

Film adaptation for knowing audiences: Analysing fan on-line responses to the end of *Breaking Dawn – Part 2* (2012)

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Abstract:

Critics of film adaptations of literary works have historically evaluated the success or failure of the movie on the grounds of its fidelity to the original book. In contrast popular arguments for medium specificity have questioned whether fidelity is possible when adapting one medium to another. This article follows recent academic work which has focused awareness on the *processes* of adaptation by examining evidence of reading and viewing experience in online and social media forums.

The broader research project explored the online *Twilight* fan community as an example of a 'knowing audience' acquainted with both novel and film. Here we focus on the strong response within fan forums to the surprise ending of the final film adaptation *Breaking Dawn – Part 2* (2012). The research uses the forum, blog and facebook page as sites for evidence of reading experience as defined by the Reading Experience Database (RED). The analysis sheds new light on the tensions that exist between fidelity and deviation and the article positions fan audiences as intensive readers who gained unexpected pleasure from a deviation from a canon. It argues that fans are also collaborators within the adaptation process who respect authorial authority and discuss the author's, scriptwriter's and director's interpretation of the novel for the screen. The research identifies the creative and commercial advantages to be gained from a collaborative and open dialogue between adaptors and fans.

Keywords: Adaptation, fandom, online fan communities, *Twilight*, reading experience, film, audiences, fidelity, canon, collaboration, screenwriting, franchise, Stephenie Meyer, Melissa Rosenberg, Bill Condon

Introduction

Breaking Dawn - Part 2 (2012) was the fifth and final film adaptation in the *Twilight* franchise seven years after the publication of the first novel, *Twilight*, on 5th October 2005. The films in the franchise were released exactly one year apart, amidst much hype from the media and much expectation from fans. Commercially, it was a huge success, with the five films — *Twilight* (2008), *New Moon* (2009), *Eclipse* (2010), *Breaking Dawn - Part 1* (2011) and *Breaking Dawn - Part 2* (2012) — being the 9th highest grossing franchise at the US box office, with total domestic earnings of \$1,363.5 million (boxofficemojo.com, May 2014). The final film marked the end of the saga but, uniquely in the series, the ending of this film differed from the book's ending. Fans, who had invested so much time and emotion in the *Twilight* storyworld and its characters, reacted to this break in fidelity in their online forums. This article examines the online *Twilight* fan community as an example of a 'knowing audience' (Hutcheon 2006), acquainted with both novel and adapted film, and analyses the fans' responses to the altered ending of the film adaptation *Breaking Dawn – Part 2* (2012).

Previous work on *Twilight* has explored reasons for its exceptional popularity and its perceived anti-feminist and pro-Mormon messages directed at its almost exclusively female fan base (Anatol 2011, Bode 2010, Clarke 2010, Click et al. 2010, Larsson and Steiner 2011, Wilson 2011). The *Twilight* books and films appealed to both a teen and adult audience, including a large following of 'Twilight Moms' with their own dedicated fan site boasting 45,347 members and 2,675,781 posts.¹ In December 2007 Stephanie Meyer, author of the series, introduced herself on the www.twilightmoms.com chat forum: 'Hi, my fellow moms.... I've been lurking this site for a while... It's just so cool that I'm not the only 30+ mom and wife in love with fictional underage vampires and werewolves. I feel much less pathetic.' Through her informal and imaginative interaction with fans, both online and off, Meyer helped to create what has been described as the 'first social networking best-seller' according to Trevor Drayton vice-president of Indigo the Canadian bookstore (quoted in Green, 2008).

The film adaptations may have brought the saga to a wider audience, but they have also succeeded in directing cinema audiences back to the books, in a cyclic effect. The movies enhanced the stature of the novels. 'The books were always a big seller to start with,' notes Laura Byrne-Cristiano, journalist at Hypable the fandom review site of the fan site *Twilight Lexicon*. 'Stephenie had thousands of people at the book signings for BREAKING DAWN before there was even a movie out. But I think the movies brought the books from what I would call superstar level to stratosphere level. I know so many people who saw the movie and then picked up all the books' (Abele 2012, p.142) *Breaking Dawn* had an advertised initial print run of 3.2 million copies (Green 2008). In our examination of *Breaking Dawn – Part 2* we have sought to bring together different areas of research from different traditions: film, adaptation and fan studies. Specifically we seek to engage scholars in publishing and internet studies to explore evidence provided by online sources of cross-media literacy and intensive reading.

Christine Geraghty (2013) shows this in her outline of the five stages of adaptation studies. She starts with fidelity in Bluestone's seminal work in 1957, moving to media specificity as explained by the film critic Pauline Kael who relates it to early twentieth century concerns over the camera's inability to capture the novel's interiorisation (Kael 2016, Geraghty 2016). Robert Stam further explores and then debunks the notion of fidelity to the literary source raising the importance of intertextuality in meaning making in adaptation (Stam 2005). Other critics have variously examined adaptation's contextuality from different disciplinary standpoints – ie within the context of commercial imperatives, or as a social practice, or within the fandom (Boozer 2008, Turner 1988, Hardy 2011). Geraghty moves finally to convergence culture, described by Henry Jenkins as 'protective, possessive, celebratory and critical' (2006, p.93) and analysed by N. Katherine Hayles to reveal the effect of the digital media on the cultural practices of older media, an interaction she terms intermediation (Hayles 2005). Adaptation studies has focused on the processes involved in adaptation (Cardwell 2002, Cartmell and Whelehan 1999, Griffith 1997, Harrison 2005), whether to advocate it as collaborative commercial enterprise (Boozer 2008, Bloore, 2014), or as a way to 'extend, enhance and elaborate on their sources' (Harrison 2005, p.xviii see for example *Adaptation's* special issue on Jane Austen 2017). The *Twilight* audience online in fan forums are an example of intermediation within a convergence culture and express a surprising knowledge of the processes involved in adaptation.

Simone Murray has sought to reconceptualise adaptation 'in more concrete industrial, commercial and legal terms' as an 'encompassing economic system' (Murray 2012, p.122) and has identified ways in which the reading audiences of adapted material prove lucrative to production companies in terms both of ticket revenue and tiered levels of pre-production and pre-launch marketing:

Firstly, loyal readers of an acclaimed novel are important chiefly as key, opinion-setting early adopters, whose positive responses to a film adaptation can be used as a launching pad for a broader distribution and publicity campaign... In the second phase of producers' strategy, fan approval can be used as a basis for critical and reviewer praise at key festivals and in the build-up to the awards season. Finally, nominations and especially Academy Award wins, can be leveraged into a mainstream publicity campaign and distribution strategy targeting the mass audience. (Murray 2012, p.133)

Knowing audiences present both an advantage and a challenge to filmmakers. Commercially, as Hutcheon says 'for an adaptation to be successful in its own right, it must be so for both knowing and unknowing audiences' (p.121). In Murray's model, readers and/or fans are instrumental in the first and second stages of an adaptation's PR and marketing, and it is only at the latter stage that the film company need instigate a traditional marketing campaign to a wider audience, once opinion and interest have already been generated. Linda Hutcheon argues that the 'knowing audience' both gain and lose by

their knowledge of the novel. But as Allen Redmon points out the idea any deviation from the novel must be kept as a surprise ‘misconstrues movie magic by locating the pleasure of a movie in sudden surprises and unexpected twists rather than the ongoing engagement the best films proffer’ (2015: 254). These audiences hunting for the complete story ‘invest both time and money in this process of intermedium cultural convergence’ (Ioannidou 2013: 233)

In literary studies, reader response theory has acknowledged the active role the reader plays in the reading process. Iser identified two poles in a read text: ‘the artistic refers to the text created by the author, and the aesthetic to the realization accomplished by the reader.’ Existing at some point between these poles is ‘the literary work,’ which can only exist through the reader’s involvement or realization of the text (Iser 1974, p.274). Whilst the act of reading itself is ‘slow, private and intensely personal’ (Demory 2010, p. 204), it correspondingly provokes a need to look outside of oneself to share interpretations with others. What we want to investigate here is whether this shared discursive activity acts effectively as a third pole giving rise to a new communal realization of the literary work.

Our evidence is taken from fans’ posts on the forums about their own interpretations of the book and the film. Unlike records in diaries, autobiographies, letters or the other material forms of historical evidence of reading experience, their words are in digital form in public fora. Nevertheless this is still a primary source providing evidence of contemporary reading practice. The historical Reading Experience Database defines the ‘reading experience’ as follows:

We are aware that ‘reading’ can mean many things, from reading a book aloud or silently, to the critical ‘reading’ of a text (including dramatic and cinematic texts) in an academic sense, or (metaphorically) ‘reading’ a face, a social situation, or the symbolic value of a text. But in the interests of clarity and manageability we have had to exclude certain of these ‘reading experiences’ as outside our remit. For our purposes, a ‘reading experience’ means **a recorded engagement with a written or printed text—beyond the mere fact of possession.** (Reading Experience Database)

We use the posts in online forums as ‘a record of engagement with a written or printed text’. The study of online forums is not new, and they have been extensively used as evidence of fan’s expectation and fulfilment, franchise and canon knowledge and other questions relating to the film’s reception and the social practice of cinema going (Barker and Brooks 1998, Thompson 2007, Brooker 2002, Burke 2016). Here we take the online text as primary, empirical, evidence of the novel reading experience analyzing it as a record of the act of reading. We acknowledge its performative aspects – its unreliability as a literal source and interpret it as a means of expression. We view these online forums as a textual practice and a ‘record of engagement’ (as the Reading Experience Database defines it) across novel and film which enables us to go further into the way readers and audiences are articulating their cross-media capital. We believe this method enables us to trace an emerging cross-

media literacy. For *Twilight* readers this close cross-media reading of texts is an intensive reading practice and as such is evidence which counters the perceived trend in extensive reading or distracted surfing blamed on convergence culture and social media.

Studies of such records will add to the work currently been done on trends in digital reading, for example Michael Bhaskar's exploration of digital books, Miha Kovac's quantitative analysis of reading and leisure time, Adriaan Van Der Weel's examination of the role of reading in decoding the symbolic and Angus Philip's analysis of the digital publishing industry (Bhaskar 2013, Kovac 2007, Van Der Weel 2015, Philips 2014). Our research will also be relevant to Padmini Murray and Claire Squires' revision of Danton's print communications circuit, updating it to digital production and Skains' analysis of the changing author-reader dynamic. (Murray and Squires 2013, Skains 2010)

The forums are populated by readers and fans of the books and the films. In fan studies, Fiske notes, 'much of the pleasure of fandom lies in the fan talk that it produces, and many fans report that their choice of their object of fandom was determined at least as much by the oral community they wished to join as by any of its inherent characteristics' (Fiske 1992, p.38). Digital convergence has blurred the lines between orality and literacy and this research harks back to the cyclical, collaborative and social quality of storytelling in an oral tradition. Crossing these historical boundaries, Fuller and Rehberg Sedo observe that the relationship between the reader and other readers include 'feelings of intimacy, "belonging" and social connection' which are similar to the reasons why a person might join a fan community (2013, p.11). And Turner, with a cinematic perspective, claims that for the film buff 'pleasure in the text ... comes not only from recognizing the new and surprising but from recognizing intertextual links and generic conventions as well as their disruption' which is confirmed by mastery of the film and membership of the culture (1988, p.120).

It is precisely this prolific audience participation and fan-generated content which is evident in the *Twilight* forums' cultural convergence. Such advances in technology provide the means for audiences to consume, relate, participate and respond to media in such a way that they generate an additional layer of product themselves. For Fiske, 'this semiotic productivity [turns] into some form of textual production that can circulate among – and thus help define – the fan community' (1992, p.30). This convergence of media production and consumption is characterized by significant audience participation. In the Books category of FanFiction.net, for example, *Twilight* fan-fiction is the second most popular source text, with 216,000 stories submitted, beaten only by the *Harry Potter* series which has inspired 682,000 stories (fanfiction.net 2014).

Deviation from the storyworld or 'canon' caused fans to post their emotional responses online. 'Canon' here is used in a specific way; it refers to 'the overall set of storylines, premises, settings, and characters offered by the source media text' (Parrish 2007, p.28). In adaptation the canon can be replicated faithfully or can be used as a springboard for deviation and interpretation. Knowledge of the canon gives cultural capital and unlike other kinds of capital, the dividends of fan capital, Fiske says 'lie in the pleasures

and esteem of one's peers in a community of taste rather than those of one's social betters' (Fiske 1992, p.34).

The *Twilight* forums are predominantly female which gives them a distinct online communication style (Kendall 1989, Baym 2000, 2010). Nancy K. Baym explains how members reap personal reward for their expertise and participation, as forums enable 'people to show off for one another their competences in making sense of the genre ... and to engage in the social pleasures of performing and garnering praise and admiration' (Baym 2000, p.126). One fan claimed to have 'read each book 32 times each'. (Lizette Morticia Way Cullen, 26 Nov 2012, 00:12). Their in-depth knowledge of Meyer's canon displayed and tested within the fan community, elevates some fans to the status of *aficionado*.

Our study drew on the methods of researchers of forums and fandoms, film franchises, reading and bibliography. We eschewed surveys as they ran contra to our epistemological approach. We also chose not to intervene in the online fora and employed a cross-disciplinary mix methods approach using the publicly available textual evidence online.

Cataloguing the *Twilight* fandom

Cataloguing the 377 English language fan sites listed on Stephenie Meyer's website² produced a comprehensive, up-to-date record of online fan engagement and enabled the identification of a sub-set of key fan sites which contain regular, current subject matter and high levels of fan engagement and discussion. The method chosen was adapted from historical bibliometrics (Weedon 2017). The criteria recorded were: name, number of posts, the age and duration of the fan sites, the size and engagement of their audiences, the longevity of different site classifications and the host (see Appendix A). Automatically generated site information gave date started, numbers of registered members and posts, date of last post which proved very useful, but smaller, less populated forums needed manual counting of threads and members. For blogs and sites with regular news articles the start date was the date of the first post. For sites without forums or news content the start date was the copyright year posted at the footer of the web page (e.g. ©2008). The prevalence of spamming caused problems establishing the end date. In many cases the recorded date of last post was November 2012 when a company called EntertainmentJewelry.com spammed at least 18 sites with posts advertising a replica Bella Swann engagement ring. These were discounted and an actual last post date established.

There were also obsolete web hosting platforms. For example the 25 sites created on the piczo.com blogging platform shut down in November 2012 and disappeared entirely or remain as a single homepage with little or no content. A number of myspace pages, proboard forums and ning communities have ceased to exist. Similarly site classification was arbitrary and it was difficult to differentiate between a fan 'site' and a fan 'blog'. Many of the early sites were created on free templates which looked similar and contained similar content (e.g. an overview of plots, character profiles, character photos, about the author etc) and remained static in that content. In general, sites which featured a forum were

easiest to date, either from the forum statistics automatically generated by the hosting software or from the initial welcome thread.

Of the 377 sites examined, 163 (43%) could not be classified by start date as there was no date information, 96 (25%) no longer exist. Ten per cent of the fan sites were launched in 2006 following the publication of the first book in the saga, *Twilight* (2005). The greatest surge in the number of new sites was however in 2008 when the first film adaptation was released and 106 sites were launched. Of the 148 sites launched during 2007/08, 21 (14%) had been abandoned by the end of 2008 and only 13 sites launched during 2007-08 were still current and updated regularly at the time of the study (see Whiteman and Metivier 2013 on the death of fandoms). Those with ‘member only’ forums were excluded for the current analysis (for ethical reasons), as were all fan fiction sites and role-playing sites, and any site which did not have new content in 2012/2013. This yielded 22 fan sites for closer content analysis, 3 of which featured discussion forums with dedicated *Breaking Dawn - Part 2* (2012) discussion threads.

Sherry Turkle characterized these online conversations as ‘a kind of hybrid: Speech ... frozen into artefact’ (Turkle 1995, p.183). The online conversations were the textual evidence analysed. The selected forums, blogs and Facebook pages were printed or copied and archived for study in case the sites went down. The preserved text provided a language corpus for analysis. To evidence the emotive reaction, the corpus of a discussion thread was put through textfinder, an online program which provided vocabulary frequency tables.³

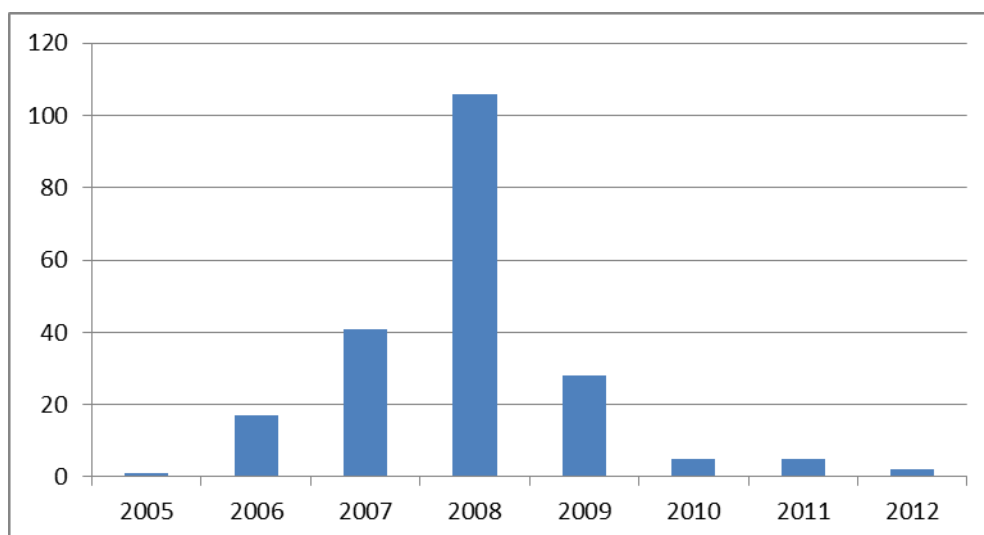


Figure 1: Fan sites shown by year of launch (n=214)

Using online fan forums was a way to get multiple, in-depth viewpoints from audience members who had invested time and passion in the saga and were likely to give an informed and judged response to the adaptation. This research takes an approach similar to Chin and Gray in their study of pre-viewers and pre-Texts of *The Lord of the Rings* films, who explain they were ‘looking primarily at the text, and Tolkien fans’ talk surrounding the text itself, not at how they use the Internet as a social apparatus’ (2001, p.3). ‘To use the language of Web

2.0, individuals construct identities relative to their networks' (Pearson 2009). Making use of forums allowed us to analyse audience reaction, albeit the audience who chose to perform and record their reaction online. Therefore social interaction on the forums, use of language, gendered readings of the text, etc were not touched upon; rather this was a study focusing on this fandom's response to adaptation.

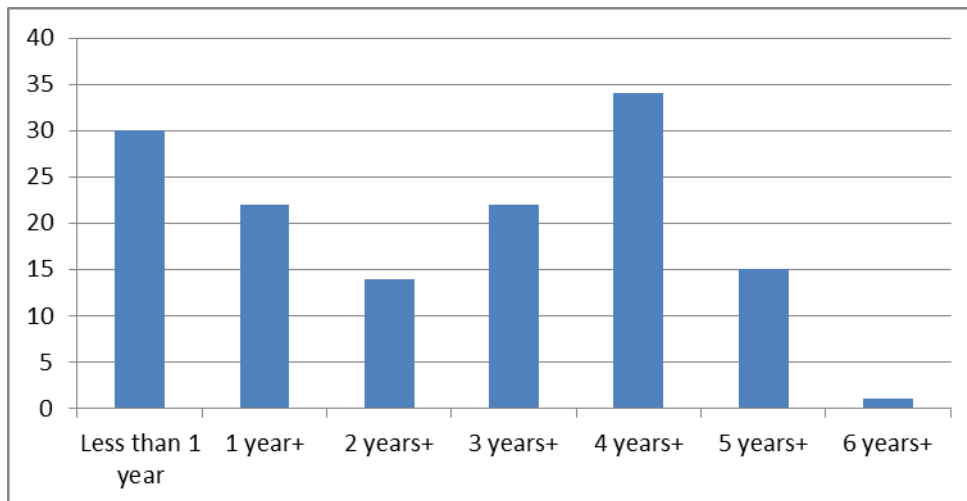


Figure 2: Life span of fan sites where start/end dates were available (n=138)

The climax of the film adaptation

The focus of this paper is the fans' reaction to the climax of the film adaptation which differed from that of the book. In Barthesian terms this is a cardinal function or nuclei, a hinge point in the narrative which opens up the possibilities for readers of other alternative consequences. Such change is often prepared for by catalyzers, small seemingly meaningless actions which bridge between these change points. Indices in the narrative signify the particular ability or mythic power of the vampires and werewolves (Barthes 1966, Macfarlane 1996). At the end of the novel *Breaking Dawn*, the protagonists, the Cullen family, and their witnesses assemble and face the antagonists, the Volturi, and a bloody battle is expected. However, no fight takes place as Aro, the head of the Volturi, has a vision of the future and sees his own death and many other casualties. After the long and detailed build-up in the novel, many readers at the time lamented how the lack of action had left them dissatisfied and frustrated.

In the film adaptation, however, this battle takes place, seamlessly following on from the expected storyline, so that the audience is led to believe the battle is part of the narrative action. In the fight scene, several key members of the Cullen family are killed, along with many members of the Volturi. It is only at this point, when the audience believes that many of the protagonists are dead, that it is revealed that the battle was a vision of the future, foreseen by Alice Cullen and read, telepathically, by the Volturi leader Aro. The indexical significance of the werewolves in the book for Alice is removed at this point in the

film so the knowing reader is surprised, as their 'reading' misleads them. This deviation, however, does nothing to alter the happy ending of the film.

Of particular relevance here is how the unexpected deviation from fidelity surprised, challenged and ultimately delighted the fans (delighted perhaps because of the return to fidelity when the sequence is revealed as a vision). The fans proved themselves an incredibly knowledgeable audience through their close familiarity with Meyer's text and their intensive readings of both the books and the films. They experienced the change in the storyline in three keys ways – as readers, collaborators and viewers – and the post-film discussions challenge some long held beliefs about authorship and the canonical text.

In his book *Screenplay*, professional screenwriter Syd Field outlines the framework for a successful screenplay, the paradigm of the three act structure. Field asserts that two key Plot Points are required to 'move the story forward ... and hold the paradigm in place' (Field 2005, p.143). He defines a Plot Point as 'any incident, episode, or event that hooks into the action and spins it around in another direction.' In *Breaking Dawn – Part 2* (2012), Plot Point 1 occurs when Irina sees Renesmee and wrongly accuses the Cullens of creating an immortal child, thereby provoking the Volturi to exert punishment on the Cullens. Plot Point 2 occurs when the witnesses assemble to vouch for the Cullens' innocence and a fight ensues. Robert McKee outlines a similar five-part structure: the Inciting Incident, the first major event of the telling, is the primary cause for all that follows, putting into motion the other four elements – Progressive Complications, Crisis, Climax, Resolution (McKee 1999, p.181).

It is apparent that, structurally, the climax and the resolution in the film conform more closely to Field's model. However by transforming a single sentence in the book (*Breaking Dawn*, p.738) into the finale of a five film franchise lasting 8 minutes 45 seconds on screen, Meyer and Rosenberg succeed on two of McKee's cinematic counts – firstly they 'turn what is mental into the physical' (McKee 1999, p.368) and secondly they 'give the audience what it wants, but not the way it expects' (p.310).

Analysis showed that the fans' response to the deviation from the *Twilight* canon could be grouped in three ways: comments on the book text; comments on the changes in the screenplay (including point-of-view and dialogue); and reading meaning into textual imagery. These will be looked at under the three dimensions of the fandom: as readers, as collaborators and as viewers.

The collaborative audience

Stephenie Meyer began her relationship with fans during the early stages of the franchise, and she used her personal website to keep fans updated and respond to questions. This dialogue with fans also extended to other members of the adaptation team, with screenwriter Melissa Rosenberg and director of the final two films, Bill Condon, making use of social media to connect and reach out to fans during the adaptation process.

Using her Facebook page Melissa Rosenberg communicated with fans while writing the *Breaking Dawn* screenplays. At times she openly requested feedback. MTV News on 29th July 2010 reported that:

Fans interested in checking in more frequently with Rosenberg's 'Dawn' progress can check out her Facebook page, which Rosenberg told us she checks regularly to see what Twi-hards are saying and involve them in plotline discussions. 'I ask people to really weigh in with what are their favorite scenes in the books, what's important to them,' Rosenberg said. 'And there generally seems to be a consensus about one scene or another. It's really helpful for me and I'll interact with them sometimes.'⁴

Comments included suggestions of specific events and songs to accompany particular scenes. Numerous fans posted photographs of their daughters as potential actresses to play the role of Renesmee. The screenwriter acknowledged the benefit of having this dialogue with an audience which has a deep knowledge of the text saying it provided her with information about which scenes or episodes resonated most with fans. Melissa thanked them saying: 'SOOOO great to read your thoughts on important moments in BD. I'm very much in agreement with almost every single thing you've mentioned, which makes me happy. And relieved. Still working away on all of it - it's far from finalized. But grateful to you all!!! xoxo Mel' (Facebook, 30 July 2010).⁵ She later added that the fan interaction also helped her to quash any internet-generated rumours about omissions in her *Breaking Dawn* scripts. The posts show that the fans feel that they 'own' the story and its characters. They subvert the assumption of the author's absolute authority and imply that a storyworld could indeed take on a life of its own, beyond the pen of its author. Their reaction suggests that with enough knowledge of a storyworld, anyone with a credible enough aficionado status could take up the challenge of co-creation.

On 30th April 2010, director Bill Condon wrote an introduction as the new director in the franchise and in it Condon demonstrated his credentials using very specific *Twilight* terminology to validate himself as part of the community.

Greetings Twihards, Twifans, Twilight Moms, Team Edward, Team Jacob and Team Switzerland ... I'm pretty busy bringing myself up to speed on what you already know by heart: I've read BREAKING DAWN twice, rewatched Catherine's and Chris's movies 2-3 times each, have all four CDs playing in my car, and have Catherine's notebook, Mark Cotta Vaz's companion books, and even Volume 1 of the graphic novel here on my desk ... I realize that this barely qualifies me for "newborn" status in the universe you've been living inside for a few years now, but a guy's gotta start somewhere.⁶

This introduction letter acknowledges the fans' expertise as Condon admits that he can never compete with the fans who have been living in this universe for years and know it by heart. Yet the letter asserts his seriousness and commitment, and lays a strong foundation of trust and respect for the ensuing two films. After the film is made, Condon addresses 'our global Twihard family' – a family to which he now feels he belongs – in the final letter of 25th November 2012 and he gives recognition to the fans as part of the creative team: 'I'm very proud of what we've created together'. He acknowledges how the film has been created with the fans' expectations in mind, indicating that certain elements have been chosen and tailored specifically for the fandom: 'enjoy the twists and parting gifts we have in store for you...'. He also provides a telling example of how the fans' intimate knowledge of detail came to his aid during filming:

I don't think I'll ever live down the shame of being spied on by Twihard covens around the world on our very first night of shooting in Rio. Thanks to photos shot and instantly posted online of Bella and Edward on honeymoon, we were called out in real time for missing a certain engagement ring (Sorry – again!)⁷

What might have been perceived as a problem, in terms of security and leaking of spoiler information was turned into an example of the knowing audience providing continuity advice during the filming process.

Condon's parting letter provoked many Facebook comments indicating the strength of the relationship. Personal expressions of thanks make up a large percentage of the 2,900+ comments left. The majority of these comments express the fans' pride and gratitude. Fans on other sites also singled out his directorship as the best in the franchise: 'I love how Condon found ways to include all the directors even while making this his own unique vision of the story. And I love that he tied all the disparate styles together. It sews all the movies together into a quilt'. (Shimmerskin, 21 Nov 2012, 04:36)⁸

The reading audience

The initial collective of *Twilight* fans were prompted to seek each other out and create their own space online to discuss the book, long before the arrival of the films as the founder of the *Twilight Lexicon* admits. The website 'came about from pure necessity. After reading *Twilight* in February of 2006, I found myself craving more and went online to start my search.'⁹ The *Lexicon* is arguably the most authoritative and comprehensive of all the *Twilight* fan sites. Founder Lori Joffs (aka Alphie) struck up a friendship with author Stephenie Meyer after Meyer posted a review of Joff's fanfic version of *Twilight*, 'The Lion and The Lamb', on the site FanFiction.net. Joffs subsequently launched *Twilight Lexicon* as an information resource for fans,¹⁰ with Meyer providing her with additional material and answering questions about the *Twilight* universe she had created. On the *Lexicon* site, there is a very clear demarcation in the forums between book and film discussion, with the forums

divided into sections – *In The Meadow* relating to discussion about the books and *Hollywood Hideout* for discussion about the films. Within these, and the other sections, there are additional subsections, narrowing the discussion further by book and then again by chapter. By intensive reading the fans can share ideas, interpretations and reactions, thus generating a collective understanding and a communal ‘realization of the text’ (Iser 1974, p.274).

The sense of pleasure and esteem is evident in the forums of the *Twilight Lexicon*. Members of the *Lexicon* pride themselves on being the elite in terms of *Twilight* knowledge. Discussing a deviation from Meyer’s canon in the film *Breaking Dawn – Part 2* (2012), one *Lexicon* fan comments: ‘One of the only places on earth where they will be called on it is here on the Lex, and they knew that’ (Openhome, Sun Nov 18, 2012 12:11 am). An excellent example of how fans demonstrate their aficionado status through their intimate knowledge of canon takes place in a discussion thread on the *Twilight Lexicon* forum entitled ‘The New Ending **SPOILERS SPOILERS SPOILERS**’ where the poster asks ‘Was the new ending necessary? Did it make it better? What does having a dual ending do to the saga?’.¹¹ The thread is dominated by a discussion of the mechanism through which the climactic ending is achieved – Alice’s vision of the battle. As one fan points out in only the second post in the thread:

It’s bothering me... In New Moon; Alice gets a vision about Bella. She can’t see what happens with Bella after jumping that cliff. Alice tells Jacob she can’t see past him.... And then you get to BD2. With a complete vision that seems to be the ending. Alice can’t see the wolves! Yet, she sees a complete fight with wolves and all! How can she see that? Am I missing something here? (Brienna, Wed Nov 14, 2012 5:56 am)

In the books Alice Cullen is unable to see the wolves or Renesmee in her visions of the future, yet both appear in her vision at the end of *Breaking Dawn – Part 2* (2012). Forum members proceed to use their knowledge of the books to offer possible explanations for this blatant deviation from *Twilight* canon. One fan refers back to the second book in the saga, *New Moon*, for her rationalisation:

Remember in New Moon ... Alice says that it’s possible to lie with your thoughts ... what if she used her thoughts to lie to Aro about the outcome...making him see an outcome that was completely made up? (Songbird, Thu Nov 15, 2012 11:53 am)

However this suggestion is quickly countered by another fan’s cross-referencing with earlier books:

But shouldn’t Aro then just see that you’re lying? ... In the book, don’t remember the exact lines or quote; but when Edward goes to Aro to give him

his hand, Aro can see everything. He knows every plan or strategy the Cullens or friends have thought out. ... Even without the book explaining; Edward said himself in NM that Aro can read every thought you've ever had by *holding your hand*. (Brienna, Thu Nov 15, 2012 12:41 pm)

Further suggestions are put forward by other forum members. The fans are troubled by this deviation from canon, examining the plausibility of each suggestion in turn, using a mixture of textual knowledge and supposition, in an attempt to reconcile the film with their understanding of the books. But while some suggestions are applauded and others dismissed, there is a noticeable division between those who feel able to accept the deviation for adaptation purposes and those who cannot:

You know for the first time I can live with the alteration from the canon... I understand that they had to make the movie more exciting than in the book and I understand that they have to make the movie epic to sell it... I am just so bloody happy that they choose to give up the science of Alice's visions instead of really killing a Cullen... It could have been so, so, so much worse... (marielle, Nov 19, 2012 1:34 pm)

However, for those fans who view the deviation from canon as a major difficulty, there is a distinct shift in their position from aficionado to critic:

Right now I don't think I'm ever going to find an explanation for it all that'll satisfy me. Wolves involved = Alice shouldn't see the vision ... Unless SM comes up with a darn good explanation, it'll keep bugging me I think. (Brienna, Sun Nov 18, 2012 3:50 pm)

The bottom line, in my opinion, is that they just threw that canon out like yesterday's garbage. The utility of blocks in Alice's visions had outrun its usefulness, at least as far as the movie. (corona, Nov 19, 2012 1:07 pm)

Such is their disapproval that criticism begins to be directed towards the author for imposing such a restrictive 'rule' early on in her writing: 'The real problem here, seems to me, is Stephenie's decision all those years ago to allow wolves to wipe Alice's visions of EVERYONE out.' (December, Sun Nov 18, 2012 12:25 pm) There is an implication here that, as the author, she should have thought things through more carefully and considered the future implications of such a key plot device. In addition a further two forum members note that these 'rules' appear to have been relaxed by the author in her later books as 'stringent requirements seem to lessen as time goes on' (Tornado, Sun Nov 18, 2012 5:08 pm)

These critical examples illustrate a noticeable shift in the power relationship between the author and her fans, with the *Lexicon* members boasting such expertise that

they feel qualified and justified to critique Meyer's authorial decisions, as well as her decisions as producer of the film adaptation. *Lexicon* member 'corona' goes on to encapsulates the dichotomy the fans feel about the change in Meyer's canon:

Stephenie might try to retrofit an explanation. It would be a delicious lie, and I'd love her for it. She's the author, so her explanation would be the accepted canon, but she would be a beautiful liar. Except she can't be, she's the author. I love it. (corona, Mon Nov 19, 2012 1:07 pm)

This poses the question: is it possible for an author to renounce her own canon or is the author's very involvement in the adaptation process simply an opportunity to expand upon or refine her original mythology? Some fans clearly see Meyer's involvement and influence on the film adaptation as a means by which she can provide additional layers and added nuances to her characters:

This is the great thing about that last battle. In the book, SM finally elevated her characters above the story itself. She loved her characters more than the story and couldn't let any of them die. Now, in the movie, she can continue to tell the story and reveal even more about her characters while still keeping them ultimately safe. (corona, Mon Nov 19, 2012 1:07 pm)

Because Meyer was so involved in the process of adapting *Breaking Dawn – Part 2* (2012) from book to film there is a feeling that her involvement gives credibility to the changes made. Fans trust in the outcome because of her input and this may be a unique reason why, for many fans, this adaptation ended up being *better* than the book – because they perceive it as the author's second chance to get it right. As confirmation of the reciprocal relationship between the author and her fans, Meyer does in fact respond to her fans' questions and concerns over the deviations from canon in a public statement posted on her website on 26th November 2012 in which she offers her explanation of the changed film ending:

Melissa Rosenberg and I have both mentioned the fateful dinner we had (back during the filming of *Eclipse*) where we hashed out a way to make the end of *Breaking Dawn* more cinematic. This was the idea we latched on to — how do we make this vision of Aro's into something the viewer can experience? The answer was pretty simple once we looked at it that way — we already had a character who could show us visions. So the only real change to the book ending of *Breaking Dawn* is that Alice enters the scene earlier, and comes in contact with Aro.

(Are there a few little trespasses against the mythology in this vision? Yes, as some of you have pointed out. The consensus was that a minor deviation

from what had been established was forgivable in the name of entertainment. I had a few very elaborate solutions, but they were too confusing and not nearly as cinematic as the final product. And obviously, the result was very entertaining.)¹²

There is a sense of pride amongst the *Lexicon* fan community that this dichotomy concerning the wolves and Alice's ability to envision the future would only present a problem here on their forum and with this pride comes prestige, a form of Fiske's cultural capital, from perceiving themselves at the top of the *Twilight* fandom hierarchy. It is the fans' absolute certainty of their own expertise which goes some way to providing one acceptable explanation for the Wolf/Vision dichotomy: that the filmmakers had to include the wolves, thereby breaking with canon, simply so that ardent fans wouldn't piece together the clues. There is little doubt, though, amongst the *Twilight Lexicon* membership, that the decision to kill off two major protagonists was a surprising move on the part of the author, screenwriter and director.

From the forum discussions, it is apparent the fans have a fair understanding of the adaptation process and the constraints placed upon the screenwriter in condensing a 700 page novel into two two-hour films, and the challenges of making into a movie the book's internal narrative. In the film the audience is 'exposed to the multiplicity of signifiers contained within the space of a frame or series of frames' (McFarlane 1996, p.27), allowing the film to convey its message with more immediacy. On the *TwilightSaga.com* discussion thread 'Movie did it better', there is a debate about the merits of the real battle on screen versus the mental battle alluded to in book. The debate focused on the question of what political position the author might be trying to convey through this dichotomy. Some fans interpret her lack of action in the book as a sign of pacifism through her use of a cerebral game of out-maneuvring, echoed by the chess metaphor on the front cover of the book. Many more, though, felt disappointment: 'I am thankful that no one died, but after 300 pages of reading, I felt really let down. I felt like I had been emotionally duped or misled.' (JJ)¹³ Meyer addresses the question of 'why no action?' on her website thus:

I'm not the kind of person who writes a Hamlet ending. If the fight had happened, it would have ended with 90% of the combatants, Cullen and Volturi alike, destroyed. There was simply no other outcome once the fight got started, given the abilities and numbers of the opposing sides. Because I would never finish Bella's story on such a downer — Everybody dies! — I knew that the real battle would be mental. It was a game of maneuvering, with the champion winning not by destroying the other side, but by being able to walk away. This was another reason I liked the chess metaphor on the cover — it really fit the feel of that final game. I put a clue into the manuscript as well. Alice tore a page from *The Merchant of Venice* because the end of *Breaking Dawn* was going to be somewhat similar: bloodshed appears

inevitable, doom approaches, and then the power is reversed and the game is won by some clever verbal strategies; no blood is shed, and the romantic pairings all have a happily ever after.¹⁴

Reference to the Shakespeare play with its dramatic reversal and to the war strategies of chess belies the medium specificity argument. Mental confrontation can be dramatic and performative but Rosenberg wants to make it entertaining and provide the spectacle necessary for cinema. Meyer may also have been responding to the criticism of the novel, and taking a second attempt to please her disgruntled audience. Some fans from the *Lexicon* forums think this was the case: 'I really think this was SM's way of saying, for all those who criticized the anti-climactic ending of the book, here you go' (Violet Sunlight, Tue 27 Nov 2012, 11:23pm).¹⁵ However as JJ from the TwilightSaga forum adds: 'The movie allowed you see what would happen and then release a breath that you didn't even realize that you were holding and be thankful 'that' did not happen'(JJ).¹⁶ And in many ways that is an even more powerful way to get across a message of pacifism, if that had indeed been Meyer's intention.

The capacity for the film adaptation to work on multiple levels for different audiences and therefore bring in an existing readership as well as a separate movie-going audience to the cinemas makes good business sense. For an uninitiated movie-goer, an unfamiliar storyline, an unknown outcome and plenty of action are arguably sufficient attraction to make the film a success. For an audience with a deep knowledge of the original book, the adaptation takes on an added power. The final scenes remediate the physical book, depicting the turning of the pages of the actual novel and a close-up of the final word in the book 'forever'. The ending is cited as a moment that has been crafted solely for the fans:

Everything that flows from the battle onwards is like one big butterfly kiss to the book fans. The meadow scene, the final paragraph, the names of Jacob and Edward and Bella being lifted off the pages in the final credits. A tribute to the stars, to the characters, to the author and ultimately to us, the reader.
(corona, Mon Nov 19, 2012 4:08 pm)

The closing scenes draw the audience inexorably back to the book – and by association, the reader: 'This is an ending that was feared to be tortured to fit itself to Hollywood convention, and yet is full of hidden nods to the fans' (corona, Mon Nov 19, 2012 4:08 pm).

The viewing audience

The adapted ending of *Breaking Dawn - Part 2* (2012) led to a unique and unexpected cinematic experience for knowledgeable *Twilight* fans. The full impact of the changed ending could only truly be felt by viewers who were familiar with the book, and who had invested the additional time and affection in the characters that appear to have been killed.

The success of the film’s climax is largely down to the selection of which characters die, specifically Carlisle, who is a loyal, peace-loving man, whose primary motivation is protecting his family. This provokes a shock at Carlisle’s apparent death.

After the cinematic experience, fans returned to the forum and Facebook to share their reaction. Contrasting these sets of reactions provide insight on the two types of social media and the fans who posted on each. While the forums are a place for aficionados to discuss more detailed readings of the film, comments on the official *Twilight Saga* Facebook page, and that of screenwriter Melissa Rosenberg, were from a wider range of fans, some of whom sought the personal connection with the creative team behind the franchise.

On 17th November 2012, the day after the release of the film Rosenberg posted a still photo of the final fight scene on her Facebook page and teased fans with the question: ‘Do you know what happened next?’ In reply to this, fans comments display a wide range of strong physical responses.¹⁷

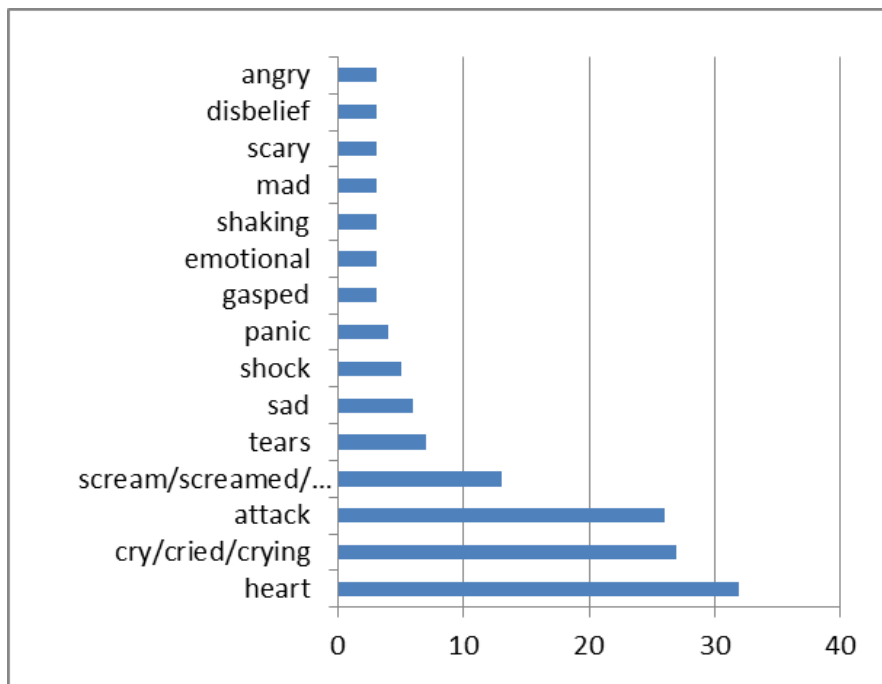


Figure 3: Frequency of words used in reply to Melissa Rosenberg’s Facebook post dated 17th November 2012, displaying the physical symptoms and emotions felt by fans [frequency by textfinder.com]

Of the 233 responses gathered, 26 make reference to having a ‘heart attack’, 34 use the word ‘cry/crying/cries’ or ‘tears’, and 13 use the words ‘scream’ or ‘screamed’. Lesser numbers reported feelings of anxiety, panic, shaking, puking, shock and holding their breath. For example, Kalia Broussard details the full gamut of emotions felt throughout the latter part of the film:

I was not expecting this. My God though ... I seriously screamed ... The whole theater did. Then I cried. Got angry. And almost stormed out. But thank God I didn't. Because the way y'all twisted the plot was epic. I ended up crying again but this time happy tears – and ended up laughing at myself at how ridiculous I was being. The whole time I was thinking 'How could they do this to us? How could Stephenie Meyer allow this? This is bull!' But I'm glad the way it ended.

In addition to these visceral reactions, other fans reported strong feelings of anger. One fan, Kennedy Bowden, writes: 'Almost headed home to destroy my room' while Barbie Freeman said 'I got sick to my stomach then I got mad and then I was like WOW... loved it.'

The juxtaposition of positive and negative language is typical of the fans' response in this arena. Yet despite this the overwhelming message from fans to the scriptwriter was that they loved the film, and that this extreme range of emotions led to the particular success of this adaptation:

I almost had a panic attack! It was the most perfect ending ... I cried for last 20 minutes! Can't wait to see it again! (Karen Mallen)

The anger, the tension ... and then the relief, that's what made the movie the best one yet. (Helen Isitt)

Similarly, the fans responded to the creative direction: in the reaction to Bill Condon's farewell message it became personal: Tracy D Pass confessing 'All I can say is O...M...G! In the space of 5 mins I went from wanting to kill you to wanting to shower you with kisses!!!' (26 Nov 2012, 00:19).¹⁸ Several fans commented on the enjoyment derived from sharing this emotional rollercoaster with a community of like-minded people: 'I was at the marathon here in Bristol, Va and we all lol'ed, cried and gasped at the final end scene.... And we were, for a time, a group of strangers brought together as a family.' (Erica Lyn Bishop, 26 Nov 2012, 18:48) 'I have never been so shocked in a movie before – but I loved the ending'. (princessdi)

One such dedicated thread in *Twilight Moms* entitled 'BD2: how did the theater you were in react to the battle scene' offers more insight into the extreme cinematic experience and response. Interestingly, an analysis of word frequency in this thread shows less of the extreme physical references than were found on Rosenberg's Facebook page. Here we do not find as many references to heart attacks, panic attacks, anger or throwing up. Here the overriding emotion is shock, followed closely by relief. There are high instances of crying and screaming, but also high recordings of laughter and cheering. The thread calls for reporting of the collective response not the individuals' which may explain this difference. Nonetheless there is still strong anecdotal evidence in the *Twilight Moms* forum¹⁹ of extreme physical reactions to the fight scene:

You could hear people saying oh my god, yells, lots of sounds – I was in total shock – thought I was going to have a heart attack... All I could think about was how fast I could get home to take my heart pills (I get palpitations)... at least the nearest hospital was 3 minutes away... (princessdi)

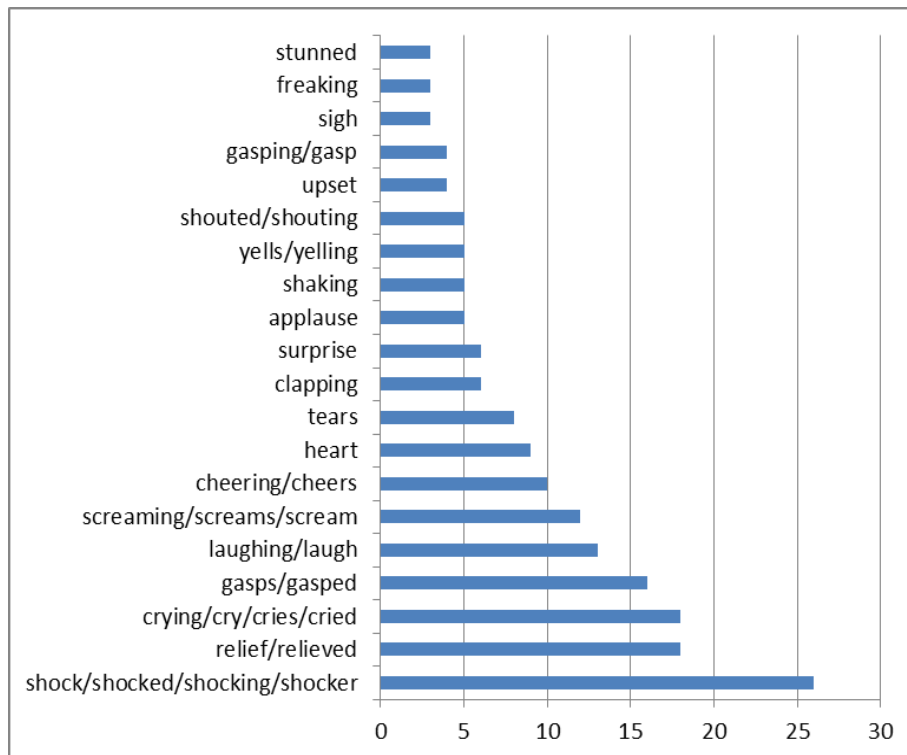


Figure 4: Frequency of words used in reply to TwilightMoms.com discussion thread BD2: how did the theater you were in react to the battle scene displaying physical symptoms and emotions felt by fans [measured using www.textfinder.com]

And one fan admits, humorously, to suffering from a very specific medical complaint following the film: ‘The battle scene kind of screwed me up. I was (and still am) suffering from PTSD (Post Twilight Stress Disorder)’. (italiahaircolor)

There is also evidence that, being engaged in the fandom, and privy to insider information, may have in fact added to the shock value: ‘There was a huge intake of breath when Carlisle “died” and because we’d been led to believe that there would be a shock at the end, I think everyone thought that was it (jed). This feeling of community and shared experience is reaffirmed time and time again, suggesting that the collective response to the film is a clear indicator of its success:

Any time you watch a movie and the whole audience gasps at the same time, that’s an awesome movie. (Betty Stanley, 25 Nov 2012, 23:52).

When Aro ripped Carlisle's head off ... I do think my heart stopped beating... The theatre was full of *gasps* ... the breathless sort, like everyone collectively had the wind knocked out of them. It was fairly guttural... I do remember when Aro was beheaded and the whole place lit up like the 4th July ... there was clapping and cheering and woo-hooing ... all of which, in the big reveal, was followed up by more clapping and cheering and woo-hooing.²⁰

There is also evidence of hierarchy and elitism amongst fans, with 'true' fans wanting to share the cinematic experience with other 'true' fans. In the discussion thread fans record their response to a second or third viewing. One fan, *italiahaircolor*, who is particularly engaged in this discussion, describes how she still felt a strong physical reaction, even on a subsequent viewing:

On viewing two I was able to enjoy the movie and I thought (having the benefit of knowing what comes next) that I would be fine through the battle ... but as they walked across the field, my stomach tensed up and heart started to race and I had to make a conscious effort to breathe and remind myself 'It's only going to be a vision ... A VISION!'²¹

However, her feelings of anxiety had lessened enough for her to notice points she had missed on first viewing and to appreciate added layers of meaning in these small details: '... there was "new" shock in the smallest moments.' Others went to subsequent viewings specifically for the enjoyment of seeing the reaction of the audience:

I've seen it three times now and it's the most entertaining thing ... To keep an ear out and pin point which section of the theatre are in for the first time (usually the ones gasping or panting in relief, laughing nervously and whispering thank god) and which sections of the theatre have seen it before (usually the quiet ones who look around and giggle at the other's reactions.) (Sweets)

While there were some gasps and cries of relief at the reveal ... there was a huge "OOOOhhhhhhh" from the audience which made me chuckle

So yesterday afternoon I went with a friend ... During the battle scene? She. Lost. Her. Mind. I don't blame her, but I was trying not to laugh because I wanted to focus on looking for things that I hadn't noticed before ... SO I had to try and ignore her. (Eyes of the Oracle)²²

It is apparent that the heightened emotions felt during the initial viewing hampered the viewers' ability to take in all the details. However on subsequent viewings, fans could

decode more detailed messages and build upon their enjoyment in increasing layers, by both watching their friends and sharing their findings with their peers online.

Conclusion

As intense *readers* the fans enjoyed the intellectual and mental challenge of testing their reading of the story and their understanding of Meyer's canon against those of fellow readers and against those of the adapting team. As *collaborators* the fans took pleasure in a feeling of inclusion and ownership within the franchise. To see their very vocal criticism of the novel's ending reworked and rectified in the film adaptation further justified their status as aficionados and challenged the assumption the novel is the sum total of the story and the author as the only authority on the narrative. Finally as *viewers*, the fans enjoyed the unforeseen pleasure of being surprised in a familiar storyworld in which they believe themselves to be experts, challenging the notion that fidelity is essential to the adaptation genre. Fans noted feeling a sense of resolution and completion after watching the film. Any remaining sense of anti-climax felt upon finishing the book was remedied by the film's action, and in particular by experiencing the shock of the film's unexpected fight scene. The altered ending may have challenged their expertise in the *Twilight* storyworld as well as their apparent desire for fidelity but, overwhelmingly, they approved.

The forums provide evidence of the fans' awareness of cyclic forms of story retelling. As with Fuller and Rehberg Sedo's (2013) investigation of book events, these sites facilitate and nurture intensive reading and shared interpretation, and there is strong evidence to prove that fan readers re-read books multiple times. *Twilight's* participatory fandom engaged with the scriptwriter's request for the 'best bits' of the story which were then performed through the director's cinematic vision, realizing the fans' interpretation but bringing them to the shared enjoyment of a unique twist in the storyline. The idea of a revised version of the book following the film adaptation was mooted in the forums: one fan said 'I was unsure when I first heard that they were changing things but I'm so glad they did ... I would be thrilled if SM brought a new version of the book out including this as that part of BD was always a bit boring for me!' (for the love of twilight).

Hutcheon says 'adaptation is not vampiric: it does not draw the life-blood from its source and leave it dying or dead, nor is it paler than the adapted work. It may, on the contrary, keep that prior work alive, giving it an afterlife it would never have had otherwise' (2006, p.176). The comments posted in the forums and blogs reveal that this afterlife included a rich re-reading of the text. While all records of a reading experience are subject to the aims and intentions of the form in which they are published, forums are empirical evidence of reading in what is a conversational space, though performed in public. Studies of online forums have shown the distorting effects of subject position in gendered communication and the construction of online identity and we recognise that these posts are performative, and most are contributed by women, and likely to seek consensus. Their use as primary evidence for reading experience has to be interpreted within the context of online behavior, from formal conventions around spoilers to social behaviours such as

trolling. With these caveats, they provide useful evidence of reading across media at a given location and time and the insights into rates of media literacy are too valuable to be ignored. They also tracked a phenomenon and enabled us to access the event in a way that surveys and retrospective focus groups could not. Such sources give evidence which can be gained in no other way

This research acknowledges Whiteman and Metivier's concept of dead fandoms and adds to the research on the transience of online fandoms by documenting the scope of the *Twilight* fan sites, levels of participation and longevity. The *Twilight* fandom's lifecycle was spread over the period from the publication of the first book to the end of the last film, with the peak of the fan sites created in 2008 in response to the films and its actors. In fact a core of loyal and constant fans gravitated to a few sites – the final subset of online sites – amongst the plethora of non-participatory forums. So while a fandom may appear outwardly large and expansive, the number of fans sites actively engaged is much smaller. At the end of the *Twilight* franchise, there was an orchestrated marketing campaign to steer the newly bereaved *Twilight* fans towards the upcoming *Mortal Instruments* franchise. This was attempted by giving away 'teaser' first chapter booklets of the novel *The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones* by Cassandra Clare, which was branded and aimed at a similar audience demographic and personally endorsed by Stephenie Meyer.

The research supports Murray's conceptualisation of adaptation as a commercial and economic system by highlighting the potential profit-related benefits to film companies of approaching adaptation from the marketing perspective of providing added value. (Since the last film, numerous books have been published about the storyworld for fans, including Stephenie Meyers' own gender-swapping rewriting *Life and Death: Twilight Reimagined* in 2015.) Using adaptation in a more experimental way could lead to increased levels of engagement from fans which in turn would encourage added consumption. Adaptations which adhere to fidelity are predictable, safe and have a limited timeframe but offering fans altered story arcs, added characterisation, and even different final outcomes encourages the participation as both producers and consumers. J.K. Rowling has sought to do this through the constructed fansite Pottermore, with mixed reactions from readers (Martens 2016). In China online fantasy novel series by Zhang Muye *Ghost Blows Out the Light* (2006) is the source of two film adaptations *Mojin: The Lost Legend* (Wuershan, 2015) and *Chronicles of the Ghostly Tribe* (Lu Chuan, 2015) released within a month of each other, one more faithful to the original than the other raising debates within the fandom. Big franchise Marvel and DC comic book adaptations have been more successful in spin off transmedia storylines (Brooker 2012, Burke 2016). While small experimental sites have been created by or with authors to build readerships and stimulate co-creation (Franco 2016). Fandom, as a phenomenon in itself and the sense of community it affords, offers significant rewards to readers.

Authorship was inscribed in the *Twilight* fandom through Stephenie Meyer, Melissa Rosenberg, and Bill Condon's involvement. But the fans in their triple role took an active role in the realization of the text, exerting their ownership of the storyworld. These reader-

viewers debated their understanding of the rules of the fictional world, enforcing consistency in the psychological motivations and actions of the characters. A ‘knowing audience’ they were also ‘knowledgeable’ of the codes, conventions and processes through which multilinear narratives are played out in the complexity of the cinematic frame. They exhibited a high degree of media literacy and were able to use or discard arguments for fidelity, media specificity and auteurism, without the hindrance of hierarchical notions of source and derivation. They also had high communicative competencies in internet discussion, employing and re-appropriating the conventions of the forums, blogs and Facebook page to organize the conversation socially, as well as moving topic from site to site, thread to thread as issues trended.

Significantly, this research shows that the individual acts of reading, discussing, watching, debating difference and rereading create a reimagined and communal story text which may or may not be consistent with the author’s artistic vision. This reimagined and shared story text became, through processes of fandom, the preferred realization. In this case, the reimagining of the text came not only from reading of the book and from reading of the film, but from a transmedia – or, to extend Iser’s term, a transaesthetic – experience derived from both.

The research also suggests that literacies – visual and symbolic – are more closely interconnected processes in reader-viewers’ minds as intensive reading of the book and film takes place (Weedon 2016). Through different cognitive processes, visual and symbolic literacies facilitate the reader-viewer’s ability to connect with the characters and their predicaments. More than that, the cognitive processes of visual and symbolic literacies evoke different affectivities and, when combined, the affect of the story is greater. So the overriding function of storytelling as a form of guided life experience is enhanced by it being played across multiple codes (Oatley 2008). Our reader-viewers found the engagement in what had become, through the adaptation and fandom processes, symbiotic aesthetic codes led them to a more satisfying reimagined communal story text.

Finally, we can reflect on the pleasure given by becoming a ‘knowing’ member of the audience. As readers left the cinema in the early hours of the morning on 16th November, having watched the very first showing of *Breaking Dawn – Part 2* (2012), they felt a very real sense that the cinematic ‘twist’ they had just witnessed must not be shared with friends who had not yet seen the film. Because the ending was ultimately faithful to the story, they were willing to be complicit with the filmmakers and allow the spectacle to be experienced without spoilers, without knowing, in order that others could fully appreciate and enjoy the rollercoaster of emotions it generated. These viewers became privy to a secret creating a whole new level of knowing audience within the *Twilight* fandom.

Explanatory note about forums:

This article refers to a number of online textual sources including discussion boards, blogs, websites and Facebook pages. Due to the transient nature of online data, some of these

links no longer exist. Direct quotes from an online source include, where given, the user name, date and time of the comment, to provide a method of unique identification. Attribution of each quote to the correct discussion thread, web page or Facebook post is by endnote reference.

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Appendix A:

Name	URL
BellaandEdward.com	http://bellaandedward.com/
Edward Cullen Online	http://edwardcullenonline.com/
Edward’s Meadow	http://www.edwardsmeadow.com/
Fanpop - The Twilight Fan Club	http://www.fanpop.com/clubs/twilight-series
For Forks Sake	http://for-forks-sake.livejournal.com/
His Golden Eyes	http://pagetopremiere.com/tag/twilight/
The Lion fell in love with the Lamb (LiveJournal)	http://lion-lamb.livejournal.com/
My Twilight Purgatory	http://www.mytwilightpurgatory.com/
Sort of Beautiful (LiveJournal)	http://sortofbeautiful.livejournal.com/
Twilight Coven Philippines	http://twilightcovenph.blogspot.co.uk/
Twilight Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/twilight
Twilight FanForum	http://www.fanforum.com/f132/
Twilight Guy	http://www.twilightguy.com/
The Twilight Lexicon	http://www.twilightlexicon.com/
Twilight Moms	http://www.twilightmoms.com/
Twilight Movies	http://twilightmovies.org/blog/
Twilight Newborns	http://www.twilightnewborns.com/
Twilight Originals	http://www.moviefanatic.com/movies/twilight/
Twilight Poison	http://www.twilightpoison.com/
The Twilight Saga	http://thetwightsaga.com/
The Twilight Saga wiki	http://twilight-review.com/
Twilight Series Theories	http://www.freewebs.com/twilightteams/
Twilight Source	http://twilightsource.com/

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Notes:

¹ As of 1 August 2012.

² www.stepheniemeyer.com/ts_fansites (accessed 21 October 2013)

³ Textfinder.com is now offline. The program was similar to textSTAT <http://neon.niederlandistik.fu-berlin.de/en/textstat/> (accessed 29 March 2017). For digital research tools in the humanities see <https://dirtdirectory.org/>

⁴ MTV News interview Melissa Rosenberg <http://www.mtv.com/news/1644652/breaking-dawn-writer-says-shes-trying-to-find-room-for-all-characters/> (accessed 23 March 2017)

⁵ Melissa Rosenberg official Facebook page – <https://www.facebook.com/melissa.rosenberg> (accessed 23 March 2017)

⁶ Bill Condon’s introductory letter to fans 30th April 2010 on The Twilight Saga official Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/notes/the-twilight-saga/a-note-to-fans-from-bill-condon/10150166853605005> (accessed 23 March 2017)

⁷ Bill Condon’s farewell letter to fans posted 25th November 2012 on The Twilight Saga official Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/notes/the-twilight-saga/greetings-to-our-global-twihard-family/10152295109100005> (accessed 23 March 2017)

⁸ Twilightmoms.com - BD2 – ‘How do you feel about the way they wrapped it all up’ thread <http://forum.twilightmoms.com/showthread.php?64168-BD2-How-do-you-feel-about-the-way-they-wrapped-it-all-up> (accessed 21 October 2013) [forum no longer exists]

⁹ The Lexicon Story: According to Alpie <http://www.twilightlexicon.com/administration/faqs/> (accessed 23 March 2017)

¹⁰ Joffs later went on to help Meyer edit the third book in the saga, *Eclipse*.

¹¹ Twilight Lexicon - The New Ending **SPOILERS SPOILERS SPOILERS** <http://forum.twilightlexicon.com/viewtopic.php?f=86&t=6993> [accessed 21 October 2013]

¹² Statement from Stephenie Meyer to fans dated 26th November 2012 <http://stepheniemeyer.com/2012/11/the-ending-of-bd-2-spoilers-ahead/> (accessed 23 March 2017)

¹³ TwilightSaga.com - Movie Did It Better – <http://thetwilightssaga.com/forum/topics/movie-did-it-better?id=2570916%3ATopic%3A169633320&page=1#comments> (accessed 1 Jul 2013)

¹⁴ Stephenie Meyer’s explanation as to why there was no fight in the book - http://stepheniemeyer.com/bd_faq.html (accessed 23 March 2017)

¹⁵ Twilight Lexicon - The New Ending **SPOILERS SPOILERS SPOILERS** <http://forum.twilightlexicon.com/viewtopic.php?f=86&t=6993> [accessed 21 October 2013]

¹⁶ TwilightSaga.com - Movie Did It Better – <http://thetwilightssaga.com/forum/topics/movie-did-it-better?id=2570916%3ATopic%3A169633320&page=1#comments> [accessed 1 Jul 2013]

¹⁷ ‘Do you know what happened next?’ thread – Melissa Rosenberg’s official Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/melissa.rosenberg/photos/a.201991641674.170885.77738391674/10151312752271675/?type=1> (accessed 23 March 2017)

¹⁸ Bill Condon’s farewell letter to fans posted 25th November 2012 on The Twilight Saga official Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/notes/the-twilight-saga/greetings-to-our-global-twihard-family/10152295109100005> (accessed 23 March 2017)

¹⁹ Twilightmoms.com – ‘How did the theater you were in react to the battle scene’ thread - <http://forum.twilightmoms.com/showthread.php?64157-BD2-how-did-the-theater-you-were-in-react-to-the-battle-scene> [forum no longer exists]

²⁰ Bill Condon’s farewell letter to fans posted 25th November 2012 on The Twilight Saga official Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/notes/the-twilight-saga/greetings-to-our-global-twihard-family/10152295109100005>

²¹ Twilightmoms.com – ‘How did the theater you were in react to the battle scene’ thread - <http://forum.twilightmoms.com/showthread.php?64157-BD2-how-did-the-theater-you-were-in-react-to-the-battle-scene> (accessed 21 October 2013) [forum no longer exists]

²² Twilightmoms.com – ‘Anyone else disappointed in BD2’ thread - <http://forum.twilightmoms.com/showthread.php?64156-Anyone-else-disappointed-in-BD2> (accessed 21 October 2013) [forum no longer exists].