

## **Bridget Jones's diary: the book and the movie.**

In 2001 Bridget Jones's diary novel, written by Helen Fielding in 1996, was turned into a romantic comedy movie and comparing the book with the movie we can find many differences.

Transposing a book into a movie means that we change the linguistic code of the book, based just on written language, and that we start dealing with a new mean of communication which works with different codes.

It's evident that the novel is richer of descriptions than the movie where the director had to compress and reduce the story in order to respect the time limit. Nevertheless, watching the movie it's easy to find some cases of amplification of book scenes.

Differences between novel and movie are about their narrative structure such as the use of flashback and ellipsis and the presence or absence of some scenes and characters. Many times the book and the movie present big discrepancies in the story development and the same fact can be presented in two different ways.

The first reason why we find so many differences between book and movie is related to a matter of time:

- the book has no time limit: the author can use as many pages as she wants to describe facts.

- the movie has a precise time limit: the director must compress what happens in few hours.

**Example:** in the book we know Bridget's world ( family, friends etc) little by little, page by page while in the movie all information which are necessary to understand Bridget's world and life are compressed in few sequences .

This happens at the beginning of the movie when through Bridget's voice we get many elements of her every day life in few minutes; on the other hand, in the book, she introduces us her friends and colleagues while she writes in her diary and so we know them more slowly, day by day.

An other reason for all these differences is that book and movie use two different linguistic codes and they want to satisfy a different public:

- the book is written for a very specific public: women. ( especially young women who want to identify themselves in Bridget's problems and adventures)

- the movie wants to catch a larger audience: man and women who want to spend 2 hours watching a funny and romantic comedy.

A different public justify also a different tone and a different register but before analysing the language, is important to remember that we are dealing with a diary which is a personal journal arranged by date reporting on what happened over the course of a day and which have for definition an informal and colloquial style.

- The book is all written in first person and the language is very friendly and colloquial, with many idiomatic expressions but almost without swearwords ( we only find sometimes the word *bastard, shit or fuck*).

- The movie solves the problem of keeping the diary form using Bridget's voice that describes, explains and comments every scene but the register appears to be completely different from the book. In the movie there are many words of English slang and many swearwords as: *shagged (scopare), wanker (coglione), bugger of (andare a farsi fottere), crikey (cribbio), fuck me (cazzutissimo), bugger (cazzo) etc etc.*

It's important to underline that often the movie exaggerates in using these kind of words; some significant examples of this phenomenon are:

- The scene where Bridget is in her office speaking at the phone with her friend Jude and she says "He's just a big knobhead with no knob. A bastard". This scene doesn't exist in the novel and probably, the main reason why the movie's director decided to introduce it was to underline Bridget's vulgar language and create laugh in the audience.

- The scene where Bridget is preparing the dinner for her friends: in the book she just said " Just looked in the fridge and the tuna is not there. What has become of tuna? What? What?" while in the movie we have " Where the fuck's the fucking tuna?" . This sentence shows the movie's choice of using a very low linguistic register in every situation.

- Shazzer's way of speaking who uses a very colourful language and "likes to say fuck a lot". She uses this word in every situation, also when she gives suggestions to Bridget such as "Fuck them, fuck the lot of them! Tell them they can stick fucking Leavis up their fucking arses!"

Finally, what is important to underline in the lexical analysis is that, even if there are differences in the register, the book and the movie both present a very modern language which perfectly reflects the cultural atmosphere in which the story is settled: urban life in London in 1990s.

The language creates a very deep relation between readers/audience and Bridget's story and it plays a very important role in the process of audience identification.

Characters which are completely omitted in the movie because they have peripheral roles:

-Bridget's brother whose name is Jamie. In the novel Bridget speaks two or three times of him while in the movie Bridget is only child.

-Bridget's neighbours: Vanessa and Dan.

-Bridget's mother boyfriends: in the movie we see Bridget discovering that her mum has a relationship with Julio while in the book we read that her mum has more than one extra conjugal relationship.

There is only one character that we find in the movie but that is absent in the book: Mr. Fitzherbert that Bridget calls Mr. Titspervert because he always looks at her tits. In this case the introduction of a new character creates an hilarious play on words with a sexual allusion.

Some examples of chapters and scenes described in the novel which are completely omitted in the movie version:

-Chapter " May Mother-to-be" : in the book Bridget seriously think to be pregnant and she also makes a pregnant test but in the end she isn't. In the movie this situation is completely omitted.

-Friday 28 April: all events occurring to Bridget during this day are absent in the movie.

-Bridget's trip to Edinburgh.

-Chapter "A criminal in the family": in the book writer tells us that Julio and Bridget's mum have defrauded a large number of person and that they have problems with the justice but in the movie this situation doesn't exist.

Some facts are often described and represented in different ways:

-the New Year's Day Turkey Curry Buffet

<u>BOOK</u>	<u>MOVIE</u>
1) the novel begins with the least of New Years Resolutions and Bridget begins her new diary describing what has happened during the party.	1) the movie starts with Bridget's arriving at the party and only after this "exceptionally bad start" she decides to buy a new diary and to write New Years Resolutions.
2) her mum just kisses her and introduces her to others guests.	2) Bridget's mum wants her to change her dress and she insists on Mark Darcy's presence.
3) Uncle Geoffrey is presented as a friendly and funny person and we	3) Bridget says that Uncle Geoffrey "grope my ass". This underlines that

don't have the idea that he is a maniac.	he has a kind of sexual obsession.
4) Mark Darcy has a v-neck diamond-pattern in shades of yellow and blue sweater.	4)Mark Darcy has a terrible sweater with a big reindeer drawing on it.
5)Mark Darcy is described more polite and friendly than the movie. The situation is presented in an embarrassing way but anyway, he tries to start a conversation about books with Bridget. He doesn't offend Bridget while he is speaking with his mum.	5)He is showed to the audience in a very bad way: he seems to be cold, serious and impolite. He doesn't care to start a conversation with Bridget. He says bad comments about her in a very impolite way.
6) Bridget presents herself in a better way than the movie.	6) Bridget appears as a thirty years old alcoholic woman who smokes a lot. She appears a bit superficial compared to Mark.



- The scene of the fireman's pole

This embarrassing moment is present in both documents but it's narrated in 2 different ways.

<u>BOOK</u>	<u>MOVIE</u>
Bridget writes on her diary what happened at the fireman station but her tone is not very ironic. She is quite down and depressed, she feels a completely unsuccessful woman.	It shows what happens in the fireman station in a very funny way. In the last scene it also shows that Bridget's ass (exaggeration). There is no attention for her feelings.
More attention for Bridget's feelings and sensibility.	It only underlines Bridget's ridiculous aspects in order to create laugh.

In the movie the scene is well showed but it's too much emphasised the and wants to underline only how ridiculous Bridget is. is described in a more sad and depressing way. she underlines that she feels a completely unsuccessful woman. The book takes care of Bridget's feelings, without trying to show every time ridiculous things she does.



Bridget Jones Sit Up Britain

Sometimes there are scenes of the movie that are not present in the book: in this case we speak about *amplification*. These scenes usually create emphasis on some characters' ridiculous aspects .

- The scene of the lake which is an example of amplification but which is also very important for linguistic motivations because it shows us two contrasting registers.

<u>Bridget and Daniel</u>	<u>Mark Darcy and Natasha</u>
They use a very colloquial and informal register, sometimes a little bit obscene. Daniel: "Oh Fuck me, I love Keats. There was a young woman from Ealing who had a peculiar feeling, she lay on her back and opened her crack and pissed over the ceiling".	They use an high linguistic level because they are two barristers. "The weakness of their case lies in the deposition they made on August 30".....
Daniel falls down in the lake and says: "Bollocks, shit!"	Natasha looks at them in a very disgusting way while Mark seems to be jealous of their happiness.



-Scenes in which Bridget is looking for a new job. In the movie we see that she makes three interviews while in the book she makes only an interview.

First interview: Interviewer: "What do you think about Nino Phenomenon?" Bridget: "It's a blip. Latin music's on its way out"
Second interview: Interviewer: "Do you have children?" Bridget:" Christ no!"
Third interview : Interviewer: " Why do you wanna work on television?" Bridget:" I've got to leave my job because I shagged my boss"

We see that in the first interview she tries to be serious and to seem well-informed but she appears completely stupid. In the second we see the ingenuity and spontaneous of Bridget that is not a good layer . In the last one we see Bridget's honesty and spontaneity that are underlined by the use of an inappropriate register for a working interview. So we can say that linguistic level pass from a formal way to a total informal way.

-The scene in which Bridget decides to leave her editor's job and she goes to Daniel Cleaver office to resign. In the book this part has a very short description while in the movie is one of the funniest part.

Daniel	Bridget
<p>Daniel speaks in a very formal way just because they are in job place and he as a certain image. He has to show who is the boss:" Just hold it right there, Miss Jones. I'm sorry to inform you but I think you'll find that, by contract you are expected to give at least six week's notice".... There are lots of prospects here for a talented person who perhaps for personal reasons has been slightly overlooked professionally".</p> <p>Bridget is just left and Daniel says: "Just sod off": after all his formal speech he says what he really thinks using a swear word.</p>	<p>In this moment she feels powerful and she speaks in an ironic way even if Daniel is her boss. Bridget answers:" Thank you Daniel, that is very good to know. But if staying here means working within ten yards of you, frankly I'd rather have a job wiping Saddam Hussein's arse".</p>



Daniel and Bridget at work