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Adaptation and Self-Undermining Postmodern Views of the World

This paper examines the artistic construction of fictional and non-fictional characters and worlds and shows how adaptation changes non-fiction into fiction. This is illustrated with two films, *Adaptation* (Spike Jonze, 2002) and *American Splendor* (Shari Springer Berman and Robert Pulcini, 2003). These films are examples of self-reflexive intertextuality, in which the film chronicles the process of its own making and contains multiple portrayals of the characters and story world that inform reading/viewing. Postmodern irony is implicated in this process, which is shown to be self-undermining. The self-loathing of the characters Laroche, Orlean, Kaufman and Pekar is related to the self-loathing arising from Schopenhauer's view of the world, in which the will to life must be renounced to achieve equanimity. The dialogue that results from reading/viewing informed by differences and switching undermines the interpretation of critics that the non-fiction works and film adaptations reflect the postmodern world view, in which a person's self is created by the rush of phenomena, where persons do not change and nothing is resolved.