

Trainspotting: novel versus movie essay



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Trainspotting: Novel versus Movie Danny Boyle's film, *Trainspotting*, diverges from Irvine Welsh's novel in several ways. First, there are three major instances in which the film veers into surrealism or expressionism- the overdose and withdrawal sequences, and, of course, when Renton dives into the toilet to rescue his opium suppositories. The fact that when Renton returns to his apartment, he is still soaking wet elevates the scene to the truly bizarre. In terms of the other characters, it is interesting to note that Diane's character has been expanded, perhaps to broaden the appeal of the film to a female audience and providing the central protagonist with a 'love interest'. Spud is made more of a caricature in the film than in the novel, and takes on some of the characteristics of Second Prize, whose role in the novel is sketchy, at best, and in the film has been profitably eliminated. Perhaps though, the most significant difference is between the film's Tommy and the novel's Tommy. Despite the many dissimilarities between film and novel the memorable events of the novel are retained in the film: the discovery of the dead baby Dawn; Spud, under the influence of speed, and his hyperactive job interview; and Renton's rendezvous with the underage Diane.

"Trainspotting", which is the slang for mainlining heroin and also refers to the obsessive behavior of addicts looking for their next fix, figures much more prominently in the movie than the book. The book gives a much more multifaceted view of the characters than the movie does, but overall the adaptation from novel to movie was very well done.