

The Challenges of Adapting *Five Nights at Freddy's* (2014-2022) Across the Media

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.51584/IJRIAS.2025.10100000190>

Received: 10 November 2025; Accepted: 16 November 2025; Published: 22 November 2025

ABSTRACT

This study analyses the process of adaptation between a short story titled *Into the Pit* (2019) into the video game *Five Nights at Freddy's: Into the Pit* (2024), with a heavy focus on the narrative. It shows the struggles faced by writers when adapting a text from a different medium; especially into a medium that is far more active in terms of audience engagement (from conventional short story into a video game). According to modern trends, many fans are dissatisfied with modern adaptations of original texts; often critiquing it for changing elements present in the original text which further changed the meaning of the original media. This study argues that the process of adaptation often includes changes that would affect the storyline and how audience would receive the adaptations; oftentimes for the worse. The study itself also limits itself on the narrative and plotlines of the texts; as the process of adaptation often impacts many other aspects such as characters and characteristics, artistic elements, and (to an extreme extent) genres. Video game as a form of adaptation is also something that is very new to the world of creative industries. As such, it is important that this study chooses a new medium in order to establish ground rules for future video game adaptations as a baseline to follow.

Keywords: *Five Nights at Freddy's*, horror, adaptation, video games, short story

INTRODUCTION

Adaptation is a form of art that has been practiced long ago; during the Victorians Era, they had a habit of taking just about anything and adapting it to all sorts of directions; poems, novels, plays and others are all adapted to and from one another mediums, says Hutcheon in her book (2013). Modern societies still inherit the same habit, now with the additions of film, radio, and the wide varieties of electronic media like video games and interactive videos has caused adaptation to run its course.

According to Uhry, as cited by Hutcheon, O'Flynn (2013), adaptation is a bit like redecorating. Similar to when redecorating our living space, it does not necessarily imply that the original decoration is superior nor inferior compared to the new decoration. Rather, it is simply a reorganisation or a rearrangement of the same story, told from a different perspective or point of view. Hutcheon also mentioned in her theory of adaptation how adaptation should not be regarded as a formal entity; and that it is also a process (2013). It shifts the focus on the audience to how to engage with the stories in different mediums, remediating them.

Five Nights at Freddy's (FNAF) is a point and click survival horror game developed and published by an independent game developer, Scott Cawthon, which had its first game published on August 20 2014, and its latest instalment on August 7 2024. The franchise in its current state has evolved from purely being a game franchise into a multimedia franchise, containing 13 major video game titles, more than 25 book titles and a feature length film. The focus of this study will be about the adaptation of the short story anthologies, titled *Into the Pit* (2019) and its video game title, *Five Nights at Freddy's: Into the Pit* (2024).

Table listing the major titles in the FNAF multimedia franchise.

Mainline Games	Spinoff Games	Short Story Anthologies	Novels & Other Publications	Film
<i>FNAF</i> (August 8, 2014)	<i>FNAF World</i> (January 21, 2016)	<i>Into the Pit</i> (December 26, 2019)	<i>FNAF: The Silver Eyes</i> (December 17, 2015)	<i>FNAF</i> (Worldwide release: October 27, 2023)
		<i>Fetch</i> (March 3, 2020)		
<i>FNAF 2</i> (November 11, 2014)		<i>1:35 A.M.</i> (May 5, 2020)	<i>FNAF: The Twisted Ones</i> (June 27, 2017)	
		<i>Step Closer</i> (July 7, 2020)		
<i>FNAF 3</i> (March 2, 2015)		<i>Bunny Call</i> (September 1, 2020)	<i>FNAF: Survival Logbook</i> (December 26, 2017)	
		<i>Blackbird</i> (December 29, 2020)		
<i>FNAF 4</i> (July 23, 2015)	<i>FNAF: Special Delivery</i> (November 25, 2019)	<i>The Cliffs</i> (March 2, 2021)	<i>FNAF: The Fourth Closer</i> (June 26, 2018)	
		<i>Gumdrop Angel</i> (May 4, 2021)		
<i>FNAF: Sister Location</i> (October 7, 2016)		<i>The Puppet Carver</i> (July 6, 2021)	<i>FNAF: The Ultimate Guide</i> (December 7, 2021)	
		<i>Friendly Face</i> (September 7, 2021)		
<i>Freddy Fazbear's Pizzeria Simulator</i> (December 4, 2017)		<i>Prankster</i> (November 2, 2021)	<i>FNAF: Security Breach Files</i> (September 20, 2022, updated in April 2, 2024)	
		<i>Felix the Shark</i> (April 19, 2022)		
<i>Ultimate Custom Night</i> (June 27, 2018)		<i>Lally's Game</i> (July 19, 2022)	<i>FNAF Character Encyclopedia</i> (February 7, 2023)	
		<i>HAPPS</i> (September 20, 2022)		
<i>FNAF: Help Wanted</i> (May 28, 2019)	<i>FNAF: Into the Pit</i> (August 7, 2024)	<i>Somniphobia</i> (December 6, 2022)	<i>FNAF: The Official Movie Novelization</i> (December 26, 2023)	
		<i>Submechanophobia</i> (December 27, 2022)		
<i>FNAF: Security Breach</i> (December 16, 2021)		<i>The Bobbledots Conclusion</i> (March 7, 2023)	<i>FNAF: VIP</i> (August 3, 2024)	
		<i>Nexie</i> (May 2, 2023)	<i>FNAF: The Week Before</i> (September 3, 2024)	
<i>FNAF: Help Wanted 2</i> (December 14, 2023)		<i>Tiger Rock</i> (July 18, 2023)	<i>FNAF: Return to the Pit</i> (December 24, 2024)	
		<i>B7-2</i> (October 3, 2023)	<i>FNAF: Return to the Pit</i> (December 24, 2024)	

The original creator and developer of the *Five Nights at Freddy's* franchise, Cawthon began his career as a game developer making self-funded Christian adventure games, with one of his earliest titles being *Noah's Ark* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*; according to Marsh (2023). When he released a family-friendly game titled *Chipper & Sons Lumber Co.* which was published in 2013, Cawthon received multiple criticisms on it; one reviewer named Jim Sterling called it unintentionally “terrifying”, and that the characters – which were meant to look cute – felt “soulless”, in an article written by Hernandez (2015). Cawthon then took the criticism to heart, and according to an interview with IGM, he believes that he can make something that is scarier than the terrifying aspect that was pointed out by Sterling (2014).

Cawthon then published his next game, titled *Five Nights at Freddy's* (2014) on *Steam*, which received huge positive feedback; with the game being extremely popular among Let's Play YouTubers; a subset of content creators specialising in playing games. Cawthon then subsequently released a sequel to the game, titled *Five Nights at Freddy's 2* (2014), *Five Nights at Freddy's 3* (2015), *Five Nights at Freddy's 4* (2015), and *Five Nights at Freddy's: Sister Location* (2016) in the subsequent years. He then co-wrote a trilogy novel along with Kira Breed-Wrisley called *The Silver Eyes* trilogy in the fall of 2016. After that, Cawthon published a few more books and games; some of them being spin-offs of the mainline games and others being sequels of them; one of them being titled *Five Nights at Freddy's: Into the Pit* (2024), which was based off of a short story sharing the same name.

In the earlier mainline games, players are often left in the dark when it comes to the storylines, only occasionally hinted on the events happening implicitly through minigames or phone calls, whereas the books would later give fans of the franchise important names. The stories told in the books takes place in a separate continuity from the stories in the games, but is still considered as canon, as said by Cawthon in his *The Ultimate Guide's* (2021) book, "Many concepts first introduced in the novels later took hold in the games, while concepts in the games were sometimes expanded on in the novels. As the franchise evolves, the stories in the book series and the games derive from each other further, to the point the book could almost be considered independent from the games. Then, Cawthon along with Mega Cat Studios published a game; this time based off of their short story *Into the Pit* (2019) titled *Five Nights at Freddy's: Into the Pit* (2024).

Both the short story and the game tells the story about a boy named Oswald, who entered a ball pit in a pizzeria, only to travel in 1985; on the day where an animatronic called Spring Bonnie murdered 6 children. Oswald then entered the ballpit once again to travel back to the present, but was followed by a man wearing a rabbit costume who then pulled his father before replacing him. Oswald then ran away from his house to return to the past pizzeria in order to rescue his father, and kill the rabbit man.

Problem Statement

According to a study by Hartati, Kustanti and Permaludin on *Application of an Adaptation Approach Through Narrative Comparisons in the Novel and Film Twilight*, adaptations often include additional stories or alter existing ones in order to convey the setting more explicitly (2024). As a result, adaptations may end up looking slightly different compared to its original text. Watkins also stated that there is a lot to be worked on adaptations' transformative narratives (2018). These changes in characterisation, messages and plot often leads to dissatisfaction between the audiences; or even the author of the original text.

The short story *Into the Pit's* medium practises the telling of the narrative, whereas the game does a job of telling as well as showing it, giving the audience a wider scope to engage with the idea. The adaptation from telling to showing is one of the most common forms of adaptation, usually from print to performance; said by Hutcheon & O'Flynn, (2014). This form of adaptation allows fans of franchises such as *Marvel* or Japanese light novels to engage with the medium differently.

As multimedia franchises expand, the adaptation of the *Five Nights at Freddy's* (FNAF) into different formats; such as films and novelisation brings its own unique challenges and opportunities. While the games rely on players' interactivity, fear and suspense to deliver the horror elements, as well as the narrative; these elements must be reimagined so as to deliver the same elements in a more passive and less reactive format. Based on a study on *Application of an Adaptation*, Hartati et al. said that adaptations of films often include additional stories or alter available stories and context to convey the settings of the original texts more explicitly (2024). Other than that, Colton pointed out that the biggest reasons for failure of adaptations are broken into three pillars; the lack of Adherence, Ardour, and Dawdling (n.d.)

Thus, this study aims to investigate how the elements of horror and suspense within the narratives are adapted across the media, and the effectiveness of these adaptations. As such, this study's research objectives are

- I. to identify the changes made when adapting the short story *Into the Pit* (2019) to *Five Nights at Freddy's (FNAF): Into the Pit* (2024) game based on Theory of Adaptation (2013) by Hutcheon.

- II. to analyse the effects of the alterations caused by the adaptation of the short story *Into the Pit* (2019) to *Five Nights at Freddy's (FNAF): Into the Pit* (2024) game to the storytelling.

The study will base its theory on Hutcheon's Theory of Adaptation (2013) in order to identify the changes made during the adaptation process of the short story into *FNAF: Into the Pit* (2024) video game. The first research question is what are the challenges of adapting *Into the Pit* (2019) short story to *FNAF: Into the Pit* (2024) video game and what are changed in between. Next, this study also aims to analyse and understand the effects caused by said alterations earlier to the narrative of the story, as well as how it impacts the audiences' engagement based on trends surrounding this title on social and mainstream media. Thus, the second research question is how the effect of the alterations caused by the adaptation to the storytelling and audience engagement.

The significance of this research is to shed light upon the process of adaptation of texts into separate mediums. Audiences are extremely critical when it comes to the process of adapting their beloved stories into a new medium, and thus often gets upset when the adaptations are not up to their vision. In an interview through RogerEbert.com, it is stated by Forman that oftentimes adaptations of books that you enjoy, you would be let down (2014). Some of the most critical adaptations are the movie *Fantastic Four* (2015), receiving a 4.3/10.0 rating on IMDb as well as *Assassin's Creed* (2016), which received a rating of 5.6/10.0 on the same website.

Thus, it can be drawn from Forman's analysis that many fans do not prefer adaptations as compared to the original text.

This study limits itself to analysing the narrative and storyline of both *Into the Pit* (2019) and *FNAF: Into the Pit* (2024). Thus, it will not focus on the analysis of characters like Oswald, nor the general settings of the story, unless relevant to the research. The reasoning of this limitation is due to fans of the media mostly critiquing adaptations on the plot of the stories; whether its exclusion of pre-existent content or addition of unnecessary plot points.

The Concept of Adaptations

Comprehensive literature evaluations on subjects including studies and previous research on adaptations, the *Five Nights at Freddy's* (FNAF) franchise, and adaptation theories will be carried out in order to deepen comprehension of this research. According to Mariani's journal on the process of adaptation in 2024, adaptation has become a keyword for new ways of storytelling; told in an ever-expanding multimedia universe. Adaptations rely heavily on new technologies, while also maintaining connections among old and new means to create and consume texts. Mariani delves into the complexities of adapting a novel for the big screen; discussing the choices and challenges that directors and screenwriters face in order to preserve the essence of the source material when adapting. To sum up, Mariani's article highlights the importance of staying faithful to the characterisation and themes of the original text, while also being creative in visualising certain scenes into a newer form of storytelling.

Afterward, Hartati, Kustanti & Permaludin stated in 2024 that there are several terms associated when it comes to adapting literary works; ecranisation, musicalisation, dramatisation and novelisation. They also stated that translating a literary work into the screen involves converting a written language into a mix of audio-visual language, using the adaptation of the novel *Twilight* (2008). This comes into relevance as video games also utilise a visual-audio language, similar to film.

Other than novel-to-film adaptations, there are also adaptations from comic-to-film. According to Pratt in its journal on compatibility and value of comic-to-film adaptations in 2024, comic-to-film adaptation is inescapable in modern culture. In his journal, he delves into the challenges and opportunities when adapting this medium. He also stated the four groupings of value in comics – the narrative, pictorial, historical, and the referential which is relevant to adapting comics into film adaptation. These studies focus on the challenges and adjustments that are to be made when adapting a novel or a comic into film. While different from adapting a short story into a video game; the narrative aspect of video games parallels with the narrative of a film.

Next, in Zhenhua Jia's case study of *The Great Gatsby's* (2013) adaptations published in 2024, her study summarises the aesthetic characteristics and limitations of adaptations when it comes from classic literature into a more insightful modern narration on the screen. The article also discussed how the adaptation managed to capture the spirit of the original text all while facing the limitations caused by the differences between literary and cinematic mediums. This journal proved useful for this study as it presents some of the limitations caused by the differences of the mediums.

Genres of Horror

I also did some reading on the horror aesthetics in order to garner more of an understanding of this study. In a book titled *Horror Film Aesthetics: Creating the Visual Language of Fear* written by Sipos, cinematic tools such as acting, costumes, sound design and lighting play heavily into creating horror on the screen (2010). Sipos also stated that horror is an elusive genre to be defined; how some horror shows could be misconstrued as science fiction, dark fantasy or even suspense depending on the stories told and the current popular trend.

Caroll's article on the nature of horror, which was published in 1987 is also another article that I read in order to understand this genre more. Compared to Sipos, Caroll focuses more on the horror associated with texts such as Stoker's *Dracula* or Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*. According to Caroll, this sort of horror; which he coined as "art-horror" focuses more on the fictitious style of horror over something realistic such as a loose serial killer or a natural disaster.

Five Nights at Freddy's Text and Franchise

For the *FNAF*, I have read several journal articles based on the multimedia franchise. One of the articles that I have read is Hannah Capstick's study on *FNAF's* approach to music, sound and their relationship with immersion. This study relates to one of my objectives which was to analyse audience engagements and immersiveness in video games compared to a short story. Capstick argues that the concept of "Global Music Box" aims to understand the many elements in a video game collectively to create an immersive experience.

Next, Hovland in his study on the transmedial symbiosis between *FNAF's* different narratives explores how the franchise helps connect its multimedia franchise through transmedial storytelling and adaptation (2024). He argues that the franchise uses game mechanics that are fragmented and puzzle-like to allow players to speculate and fill the narrative gaps, while also having other installments that are more narrative driven. Examples of these narrative driven media are *FNAF: Security Breach* (2021) and the books. These titles, while in different continuity, share parallel to one another, allowing one medium's concepts and lore to influence the other.

I also did some extended reading on a journal which was written by Yujie Ji and Yixuan Zhao. The journal is an analysis on *FNAF's* narrative and explores the storytelling and narrative strategies used by them. According to them, *FNAF* utilises techniques such as cryptic storytelling and meta narrative in order to deliver their stories, referencing titles such as *FNAF: Help Wanted* (2019). Ji and Zhao also pointed out that *FNAF's* storytelling often requires players to actively uncover the lore, rather than receiving it by Cawthon.

Game Reviews and Sales Data

In order to see the effect of this adaptation to the audience, this study will be using two sites called *Steam* and *Gamalytic* in order to draw conclusions. *Steam* is the largest online-gaming platform in the world, averaging at 132 million users per month, with 69 million users logging onto *Steam* on a daily basis (Backlinko, 2025). *Steam* is used in order to analyse the reviews left by users who have bought and played the game *FNAF: Into the Pit* (2024) in order to draw conclusions in regards to player satisfaction. Meanwhile, *Gamalytic* is a provider of real-time game statistics. *Gamalytic* serves as a market intelligence platform, providing analytics and insights for *Steam* games, offering data on game sales, revenue, and player demographics.



Image showing the review chart for the game *Five Nights at Freddy's: Into the Pit* (2024)

As shown above, the overall review for the game *FNAF: Into the Pit* (2024) seems to be overwhelmingly positive, from a total of 9,134 users (as of June 19, 2025). Many of the users praised the horror aspect of the game, claiming that the jumpscare were extremely immersive and had an extremely fun and intuitive gameplay. Many of the people who also rated it well quoted it as a very beautiful love letter to the franchise; considering this is Mega Cat's first game within the *FNAF* franchise. However, some of the bad reviews of the game stated that the game has a horrible gameplay loop as well as the locking of the various endings behind 'tedious' easter eggs. The gameplay loop was criticised by quite a few of the users, while also mentioning that the game's replayability is lacking.

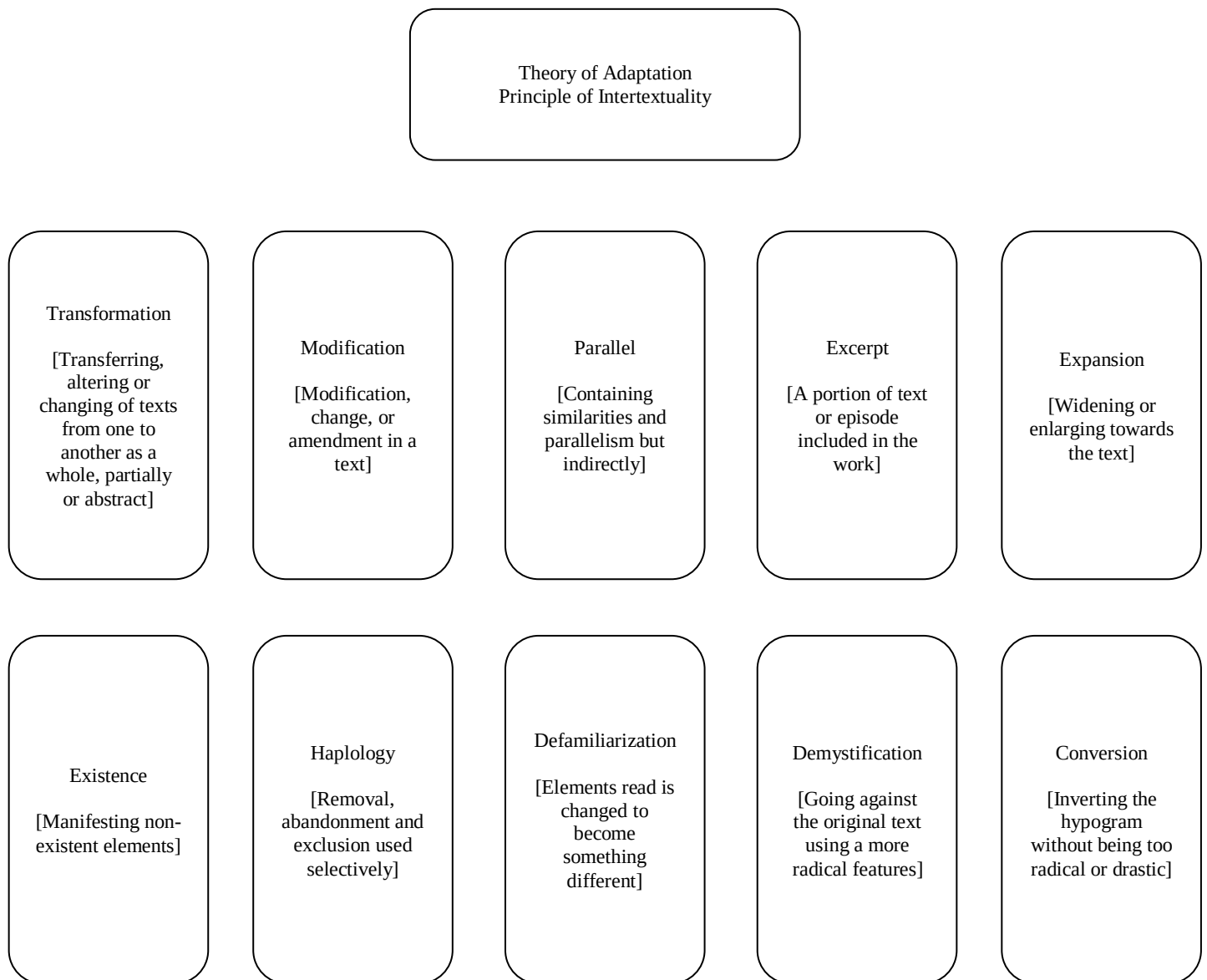
According to *Gamalytic*, *FNAF: Into the Pit* (2024) sold a total of 164.5 thousand copies on Steam, as of June 18th. This averages to 522.2 copies sold each day only on Steam, with the game's gross revenue being somewhere between 1.9 million to 3.9 million US Dollars. In comparison, Amazon, which is the largest international e-commerce company, has close to 13 thousand reviews of the original *Into the Pit* (2019) short story compilation. Though the usage of reviews is not entirely accurate, Amazon requires their reviewers to purchase the product before giving it a review, so it is safe to say that on a minimum 13 thousand copies were sold at least on Amazon. According to these datas, there is an upward trend of 1265.4% increase in sales of *FNAF: Into the Pit* (2024) compared to the original short story *Into the Pit* (2019).

The Choosing of Theories and Theoretical Framework

Linda Hutcheon's *Theory of Adaptation* (2013) explains the concept of adaptations; that they are not just a copy or a repetition of the original text. Rather, an adaptation is a reimagining of it. Hutcheon comments that adaptations' purpose is to repurpose and reimagine the original text in order to cater to a new context, audience or medium. She also pointed out the importance of the relationship between the two texts as adaptations can be seen as a form of critique or revision of the original work. An example of adaptation being made as a form of critique is David Edgar's stage adaptation of *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-39) which was originally made by Charles Dickens. Edgars' play was called "a play that critiqued Dickens' form of social morality"; says Innis (1993). Hence, Hutcheon's theory focuses on the importance of adapting, as well as maintaining relationship with the original text.

The second theory that I read is Julie Sanders' *Adaptation and Appropriation* (2016) book. In it, Sanders focuses on the cultural, social and political implications of a form of adaptation. She examines how adaptations not only are shaped by current societal norms and values, but also are capable of shaping it. Lastly, I also do a little bit of reading about a study on the two theories, which was written by Paul Edwards. Paul focuses on Hutcheon's theory of adaptation in his study, while using the latter as a useful measure of how adaptation can be bracketed, as well as how far it can be stretched (2007). Reading this study helps me to understand the two

theories better, which brought me to the conclusion of using Hutcheon's theory over Sander. From that a theoretical framework for this study was construed as such:



Graphic showing the principles of intertextuality within the theory of adaptation.

The presented theoretical framework showcases the ten principles of intertextuality within the theory of adaptation, where the principle of transformation alters or changes texts whole, partially or abstract.

Modification principle changes or amends the text. Parallel maintains the similarities of the text indirectly. Next, excerpt includes a portion of the original text or episode in the adapted work. Expansion widens or enlarges the texts into a larger foundation, and existence manifests elements that do not exist in the original text. Haplology removes, abandons and excludes portions of the original text selectively without changing the messages. Defamiliarization changes elements read in order to become something different. Demystification goes against the original texts using radical features, while conversion inverts the idea and structure of the text without being too radical or drastic.

However, in an adaptation process, not all 10 principles will be utilised. Oftentimes principles such as demystification, existence or expansion are often not used. As such, this study will also exclude some principles accordingly so as to not clutter or muddle the focus of this study. This study will focus on the five principles as such; defamiliarization, haplology, modification, parallel, and transformation as these five are a lot more present within this adaptation of texts.

Research Design

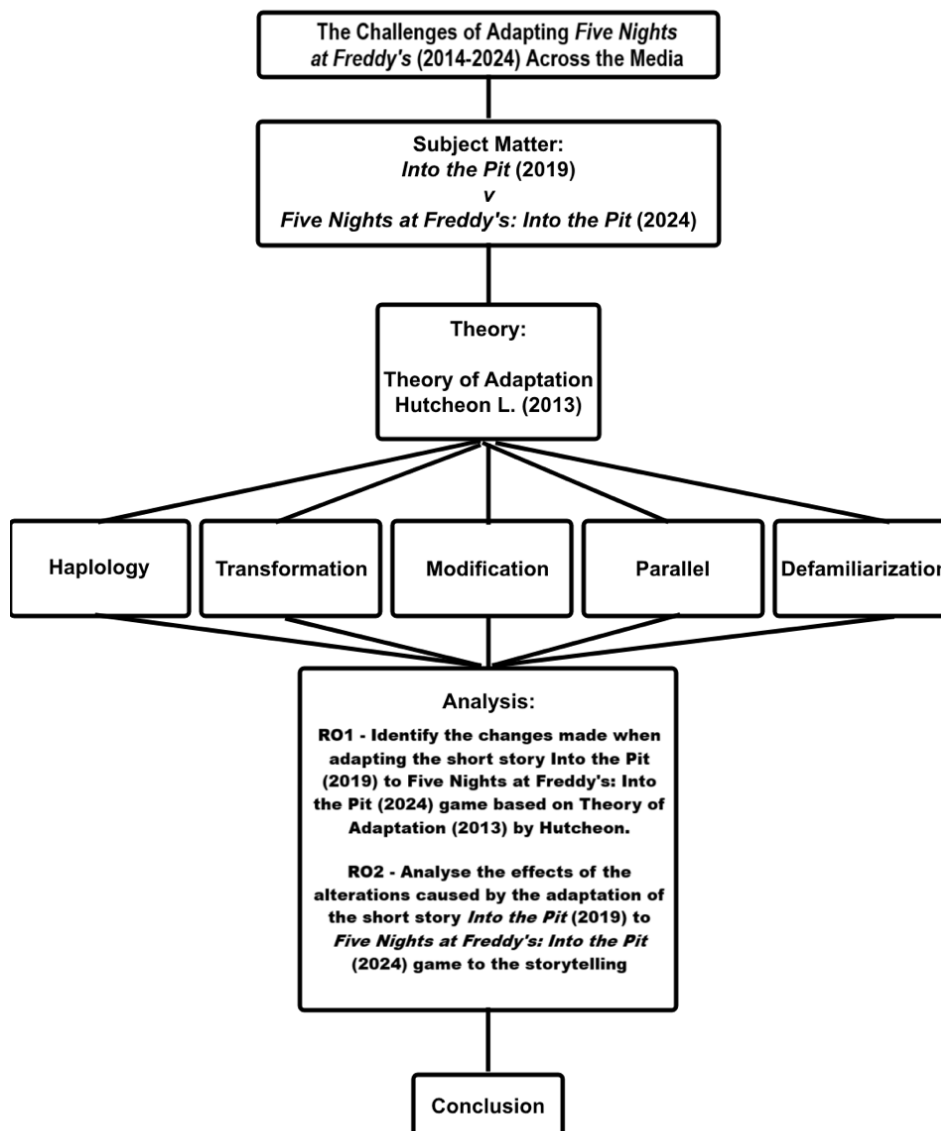


Chart showcasing the research design of this study

This study begins with identifying the issue of adaptations, where alteration or modification would often lead to changes in meaning of texts by Hartati et al. (2024). Based on Hutcheon's Theory of Adaptation (2013), the focus of this study is to first and foremost identify the challenges in adapting the original text *Into the Pit* (2019) short story into the video game *Five Nights at Freddy's (FNAF): Into the Pit* (2024), before analysing the effects of these alterations and modifications to the storytelling and audience engagement according to Hutcheon's Theory of Adaptation (2013).

The next step is identifying the changes made in *FNAF: Into the Pit* (2024) compared to the short story *Into the Pit* (2019). Identification of these changes will be made based on the ten principles of intertextuality; transformation, modification, parallel, excerpt, expansion, existence, haplology, defamiliarization, demystification, and conversion. However, not all ten principles will be utilised for this study, as principles such as demystification are not utilised during the process of adaptation. The principle of existence is also not going to be used as this adaptation is a very close adaptation and does not add a lot of brand new elements to the story in *FNAF: Into the Pit* (2024) when compared to the original text.

The choosing of the two texts, *Into the Pit* (2019) short story and *FNAF: Into the Pit* (2024) are made as *FNAF: Into the Pit* (2024) is a direct adaptation of the short story in the franchise. While there are other texts

adapted within the *FNAF* franchise, texts like *FNAF: The Silver Eyes* trilogies (2015-2018) are less direct adaptations and are more outdated to be used for study. Thus, this research will focus only on *Into the Pit* (2019) short story and *FNAF: Into the Pit* (2024) video game in order to identify the challenges of adapting the story.

Changes between original and adapted text

The first key difference of the short story *Into the Pit* (2019) and the adaptation *Five Nights at Freddy's (FNAF): Into the Pit* (2024) are the exposition of the stories. The story begins on the last day of school before the summer holiday in the short story. We are exposed to the town that Oswald resides in, and the state of it. We are also told about Oswald's friend, Ben who moved away from the town, leaving him by himself. Meanwhile, the video game brings us straight into the middle of summer holiday, where Oswald's father is driving to Jeff's Pizza to drop him off as he heads to his part time job, where the two of them had a small bet whether there is still a dead possum on the crossroad. Any mentions of Ben within the short story was removed in the video game adaptation, outside of item interactions.

The rising action of the video game adaptation vastly differs from the original text. In *Into the Pit*, Oswald and his father had a fight where Oswald complained about his parents' financial status, and how his friend Ben gets to have a vacation at a beach, while he is stuck in Jeff's Pizza, with just enough money for a slice of the most basic pizza. He then decided to play a prank on his father by hiding in a disgusting and abandoned ball pit in Jeff's Pizza. While hiding in it, Oswald finds himself travelling to the past; way before Jeff owned the pizza place, and the place was called Freddy Fazbear's Pizza. In the video game, Oswald jumped into the ball pit within the first few minutes of the game, planning to prank his father who was late to pick him up. While in the past, the video game moves further into the story by means of Oswald playing hide and seek, before stumbling upon a scene of carnage as a creature similar to a rabbit animatronic goes around kidnapping children.

In *Into the Pit* (2019), Oswald spent a few days hanging out in 1985, hanging out with his new friends Chip and Mike. The climax of the story then happens on one day, when he jumped into the ball pit, he came to Freddy Fazbear's Pizza that had erupted in chaos, with kids and parents running around and a man wearing a yellow rabbit costume seemingly responsible for the murder and chaos. As the rabbit man chased him, Oswald jumped back into the ballpit, attempting to return to the present, where he is confronted by his father. Before being able to answer his father's scolding, the rabbit man appeared from the ballpit as well before dragging his father into the ballpit, and utilised a hypnosis technology to mask himself as Oswald's father. The game's climax arrived as Oswald realised his father had been swapped by the rabbit and was watching his every move every night. The rabbit would chase Oswald around the house in order to kill him, and Oswald is forced to sneak out of his home to return back to the ball pit and find his father.

The falling action of both stories are roughly similar, with Oswald returning to the ball pit at night to find his father. The only differences between the two are the duration in which Oswald's action takes place. In the short story, Oswald sneaked to the ball pit after the first day back to school after hearing some quotes of encouragement by his new friend. That night, he tiptoed out of his house before diving into the ball pit and counting to one hundred. Meanwhile, the game's adaptation takes place over five days, with Oswald sneaking out every night to the ball pit, attempting to find his father who was hidden in a hidden room. Every night, Oswald would find other children who were trapped by the rabbit and help free them.

The ending of the stories are the biggest outliers in terms of differences. While in the original short story, Oswald would find his father's feet under the ball pit and struggles to pull his father up from the ball pit. Once he's pulled him up, the rabbit jumped on him, biting Oswald on the arm before getting knocked by him. The rabbit would then get strangled by the ropes around the ball pit, ultimately killing him. Oswald then finally had his chance to apologise to his father for 'attempting to prank him' and getting his father knocked out in the ball pit. The two of them make amends with each other and leave Jeff's Pizza in peace. However, in the game's version there are four separate endings, depending on the way you play the games. Below are all the endings achievable within the game:-

Table showcasing the different endings in the *FNAF : Into the Pit* (2024) video game.

Ending Name	What Am I Ending	See Ya Dad Ending	Pit-y Party Ending	Jeff? Ending	Family Fun Night Ending
The Ending	Oswald wakes up on the stage, with the other animatronics blocking the doors. He then slowly forgets his name and his existence.	Oswald leaves the Freddy's pizzeria in the past without his father; now being lost and confused.	Oswald manages to save his dad from the Party Room, but the rabbit jumps back from the ball pit, pulling Oswald back in. Oswald then wakes up tied to a chair in the Party Room, with the rabbit laughing as the door swings open.	Oswald manages to save his dad from the Party Room, but the rabbit jumps back from the ball pit and bites Oswald's arm before getting stuck on the ball pit's net and seemingly dies. Oswald and his father leaves the establishment before Jeff enters the ball pit to investigate. The rabbit then comes back to life and kills Jeff.	Oswald manages to save his dad from the Party Room, but the rabbit jumps back from the ball pit and bites Oswald's arm before getting stuck on the ball pit's net and dies. Oswald and his father then leaves the establishment. Jeff then sells all of the decrepit arcade machines and renovates Jeff's Pizza, where Oswald and his parents would later revisit.

As shown above, the endings to the video game all differ on the choices and actions made by the player during their playthroughs. This is by far the biggest thing separating the two versions. However, many fans consider the *Family Fun Night* ending to be the canonical (i.e. a general law, rule, principle, or criterion by which something is judged, Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.) ending as it serves as the best ending and goes in line to the events in the short story version.

Reasonings for the changes

All of these changes were made due to the difficulties and/or feedbacks received from the original short story when adapting it into the game, and this section will now utilise the 5 principles of intertextuality from Hutcheon's theory of adaptation in order to justify the changes between the two versions. This section will also discuss all five principles separately within their own subtopics.

i. Haplology

Haplology refers to removal, abandonment and exclusion from the original texts which is used selectively when adapting the text. In *Into the Pit* (2019), there are a few elements which were removed during the adaptation process.

In the beginning of the story, one of the elements removed was Ben. Ben was Oswald's friend who moved away from the town they resided in, and served as the source of conflict within Oswald's mind. Ben, whose family's finances turned out better after leaving the town. This drastically changes the motive of Oswald jumping into the ball pit in the first place; from him originally letting out frustration on his dad and family for being not well off, to him wanting to play a tiny prank on his father. A probable reason for this removal may be the overall lack of impact Ben brings to the story; where the writer believes they could utilise a different stimulus to move the story forward.

ii. Transformation

The next principle is transformation; where writers would alter the text from one to another whether whole, partially or abstract. This can be seen used multiple times, one of them being the mention of the dead possum. While being an extremely minor point, the placement of the dead possum sets the bleak situation the town is currently in. In the video game adaptation, the dead possum is instead

used as a betting competition between Oswald and his father, in order to create a narrative where the two of them are close enough to be joking with each other.

Another element that was changed in the original text was the scene when Oswald returned home from his first day back in school. He was helping the yellow rabbit to clean out the house, in an attempt to pretend everything was normal in his life before figuring out a way to save his real father. This was changed in the video game into a quest taking places around the town which gives the player and Oswald hints in order to progress the story. This is likely changed in order to stimulate the players and not bore them.

iii. **Modification**

Modification refers to amendments made to the original texts, usually with the intent of improving upon the context or delivery of said texts. In the video game, the relationship of Oswald alongside his friends from the past Chip and Mike were amended to take place over a single day instead. The likely reasoning for this is to move forward the plot faster than the original story, emphasising the survival horror aspect of the game and the core theming of Five Nights at Freddy's game; taking place over five separate nights.

Other than that, the video game also refined the endings to the game, especially with the Jeff? and the Family Fun Night ending, where they further clarified the fate of the yellow rabbit. In the short story, though the yellow rabbit was heavily implied to have died due to strangulation, the ending was somewhat still left up to interpretation, and the video game simply amended it, portraying a clearer ending.

iv. **Parallel**

A clear example of parallels within the two versions of this story can be seen within the character of Gabrielle. In the short story, she is a girl who recently moved into the town and talked with Oswald. Oswald helped Gabrielle to fend away some bullies before chatting with her. Gabrielle, who likes to read about Greek Mythologies, told Oswald that Greek Myths and Sci-Fi stories aren't that different from each other; both of them telling a story about being brave against impossible odds. This then fuels Oswald to save his father, and serves as motivation for him to slam into the yellow rabbit and save his father.

In the video game, Gabrielle serves a similar role, as a motivator for Oswald, giving him the same speech about being brave. But other than that, Gabrielle also gave a notebook by her grandfather, which contained gameplay and lore clues to the animatronics running rampant in the past, as Oswald travels back and forth through time to save his father. This parallel helps the player as well to learn the way to navigate around the animatronics which serves as hostile entities, preventing them from completing the game.

v. **Defamiliarization**

Lastly, defamiliarization changes contexts given in the original text in order to bring something new to the adaptations. A simple example of defamiliarization would be the introduction of musics and ambient noises in the game, which further fuels the immersive experience of the players. Other than that, the video game also introduced a survival mechanic, where the yellow rabbit would chase Oswald around his house, jumpscaring him and the players whenever Oswald was caught. This further defamiliarise players from the original short story by introducing a more real sense of danger, where the lead is not actually invincible from the plot.

Other than that, the introduction of the animatronics into the gameplay of *FNAF: Into the Pit* (2024) also serves as a form of defamiliarization; making the players navigate around the obstacle in order to give them more of a challenge. Finally, the change of games such as *Skee-Ball*, *Ms. Pac-Man*,

Donkey Kong, *Frogger*, and *Galaga* into original titled minigames, based off of the in-universe lores and past games. The main reasoning for this defamiliarization is the fact that all of the originally mentioned games are of IPs unrelated to Scott Cawthon or any of the *Five Nights at Freddy's* franchise. As such, Scott Cawthon and Mega Cat Studios do not have the rights to portray any of those games within their video games.

To sum up this section, Mega Cat Studios did a number of changes from the original text in order to accommodate the new video game medium of the story of *Into the Pit* (2019). The next section will further discuss the effects caused by these alterations to the story's narrative.

Effects of the alterations to the storytelling

As changes were made to the stories during the process of the adaptation, so does the result of the story. The original short story of *Into the Pit* (2019) serves as a short story that initially helped branch the franchise of *Five Nights at Freddy's* (FNAF). Meanwhile, the video game adaptation serves as a tie-in to the previous games, despite coming from a separate universe. In terms of the storytelling of both versions, *FNAF: Into the Pit* (2024) changes fairly little compared to the original text, retaining the overall plot line while refining and changing some of the minor details such as the timeline progression, clarity and refining of the ending, as well as the reduction of irrelevant characters, like Ben. As such, both versions retain a similar theme, message, and cast of characters. Other than that, the only things that were notably changed are the change of the games mentioned in the short story as mentioned in the previous chapter in order to not infringe on said IP. However, the exclusions of these game titles does not affect anything in terms of the storytelling negatively.

When it comes to the pacing of the story, the adaptation allows the beginning of the story to move a lot faster; and slows down only after the first night has passed. This allows the game to establish a sense of danger and fear within the players, before slowly exposing to us a way to defeat the yellow rabbit. The new endings also serve as a way to bridge the medium; allowing players to perform their own choices within the story, and giving them more sense of immersion.

All in all, the core messaging of the story of *Into the Pit* (2019) is still the same when being adapted into *FNAF: Into the Pit* (2024); which is to become brave when faced with an insurmountable obstacle. While changing its purpose from expansion of the universe, the new adaptation manages to retain the same core messaging as the original text.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, this study explored the challenges and transformations that were made in the process of adapting the short story *Into the Pit* (2019) into the video game *Five Nights at Freddy's (FNAF): Into the Pit* (2024). Using the theory of adaptation by Hutcheon (2013), this study highlights adaptation as a complex process of reinterpretation that must accounts for the adapted medium, as well as the expectations of its audience.

The analysis of this study managed to identify the process of adaptations in this two media using the five key principles of adaptation; haplology, transformation, modification, parallel, and defamiliarization, all of which were present throughout the process of adaptation. These principles explained the reasoning to the exclusion or addition of certain narrative elements, such as the removal of Oswald's friend, Ben (haplology). Elements that were transformed are also done so as to help recontextualise the initial narrative elements on a new medium as a video game; a requirement in order to increase the immersiveness of the survival horror genre. Popular horror elements such as jumpscare, ambient noises and survival mechanics were introduced so as to create a sense of threat with the antagonist of the story; the yellow rabbit, thus increasing the sense of fear. Despite these introductions, the *FNAF: Into the Pit* (2024) video game retained the original story's message about bravery in the face of impossibility, proving that core themes can still be retained even in the restructuring of narratives.

Ultimately, this research proves that adaptation is equally a creative and strategic process. Changes does not always equal a betrayal of the source material; but can be a necessary requirement to align with the new

mediums. The successful adaptation of the short story *Into the Pit* (2019) illustrates how fidelity to the theme and emotional core can coexist with innovations of the new version of medias. As a transmedia franchise like *FNAF* continue to evolve, it is vital that creators and critics both understands how adaptations work so as to reshape storytelling and narrative.

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