originally about.

Nickelodeon have taken a series and instead of telling a story, have tried to turn it into something educational, and more importantly, financially rewarding. Had they stuck with the original stories, they may have managed an 18 episode run and that would be that. Now they can create as many as they like, putting peter in all sorts of situations that Potter would perhaps have never of dreamt of. Her version of the Lake District has been destroyed by this adaptation, with its Americanised version of the area. And then there is the animation. Why childrens animation companies and directors think that the only thing children want to see nowadays is CGI filmed in 3D with the latest special effects etc. Is beyond me.

I remember screaming when I heard it was being rehashed in CGI, thinking 'That's my Childhood being destroyed!'. It angered me very much, since many children of this latest generation will perhaps never seen the 1992 version, or even read Beatrix Potter's original books. They will most likely take this show at face value and assume that it was a character created by Nickelodeon. Adaptations like this are the reason why books are becoming less popular. Why read to your child when you can stick them infront of the TV and let someone else tell them a story? I loathe this adaptation, having watched the unaired pilot episode, and feel that if this is what the future of childrens television is going to be like, then future generations are doomed to an existence where books and imagination are rare.

It has however, been a brilliant resource for my research, as has the 1992 version, since TV adaptations are often handled differently to film adaptations. They have provided me with a huge basis on which I can compare at length with the Original storybooks.



Title of Film: Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs

Year: 2009

Director: Phil Lord and Chris Miller

Screenwriter: Phil Lord and Chris Miller

Location: America

Production Companies: Columbia Pictures, Sony pictures Animation

Type of film: CGI

Synopsis: On the small island of Swallow Falls, Flint Lockwood, a young outcast boy, is a clumsy inventor encouraged by his mother. However the island becomes unable to export their famous sardine stocks, and the locals end up having to eat it all the time. Years later, Flint's mother dies and his sceptical father Tim Lockwood, an old fisherman who has a tackle shop, gives Flint a share in the business, and asks him to work there with him instead of continuing his efforts to become a famous inventor. But Flint has just invented a food processor that can convert water into any type of food, and he decides to test it out. Things don't go according to plan and he manages to launch it into the atmosphere, where it reacts to the rain clouds and hamburgers begin to rain down from the sky. Soon the whole island is excited about the prospect of being able to eat things other than sardines and Flint starts taking orders. As word reaches mainland America, a television station sends trainee weather reporter Sam Sparks to cover the phenomenon, making Flint famous. However, the greedy and gluttonous Mayor Shelbourne overworks the machine and the food starts to mutate into giant unstable versions. As the mutations become a menace to the human race, it is up to Flint and Sam to figure out a solution before the small island, and eventually the world, are consumed by giant fast food.

This is another film I was initially sceptical about – not least because it was one more in a long line of digitally animated films – but also because I knew absolutely nothing about it. It was only recently that I discover that it had been a childrens book long before the idea of the film had come about. Whilst the film has been padded out extensively, with new characters and new plot lines, it doesn't do it any harm. It doesn't represent the book in any visual sense, which is a terrible shame, but this also allows it to come into its own and stand as a separate but loosely related story. It has enough depth, humour and moments that pull at your heartstrings a little for it to be a genuinely good film. Children will love the quirky character designs, and the notion of your favourite food falling from the sky even more. I wasn't originally going to include this in my research, but after watching the film, I am incredibly interested in the story and original book. Whilst I haven't read it yet, I don't doubt that I will be able to draw many comparisons between the two, making it a valuable source of information.

