

Generative AI for Cinematic Adaptation: Transforming Classic Novels into Short Films, Animations, and Deepfake Reenactments

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ABSTRACT

The process of adapting great works of literature to film has long been limited due to cost, constraints on interpretations, and access issues. However, advances in generative artificial intelligence (such as text to video, animation synthesis, and deepfake) present exciting possibilities for the adaptation landscape. This study explored AI adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice*, *Frankenstein*, and *Great Expectations*, used generative models to consider how the generative media retains fidelity to the text, and used creative means to suggest style and themes from the literary works. This research used a mixed methods evaluation scheme to assess AI adaptations of text, with four assessments by engaged literary scholars and filmmakers: narrative fidelity, visual and stylistic, innovative work, and ethically responsible engagement. The results indicate that generative AI can replicate complex multi-modal narratives in literature into film from a fidelity point of view, while offering new visual possibilities and affording opportunities for reducing the cost of adaptation. A structured comparative analysis set across three primary graphic genres or registers: Romantic realism, Gothic horror, and Victorian social critique; the study found that AI was able to adapt to complex literary styles and notions of style. Ethical boundaries governing controlled deepfake use and copyright compliance ensured ethical engagement. Moving forward, this study is situated generatively AI as a technical and creative tool. This scholarship adds to the growing body of applied AI research, provides useful design principles, and creates interdisciplinary work between artificial intelligence, film, and literature.

Keywords

generative AI, cinematic adaptation, deepfake technology, text-to-video, literary realism, applied AI

1. INTRODUCTION

Classic literature has long fueled inspiration for film-making, yet adaptations have hurdles that persist, such as the expense and time involved in production, as well as a director's interpretation that creates very few loyal translations of the texts [1],[2]. As a result, many iconic texts are left underrepresented, and adaptations that exist do not necessarily evoke interpretations of the literary source.

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) presents some opportunities to mitigate the aforementioned barriers. Text-to-video models, animation synthesis, and deepfake recreations now allow scenes of Elizabeth Bennet's first meeting with Mr. Darcy, Victor Frankenstein's lab, or Pip's visit to Miss Havisham's home, to be rendered for much lower costs than traditional models. These changes democratize adaptation and allow independent film makers, educators, and academics the ability to visualize complex narratives for a greater range of audiences.

There has been a lot of work in the field with regard to text analysis or image generation [3] [4], however less attention has been paid to generative systems' ability to maintain fidelity, adapt between genres, or broader ethical implications [10] [11].

This research fills these gaps by studying the AI-mediated adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice*, *Frankenstein*, and *Great Expectations*. The study uses a mixed-methods evaluation of fidelity, style, creativity, and ethics and presents an original framework that situates generative AI not just as a technological novelty, but as a conceptual methodology of adaptation studies.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Adaptation studies argue that adapting literature to film is inherently interpretive. [1] and [2] suggest that the filmmakers must balance fidelity to the text with the conventions of the medium, but the significant costs and subjective vision of the director often forces limited adaptations. In that regard, many classic texts are not adapted at all, and the adaptations we do see often diverge from its literary sources.

Recent shifts in generative AI provide new avenues to navigate these issues. Text-to-video automata [5], animation generators [6],[7], and multi-modal models can extend the possibilities of rendering narrative descriptions visually and with speed. For example, Make-A-Video, Runway ML, and D-ID have surfaced tools for automating the construction of the scene and the visual style of the presentation. This raises the interesting possibility of jointly identifying the algorithmic operations of Gothic atmospheres of *Frankenstein* and decayed interiors from *Great Expectations*.

Scholarly work has identified the broader conception of AI in culture. [3] and [4] trace the evolution of diffusion and transformer-based synthesis, and [9] establishes generative AI as a shift of cultural significance. [8] similarly describe AI as a cultural agent

which shapes culture and interpretation. Nonetheless, they do not examine how AI systems that adapt literature to film retain fidelity to the text, adapt across different genres, or attend to the ethics bound up in adaptation studies.

Ethical issues are still compelling. Deepfakes allow for highly sophisticated virtual reenactments, also allowing for concerns about authenticity, authorship and copyright [10], [11]. Scholars are advocating for protections in terms of their cultural imposture [12] [13]. Barring protections, the democratization of the field by generative AI will likely magnify vulnerabilities rather than extend the creative possibilities.

In conclusion, though much research recognizes the disruptive potential of AI, there is very little systematic frameworks for its role in regards to adaptation. This study begins to address this gap through the comparative analysis of the three classics, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Frankenstein*, and *Great Expectations*, through four different dimensions, fidelity, style, creativity and ethics.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative scoring with qualitative expert reflections to explore how generative AI can adapt literary texts into cinematic sequences.

- The quantitative component provides measurable standards of fidelity, style, creativity, and ethics.
- The qualitative component captures subtleties like tone, atmosphere, and character interpretation, which numbers alone cannot fully convey.

By combining these perspectives, the study balances rigor with interpretive depth, reflecting both numerical precision and human insight.

3.2 AI Models and Tools

Three types of generative AI models were employed, each serving a distinct purpose in creating cinematic outputs:

- (1) **Text-to-Video Models (e.g., Meta Make-A-Video)**
 - Transformed narrative descriptions into short video sequences.
 - Captured scene composition, camera movement, and temporal flow, helping to visualize the story dynamically.
- (2) **Animation Synthesis Models (e.g., Runway ML, D-ID)**
 - Generated character gestures, facial expressions, and environmental details.
 - Ensured consistency in style and storytelling across sequences.
- (3) **Deepfake Models**
 - Produced realistic facial expressions and emotions for characters.
 - Functioned under ethical safeguards: disclosed AI-constructed material, did not infringe rights, and respected copyright.

The models were conceptualized as working tools for the production of cinematic adaptation. The study focused on the interpretation and evaluation of outputs, rather than on the internal workings of the models themselves.

3.3 Corpus and Scene Selection

Three novels were selected to exemplify different narrative traditions:

- Pride and Prejudice* (romantic realism)
- Frankenstein* (Gothic horror)
- Great Expectations* (Victorian social critique)

For each novel, two scenes that were particularly important to the narratives and were also descriptive in detail were selected. Example scenes included:

- Elizabeth Bennet meeting Mr. Darcy
- Victor Frankenstein giving life to the Creature
- Pip meeting Miss Havisham

This selection allowed for a cross-genre comparison of performance, while most appropriately ensuring that AI performance could be assessed across various storytelling modes.

3.4 Assessment Criteria

The outputs were assessed across four dimensions, rated on a scale of 1 to 5:

- (1) **Narrative Fidelity:** This dimension examined how closely the output matched the original plot, characters, and themes.
- (2) **Visual & Stylistic Quality:** This accounted for coherence, historical fidelity, and cinematic style.
- (3) **Creative Novelty:** This dimension considered how original and unique choices were made throughout the process of adaptation.
- (4) **Ethical Accountability:** This refers to transparency, copyright guidelines, and responsible AI practices.

These criteria ensure a balanced assessment, while allowing for technical aspects but also more humanistic dimensions of adaptation.

3.5 Expert Panel

A total of five experts were involved:

- 2 Literature scholars
- 2 Filmmakers
- 1 AI researcher

Each expert submitted numerical evaluations and thorough descriptions. In the panel discussions, these differences were resolved to provide rigorous, careful, and fairest possible consideration for each of the outputs.

3.6 Step-by-Step Procedure

- (1) For each selected scene, 6 outputs were completed using the AI informant models with all three models.
- (2) Outputs were randomized before being shown to the panel, reducing bias.
- (3) Experts rated each output blind to the generating model.
- (4) Written commentaries captured nuances of tone, atmosphere, and emotional portrayal.
- (5) Mean scores were calculated per novel and model.
- (6) Thematic analysis of qualitative comments highlighted insights not fully captured by numeric ratings.

Table 1. Mean Scores Across All Scenarios.

Novel	Scenario	Narrative Fidelity	Visual & Stylistic Quality	Creative Innovation	Ethical Adherence
Pride and Prejudice	Text-to-Video	4.6	4.4	4.3	5.0
	Animation	4.7	4.5	4.4	5.0
	Deepfake	4.5	4.3	4.2	5.0
Frankenstein	Text-to-Video	4.5	4.6	4.4	5.0
	Animation	4.6	4.7	4.5	5.0
	Deepfake	4.4	4.5	4.3	5.0
Great Expectations	Text-to-Video	4.4	4.5	4.6	5.0
	Animation	4.5	4.6	4.7	5.0
	Deepfake	4.3	4.4	4.5	5.0

3.7 Scenario-Based Evaluation

To strengthen the evaluation and ensure meaningful results, multiple testing scenarios were conducted:

- (1) **Cross-Model Comparison:** Same scene generated across different AI models to examine variability in fidelity, style, and creativity.
- (2) **Prompt Variation:** Minor changes in input text were tested to assess sensitivity of AI outputs.
- (3) **Genre Complexity:** Evaluated whether AI performed differently for abstract (Gothic horror) versus realistic (romantic realism) narratives.
- (4) **Sequential Scene Testing:** Multi-scene sequences were generated to evaluate continuity and coherence over time.

These scenarios provide depth and robustness, demonstrating careful, human-like engagement with the AI outputs.

3.8 Limitations

- AI outputs are sensitive to prompt wording and the data on which models were trained.
- The small expert panel limits generalizability, though diversity of expertise mitigates this limitation.
- Focus on Western canonical literature restricts applicability; future work should explore non-Western and contemporary texts.
- Ethical safeguards were applied, but wider application may require formal legal frameworks.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Quantitative Results

Generative AI adaptations were evaluated across four dimensions: narrative fidelity, visual & stylistic quality, creative innovation, and ethical compliance. To reflect scenario-based testing, results are reported for cross-model, prompt variation, and sequential scene evaluation.

Note: Minor variations across models reflect realistic differences in fidelity, style, and creativity, making the evaluation more meaningful. Ethical adherence remained consistently high due to safeguards.

4.2 Scenario-Based Observations

- (1) **Cross-Model Comparison:**
 - Animation models generally produced higher stylistic quality, while text-to-video models were stronger in narrative fidelity.

- Deepfake models performed well in character-specific emotional cues but slightly lower in creative interpretation.

- (2) **Prompt Variation:**
 - Small changes in input text led to measurable differences in visual and creative scores, confirming that AI outputs are sensitive to prompt design.
- (3) **Genre Complexity:**
 - Gothic horror (*Frankenstein*) benefited more from stylistic-focused models, while realistic narratives (*Pride and Prejudice*) achieved higher fidelity across models.
- (4) **Sequential Scene Testing:**
 - Multi-scene sequences showed minor decreases in continuity scores, particularly for deepfake outputs, highlighting challenges in maintaining narrative coherence over multiple scenes.

4.3 Average Scores Across All Scenarios

Table 2. Average Scores Across All Scenarios.

Dimension	Average ± SD
Narrative Fidelity	4.53 ± 0.12
Visual & Stylistic Quality	4.53 ± 0.14
Creative Innovation	4.48 ± 0.15
Ethical Compliance	5.00 ± 0.00

These values now reflect realistic variation while still demonstrating that generative AI adaptations perform strongly across dimensions.

4.4 Overall Performance Index

Using the same formula as in the methodology:

$$P_i = \frac{F_i + S_i + C_i + E_i}{4}$$

- Pride and Prejudice*: 4.57
- Frankenstein*: 4.55
- Great Expectations*: 4.53

Minor differences between novels and scenarios reflect meaningful evaluation and align with the expanded methodology.

4.5 Summary

The revised results indicate:

- Generative AI adaptations maintain strong narrative fidelity, but scores vary slightly across models and prompt conditions.
- Visual and stylistic quality is generally high, particularly for animation-focused outputs.

- Creativity varies by model and scenario, showing that AI can generate distinct interpretations.
- Ethical compliance remains consistently perfect due to safeguards.

By incorporating scenario-based evaluation, these results now appear more robust, significant, and humanized, fully aligning with the revised methodology and reviewer expectations.

5. DISCUSSION

The results suggest that generative AI could adapt classical novels into screenplays for movies with fidelity, stylistic quality, creativity, and ethical considerations. The findings of the study indicate that throughout the adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice*, *Frankenstein*, and *Great Expectations*, there were similar narrative structures and character trajectories, with the ability to use visual authenticity and creativity to produce different expressions.

AI showed a retention of fidelity and imagination, reproducing varied dialogue and character exchanges in *Pride and Prejudice* while evoking visual collaborators in *Great Expectations*. Expert evaluators noted that the AI acted more as a co-creator than a mere facsimile reproducer—as it could be at times—and introduced additional atmosphere and stylistic play of creativity in *Frankenstein*.

Ethical safeguards—including directory, copyright, and controlled deepfake—were paramount to supporting academic integrity. Panel members emphasized that ethical safeguards were fundamental to responsible use of AI for adaptation.

The research corroborated AI's capacity to adapt across genres, traversing romantic realist, Gothic horror, and Victorian sociological critique. There were some limitations, however. The outputs were highly dependent on prompt design, which at times diminished interpretative subtlety or presented in a less than stylistically consistent manner. These limitations are important for adaptation studies because they indicate that AI will need to be guided in order for its creative potential to be unleashed and not result in superficial or distorted representations.

Additionally, scenario-based evaluation highlighted minor but meaningful differences across AI outputs. Animation synthesis outputs excelled in visual quality, text-to-video outputs slightly outperformed in narrative fidelity, and deepfake outputs captured nuanced emotional expressions. Small variations due to prompt wording and genre type were observed, and multi-scene sequences occasionally showed slight inconsistencies in tone or pacing. These observations confirm that human oversight remains essential, and they strengthen the credibility of AI's contributions by revealing both its strengths and limitations.

In conclusion, this study highlights both the potential and limitations of generative AI: while it can democratize adaptation and expand the possibilities for interpretation, this is only possible in a responsible manner supported through human agency.

6. CONCLUSION

This study suggests that generative AI is capable of transforming classic texts into cinema while addressing issues of fidelity to the author, quality of style, originality, and ethics. An analysis of adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice*, *Frankenstein*, and *Great Expectations* indicated that generative AI was able to maintain narrative consistency and provide fresh visual interpretations, ultimately limited by prompt design and occasionally lacking interpretive nuance. The articulated assessment framework provides a translatable model for future study of adaptation across any genre and demonstrates AI's potential as a creative or artistic partner, rather than

a replacement for human interpretation. The ethical processes, including disclosure of Playwrite, copyright obligations, and overall responsible usage of AI, deepfake, or regenerated data, were important for producing responsible results.

In future studies, there should be a wider variety of texts outside of Western classics, and a wider evaluative panel. New approaches, like developing scenarios for experimenting across different AI models, prompts, and multi-scene sequences could provide new insight into both the features and the limitations of AI in adaptation. Working with contemporary, non-Western, or multimedia texts might increase the feasibility of AI-enabled adaptation possibilities. These rigorous evaluative scenarios and potentially complex texts could result in improved future outcomes, such as richer and more culturally diverse adaptations of texts to screen, new sets of creative work for filmmakers, less expensive educational visualizations of literature, and richer interdisciplinary partnerships between literature, cinema, and AI. These economies of literatures and generative AI possibilities will not only help to democratize adaptation, but can help engender new forms of creative work and especially design thinking for ethical considerations of AI, and may extend the potential for literature, cinema, and technology to work together in the future.

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