

Háskóli Íslands
Hugvísindadeild
Enskuskor

True Fidelity?

The Adaptation of High Fidelity

Ritgerð til B.A.-prófs

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Summary

High Fidelity is a novel written by Nick Hornby and was published in 1995. Five years later, a film with the same title was released world-wide. The film is an adaptation of the novel. I have decided to inspect what changes were made to the original story when it was adapted for the film. There were many changes made that are obvious to those who have both read the story and seen the film, such as the relocation of the setting from London to Chicago. But I found changes such as this one to be merely superficial changes. The changes I wanted to inspect were the ones made to the characters, theme and atmosphere.

I found the theory of novel-to-film adaptation is relatively young in many respects. The adaptation process itself is perhaps as old as the cinema itself but the theoretical discussion of the process is by no means as extensive as it perhaps should be, considering how many novels and other literary works have been adapted for films.

Critics have many times criticized film adaptations for not being as good as the original work. I found that his criticism can be unfair, as many adapted films are not trying to reproduce the original work but to reinvent it for a new format. This is the approach I wanted to make when inspecting the film adaptation of *High Fidelity*. I wanted to find out how the film-makers succeeded in making their own version of the story without betraying the original work.

I have also applied the theories of adaptations to *High Fidelity*, and assessed how successful the film-makers were in adapting the original story – most importantly its characters, theme and atmosphere.

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Introduction

High Fidelity, the first fictional novel by English author Nick Hornby, was released in 1995. Five years later, the film adaptation with the same title was released in film theatres. Along with the fact that the setting of the story was relocated from London to Chicago, the most obvious change is that the protagonist's name is changed from Rob Fleming to Rob Gordon. This alteration is of no true significance to the film but it gives motive to speculate as to why the film-makers felt it necessary to change this detail. Were there other changes made to the character and if so, to what extent and how might they influence the story itself?

For almost as long as there has been a film industry, there have been film adaptations based on previously published works, mostly of the literary kind. However, many adaptation-theorists are surprised how little attention has been given to both the theoretical and practical processes of adaptations. Most critics of film adaptations seem to be preoccupied with how well the film measures up to the original work, rather than evaluating the film by its own merits.

I will discuss what influence the process of adaptation had on Hornby's novel, *High Fidelity*. I will inspect what changes were necessary to make and which changes were optional. In making a successful adaptation, did the film-makers need to adhere to any specific laws of adaptation or were they at liberty to make any change they wanted to the original work?

When discussing adaptations, many other questions arise, not only those that address the process itself. Although the film was released many years after the publishing of the novel, the film can have a substantial effect on the novel and its author. The film might draw either positive or negative attention to the original work and have an impact on the author's career as a novelist. Is the adaptation process beneficial for both parties or is the film merely capitalizing on a previously published work which has already been well received?

Both art forms have their advantages which must be taken into account when adapting from one form to the other. Features that the novel uses to its advantage might not be at the disposal of the film-makers and vice versa. Undeniably, this has an effect on the outcome of the adapted work, as well as many other elements which I will look at.

When discussing and comparing the protagonist in both novel and film, I will refer to the novel's protagonist as Rob Fleming whereas Rob Gordon is the name of the film's version of the main character.

I have also compiled two lists which are included as appendixes to this essay. I based them on similar lists which Brian McFarlane compiled in his 1995 book, *From Novel to Film*, in which he discussed various film adaptations. McFarlane's book is considered to be centric to modern theoretical discussion of novel-to-film adaptations. Other sources I have studied cite McFarlane's book in most, if not all cases.

The first appendix is a segmentation of the film which sequences the events as they occur in the film. The second is a similar sequencing of events in the novel which I then compare to the film. This was not an easy task, as the film manipulated and rearranged the novel quite extensively.

Independent Analyses of Novel and Film

High Fidelity is a novel written by Nick Hornby and published in 1995. The novel is contemporary and is set in North-London. The protagonist is named Rob Fleming, a record-shop owner in his thirties. The main setting of the story is his apartment and shop, Championship Vinyl, along with various locations nearby. The novel is written in the first-person narrative of the protagonist.

The story begins with Rob's split-up with his girlfriend, Laura Lydon, which becomes the main conflict of the story. It represents two kinds of conflicts. Firstly, the internal struggle of Rob's status in the world; his early mid-life crises where he goes through a reassessment of his life, in particular his previous romantic relationships. His reassessment has a direct affect on his relationship with Laura, around which the main external conflict revolves.

Rob's initial premise about his split-up with Laura is that it cannot have the same, or as deep, effect on him as his earlier split-ups with other girlfriends have had. As the reader will realize later in the novel, Rob's assessment of all qualities in life can be summarized by making a top-five list on almost everything. He therefore lists his 'desert-island, all-time, top five most memorable split-ups' (1) in the opening segment of the novel and as a result establishes the beginning of his life after his split-up with Laura.

Rob is an avid music enthusiast and owns an extensive record collection as well as the record-shop. The story itself is greatly influenced by music as Rob's everyday life revolves around music. He claims music is more dangerous to young, impressionistic minds than violence, as he explains in the following quote:

What came first, the music or the misery? Did I listen to music because I was miserable? Or was I miserable because I listened to music? Do all those records turn you into a melancholy person?

People worry about kids playing with guns, and teenagers watching violent videos; we are scared that some sort of culture of violence will take them over. Nobody worries about kids listening to thousands – literally thousands – of songs about the broken hearts and rejection and pain and misery and loss. (18-19)

No matter what came first – the music or the misery – the result is the same. He claims to be miserable and an inseparable part of his misery is the music he listens to. Music is a major influence in his life, as he explains in various segments during the story. One such example is when he falls in love with a song, he seeks an example from the real world to complement the song. This was his reason for his infidelity with Laura – he had been listening to a song and found a woman who made him feel the same way.

The issues confronting Rob and Laura's relationship are mostly the same ones that Rob has to deal with internally. He is not happy at his job; he feels he is '[...] patently not a grown-up man in a grown-up job' (129). He feels his life has never amounted to anything he himself regards worth while.

Rob blames one split-up especially as the cause for the turn his life took. Charlie Nicholson was the woman who, according to him, ruined his life. Rob was in university when he met Charlie and when they split up, he quit his studies and began to work in a record-shop. He therefore attributes that major shift in the course of his life to Charlie's treatment of him, rather than how he himself dealt with the situation.

But as the story develops, Rob decides to look up the women of his past and confront the issues surrounding the end of their relationships. To his surprise, he finds he is not at all the victim of these break-ups, but rather a beneficiary. Even Charlie fails to live up to the standard of the penultimate girlfriend. Whereas he admired her intellect in the past, he now finds her annoying. 'How had I managed to edit all this out in the intervening years? How had I managed to turn her into the answer of all the world's problems?' (152).

The answer, he finds, is to be found within himself. His relationship with Laura was the one that counted for the most and he finds that his job would actually make a list of his top five dream jobs. He finds he has the potential to be content with his life.

This realization is central to his wanting to be back with Laura and sort out his own emotions to allow himself to be happy. Rob and Laura are reunited after her father's funeral and re-start their relationship. And rather than running away again when the relationship, becomes uncomfortable, again, Rob decides to confront himself and stop chasing a fantasy of life being better with another woman. Surely, there would never be a first kiss with Laura again, but he would rather spend his days with her than looking for a fantasy that would never materialize.

His biggest lesson is that after all that, he is now not only able to see how to make himself happy but, perhaps more importantly, how to make Laura happy as well.

The journey Rob takes during the course of the story is influenced by the characters and situations that arise from the time he and Laura split up until they are happily reunited.

Barry and Dick are Rob's employees in his record-shop, Championship Vinyl. Although Rob would scarcely admit it, they are the extreme versions of his own character – the outrageous and offending Barry and the shy and inverted Dick. Ultimately they are very close friends although they seem not to get along very well at times. They are more alike than they themselves would want to admit. All of them are equally awkward with women and take pleasure from the fact that their intense knowledge of music is mostly unparalleled. Indeed, they never seem to agree on what should and shouldn't be on their Top five lists of various artists, bands, albums or songs. Each of them thinks their list is the best.

The ultimate reason for their constant compiling of various top five lists is attributed to their belief that it is more important in a person to state what you like (mainly in regards to music, literature, films etc) than what a person actually is like. After Rob's epiphany and as a result of Laura's actions, he later realizes that this assumption is wrong. He could actually enjoy someone's company in spite of his distaste for his/her record collection.

Marie Le Salle is introduced to the story as a musician who Rob meets at the beginning of the story whilst attending her concert with Barry and Dick. As their relationship evolves, Marie becomes the 'other woman' in Rob's life. He is infatuated with her, mainly because she embodies the fantasy of Rob's idea of a perfect

relationship. He wants to be a part of a musician's life; to have her write songs at home and ask for his opinion of them etc. Marie is an American, which adds to the contrast between her and Laura. Rob finds that he gets along well with Marie and they do in fact sleep together, but this does not deter Rob from his obsession with Laura. Marie and Rob remain friends and although Rob doesn't tell Laura the full extent of their relationship, the two women meet and like each other.

There are many other characters in the novel that all have their affect on the protagonist. Liz, Laura's best friend, serves as a barometer for the tension between Laura and Rob during their time apart. Rob's parents symbolize the life that Rob himself doesn't want but is ultimately destined to have with Laura. Also, all of Rob's ex-girlfriends enter the story as he tries to discover why he has always had problems with relationships.

The role of the antagonist can perhaps best be attributed to Ian Raymond - Rob and Laura's former neighbor and the man Laura goes to after her relationship with Rob ends. His role is more of a comical nature though, as it was only convenient for Laura to seek solace in the arms of Ian, rather than to start a serious relationship with him.

In general terms, the film does not stray far away from the original work. Certain changes were made to the film, most noticeably the relocation of the setting from London to Chicago. However, this does not affect the film greatly as the film-makers stay true to most of the characteristics of the protagonist and other characters.

As seen in Appendix B, where major events of the novel are compared to the plot of the film, the film-makers have rearranged the order of many scenes as well as omitted certain events from the novel. I will later discuss the effects of these changes made to the original work and the effects they have on the film.

The casting is one of the strongest features of the film. As I will argue, Cusack's involvement in the film is more than just his portrayal of the protagonist and that is to the film's advantage. Other roles are appropriately cast with a mixture of actors who were well known in the Hollywood-industry as well as unknown actors. But all the actors fit very well to their role which indicates that the main aim of the casting process was to find actors suitable for their role, not ones whose status as a Hollywood-star would further the exposure of the film.

John Cusack is the protagonist Rob Gordon. When reading the novel, one feels an intimate connection between the narrator, Rob Fleming, and its author, Nick Hornby. This is Rob's story, and therefore Hornby's story as well. Much to the same effect, the film is Cusack's story. As is the case with other cast-members, Cusack fits the role of Rob Gordon very well.

In the year 2000, at the time the film was made, Cusack was undoubtedly the most famous of the actors cast in one of the major roles in the movie. He had already established himself as a Hollywood-star, much as Tim Robbins and Catherine Zeta-Jones but they are cast as supporting actors in the film. Cusack had already gained fame for his work in movies such as *Say Anything* (1989), *Bullets Over Broadway* (1994), *City Hall* (1996), *Con Air* (1997), *Grosse Pointe Blank* (1997), *The Thin Red Line* (1998) and *Being John Malkovich* (1999).

Siegfried Kracauer suggests that Hollywood stars act 'out a standing character identical with his own' and their presence therefore point beyond the film (Kracauer 99). As said before, Cusack certainly has had a long career in Hollywood and films boasting a well-known cast certainly do benefit from the actor's body of work. Had Cusack not been as well known as he was at the release of *High Fidelity*, it is safe to say the movie would not have gained as much attention as it did.

However, Cusack's status in Hollywood allows him to choose the films on which he would like to work. Both before and after making *High Fidelity*, Cusack has starred in typical 'block-buster' Hollywood-films such as *Con Air* (1997) and *America's Sweethearts* (2001), which have certainly furthered his career. However, it can be argued that he becomes more personally involved in certain films than others.

An example of that kind of project is George Armitage's *Grosse Pointe Blank*, released three years prior to *High Fidelity*. Cusack is also credited as one of the co-authors of the screenplay as well as one of the film's co-producers. The film was successful and Cusack was praised for his involvement in the film.

Cusack had the same involvement in *High Fidelity*. He is also co-author of the screenplay as well as co-producer. He teamed up with two of the same screenwriters who worked on *Grosse Pointe Blank*, D.V. DeVincentis and Steve Pink but all three were raised in Chicago, where *High Fidelity* is set.

Given his earlier success with *Grosse Pointe Blank*, *High Fidelity* did benefit from being categorized as a ‘John Cusack project’ in which he became heavily involved. Personally, I have always credited the film as being a ‘labor of love’ for Cusack and would argue that the film benefited greatly from his involvement.

‘The Musical Moron Twins’ (88) – Dick and Barry – are portrayed by Todd Louiso and Jack Black respectively. It was a ‘break-out’ role for both actors. Louiso captures Dick’s insecurities and shyness very well but in a way that doesn’t degrade the character. One imagines Black had to do very little acting, as Barry is a spitting image of how Black portrays himself in his projects with his band, Tenacious D. Barry is a vulgar know-it-all but ultimately good-hearted and very likeable.

Lisa Bonet plays Marie Le Salle. The film-makers stick to the novel’s narrator’s description of her – ‘post Partridge Family, pre-LA Law Susan Dey’ (49) – but simply add ‘[...] but you know ... black’ to Dick’s description of her in the film. Dick also says she is ‘Sheryl Crow-ish’, possibly to familiarize her even more to the viewer. She is convincing in her role as an out-of-town singer-musician. Although one of Marie’s strongest characteristics in the novel is that she is an American, it is abundantly clear that she is foreign to Rob’s world in the film, even though they both are American. Bonet’s career has been strongly influenced by her role in the hit TV-series *The Cosby Show* but she manages to distance herself from her role in the series. As for many actors who find themselves typecast after working on a long-running TV-series, Bonet has found it hard to find work in mainstream Hollywood. Her work in *High Fidelity*, however, provided her with the opportunity to showcase her talents, both as an actor and a singer.

Danish actress Iben Hjejle portrays Laura. Her being cast in the role may have come as a surprise as she is not a native English speaker, but speaks English fluently. She is still not very well known outside Scandinavia and *High Fidelity* is by far the most internationally recognized movie she has worked on. However, it goes to show how ambitious the casting process for the film was. It appears that the film-makers did not want to settle for just any American actress for the role of Laura and dare to cast an unknown foreign actress, presumably because they knew she would suit the role.

Casting well-known actors in other roles (Catherine Zeta-Jones as Charlie Nicholson, Tim Robbins as Ian Raymond and Joan Cusack as Liz) make up a well-rounded cast that complements the film very well.

Julie Sanders argues that '[the] art of adaptation and appropriation has a potent influence and shaping effects in its own right' (Sanders 158). This can be attributed to the film-version of *High Fidelity*. It is a separate work of art within its own rights which has a different approach to the original work and therefore a different effect on the story. The purpose of the adaptation is not to simply repeat the original work in a different medium but to reinvent it.

When adapting novels for films, the latter often is doomed to fail as it fades in its comparison to the original work. This is usually referred to as privileging the literary source. Christine Geraghty argues that many theoretical writings on adaptations 'often rely, more or less overtly, on a hierarchy of judgment that brings together and privileges literature, reading, and authorship over screen, viewing and mass production' (Geraghty 2). She furthermore argues that the original work itself is influenced by other works and is rich in intertextuality. The film is therefore not reliant upon a singular source, but another addition to the endless recycling of other texts which may have influenced both the original work and the adaptation.

It can therefore be argued that the adapted work is not only reliant on the original work, but many other factors as well. The adapted film might have relations in intertextuality to other works that the original novel might not have. In the case of *High Fidelity*, an example of this is the music which is included in the film's soundtrack. The film has the ability to let music inspire the atmosphere more potently than the novel and therefore evoke different responses from the viewer. The actors cast in the film have also their own influence on the film, as they might draw upon their own previous experiences which might further add to the film's intertextuality.

The novel and film are two different works within their own rights and should therefore the film should not only be criticized on how it fared in its adaptation from the novel.

The Adaptation of *High Fidelity*

Adaptations have a long tradition in the film industry. However, as I previously mentioned, the adaptation will always be second to the original work for many. For the most part, that applies to films' adaptations of literary works. 'It is not as good as the book,' is probably the most common criticism of films in general. Linda Hutcheon argues this might be a result of a 'thwarted expectations on the part of a fan desiring fidelity to a beloved text' (Hutcheon 4). However, as she later points out, adaptations are by far the most awarded film format. 85 percent of all Oscar-winning Best Pictures are adaptations as well as 95 percent of all Emmy-winning miniseries, according to a 1992 study (Hutcheon 4).

There is little doubt of the mutual advantages of adaptations for both film and novel. A film has the potential to reach more viewers than a novel would attract readers (Hutcheon 5). The film would benefit from basing its material on a work that was already well-received and therefore a 'safe bet.' The author would also benefit from the exposure from their already published work and therefore exposure of future works.

'It is not as good as the book' is the easy way out for critics. An adaptation means making the story suitable for the film-format. It does not necessarily mean a reproduction of the story for the film. Certain changes are unavoidable and in assessing those changes the measures of the adaptation's success are evaluated. Is the film true to the original work's moral and theme? Does the development of the story and characters serve the same effect, in leading to the conclusion of the story? Questions like these must be first and foremost addressed when criticizing adaptations.

Brian McFarlane is surprised at 'how little systematic sustained attention has been given to the process of adaptation' since the process of adaptation has been the

focus of critical attention for decades and the phenomenon itself is ‘almost as old as the institution of the cinema’ (McFarlane 3). He goes on to establish his method of analyzing film adaptations of novels, where he identifies elements of the adaptation process which are the most important details of the adaptation process and/or have mostly been ignored in previous discussions. McFarlane then discusses the film adaptations of five novels, putting his own methods of criticism and theoretical discussion to use.

One of the central issues of film adaptations is the one of being ‘faithful’ to the original work. But this issue is controversial. Should a film be faithful to the ‘letter’ or to the original work’s ‘spirit?’ If a film is bent on adapting according to the strictest reading of the original work, little is left for the film-maker’s own input and creativity. However, adapting to the ‘spirit’ of the original work is a fragile process as well. The experience of reading a novel is never the same for every reader. When criticizing the faithfulness of adaptations, the critics themselves vary in their own reading of the original work. The film-maker adapting a recognized novel is no different – his reading and interpretation may be completely different from the next reader of the same novel. McFarlane states that this approach is a ‘doomed enterprise’ (McFarlane 9).

The question of faithfulness is not easily answered. But in order to be able to compare the adapted film to its original work, certain elements must be in place. The film cannot betray the original work in its most basic senses, most importantly its theme and moral. Most would not consider an adaptation of William Shakespeare’s ‘Romeo and Juliet’ where the two main characters live ‘happily ever after’ as being true to the original work, in which they are united in their deaths.

Brian McFarlane has adapted Roland Barthes’ analyses of the ‘five narrative codes which structure all classical narrative in *S/Z*’ (McFarlane 15) to the narrative functions of the film. Although Barthes did not write his theories with films in mind, McFarlane has used his definitions of narrative codes when discussing the narrative properties of the film.

Barthes calls major elements of the narrative cardinal functions. McFarlane states that when a major element of the story is changed, for example ‘to provide a happy rather than sombre ending’ (McFarlane 14), it is due to be met with great

criticism and disagreement. According to McFarlane, ‘The film-maker bent on ‘faithful’ adaptation must, as a basis for such an enterprise, seek to preserve major cardinal functions’ (McFarlane 14).

A narrative is a sequence of events that make up a story. Barthes states the essence of narrative function as ‘the seed that it sows in the narrative, planting an element that will come to fruition later’ (qtd. in McFarlane 13). Barthes goes on to categorize two kinds of narrative functions – either distributional or integrational which he calls ‘functions proper’ and ‘indices’ respectively.

The first, distributional functions or ‘functions proper’, is the material in the narration which is more suitable for adaptation. It is the simple sequencing of events which strung together take the story from its beginning to end. These sequences can then be divided in two categories. The sequences Barthes calls ‘cardinal functions’ are the major elements of the story. They are the vital components of the whole narrative, all of which are crucial to the development of the story itself, its characters, theme and moral. If one such element is omitted during an adaptation, the adapted work risks losing a crucial element of the original work and may, as a result, be subjected to the criticism of being ‘unfaithful’ in its adaptation.

The second subcategory of Barthes’ ‘functions proper’ is the elements of the narrative he calls catalysers. These elements ‘work in ways which are complementary to and supportive of the cardinal functions’ (McFarlane 14). They lay out the exact development of each sequence, from one minute to the next, and provide the setting for the structure and development of the story. An example of a cardinal function is the death of a major character. Catalysers are the description of the surroundings and settings of the character’s death.

Indeed, director Stephen Frears does not stray away from the major cardinal functions of Hornby’s novel. The protagonist, a record shop-owner, breaks up with his girlfriend. A series of events, including her father’s death, bring them back together. In the process, the protagonist learns a great deal about himself and shows growth to the point of his being able to see what must be done for their relationship to prosper.

However, Frears is not wholly dependent on the original work. He is not afraid to alter the sequencing of events and omit various scenes from the novel, as seen in appendix B where the cardinal functions of the novel are directly compared to the

structure of the film. His adaptation is not, in this regard, to the ‘letter’ as he is more focused on capturing the essence of the novel’s theme and moral, rather than to adhere to the structuring of events in the novel. According to McFarlane’s theory I mentioned above, he is therefore allowing himself to interpret the novel’s moral and theme – most obviously by deciding which scenes to alter or simply omit and which ones to adapt to his film.

Indeed, these alterations have an affect on the outcome of the work. Whilst the major elements of theme and moral are preserved, the novel has a different impression on the reader than the film on its viewer. I will later discuss in more detail how these changes affected the adaptation process and the outcome of the film itself.

The other major category of the narrative, according to Barthes, is the integrational functions which he calls ‘indices’. McFarlane describes the ‘functions proper’ as ‘horizontal’ whereas the indices are the ‘vertical’ aspect of the narrative function. In short, they are the emotional information of the characters and the psychological mood of the story itself. If functions proper are the bare bones of the story, indices put the meat on those bones and bring the story to life.

Indices are the elements most responsible for the reader’s perception of the narrative. These elements are more difficult to adapt from the original work, since the work itself sets its own atmosphere and mood. In fact, McFarlane makes the distinction of transferring the material from the original work on one hand and adapting on the other. The functions proper are entirely transferable without any adaptation necessary but this cannot be said about indices. They have to be adapted and therefore interpreted by the film-maker.

High Fidelity, the novel, is written in first-person narrative from the point of view of Rob Fleming. Indeed, the film has the same point of view, that of Rob Gordon. McFarlane argues that ‘the loss of the narrational voice may [...] be felt as the chief casualty of the novel’s enunciation’ (McFarlane 29), where enunciation is the process in which the film speaks to its audience using various methods and styles.

The relationship between the narrator and reader in the novel is strong, as the reader is fully dependent on the other’s account of events. As McFarlane states, the loss of this important element is difficult to compensate in the film. However, by

making Rob Fleming turn to the camera and thus speak directly to the viewer, the film-makers try to make up for this loss of the first-person narrative.

It can, however, never be ‘equivalent to the continuing shaping, analyzing and directing consciousness of a first-person narrator’ (McFarlane 16). As is the case for first-person narrative, the story is seen through the eyes of the narrator. Everything ‘is filtered through the consciousness of the protagonist-speaker’ (McFarlane 16). Although Rob Gordon acts on various occasions as the narrator of the story being told in the film, the viewer does not have to rely on his account. The viewer has the choice to take in other visual and audial effects accompanying the narration.

In the book, Rob Fleming accompanies the reader through the story, explaining his implied emotions and experience. While watching the film, the viewer has more to consider, although following Rob Gordon’s account of events. The viewer might have a different perspective of other characters, as opposed to through the descriptions and sentiments Rob Fleming might have of them.

By allowing Rob Gordon the omniscience of a first-person narration from time to time, he attempts to enrich the story and explain situations, much as is done in the novel. Despite all this, the weight of the first-person is more evident in the novel than the film.

In the film, a character is introduced who is not in the novel. His name is Lewis and most likely is a regular customer of Championship Vinyl. He is only in one scene in which his sole purpose is to express his view that the three who work there – Rob, Dick and Barry, are in fact elitist. ‘You feel like underappreciated scholars so you shit on the people who know less than you [...] which is everybody. [...] It’s just sad,’ Lewis states.

Lewis’ character is invented for the film to mirror the novel’s narrator’s view and therefore to compensate for the loss of the narrational voice. But, as Rupert Giddings argues, ‘first-person novel point of view is not the same as seeing the action from the camera; in the novel, the narrator tells and the reader listens, but there is not equivalence, rather a warm intimate relationship’ (qtd. in Cartmell and Whelan 11). It is examples like this one that illustrate how certain aspects of the novel are not easily adapted to film. The film-makers might use different methods to make up for such important features as first-person narration, but much is lost during the process.

Disposure of certain elements of the novel will alter the perception of the protagonist. As previously explained, if any of the major cardinal functions are changed during the adaptation process, it will alter the general structure of the story itself, its moral and theme. Also, it will unavoidably result in a different perception of the protagonists in the novel on one hand and the film on the other.

An example is Rob's thoughts in the novel when he tells Dick that he has split up with Laura. This happens directly after an overreaction to Barry's behavior leads to a scuffle between the two of them. Barry storms out and Rob asks Dick to tell him the reason for his reaction was his split-up with Laura. Dick offers him to talk about it, and as Rob (the narrator) explains to the reader, he is 'almost tempted: a heart-to-heart with Dick would be a once-in-a-lifetime experience' (46). In the same scene in the film, Rob simply says 'no'. Whilst the viewer of the film cannot know what Rob is thinking in that moment, the reader of the novel will register that his thoughts indicate that he is not overly wrought with the pain of his split-up with Laura.

By the loss of the narration, at least for the most part, it is more up to the viewer to interpret the situations that arise in the film, as the reader of the novel is guided through Rob Fleming's emotions as the events unfold. This loss is the most difficult obstacle to overcome, as is the case when adapting first-person narrative or indeed other kinds of narrative, such as the omniscient narration. Whilst the novel relies on the first-person narrator to tell the story, the film can simply show the viewer the story. The viewer, as a result, is more able to make his/her own conclusions. In the novel, the story is being told whereas it is being presented in the film.

The film's protagonist, Rob Gordon, is given many attributes of the novel's Rob Fleming. But there are certain changes made which have an effect, to various degrees, on the development and growth of the film's protagonist during the course of the story. One of the most obvious changes is the one made to his surname. It is changed from Fleming to Gordon. There are, however, no obvious reasons for this alteration. Perhaps the film-makers felt Gordon was a stronger name, more suitable for the film's hero. I have no evidence for that claim, but indeed many of the elements omitted in the film are ones that might be considered to leave a more negative impression on the protagonist.

In the recount of Rob Gordon's old girlfriends, his 'desert-island, all-time, top five most memorable split-ups,' one relationship which is mentioned in the novel is excluded from the film. Jackie Allen was the girlfriend of Phil, his friend as a teenager and he 'pinched her off him, slowly, patiently, over a period of months' (10). This case is certainly not as typical as the other split-ups. Indeed, it is not how about the relationship ended, but how it began. In it, he is the villain – the one who steals his friend's girlfriend from under his nose. All the ex-girlfriends on the list leave a different impression on the novel's protagonist but collectively they explain Fleming's history and put it in context with his current situation – his split-up with Laura. By omitting Jackie Allen's split-up, a piece of that history is lost and it is the one which more emphasizes his negative characteristics, rather than the positive ones. Whatever reason the film-makers had for omitting the Allen-split-up, be it just for the case of simple condensing the story, the fact that they chose the most negative case to omit indicates that they wanted to portray a more positive image of Rob Gordon.

Another example is Rob Fleming's adultery to Laura. It is not simply omitted from the film and it is still cited as one of the reasons for their split-up. On the other hand, the film does not go in to the same detail of Rob's adultery as the novel does. In the novel, both the causes and consequences of the adultery are discussed, but only barely mentioned in the film and basically written off as a simple 'side-step' on behalf of the film's protagonist. The omission of these details might be considered as the film-makers desire not to dwell on one of the protagonist's most negative features.

There are also elements omitted in the film which could have better indicated Rob's fragile state of mind following his split-up with Laura. In the novel, at Marie Le Salle's concert, Rob secretly cries when he hears her rendition of Peter Frampton's 'Baby I Love Your Way'. There is also the account of his birthday and his desperate attempt to make up for the fact he has to spend it alone. Then he admits for the first time that he actually misses Laura. He describes it as being homesick, as his new situation is as foreign to him as if he were a stranger in familiar surroundings.

These situations indicate how much he misses Laura and how he wants to get back with her. By omitting them, the film-makers lack specific reasons for Rob's desire to be with Laura again. The film-makers did, however, include a scene which was not found in the novel. In it, Rob repeatedly calls Ian's apartment from a

payphone outside of the building. Whether this might be considered an act of love or simple jealousy it is clear that in that moment, Rob wants Laura back. He tries to convince her that she is no better off with Ian than with him.

Many of the scenes omitted from the novel go to show how Rob's life is empty without Laura. One such example is when Rob Fleming goes to visit his parents. As he arrives at his parent's house, Rob finds they are not there but at a wine-tasting hosted by their neighbor. Later, during the evening, he joins them to see a movie at the cinema. He is fully aware that he is a grown man in his thirties going to see a movie with his parents – which according to him is a humiliating experience. Whilst there, he has a 'terrible, chilling, bone-shaking experience: the most pathetic man in the world gives [him] a smile of recognition' (109). The man is also there to see the movie in question with his parents. Surely, his experience would be different if accompanied by Laura, not only his parents. Indeed, later in the novel and after Rob and Laura get back together, they go visit his parents at which point Rob is overly relieved to be there in Laura's company as opposed to being alone.

As these examples indicate, the two authors of these two works take very different approaches to demonstrate the protagonist's growth and his maturity in the latter stages of the stories. Indeed both stories use similar methods of developing the story to much the same result, but by different methods.

In the novel, as Rob and Laura have re-started their relationship, they go and meet Laura's colleague from her work and his wife – Paul and Miranda. As the narrator states, this is a big event for him. '[A] sign to the world that I'm going to be around [in the relationship] for a few months at least' (210). He enjoys the evening. He is by no means as uncomfortable as he was in Charlie's 'sophisticated' dinner party and the conversations he has are much more mature than the ones he has at the shop with Dick and Barry. After all this, Laura encourages Rob to take a look at Paul's record collection. He finds it appalling and then has to admit, albeit to himself, it's about what you are like, rather than what you like.

This scenario is left out of the film. There is, however, a sequence of events in the film which lead him to take it upon himself to publish a single. The song is by two teenagers, Vince and Justin, who are first introduced to the story as shoplifters in

Rob's shop. In spite of this, when he hears their song for the first time, he immediately offers to publish their single, without any deliberation.

By creating this new scenario, the film-makers show that Rob does indeed have the initiative to be creative and is not afraid to take a bold step out of his area of comfort. Not only does Rob recognize that Vince and Justin's music is promising but that he could actually produce a single and release it himself. Within seconds of hearing their song for the first time he immediately offers Vince and Justin to publish their single.

As Laura later states, she is proud of him taking this bold step and 'putting something new in to the world'. Whereas in the novel, she is proud that he has a personal enlightenment and has matured enough to admit his previous misconceptions were wrong.

In the film, Rob comes home to find Laura reading his list of 'Top five dream jobs'. He is ashamed of it but Laura is pleased that he is allowing himself to speculate about his life. In the novel, it is however Laura's idea to make that particular list. The result is the same in both works, being a record shop-owner is actually something Rob would like to do and he should be pleased about that.

But these examples go to show that the protagonist is more independent in the film. He takes it upon himself to do these things, rather than a result of somebody else's actions – most often Laura's.

The reasons for these changes during the adaptation process are possibly the result of two factors. On one hand, the relocation of the setting from England (novel) to America (film) and the requirements made by the Hollywood-film format on the other. Linda Hutcheon argues that both points are not mutually exclusive. 'For Hollywood [...] transculturating usually means Americanizing a work' (Hutcheon 146). By which she means adapting a work which has its origin in a different culture than Hollywood, and America by extension, entails changes to better suit the Hollywood-film format. In the film, Rob Gordon is portrayed to be a strong, more independent protagonist than his counterpart in the novel. He is made to be more of a 'self-made man' – one who in the end does not shy away from the venture of publishing music after having spent his whole life as an avid lover of music and more importantly, a critic.

Hutcheon also states that because Hollywood films are made for international audiences, ‘the adaptation might end up not only altering character’s nationalities, but on the contrary, actually deemphasizing any national, regional or historical specificities’ (Hutcheon 147). In the case of *High Fidelity*, the most significant changes that are a result of relocating the setting of the story from London to Chicago, are the ones made to the protagonist. In the novel, Rob’s job does not influence the development and growth he has during the course of the story, whereas in the film it is used to emphasize how he is more willing to take chances and try something new, as is the case with the release of Vince and Justin’s single. The film-makers perhaps felt it more appropriate to show how he put the lessons he learnt from his split-up with Laura to use in more aspects of his life than just his relationship with her.

Otherwise, the relocation from London to Chicago is mostly painless. John Cusack himself is born and raised in one of Chicago’s suburban municipalities, Evanston. It is therefore not difficult to see how much at home Cusack is in the film’s setting. The film also uses many of Chicago’s outside locations as a venue for Rob Gordon’s narration to the camera, which is fitting to the film.

The film-makers of *High Fidelity* do not have much difficulty adapting the characters of the novel to the new setting. There is only one obvious problem, the fact that in the London-based novel Marie Le Salle is an American. Although this doesn’t change in the film, it changes the perception of her character since the setting of the film is relocated to America. Nonetheless, she is still not a Chicago-native but this is mentioned in the film in passing.

In the novel, Marie poses a stark contrast to Laura. Her being American only adds to that contrast. But the film-makers still manage to preserve this contrast in the film. In it, Marie retains all of her most important characteristics as a free-spirited and out-going musician who ultimately cannot compete with Laura, despite Rob’s fantasy of living with a musician.

The constant references to music and culture in Hornby’s novel make it a perfect candidate for adaptation in this regard. The world of the protagonist is very visual, both at home and at work where he is surrounded by records. The novel itself mentions countless musicians, bands, albums and songs but its deliverance depends on the reader’s actual knowledge of the artist/song in question. The film-format offers

the possibility of sounding out the actual music. One such example is when Barry plays his top five Monday-morning songs and begins with *Walking on Sunshine*. This is directly after Rob has split up with Laura and is therefore hugely inappropriate in his view. In this instance the reader of the novel must be familiar with the song to fully appreciate Rob's sentiment whereas the viewer of the film has the advantage of actually hearing the song. Although it is not necessary to recognize each piece of music mentioned in the novel to enjoy the story, the medium of film can undoubtedly enhance the atmosphere by its soundtrack.

Marie Le Salle is one of the supporting characters in the novel and her rendition of Peter Frampton's song, *Baby I Love Your Way*, is of significance to the story. To Rob's surprise, he actually likes her version of the song although he is no fan of the original song. The film offers the possibility of delivering Marie's performance thus enabling the viewer to put him/herself directly in the protagonist's shoes.

Also, Barry's band is the source of much controversy and amusement between himself and Rob during the course of the story. Rob doesn't expect much of Barry's band and pleads with him not to play at the club where Rob is DJ-ing towards the end of the story. But to his immense surprise, the band and indeed Barry himself are a hit with the crowd. Once again, the film offers the possibility of bringing the viewer closer to the story and its atmosphere by bringing Barry's band and music to life in the film.

One of the strongest features of the film is the soundtrack. According to the end credits of the film, 57 songs are used during the course of the film. Given the generous assumption that the average length of each song is 3 minutes, the time it would actually listen to all songs would still outrun the film's runtime of 113 minutes by 58 minutes. I should however point out that each song does not feature in its entirety in the film, but the sheer volume of the songs in the soundtrack indicates the frequent use of music to enhance the atmosphere of the story itself, to the film's advantage.

Result of Adaptation

Scott Rosenberg is one of the screenwriters of the film-version of *High Fidelity*. In an interview about his career as an established screenwriter in Hollywood, he accredits every positive feature of the film's story to the original novel, which he calls extraordinary. This he claims although he recognizes the film itself was very well made and especially well cast.

Rosenberg was the first of the four screenwriters for the film to write an adaptation of the novel, but as he stated in the same interview the screenplay underwent many rewrites after that, for the most part by the other screenwriters, John Cusack, D.V. DeVincentis and Steve Pink.

Rosenberg's view says a lot about the novel and the adapted film. It also raises a few questions. If the film is considered to be successful, is it only because of the material on which it is based? Even if that were to be true, it is then up to the film-makers to treat the material 'correctly'. They must be able to adapt the material from one form of art to another. That is a fragile process as I have discussed and one that should not be underappreciated. No matter how great the original material is considered to be, it is no guarantee for the successful adaptation.

In the case of the adaptation from novel to film, it could be argued that the process is a win-win situation for the novel. If the adapted film is successful, the novel is by extension praised as is the case for Rosenberg's quotation. However, if the film is by no means considered to be a deserving reproduction of the original novel, the novel is excluded from that criticism. The conclusion is that the novel has nothing to lose in being adapted to a film.

Perhaps for that reason alone, the film should be judged by its own merits. And even though a film can never fully measure up in comparison to the novel from which it is adapted, that doesn't necessarily mean that the film is not worthy of praise.

As I previously argued, the process of adaptation can be mutually beneficial for both the original novel and the adapted film. This view is supported by Hutcheon's claim that an adaptation is not vampiric in nature. '[An adaptation] 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.' (Hutcheon 176).

I would argue that the novel did benefit from its adapted film. The film did further the longevity of the novel and draw attention to Nick Hornby's body of work. After the adaptation of *High Fidelity* was released, two other of his novels have been adapted as well – *About a Boy* (film of the same name, released 2002) and *Fever Pitch* (film of the same name, released 2005). It is also likely that Hornby's novel, *A Long Way Down*, will also be adapted into a film – according to Hornby's own website.

One of the central issues of my discussion of *High Fidelity* is the adaptation of the protagonist of the novel for the film. As McFarlane argued, there are different aspects of the novel that are of the nature to be easily adapted, or transferred as he calls it, and then the elements which require true adaptation – 'adaptation proper' (McFarlane 26).

McFarlane argues that although the film-maker might retain all of the cardinal functions in his adaptation of his original work, the adaptation of the indices-elements of the novel might provoke an entirely different response from the viewer familiar with the original work. It is in that process when the creativity of the film-maker is mostly at display.

As *High Fidelity*, the novel, is written from the first-person narrative of the protagonist, Rob Fleming, I have argued that the assessment of the adaptation of the protagonist is central to the assessment of the adaptation itself. The adaptation lies mostly in the successful reinvention of the protagonist.

For the most part, the film-makers had to build a new character in the protagonist. Surely there are many traits drawn from the original work, personal information such as age, employment, living conditions, background and so forth. The events that occur during the narrative are mostly the same for both works. However, the real challenge of adaptation lies within the protagonist's handling of the events –

his emotional and physical response. It is the psychological information that brings the character to life.

I will argue that the adaptation of the protagonist was successful, for the most part. During my discussion I have illustrated various different traits of the two protagonists – one in the novel and the other in the film. I have also argued that those very differences are to neither character's disadvantage but vital to the process of building each character. After closely inspecting both works I can, for my part, make the distinction of Hornby's Rob Fleming and Cusack's Rob Gordon. And there in lies the success. Gordon is not a copy of Fleming, but a reinvention of a character, influenced and inspired by the original one.

The subject of *High Fidelity* is Rob's struggle with his life and relationships with women – his reluctance to accept himself as he is and allow himself to be happy. He is at a turning point in his life where he faces the questions of where his life is headed. In trying to evaluate his current status, he reassesses his life and finds that it is within his own control to be happy and allow others to be content around him. This situation is not exclusive to Rob's life and is a common question that addresses the purpose of being.

As the majority of filmgoers are presumably young adults, the theme would speak to the film's audience. For many people in their thirties, they face the rest of their lives realizing their life has not taken an 'acceptable' course of action during their adulthood. The novel speaks to this issue and portrays Rob's journey through the emotions of his acceptance of himself and the life he has built for himself.

I feel the film delivered quite well in its atmosphere and theme. After all, the protagonist manages to come to terms with his own life to the degree of being able to project his happiness to others in his life, most noticeably his girlfriend. The most significant change that can be identified in the film's handling of the main subject is the development of the protagonist. The novel focuses on Rob's 'internal' growth – how he was able to allow himself to come to terms with his own life and thus being able to form better relationships with others. The film, however, is more preoccupied with how Rob's growth had an influence on his being able to find success in a new field – publishing. The introduction of Vince and Justin to the story was the vehicle

which allowed the viewer to appraise the protagonist's growth in a more tangible way. Not only was Rob happy but enterprising as well.

Conclusion

High Fidelity, the film, merits standing alone when being criticized without being unfairly compared to the original novel. They are two different works in a mutually beneficial relationship. After the release of the film in America, two of Nick Hornby's novels have been adapted as well and the third is rumored to be in the making. Although I have no solid evidence, that fact suggests that since the first adaptation was successful, others would be as well – therefore a positive testament to the adaptation of *High Fidelity*.

I have shown that the film did approach its source in a way that both highlights the positive elements of the original narrative, as well as allows the film-makers to reinvent the story to better suit the new medium. It is an example of how the two works can interact without compromising either one. I find film adaptations of literary works must be aware that the film is not simply a copied version of the original work, but an independent work of art within its own rights. The format of films offers many possibilities that the novel cannot offer, and vice-versa. The film must therefore not shy away from the advantages it can use to tell its story, but rather to emphasize them.

However, the adaptation can never betray the original work in its most basic senses. If it does, the adapted work can hardly be considered to be an adaptation, but much rather a work that was 'inspired' by another work.

The author of the novel, Nick Hornby, has also given the film his stamp of approval in a short interview on publisher Penguin's website. 'I never expected it to be so faithful ... At times it appears to be a film in which John Cusack reads my book.'

His comment begs the question of what being 'faithful' actually means. I have shown that various changes were made to the story in the novel's adaptation as well the fact that various segments were omitted. Presumably Hornby is pleased that

despite those changes were made to his novel, the film did manage to produce the same atmosphere, moral and theme he himself tried to apply to the novel – a true measure of success.

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Appendix A: *High Fidelity* — Segmentation

1. *Opening credits*
2. *Rob's apartment*
 - a. After breaking up, Laura leaves the apartment. Rob starts reciting his top five break-ups, starting with Allison Ashmore.
 - b. Flash-back. School playground. Rob's teenage relationship with Allison Ashmore. He was 14 years old.
3. *Train station*
 - a. Rob tells the story of break-up no. 2, Penny Hardwick.
 - b. Flash-back to his high-school relationship with Penny.
4. *Championship Vinyl store*
 - a. Rob tells the viewer that he owns a record shop.
 - b. Dick enters.
 - c. Barry enters and puts on *Walking on Sunshine*.
 - d. In his office, Rob tells the story of break-up no. 3, Charlie Nicholson.
 - e. Flash-back to his college years and his relationship with Charlie. They went out for two years.
 - f. Laura calls. Asks to come by the apartment and pick up some stuff while he is at work.
 - g. In the store, middle-aged customer comes in and asks for *I Just Called to Say I Love You*. Barry humiliates him. Rob gets angry and when Barry mentions Laura, Rob snaps and attacks Barry. Barry leaves.
 - h. Rob is in his office; Dick comes in to see if he's all right. Rob asks Dick to let Barry know he broke up with Laura.
5. *Rob's apartment*
 - a. Rob talks about women's underwear.
 - b. Rob listens to message from Laura's mom on the answering machine.
 - c. Rob tells the story of break-up no. 4, Sarah Kendrew.
 - d. Flash-back to his late twenties relationship with Sarah.
 - e. As Rob starts to re-arrange his record collection, Dick enters to invite Rob to Marie LaSalle's concert. Rob explains his method of his re-arrangement. Dick is impressed.
 - f. As Dick leaves, Rob's mom calls. Rob tells her he and Laura broke up.
6. *Club where Marie de Salle is playing*
 - a. He meets Dick and Rob when Marie is performing *Baby I Love Your Way*. They talk about what it would be like to date a musician.

- b. They talk to Marie. She has just moved to Chicago. They invite her to come to the record shop.
7. *Rob's apartment*
- a. Rob listens to Liz's message on the answering machine.
 - b. The next day, Laura comes to the apartment. To her surprise, Rob is not at work.
 - c. They talk about the relationship, how Laura has changed and Rob is still the same.
8. *Championship Vinyl*
- a. Lewis is there. They make a top five list.
 - b. A regular customer comes in to ask about a rare record. Barry does not sell it to him, but to Lewis instead.
 - c. Lewis tells them they are snobs.
 - d. In his office, Rob calls Liz. Liz 'doesn't think much of this Ian-guy'.
 - e. Marie is in the shop as they are playing her record.
 - f. In his office, Rob is angry and wondering who Ian is.
9. *Rob's apartment*
- a. As he is walking in to his building, Rob tells the viewer Laura doesn't know anybody named Ian.
 - b. Rob finds an envelope addressed to I Raymond. Rob realizes Ian is his old neighbor who he better knows as Ray.
 - c. In his bed, Rob tells the viewer he and Laura used to listen to him having sex.
 - d. Flash-back to Rob and Laura in bed, listening to Ian having sex.
 - e. Rob imagines Ian and Laura having sex.
 - f. Rob tells that his no. 5 break-up, with Jackie Alden, was painless. He promotes Laura to his top five break-up list. Rob is crying.
10. *Championship Vinyl*
- a. A customer comes to the counter and asks Rob's whether he has soul. After a brief moment, he directs her to the soul-section of the store.
 - b. The telephone rings. Rob says he is interested and writes down an address.
 - c. Liz enters and calls him a 'fucking asshole'.
11. *A piano bar*
- a. Rob tells the viewer he was a DJ at a club, where he first met Laura.
 - b. Flash-back to club. Laura and Rob meet, and Rob tells Laura to come back next week and he'll give her a tape.
 - c. Rob explains, during various flash-backs, how their relationship developed.
 - d. In reference to Liz's comment. Rob wonders why he might be an asshole.
 - e. Rob imagines Liz's conversation to Laura, where she reveals the reason for their break-up.
12. *Under railroad-tracks*
- a. Rob starts explaining his side of the story, why the things occurred to him that led to his being an asshole.
 - b. Flash-back to Laura lending Rob the money.
13. *In the train*
- a. Rob continues telling the viewer the reasons for him being an asshole.

- b. Flash-back to the talk where Laura tells Rob she was pregnant and had an abortion.

14. *Rob's apartment*

- a. Rob wonders why he is doomed to be left and starts looking up his old girlfriends.
- b. Rob calls Allison Ashmore's house and talks to her mother. Finds out that Allison married Kevin Bannister.
- c. Rob tells the viewer he would like to talk to all his ex-girlfriends on the song, 'like in a Bruce Springsteen song'.
- d. Bruce Springsteen jamming in a studio, as if he were talking to Rob. Rob realizes he wants to have full closure with his exes so that he can move on.

15. *In the movie-theatre*

Rob is watching a movie with Penny.

16. *In a restaurant*

- a. Rob and Penny talking about what lead up to their break-up and what influence it had on Penny's life.
- b. Penny storms out of the restaurant and Rob realizes that he broke up with her.

17. *Rob's apartment*

Charlie is next on his list but as he's not ready for her, he moves on to Sarah Kendrew.

18. *Sarah's apartment*

Rob meets Sarah.

19. *In a restaurant*

- a. Penny asks whether Rob is seeing anyone and tells him that her life is miserable.
- b. Rob realizes there are no hard feelings and that she is glad she ditched him and not the other way around.

20. *Sarah's apartment*

- a. Rob says good-bye to Sarah.
- b. Rob tells the viewer he could have had sex with her, but chooses not out of guilt.

21. *Rob's apartment*

Rob looks up Charlie's phone number in the phone book. He leaves a message on her answering machine.

22. *Championship Vinyl*

- a. The store is busy. Barry recommends a record to a customer, as does Dick.
- b. While Rob is playing the new EP by The Beta Band, he spots two teenagers stealing from the shop.
- c. Outside the shop, Rob and Barry catch up with them. They have stolen albums by artists who are not mainstream and well-known.
- d. When Rob is closing the store, Laura shows up to get some items.

23. *Rob's Apartment*

- a. Laura is there and they talk about Ian. She tells him she wanted to get her life together and couldn't see that happening with him. She didn't leave him for Ian and doesn't see a future with him.
- b. Rob asks if there is a chance they would get back together. Laura gives it a 9% chance.
- c. Laura asks him to leave so she could get some things.
- d. Rob asks if sex with Ian is better than with him. She tells him she hasn't slept with him yet. Rob leaves.
- e. Outside his building, Rob is acting victorious. He tells the viewer he feels so good that he goes and sleeps with Marie de Salle.

24. *Marie's apartment*

- a. Rob wakes up and tells the viewer how he pulled this off.
- b. Flash-back to the bar from last night. Marie, Dick and Barry are there and Rob tells them why Laura came to the shop.
- c. Rob tells the viewer that he, Dick and Barry decided what you like is more important what you are like.
- d. Flash-back to the bar where they compare likes and dislikes. Then they talk about their exes.
- e. Flash-back to Marie's apartment where they kiss.
- f. Marie is awake and they talk again about their exes. Marie states that having sex is a basic human right.
- g. Outside their apartment they go their separate ways. Rob immediately wonders what Laura meant by saying she hadn't slept with Ian yet.

25. *Championship Vinyl*

- a. Rob asks Barry what it would mean to him if he said he hadn't seen *Evil Dead 2* yet. Barry doesn't understand the question as he knows Rob has already seen the movie twice.
- b. In his office, Rob calls Laura and insists she meet him for a drink.

26. *A bar*

Rob and Laura sit down. Rob immediately asks if she has slept with Ian. She can't refuse it. Rob leaves.

27. *Rob's apartment*

- a. Wet after being in the rain, Rob answers the phone. It's Laura trying to explain and asking whether he would like to meet again. He hangs up.
- b. Rob calls information for Ian's number and address.

28. *Ian's apartment*

- a. Outside, in the rain, Rob calls Ian's apartment from a payphone.
- b. At first, Ian hangs up, but then Laura picks up. Rob tries to warn her that she is no better off with him. Laura sees that he is outside the apartment.
- c. Ian asks Laura whether he should talk to Rob. Laura refuses.

29. *A diner*

- a. Liz and Rob are talking. Liz tells Rob to stop harassing Laura and Ian. All he's doing is giving them something in common, creating a unit against him.
- b. Liz asks Rob why he wants Laura back so badly.

30. *Championship Vinyl*

- a. Charlie calls Rob and asks him to come to a dinner party.
- b. Ian walks in the shop. Ian wants him to stop harassing him and Laura. Rob imagines various versions of a response but doesn't say anything. Ian leaves.

31. *Charlie's apartment*

- a. Rob arrives for the dinner party. As the evening goes on Rob realizes has nothing in common with Charlie and her friends. He realizes Charlie is very superficial.
- b. Rob asks Charlie why she left him for Marco. She says Marco was a little 'sunnier ... sparkier'.

32. *Championship Vinyl*

- a. A rocker-musician reads Barry's note on the wall and invites him to his band's practice.
- b. As they prepare to leave, Dick says he can't join them for drinks. He has a date. Barry also leaves to write some lyrics. Rob leaves as well.

33. *Rob's apartment*

Rob comes home and finds Laura there. She's reading his Top five dream jobs lists. She says she is there to pick up the rest of her things.

34. *A bridge in Chicago*

Rob recites a Top five list of things he misses about Laura. He says could also make a list of things about Laura that drives him crazy but doesn't. He says it was that kind of thinking that got him there.

35. *Championship Vinyl*

- a. Outside the store, Rob accidentally collides with a skate-boarder. The two teenage shoplifters are there.
- b. Inside, Dick tells Rob that Laura called. Dick and Barry are listening to music and Rob asks what it is. Barry says its from Vince and Justin, the two shoplifters.
- c. Rob goes outside to talk to Vince and Justin. He offers to publish the song as a single.
- d. In his office, Rob calls Laura. She tells him her father died.
- e. Barry starts to make a Top five list of songs about death, when Laura calls Rob. She says her mother would like him to come to the funeral.

36. *Laura's father's funeral.*

Rob attends the funeral. Laura cries loudly.

37. *Laura's family's home*

- a. Rob is standing next to Liz when Jo, Laura's sister, comes up to her. She says Laura isn't coping well. Liz says she has had a hard few weeks. Rob thinks she is talking about him and Liz says she is talking about Laura. Liz says Rob should apologize to Laura.
- b. Rob apologizes to Laura and leaves.
- c. Laura prepares to leave as well.

38. *Outside. A suburban area of Chicago.*

- a. Rob sits on a bench and tells the viewer that he realizes now he never really committed to Laura and that was wrong of him.

- b. Laura arrives in her car, searching for Rob, and he jumps over a fence and lays down in a flower bed.
- c. Laura calls to Rob and tells him to get in the car.
- d. They drive to a place where Laura's dad used to bring her when they were kids. She asks him to have sex with him.
- e. They drive back to her family's home. She tells him she is too tired not to be with him. She says he made it clear he wants her back. And all she wants to do is go back home with him.

39. *Diner*

Rob tells the viewer they got back together and describes the next few weeks of their relationship. He then indicates then something went, or is about to go, wrong.

40. *Championship Vinyl*

Caroline, a journalist, is in the shop. She recognizes him from his DJ-ing days.

41. *A bridge in Chicago*

Rob sees a poster advertising a release-party for Vince and Justin's single. It also says the Rob will be DJ-ing at the party. He rips the poster down.

42. *Championship Vinyl*

Rob comes in the shop and asks about the poster. Dick and Barry tell him it was Laura's idea.

43. *Rob's apartment*

Rob asks Laura about the poster. She says it is an idea she had while they were apart. She says Barry is playing at the party with his band.

44. *Championship Vinyl*

- a. Rob begs Barry not to play at the party. He refuses.
- b. Outside, Rob asks Vince not to come to the party. He refuses.

45. *Rob's apartment*

- a. Rob tries to downplay the release of the single. Laura says it is important as he is 'putting something new in to the world'. She congratulates him.
- b. Rob is talking to Caroline on the phone. He says he 'just wanted to put something new in to the world'. She is interviewing him. She asks him for his Top five favorite records. He offers to make her a tape.
- c. He starts making the tape and freaks out that he is interested in another woman.

46. *Outside. A park*

Rob realizes he has been 'thinking with his guts' since he was a teenager and it needs to stop.

47. *A bar*

Laura comes in to meet Rob. He asks her to marry him. He says he is tired of fantasies and thinking about the future. But he isn't tired of her. She doesn't ask the question but thanks him for asking.

48. *A club*

- a. Rob is DJ-ing and playing Vince and Justin's single. He then introduces Barry's band.

- b. Barry's band, *Barry Jive and the Uptown Five*, perform Marvin Gaye's *Let's get it on*. Rob is pleasantly surprised and starts to dance with Laura.

49. *Rob's apartment*

Rob explains how to make a good tape. He says he's started to make a tape for Laura which is full of songs she would like. He realizes that is something he can now see how should be done.

50. *End credits*

Appendix B: *High Fidelity* — Cardinal Functions

Novel	Film
1. Rob starts to recite his Top 5 most memorable split-ups.	As for novel.
2. Alison Ashworth	As for novel.
3. Penny Hardwick	As for novel.
4. Jackie Allen	Not in film.
5. Charlie Nicholson	As for novel (but later, combined with 8).
6. Sarah Kendrew	As for novel (but later, combined with 9).
7. Laura leaves Rob's apartment after their split-up.	As for novel (but earlier, combined with 1).
8. Rob goes to his shop, Championship Vinyl. Barry and Dick are introduced.	As for novel.
9. Rob's mother calls him at home.	As for novel.
10. At the shop, a customer comes in to buy <i>I Just Called to Say I Love You</i> . Barry insults him.	As for novel (but later, combined with 12).
11. Rob reorganizes his record collection.	As for novel.
12. At the shop, Barry insults Rob who has a scuffle with him. Rob explains to Dick he has split up with Laura.	As for novel (but earlier, see 10 above).
13. Rob, Dick and Barry go to a pub to listen to Marie Le Salle.	As for novel.
14. Rob calls Laura. She asks to come to his apartment	As for novel.

- to get her things.
15. Rob calls Liz. She tells him she doesn't think much of Ian. As for novel.
16. Marie comes in the shop. She invites them to her show. As for novel (Marie's invitation omitted).
17. Rob finds an envelope addressed to I Raymond and realizes Ian is his old neighbor. As for novel.
18. Rob goes to a house where a woman is selling her husband's record collection for a fraction of its worth. He refuses to buy it. Not in film.
19. Rob, Dick and Barry go to Marie's show. She sings a song with T-Bone. Rob leaves early. Not in film.
20. Rob and Liz meet for a drink. She calls him an 'arsehole' and leaves. As for novel (but altered, Liz comes in the shop).
21. Rob tells of his years as a DJ and how he met Laura. He speculates the reasons for Liz's anger towards him. As for novel.
22. At the shop, Barry is angry at Rob for leaving them at Marie's show. He tells him they met T-Bone. Not in film.
23. Rob describes Saturdays at the shop. As for novel (but later, before 43).
24. Rob explains the reasons why Liz might be angry with him. As for novel.
25. Laura meets Rob outside the shop and they go to his apartment. As for novel (but later, consecutive to 23).
26. Rob explains how he ended up in bed with Marie Le Salle. As for novel (but later, consecutive to 25).
27. Rob visits his parents who are at a wine-tasting hosted by their neighbor. They go to the movie theatre. Not in film.
28. Rob has a conversation with Barry about the 'yet-sentence'. As for novel (but later, consecutive to 26).

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| 29. Rob calls Laura who is at work. He asks her to meet him. | As for novel (but later, consecutive to 28). |
| 30. Dick tells Rob and Barry he has a date. | As for novel (but later, after 46). |
| 31. Rob meets Laura in the pub to ask her whether she had had sex with Ian. He storms out. | As for novel (but later, consecutive to 29). |
| 32. Laura calls Rob to try to explain. | As for novel (but later, consecutive to 31). |
| 33. Rob gets Ian's phone number from the Directory Enquiries. He calls the number frequently. | As for novel (but later, consecutive to 32). |
| 34. He decides to call his ex-girlfriends from his previous list. He wants his life to more like a Bruce Springsteen song. | As for novel (but earlier, after 24). |
| 35. Liz talks to Rob and convinces him to stop constantly calling Laura. | As for novel (but later, consecutive to 33). |
| 36. Rob call Alison Ashworth's mother. | As for novel (but earlier, consecutive to 34). |
| 37. A customer comes in the shop and Rob has a lengthy internal discussion about his life and why he likes records. Also explains why he had an affair. | Not in film. |
| 38. Rob meets Penny. | As for novel (but earlier, consecutive to 36). |
| 39. Someone is interested in Barry's poster in the shop. | As for novel (combined with 30, see above). |
| 40. Rob meets Jackie and her husband Philip. | Not in film. |
| 41. Ian calls Rob. Rob imagines various versions of his response but ends up hanging up on him. | As for novel (but altered, Ian comes in shop, also later, after 43). |
| 42. Rob meets Sarah | As for novel (but earlier, consecutive to 38). |
| 43. Rob calls Charlie but can't reach her. | As for novel (but earlier, consecutive to 42). |

44. Marie comes in the shop and invites them to a show. Not in film.
45. Charlie calls Rob and invites him to a dinner-party. As in film.
46. Rob goes to Charlie's party. As in film.
47. Barry wants to advertise his band's show in the shop but Rob refuses. He doesn't want to go to the show. Not in film.
48. Laura moves the last of her things out of Rob's apartment. As in film.
49. It's Rob's birthday and he spends the day alone in the apartment watching movies. He then calls some old friends to ask them to go out for drinks. He also calls Marie and they meet during the evening. Not in film.
50. Rob calls Laura and finds out her father has died. Later, she calls back and tells him her mother wants him to go to the funeral. As in film.
51. Rob attends the funeral. As in film.
52. Rob attends Laura's father's wake at the family home. Liz and Jo speak, Rob apologizes to Laura and leaves. As in film.
53. Laura follows Rob to a bus station and they drive away. As in film.
54. She wants to have sex with him, they start but don't finish. As in film (but altered, not clear if they finish).
55. They drive to a pub and decide to get back together. As in film (but not in pub, in her car).
56. Rob describes five conversations he and Laura have. Not in film.
57. Conversation no. 1. Laura guesses how the first days were for Rob after their split-up. Not in film.
Not in film.
58. Conversation no. 2. Rob wants to know how sex was with Ian. Not in film.
59. Conversation no. 3. They talk about Laura's taste in music. She also says he needs to do more with his life, be more creative.

60. Conversation no. 4. They talk about how much Laura has changed since they met and the fact that Rob has changed very little. As in film (but earlier, after 13).
61. Conversation no. 5. Laura explains her reasons for getting back together with Rob. Not in film.
62. Rob and Laura go to dinner at Paul and Miranda's house. Not in film.
63. Rob takes Laura to one of Marie's shows. Rob introduces Laura to Marie but Laura doesn't know that they slept together. Laura asks Marie to play in the shop. Not in film.
64. Marie plays at the shop and it's a success. Not in film.
65. Rob makes a Top 5 list for his dream jobs. It was Laura's idea. As in film (but altered, not Laura's idea. Also earlier, combined with 48).
66. Rob and Laura go to see his parents. Not in film.
67. Rob finds a poster where his return to his DJ-ing days at the club is announced. To Rob's surprise, he discovers it was Laura's idea. As in film (but also a release party for single).
68. Rob begs Barry not to play at the club, to no avail. As in film.
69. Rob meets a reporter, Caroline, for an interview. He falls for her and offers to make her a tape. As in film (but earlier, before 67).
70. Rob realizes he'll end up alone if he goes from one relationship to another. He wants it to stop. As in film.
71. Rob meets Laura for drinks and proposes to her. As in film.
72. Rob DJ's at the club and Barry's band play. He starts to make a tape for her in her head, full of songs she likes. He realizes he knows how to do that now. As in film (but also a release party for single).