

Adaptation Policy: Film Policy and Adaptations in Flanders (1964-2002)

Gertjan Willems

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ADAPTATION POLICY: FILM POLICY AND ADAPTATIONS IN FLANDERS (1964-2002)

Introduction

In November 2011, the main Flemish film policy body, in cooperation with the confederation of the Flemish book trade, organized a matchmaking event, "Speed Dating Novel/Film/Television." The objective was to stimulate joint ventures by encouraging contact between publishers of novels and producers of films and television programs. This event is an example of how official film policy can influence the development of adaptation projects. The significance of film policy in this process is not a recent phenomenon; it originated with the introduction of systematic film subsidy mechanisms in various European countries and regions during the 1950s and 1960s. The allocation of government support has since been crucial to the production or withdrawal of many adaptation projects. As early as 1969, Thomas H. Guback noted that without this support, "film production in Europe would hardly be solvent and the various industries would lead a most precarious existence" (142)—a statement that gained more relevance in the following decades. In the field of adaptation studies, however, where the central questions include why and how particular texts are adapted, the role of the government's film production policies in the realization process remains widely overlooked despite the growing contextual, industrial, and "materialist" approaches within the field (Murray, "Materializing Adaptation" 10).

The main aim of this article is to shed light on the role of film policy (generally understood as the process of government funding for feature films) in the production of literary film adaptations. The article focuses on film production and policy in Flanders, the northern Dutch-speaking region of Belgium, whose recent history is marked by growing regional autonomy at the cultural, political, and economic levels. Selective "cultural" film support arrived in Belgium during the Flemish cultural and political emancipatory years of the 1960s and it immediately

took off as a regionalized affair. Starting from the introduction of the Flemish film subsidy mechanism in 1964 and ending with its structural renewal in 2002, this study relies primarily on original archival research in the Flemish government's film department records.¹ In particular, the film commission's reports provide exceptional insight into the film policy process. They include the commission's recommendations to the minister and detailed accounts of the preceding internal discussions regarding the film project applications. Information on non-realized film projects is also included in the analysis because such projects show "the latent machinery of the adaptation industry, highlighting which texts are selected for adaptation, by whom, for what purposes and with what cultural effects" (Murray, "Phantom Adaptations" 16). The large amount of archival documentation is complemented by original interviews with former policy actors (film commission members, administrative personnel, and political actors) and filmmakers (directors and producers).

The Materialization of Adaptation Studies

Simone Murray's recently published *The Adaptation Industry* is the first book-length investigation that takes on a production-related approach toward adaptations. Although criticized for minimizing individual creative forces (Raw, "Industry"), Murray's study constitutes a welcome balance to the overwhelming dominance of textual analysis as the methodological foundation of the discipline. The discussion of methodologies and the questioning of what the exact object of study should be have always been prevalent in adaptation studies and resulted in various evolutions and research approaches (Cardwell 43-76; Johnson 162). However, these studies have remained essentially textual and this often limits the contextual aspects to mere brief glances at the production contexts or cursory analyses of public and critical receptions of the adaptation and/or the adapted work. This may seem somewhat surprising as George Bluestone's *Novels into Film*, which is considered the starting point for the systematic study of the adaptation issue, devoted a substantial part of its theoretical reflection to contextual considerations:

Just a step behind the artist, and sometimes overtaking him, had been the shaping power of censor and audience. In the film, more than in any of the other arts, the signature of social forces is evident in the final work. (35)

Bluestone emphasized the importance of the audience, economic factors, and industrial and political censorship as social forces that wield power over the final product. While Bluestone is probably the most cited author in adaptation studies (despite, or maybe because of, the manifold criticism of his work [Leitch, "Twelve Fallacies" 149-50]), the contextual aspect of his oeuvre is usually neglected.²

Another frequently cited author in adaptation studies is Dudley Andrew, who famously stated "it is time for adaptation studies to take a sociological turn" (106). Andrew views adaptations as "cultural practices" that need to be approached within a discourse with specific cultural and aesthetic dimensions (Aragay 19). Given this scope, broader social, political, and economic aspects remain somewhat invisible. Consequently, James Naremore criticized Andrew's call for a "sociological turn" because "the kind of things [Andrew] recommends for us to discuss remain conventionally literary" (10). Naremore argues that what we need instead is "a broader definition of adaptation and a sociology that takes into

account the commercial apparatus, the audience, and the academic culture industry” (10).

Since the publication of Naremore’s anthology, *Film Adaptation*, in 2000, academic interest in this underexplored area of adaptation studies has grown. Reception studies that consider marketing and exhibition aspects of adaptations have started to appear (Geraghty 47-72; Grant; Mazumdar); and questions about the relationship between censorship and adaptations have been addressed (Athanasourelis; Maltby). Other studies have concentrated on the political-economic factors that determine the specific production context of adaptations (Barnett; DeBona; Gunning; Raw, “The Small-Town”). Academics are not the only ones who have focused on how issues of censorship, marketing, and other contextual factors affect adaptations (Kilpatrick; Stam, “Introduction 43). Filmmakers too seem aware of the complexities (see, for example, Swicord).

Murray’s stance can be situated in this tradition. She criticizes the textual prejudice of adaptation studies and notes that the understanding of precisely how adaptations come into being is extremely limited. Partly inspired by the political economy tradition in media studies, Murray advocates a “materializing” of adaptation theory, “to rethink adaptation, not as an exercise in comparative textual analysis of individual books and their screen versions, but as a *material* phenomenon produced by a system of institutional interests and actors” (“Materializing Adaptation” 10, original emphasis). This focus on the analysis of power structures behind the production of adaptations is also explored in this article. The abovementioned studies focus primarily on the Anglo-Saxon adaptation scene, where the decision-making power over film projects tends to be situated at commercial and industrial-economic levels. In the post-war European context, this level has been typically complemented by an important government policy level. Government funding has become fundamental in the production of many feature films, particularly in smaller film industries such as the Flemish one.

Flemish Adaptation Policy

Broadly speaking, financial government support for films can be divided into automatic and selective support measures (Finney 214-15). Automatic support measures are mostly economically inspired and aimed at financially advancing every film production in a certain region. The first form of systematic government support for Flemish films was such an automatic support measure. In 1952, a tax incentive for all Belgian film productions was introduced. Although this was a Belgian national initiative to stimulate the domestic film industry, selective film support in Belgium was regionally organized since its beginnings in the mid-1960s. Selective support systems are typically culturally motivated. The role of film policy is much more far-reaching in the case of selective support systems because of the considerable decision power over what kind of films will or will not be produced. Therefore, this article focuses on the latter type of government support.

In Flanders, a Royal Decree of 1964 called “for the promotion of Dutch-language film culture.” This led to the political appointment of a Selection Commission for Cultural Films (in short, the “Film Commission”) to which filmmakers could apply for financial support.³ After evaluating applications, this policy body gave detailed but non-binding recommendations to the minister of

Culture (from 1964 to 1992 and from 2000 to 2002) or the minister of Media (from 1992 to 2000), who would eventually make the final decision regarding funding. While the relevant minister made the final decision, the commission's recommendations were usually followed. This meant the film commission played a key role in the film policy process. Due to heavy and persistent criticism of the time-consuming, bureaucratic, and politically dependent system of film subsidies, a "new" legal framework was introduced in 1994 (the Selection Commission for Cultural Films was renamed to the Flemish Audiovisual Selection Commission). However, in practice, the previous support system continued as it always had done. True structural change in the history of Flemish film policy only came with the establishment of the autonomous Flanders Audiovisual Fund (VAF) in 2002. A new chapter in the history of Flemish film policy was introduced, thereby forming an endpoint for this study.

From the first introduction of Flemish film subsidies in 1964 until 2010, 78 percent of all Flemish films have relied substantially on selective film support (see Fig. 1).⁴ For adaptations, the corresponding percentage is even higher at 83 percent. From 1964 to 2002, only seven Flemish adaptations were realized without subsidies. The other 60 realized adaptations enjoyed a substantial state subsidy. With the exception of *Mirliton* (Rob Van Eyck, 1978), none of the adaptation projects that unsuccessfully applied for government support were ever realized. These statistics reveal the importance of government support for adaptations.

The history of Flemish film policy shows a distinct "adaptation policy." This is evident in the fact that the film commission clearly distinguished between adaptations and non-adaptations, which they called "original films." In general, three main elements were crucial to the commission's evaluation of film projects: the quality of the script, the qualifications of the filmmakers, and financial and production-related aspects. In the case of adaptations, however, these three elements were consistently supplemented with a discussion on the issue of adaptation. Although the film commissions from 1964 to 2002 shared some characteristics, it should be noted that Flemish adaptation policy went through a complex process of many changes involving various, often conflicting, interests. The evolution of the Flemish adaptation policy is largely connected to the changes in the film commission's composition. This composition changed seven times between 1964 and 2002. Nonetheless, two broad adaptation policy phases can be distinguished. The rest of this article is structured around these two phases. This division considers the composition and the concrete policy practices of the commission, the broader political and structural circumstances, and the evolution of the percentage of supported films that were adaptations. The first adaptation policy phase runs from the introduction of the film subsidy mechanism in 1964 until the early 1980s and includes the first two film commissions. The second phase runs from the early 1980s until the establishment of the VAF in 2002.

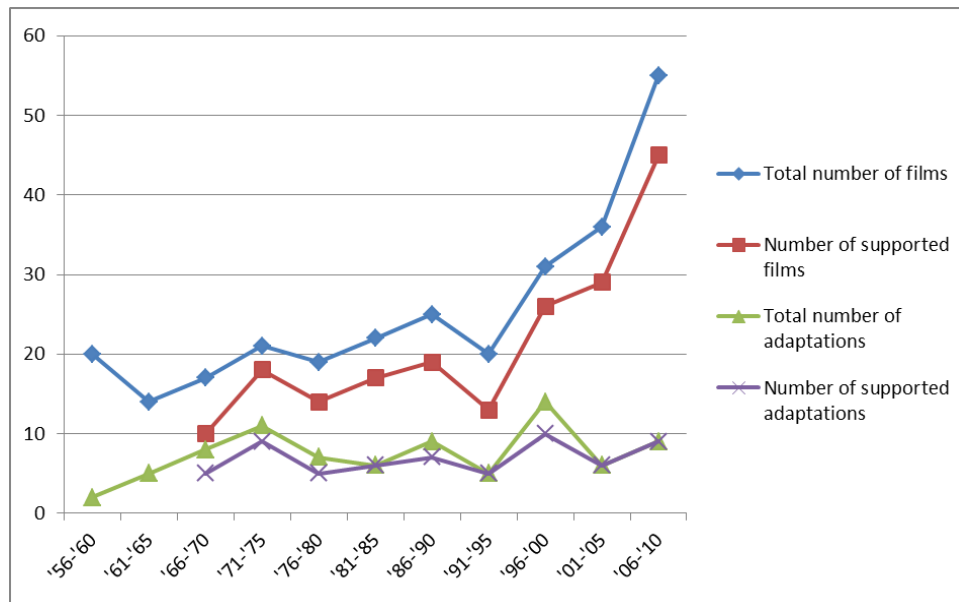


Fig. 1: Number of Flemish feature films, 1956 to 2010. (Author's own work.)

From the first Flemish feature film in 1928 until 1964, 72 feature films are realized, only 15 of which were adaptations. As Figure 1 shows, the number of adaptations rose with the introduction of selective government support for films and reached a climax in the early 1970s. During the first ten years of the first phase, more than half of the supported films were adaptations. At the start of the second adaptation policy phase in the early 1980s, this share decreased to just below 40 percent and remained at that level until the end of the research period in 2002. At the beginning of the second phase, the Liberals took over the Ministry of Culture after a long period of Christian Democratic dominance. The policy practices of the first phase were primarily culturally inspired. With the political shift, audience-related and commercial considerations became equally important during the second phase. During the 1990s, the development of the Flemish adaptation policy was characterized by structural instability. The long-awaited inauguration of a new film policy body in 2002 concluded the second phase in the development of Flemish adaptation policy and presaged a decrease of 20 percent in the share of adaptations to the total number of supported films.

Cultural Film Policy

From the very first years of Flemish film policy, the film commission was characterized by a "literary attitude." This was evident in the commission's discussions of adaptations (especially of "high" literature), which often started with a tribute to the source work. In addition, the commission was always pleased when a literary figure was involved in a film project.⁵ This literary attitude, which frequently played to the advantage of film projects based on well-respected works of Flemish literature, was connected to the literary backgrounds of many of the commission members and their Flemish cultural emancipation beliefs, in which literature formed an essential and highly valued cornerstone. The commission's

literary attitude was also manifested in its insistence on adaptations' "fidelity" to their source work, thereby touching upon one of the most debated issues in adaptation studies.

On the one hand, the film commission frequently criticized adaptations for being "too literary," emphasizing that the cinematic character needed to be safeguarded. This indicates the commission's recognition of the medium specificity of film.⁶ The commission sometimes suggested changes to the source work to "make the story more dramatic," as mentioned in a recommendation for *The Conscript* [*De Loteling*] (Roland Verhavert, 1973).⁷ On the other hand, the comparison of the source work with the adaptation always held an important place in the commission's discussions of adaptations. In this context, the evaluation of a film dossier was sometimes postponed when it appeared that not all commission members had read the source novel. Differences between the literary source work and the screenplay were mostly heavily criticized. The commission members frequently stated that they attached importance to capturing the spirit of the source work rather than "to-the-letter adaptation" of it. Nonetheless, their criticism frequently focused on the omission or addition of particular elements in the source narrative and less on the transposition of the atmosphere or the interpretation of a certain theme.⁸ As a result, the commission regularly asked for textual adjustments. This shows that film policy went beyond simply providing a budget and had textual consequences, which were mostly fidelity-inspired. This literary attitude and the insistence on fidelity are characteristics that were shared by all the succeeding film commissions during both adaptation policy phases.

Despite the commission's literary leanings and the fact that almost half of the supported films during the first phase were adaptations, the film commission regularly claimed to prefer "original" films.⁹ This was connected to the way the commission members interpreted the Royal Decree and its promotion of a "Dutch-language film culture" as encouraging the production of primarily "high-culture films."¹⁰ Such an understanding was emphasized by the succeeding Christian Democratic ministers of Culture who were active during the first phase and who matched the general pro-Flemish attitude of the various policy actors. The various policy actors wanted to break with the Flemish tradition of local farces, which was the dominant tradition until the early 1960s (Fowler, "Cinema that Stays" 267). In its desire to renew Flemish cinema (as part of the Flemish cultural emancipation in those days), the film commission believed that it was necessary to support original films. The commission's priority list of 1973 stated that "the priority list clearly points to the concern of the commission to give a new impulse to Flemish cinema by searching for original screenplays and new film talent. This is why the commission gives priority to original work."¹¹

At the same time, several filmmakers have argued that this preference was not as sincere as the commission officially declared. The director duo of Paul Collet and Pierre Drouot argued that they chose to adapt the novel *Death of a Nun* [*Dood van een non*] (Maria Rosseels, 1961) because:

[I]t had to go fast ... so it would be a novel, a novel with prestige, so that everyone would have faith in the project. Sure, everybody said they wanted original scripts, but in practice, the minister, the commission and the like were

much more at ease with the adaptation of a literary work that was already critically acknowledged. (qtd. in Pede and Wauters 9)

In addition, the press frequently accused the commission of giving preference to adaptations, and with good reason: the ratio of adaptations to the total number of supported films peaked during this first phase of Flemish adaptation policy.

One of the main reasons for this discrepancy between the theory and practice of the commission's policy was the perceived lack of decent screenwriters and, consequently, of original screenplays. The quality of Flemish screenplays was indeed regularly tackled by both the film commission and the press.¹² Consequently, various initiatives to stimulate potential screenwriters and to upgrade the quality of Flemish screenplays were set up. In 1974, a yearly prize for the best Dutch-language screenplay was introduced by the minister of Culture. It soon became clear, however, that almost none of the awarded screenplays were realized because potential producers showed little interest in them. Therefore, the film commission tried to stimulate better original screenplays by encouraging the co-operation between a director and a screenwriter. Furthermore, the ministry of Culture supported a summer course on screenwriting in 1979 and 1980.

Despite these initiatives, the commission continued to view original screenplays as lacking in sufficient quality and they turned to adaptations. According to the commission's logic, it was "safe" to make adaptations as they already had a "pre-tested story."¹³ Furthermore, supporting adaptations of acclaimed literary works that were often classics from the Flemish literary patrimony fit with the commission's Flemish cultural emancipatory beliefs and could be legitimized as an interpretation of the cultural task of promoting high-culture films. Thus, literary film adaptations in Flanders provided cultural respectability for the film medium. This reminds us of the first decades of international film history with the French films of the Société Film d'Art or the American Shakespeare adaptations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Uricchio and Pearson; Carou and de Pastre).

Another reason these productions were able to acquire large amounts of government support, in spite of the film commission's supposed preference for original films, was the intervention of other actors in the decision-making process. While the commission frequently criticized the perceived nostalgic and ahistorical portrayal of Flanders and categorized adaptations of the Flemish literary patrimony as "outdated folklore," they often succeeded in obtaining support due to various intervening factors such as the producers' lobbying strategies, the minister's power, and the involvement of the public broadcaster.¹⁴ In this respect, the role of Jean or Jan Van Raemdonck, who produced several of these adaptations, should be stressed. Being one of the only professional film and television producers in Belgium at the time, Van Raemdonck relied on a strong set of strategic skills to attract funding. He was a master in anticipating the wishes of the film commission and was not afraid to lobby both individual commission members and various political actors. An important argument that counted in Van Raemdonck's favor, and the reason he was so keen on producing these classic novel adaptations, was the fact that they were among the most prestigious and commercially successful Flemish films during the 1970s and 1980s. In particular, the success of *Mira* (Fons Rademakers, 1971) proved that these kinds of films

could attract a large audience—an important argument for justifying the spending of public money, both for the minister and the film commission.¹⁵

Dual Film Policy

Nonetheless, the first phase of the history of Flemish adaptation policy remained primarily culturally inspired. During the second phase (from the early 1980s to 2002, when approximately 40 percent of the supported films were adaptations), commercial arguments rapidly became equally important. This was largely connected to the switch from a Christian Democratic to a Liberal Minister of Culture at the end of 1981.¹⁶ The new Minister promoted collaborations with private investors and reduced the maximum amount of financial support for films, which resulted in an increased focus on more commercial films. The film commission opposed this state of affairs and went on strike in February 1983.¹⁷ The Minister of Culture fired the old commission and installed a new one in an act that showed decisively who the most powerful actor within the film policy process was.

Although certain commercial considerations had also been present in the previous commissions, the new commission displayed a more explicitly positive attitude toward more popular and commercial films.¹⁸ When the new film commission started its second term in 1986, the chairman declared, “The larger audience needs to put aside its prejudices against Flemish films. Films that are aimed at a large audience should be able to acquire support.”¹⁹ In practice, this resulted in supporting popular comedies that had their roots in television comedy programs or figures. These films were not literary adaptations, but they could not be classified as “original films” in the sense that the film commission used this term either. These “television adaptations” invariably received negative recommendations under the previous commissions, not only because of their more popular than cultural character, but also because the commission members felt that the burgeoning Flemish cinema should not trail along behind television.²⁰ The second-phase film commissions, however, had no objections as they saw the commercial potential of these popular television-based comedies.

At the same time, the “old” cultural imperatives retained their important place next to the commercial considerations, which led to a dual film policy discourse. The policy actors’ new attitude was largely advantageous to adaptations because they were still seen within a cultural framework, they provided the lure of a pre-sold title, and enjoyed a good reputation for attracting audiences. As one of the commission members recalled:

Most commission members had a literary education and started their evaluation from the quality of the literary work. ... Modern, contemporary stories did not receive the same attention as the literary films, not only because of the assumed quality of the screenplay, but also because of the accompanying name and public appeal.²¹

This comment alludes primarily to the above-mentioned prestigious period films based on Flemish literary classics. Although these productions received the largest amounts of government support, the film policy toward them was ambiguous during the first phase of Flemish adaptation policy. During the second phase, the film commission proved to be a more straightforward supporter of such

adaptations. This can be partly explained by the commercial considerations that now took a more central place within the discussions and by the commission's perception of the "authentic Flemish character" of these projects.²² While such pro-Flemish considerations had previously been subtle and less clearly articulated, they became more explicit during the second phase, thereby advancing the Flemish variant of the "heritage film." Despite the commission's continuing positive attitude toward adaptations of Flemish classics, the number of such applications decreased during the 1990s.

Due to changes in Flemish society (which had evolved from an underdog position to the dominant community in Belgium) and the audiovisual sector (particularly the arrival of commercial television in Flanders in 1989), these projects made room for adaptations of more contemporary successful Flemish novels, with a commercial value the commission understood.²³ At the same time, there was a modest upswing in the number of adaptations of non-Flemish novels. These had previously often been turned down because of their lack of relevance to Flemish culture.²⁴ This new evolution was closely connected to the rise of international co-productions stimulated by European film policy incentives, which the film commission saw as "an opportunity to promote Flemish cinema abroad."²⁵ Again, this shows how commercial arguments became more important than cultural and pro-Flemish considerations.

For adaptations of both contemporary and classic works of literature, the second-phase film commissions continued the literary attitude and insistence on fidelity that was evident in the first phase. The commission members appreciated it when they felt that a particular transposition to a screenplay was done "in a correct way, true to the original novel."²⁶ In the same vein, the commission frequently expressed its distaste for deviations from the source work. In a recommendation for the never-realized project *Tristes*, the commission stated that it appreciated "numerous good qualities that mostly also can be found in the novel ... But on the other hand, many scenes, for which the screenwriter found it necessary to deviate from the novel, are not functional or convincing, and, what's more, are a sign of bad taste."²⁷

As in the first phase, the commission regularly demanded textual remarks and suggestions on adhering to the source work. For example, the commission expressed its willingness to support the (never-realized) project *Mirror of Souls* [*Spiegel der Zielen*] "on the condition that the screenwriter commits herself to follow the original use of time (cf. the novel)."²⁸ The commission frequently gave such conditional support recommendations with various textual remarks and suggestions on adhering to the source work. The applicants subsequently rewrote the screenplay, and this procedure was repeated until the commission decided on a definitive positive or negative recommendation. This shows that the impact of film policy was not only felt in the broader production circumstances of adaptations, but also had far-reaching consequences for the textual structure of individual adaptations.

Conclusion

Government support has been an essential requirement for nearly all Flemish adaptations since the mid-1960s. Therefore, film policy actors play a crucial role in deciding what kinds of adaptations are produced in Flanders. This article shows

how film policy can have a determining role in shaping a certain regional or national film production. The exploration of the evolution of the various cultural, commercial, political, and (pro-Flemish) ideological factors affecting the complex and often ambiguous adaptation policy process in Flanders reveals how adaptations were often viewed as a “safe” road to take. Literary adaptations frequently satisfied artistic and commercial results, and they proved to be a great vehicle for exposing the Flemish cultural patrimony. Moreover, various policy actors shared a “literary attitude,” which was not only characterized by a great respect for literary works and figures, but also by an insistence on a film’s fidelity to the source work.

Notwithstanding the fact that many adaptations were seen as “better” films than non-adaptations, policy actors in the first phase felt Flemish cinema should follow a non-adaptation route. Despite the film commission’s literary attitude, non-adaptations were seen as more “original,” not only in the sense that they were based on an “original” screenplay without any direct literary origins, but also in the sense that they had a greater cinematographic value. Flanders had a very limited film tradition and in their attempt to develop a genuine “Flemish cinema,” policy actors found that Flemish films had to be able to stand alone, without any help from other cultural forms. Original films were thus seen as a more authentic kind of cinema than adaptations were. Despite this preferential leaning, almost half of the supported films during the 1960s and 1970s were adaptations. This was because of a mixture of cultural, pragmatic, ideological, and commercial reasons. Particularly important factors at stake here were the lack of screenwriters and thus of decent screenplays, the involvement of the public broadcaster, the minister’s power, and the successful lobbying strategies of certain producers.

The tendency to value original films more than adaptations remained present in the evolution of Flemish film policy but became less and less prominent as both genres received equal treatment in the film commission’s discussions. Paradoxically, however, the percentage of the total number of supported films that were adaptations slightly decreased. This was partly due to the commission’s new openness toward films that had their roots in popular television comedy. At the same time, there was a tendency among filmmakers to want to break with the perceived dominance of classic literary film adaptations. This led to more adaptations of contemporary literary works, but it also led to more non-adaptation projects than before. From a broader perspective, this evolution can be linked to a changing Flemish identity whereby the earlier need for self-assurance via the cultural patrimony made way for a self-conscious demand for contemporary fiction.²⁹

This article began with the example of a recent matchmaking event that shows how contemporary Flemish film policy encourages adaptation projects by bringing publishers of novels into contact with producers of films and television programs and demonstrates how the importance of film policy in the realization of adaptations continues in various ways. This warrants further research, both in Flanders and abroad. This article contributes to the expansion of a “materialist approach” within adaptation studies and calls for further research on the importance and complexities of film policy in the production process of adaptations. By highlighting how the film policy factor was pivotal in shaping the Flemish adaptation industry and how it had a crucial impact on the film text of

many adaptations, this article shows the complementarity of such a contextual approach to the textual-inspired tradition within the research field.

Gertjan Willems
Guest Lecturer
Ghent University

Notes

¹ Abbreviations used in the footnotes to refer to the explicit use of archival material are as follows: SAB (State Archives in Beveren), AMF (Archives of Media and Film 2004), SCF (Selection Commission for Cultural Films), and FAS (Flemish Audiovisual Selection Commission). All quotations from archival material and interviews have been translated by the author.

² One of the few authors who emphasize this aspect of Bluestone's work is Jack Boozer, who collects in *Authorship in Film Adaptation* some other studies that are relevant in this respect (Boozer, "From Traumnovelle"; Cobb; LaValley; Leitch, "Hitchcock"; Lucia).

³ Royal Decree of 10 Nov. 1964 for the promotion of Dutch-language film culture, Belgian Official Journal, 12163-12166 (21 Nov. 1964).

⁴ Following the definition of the Flemish film policy actors, a film is considered "Flemish" when the major production company is situated in Flanders.

⁵ See SAB, AMF, no. 9, SCF meeting, 10 Mar. 1972; no. 13, SCF meeting, 29 June 1976.

⁶ SAB, AMF, no. 3, SCF meeting, 5 May 1966.

⁷ SAB, AMF, no. 9, SCF meeting, 3 Mar. 1972.

⁸ SAB, AMF, no. 11, SCF meeting, 5 Apr. 1974.

⁹ Verhavert, Roland. Interview. 5 Feb. 2013.

¹⁰ Royal Decree of 10 Nov. 1964 for the promotion of Dutch-language film culture, Belgian Official Journal, 12163-12166 (21 Nov. 1964).

¹¹ SAB, AMF, no. 9, SCF meeting, 1 Dec. 1972.

¹² See e.g. De Poorter; SAB, AMF, no. 11, SCF meeting, 16 Dec. 1974.

¹³ Puttemans, Frans. Interview. 25 Jan. 2013.

¹⁴ SAB, AMF, no. 12, SCF meeting, 18 Nov. 1975. The complexities of the policy process and negotiations behind the final film policy outcome for these adaptations of the Flemish literary patrimony deserve a separate study of their own. In this respect, Hugo Claus's *The Lion of Flanders (De Leeuw van Vlaanderen*, 1984) forms a particularly interesting case study, which clearly illustrates the various forces at work (Willems).

¹⁵ Podevyn, Bert. Interview. 4 Feb. 2013.

¹⁶ Poma, Karel. Interview. 1 Feb. 2013.

¹⁷ SAB, AMF, no. 20, SCF meeting, 4 Feb. 1983.

¹⁸ Adams, René. Interview. 11 Feb. 2013.

¹⁹ SAB, AMF, no. 23, Memorandum by René Adams, 8 Oct. 1986.

²⁰ See e.g. SAB, AMF, no. 9, SCF meeting, 8 Sept. 1972.

²¹ Puttemans, Frans. Interview. 25 Jan. 2013.

²² SAB, AMF, no. 26, SCF meeting, 18 Jan. 1989.

²³ There was also a slight increase in adaptations of comics or children's books, which was warmly welcomed by the film commission.

²⁴ Between 1964 and 1985, only one Flemish adaptation of a foreign novel was supported, whereas five such films were supported between 1986 and 1991.

²⁵ SAB, AMF, no. 27, SCF meeting, 27 May 1988.

²⁶ SAB, AMF, no. 29, SCF meeting, 20 Feb. 1992.

²⁷ SAB, AMF, no. 25, SCF meeting, 12 Oct. 1988.

²⁸ SAB, AMF, no. 46, FAS meeting, 28 Mar. 1995.

²⁹ Dhoest (258-62) makes a similar analysis for the evolution of historical fiction on Flemish television.

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