The Hobbit Adaptation: Literary Infidelity or True to the Tolkien Spirit?

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This thesis examines the adaptation of *The Hobbit* (1937) into film through the use of adaptation theory, authorship, and reception theory. The use of adaptation theory sets out to show the process of story transfer between media, and authorship seeks to find who is truly considered to be the "author" of the new finished work. Through the use of reception theory, the goal is to determine the target audiences, and how such audiences influence the adaptation, and in turn, the reading or re-reading of the original source material.

The scope of this thesis focuses in particular on changes and additions made to three characters: Azog, Tauriel, and Thorin Oakenshield. Azog is examined through reception theory, authorship and adaptation fidelity as an unnecessary character resurrection that over-shadows the more practical use of his son Bolg, who is present in the actual story. Thorin Oakenshield's character restructuring is examined from authorship and reception theory as both Tolkien and Jackson's team "re-master" his character into the central hero through use of the appendices at the end of *The Lord of the Rings* (1954). Finally, Tauriel is viewed from an authorship, adaptation fidelity, and reception theory stance, as she is not of Tolkien's creation (rather Jackson's team), and how her role made her a new main protagonist, changing the entire story.

The goal of this thesis is to explore how such changes affect views on the original source material. The reason such a focus is important in literary studies terms is that once an adaptation has been viewed, by either carry-over fans or entirely new fans, our "horizon of expectations" (as coined by Hans Robert Jauss) now includes the paratext of the film adaptation. This inevitably changes the reading of the book in turn. In this way, adaptations are important to examine as they do affect the original source text in some way, since no matter how the adaptation turns out, it will always bring the discourse back to the original, breathing new life into it.

Key Words: *The Hobbit*, J.R.R. Tolkien, Peter Jackson, Philippa Boyens, Fran Walsh, Adaptation, Reception Theory, Authorship, Tauriel, Thorin Oakenshield, Azog, Bolg

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1. Introduction

    The story of *The Hobbit* (1937) follows the lead character, Bilbo Baggins, on a quest to help thirteen Dwarves (led by Thorin Oakenshield), to reclaim their long-lost homeland of Erebor from the dragon Smaug. Bilbo is coerced into the group as the burglar by Gandalf the Grey, a meddling wizard who thinks that the unknown smell of the hobbit will allow him to sneak into the mountain undetected by the dragon. Bilbo is at first resistant, as hobbits are homely creatures that rarely venture away from the shire, but the sense of adventure is too much for Bilbo to resist and he agrees to accompany the group.

    Along the way the company encounters all sorts of obstacles, such as wargs (wolf-like creatures), goblins, and the Elves of Mirkwood, who have for thousands of years been at odds with the Dwarves. After a narrow escape from the Elves (with the help of Bilbo, and his magical ring), they travel to the people of Lake-town, at the edge of the Lonely Mountain, where Smaug sleeps. Here they receive aid from Bard the Bowman and the people of Lake-town to reach the mountain. As the Dwarves enter the Lonely Mountain through a secret passageway with the key left to Thorin by his father, havoc is unleashed. The dragon leaves to destroy Lake-town, where he is slain by Bard. Then the greed of the Dwarves takes over Thorin's mind, and he refuses to give any treasure to the people of Lake-town to rebuild, despite their earlier aid. The Battle of the Five Armies then ensues as the goblins from their earlier encounters come out of the mountain caves, where Thorin and his men, the people of Lake-town, the Elves of Mirkwood, and the Dwarves of the Iron Hills all battle it out to save the treasure.

    The Hobbit was written and published by J.R.R. Tolkien in 1937. The book was meant as a children's tale written for Tolkien's own children (The movies have since taken on a darker tone, as they are meant to reach a wider audience than just children). Since its publication, there

has been much controversy over the rights to adapt the film. The rights to the film production were held by Saul Zaents, but distribution rights were held by the United Artists (Simpson & Robb, 123, 148). After a brief legal struggle and some compromise, the films were finally given the green light. *The Hobbit* films were made after the highly praised *The Lord of The Rings* trilogy, and thus some literature on the topic has been written.

Since *The Hobbit* movies have only begun to be released in 2012, there is no material yet on their adaptation process, so I hope to be a fore-runner in my research. Firstly, the objectives of this thesis are to discover why the deceased character of Azog has been kept alive in the story of *The Hobbit*'s film adaptation as opposed to the living character of his son Bolg, who is indeed alive during the story? Is the use of Azog meant to tie in to the sub-plot of the necromancer?

Secondly the character of Thorin Oakenshield will be examined in terms of how his character's amplification impacts the overall story. We will examine how the use of the appendices helped form the strong, heroic character needed in the story, and that Tolkien had perhaps intended Thorin to be.

Thirdly I will focus on why an entirely non-Tolkien character was created in the form of the female Elf Tauriel. What does she bring to the story other than a female presence? Was she merely used to break up the all-male cast? The objective here is to find out how certain creative choices were made and their impact on how both the movie is received, and how it changes how the story is read. Does it perhaps enrich the reading of the book, or does the book enrich the spectating of the film?

My main materials will be J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* (1937) as reference for the original plot line, and then the appendices from *The Lord of The Rings* (1954) as reference to the extended background material for the story, which Peter Jackson, Philippa Boyens and Fran

Walsh used heavily for the film adaptation. I will then use several books on adaptation, authorship, and reception theory to demonstrate the methods and effects of adaptation. To show the changes made on film, I will be using the three films of *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* (2012), *The Desolation of Smaug* (2013), and *The Battle of The Five Armies* (2014).

2. Theory and Methods

       I plan to examine the adaptation from book to film of *The Hobbit* (1937) through the use of adaptation theory, theory of authorship, and also reception theory. Using the theory of adaptation shows how the process is usually done when transferring a work from book to film, and the theory of authorship should expose more clearly who is considered the "author" of the finished work. Reception theory will lastly show who the target audience is and gage how the target audience influences the film adaptation and in turn how the book is read.

2.1. Theory of Adaptation

       Adaptation, as I have come to understand through my research, is quite the complicated, and often under-appreciated art form. In this chapter readers will be guided through the concept of adaptation by taking a look at the aspects of the history of adaptation briefly, expectations, definitions, film-production restraints, and the methods of creating the screenplay. This should help set up the framework for the analysis section later on.

       The concept of adaptation is by far not a new one in our historical culture. Adaptation has been around long before cinema in forms of literature, where one piece is adapted in one way or another on an earlier work. Collin McCabe addresses that often missed point whereby all historical canonical texts (from classical antiquity, medieval Europe and the Renaissance) were adaptations that in some sense reused previous materials (3). Even Shakespeare would use

various historical materials for his works, such as *Henry V*, where he followed historical works closely, but he was perfectly willing to invent or ignore aspects when it suited his purposes (McCabe, 5).

Cinematic adaptation merely brought the idea of adaptation into a new light, as from the very beginning, cinema has used adaptation from literature as its first sources for movie ideas (McCabe, 1-3). However, most people do not associate adaptation with anything other than the cinema anymore these days, but most people are unaware of adaptations in dramatic theaters, or that novels are often adapted into comics as well. One of the best known theorists on the history of adaptation is André Bazin. His understanding of adaptation was indeed groundbreaking, as no one before him had thought of adaptation as anything other than the direct transfer from book to screen. This straight transfer, of course, was entirely not the case, as most in the film industry were beginning to learn, so Bazin came up with a new way of describing the process. It was not one medium simply "translating" another, rather two media that made a whole and could not be reduced "to the sum of its parts" (McCabe, 5-6). Adaptation had indeed become its own animal with the advances in cinema. It had become a medium both dependent and independent of its source, which clearly separated it from the old concept that a film is a "recreation" of a book. Bazin claimed that although it was not a direct translation of the work, it still remained faithful (McCabe, 5). It was now firmly placed in its own category of "adaptation".

Despite adaptation finding its own category, critics and audiences alike were still mostly unsympathetic towards the cinematic medium as a whole. The battle waged on between the importance of the book versus the film. McCabe, a scholar of adaptation studies, claims that, "It is common wisdom within much adaptation studies that the question of aesthetic primacy of literature or film is the key debate" (7). Adaptation studies truly came into the light in the 1960's,

and the aesthetic debate has been ongoing since then. The general concept, which so many cling

to, is that the book will always hail supreme, no matter how faithful an adaptation may be. The

concept of fidelity will be further explored later on to see whether or not it is a good criterion

from which to judge the quality of an adaptation. Historically, this concept of aestheticism has

held its ground, according to Rachel Carroll: "All adaptations express or address a desire to

return to an 'original' textual encounter; as such, adaptations are perhaps symptomatic of a

cultural compulsion to repeat" (1).

Those who come to see an adaptation after having read the book expect, subconsciously,

to experience the story the same way they had in the book, which poses many problems. The

film will inevitably not reach all the expectations of the audience, as it is an "interpretation" of

the new authors (director, screenwriter), who have envisioned the story in their own way. This

problem will be further expanded on later.

At this point we are all very much familiar with the concept of a book being transferred

into a film, but other than that simple definition, no one can truly say what *adaptation* is. Here

McCabe explains it as adaptation referring to films that rely, at least in part, for some of its

material on a previously written work, thus differentiating it from an "original" screenplay (3).

Once again, we come across the concept that the film is merely the book in a visual format,

which as we will see, is actually far more complicated than that. In order to go any further, we

must look at the term itself.

Now let us define "adaptation" as scholars of adaptation studies have done. It is a word

with diverse meanings. The most well-known definition of "adaptation", as the world at large

knows it, would be that of Darwin: ". . . adaptation as a means of evolution and survival" (Stam,

2-3). This scientific definition of the word, which is applied quite liberally these days, lays down

the groundwork for adaptation studies in terms of literature and cinema as a whole. A work evolves when it moves between two media, as the two are extremely different. We must then carefully look at the term "adaptation" in Robert Stam's terms; "Do not adaptations '*adapt to*' changing environments and changing tastes, as well as to a new medium, with its distinct industrial demands, commercial pressures, censorship taboos, and aesthetic norms?" (3, emphasis in original). This describes the very process that it has to undergo from source text to film. It is quite the obstacle course to maneuver from beginning draft to final outcome.

Furthermore, adaptation has been termed by Geoffrey Wagner as: "transposition", "commentary" and "analogy" (224, 226, 232), whereas Dudley Andrew coins the terms: "borrowing", "intersecting" and "transforming" (98-103). The diversity in definitions makes it clear that the relationship between the source novel and the film is not a direct one. It would seem the goal for adaptation studies in general is to move as far away from the source text as possible to earn the movie its own credit as an independent piece of art. This is obvious in the credits of most movies, as Stam claims: "The widely varying formulae for adaptation – 'based on the novel by,' – 'inspired by,' – 'free adaptation of' – indirectly acknowledges the impossibility of any real equivalency" (19). Here the concept of finding an "equivalent" to the portrayal of a text is used. Often there can be no real equivalent in the end. In the case of a free adaptation, a filmmaker almost entirely reinterprets the original to fit their creative needs (Carroll, 39), Alfred Hitchcock was famous for this.

I have listed only a few terms above in conjunction with adaptation; however, Stam has listed as many terms as he could find in his research on adaptation studies, and came up with the following list,

> . . . adaptation as reading, rewriting, critique, translation, transmutation, metamorphosis, recreation, transvocalization, resuscitation, transfiguration,

actualization, transmodalization, signifying, performance, dialogization, cannibalization, incarnation, or reaccentuation. (25)

The list suggests that, with so many different definitions, or "characteristics" of adaptation, there can be just as many ways of portraying an adaption on screen. This dilemma will later feed into the discussion on fidelity, as the infinite number of ways of examining an adaptation makes it quite difficult to pinpoint what might be a "faithful" representation of the novel on screen.

It is necessary to understand a little about film production in order to grasp the constraints that adaptation is put under. Time, money, resources, capabilities of human actors et cetera, have a huge impact on what can be made, as well as what can conceptually be transferred into a visual format. The more imaginative a piece is with fantastical elements, the harder it is to transpose those to a visual format. Jack Boozer observes this more closely:

Literature-to-film adaptation involves the textual transportation of a single-track medium of published writing into a document that embraces the scenic structure and dramatic codes of the multitrack medium of film. (1)

This transition leaves a heavy burden on the production team to adapt the written piece as best they can under the constraints they are working with. Kamilla Elliott agrees with Boozer on this point, as she describes the two opposing media: the novel is seen as being linguistic, conceptual and discursive, compared to film which is primarily focused on the visual, perceptual and presentational aspects (9-13).

Bazin has famously said that there was very little difference in plot between a book and a film, however, McCabe notes that, ". . . it [the concept of book and film as one cultural object] is extraordinarily inaccurate about the number and importance of the changes from novel to film" (13). Francois Truffaut argues that there must be a possibility of producing a new type of adaptation which allows film to develop and expand on the original source text (McCabe, 6). This would allow for the movie to be seen as its own standing piece, having taken an

"inspiration" of the "spirit" of a novel, and taken it to quite a new level. As yet, most critics have

not allowed for such a new development simply for the mere fact that the book is still held

supreme.

Essentially, when comparing the two media, the cinematic medium involves more senses,

which complicates the final outcome; even the smallest visual or audio hints can change a scene

entirely. George Bluestone sees this difference as the idea of the visual as we imagine it, versus

the visual as it is portrayed in reality is what sets apart the media, and creates the problems in the

transition between the two (I).

Here it is understood that the film rarely ever turns out the way we have imagined the

book. When focusing on this idea, it is perhaps helpful to see the resulting movie as a form of a

"paratext" to the original novel. The classical definition of a "paratext" as given by Gerárd

Genette states that:

> A literary work consists, entirely or essentially, of a text, defined (very
> minimally) as a more or less long sequence of verbal statements that are more or
> less endowed with significance. But this text is rarely presented in an unadorned
> state, unreinforced and unaccompanied by a certain number of verbal and other
> productions, such as an author's name, a title, a preface, illustrations… These
> accompanying productions, which vary in extent and appearance, constitute what
> I have called elsewhere the work's paratext…. (1)

Stam defines this paratextuality as all of the commentaries, all the accessories which naturally

surround a text (titles, preface, postfaces, illustrations, et cetera) that at times become quite

indistinguishable from it, and in the end, ". . . they reshape our understanding of the text itself"

(28). When seen in this light, the film would only be another part of the paratext of a book, only

aiding it by bringing more attention to the original.

It is important, when approaching an adaptation to keep in mind that not everything can

smoothly move from the book to the screen. Most screenwriters who do adaptations tend to look

at, at least, two categories before starting the process. Here Brian McFarlane neatly lays out what those two categories might be:

> (i) those elements of the original novel which are transferable because not tied to one or other semiotic system – that is, essentially, *narrative*, and
> (ii) those which involve intricate processes of adaptation because their effects are closely tied to the semiotic system in which they are manifested – that is, *enunciation*. (20, emphasis in original)

The first category obviously seems the most basic in terms of change in media, but the second, the semiotic system, or the system of signs in which a story is embedded, can be quite complicated to portray in the audio-visual format of cinema. According to Robert Stam, an adaptation is by default different and at the same time original simply due to the change of medium (17). This should then allow for some flexibility in terms of the critical view of an adaptation. Most other theorists agree with this approach, understanding the difficulties involved when changing media. Here McFarlane comments that when considering what to transfer from novel to film, each case is different, and each filmmaker has to decide how far he or she will go, and choose what is transferable versus what is simply not (23).

Now we will focus on the method of creating an adapted screenplay. Cinema, like writing, is part of the arts, a form of story-telling and therefore, for each screenwriter the essential beginning of a movie is designing the screenplay. This process relies on a simple, age-old formula well known to writers in any medium, as was brought forth by Aristotle, ". . . strong, noble characters, cause-effect logic, catharsis" (Stam, 2). This calls for a three-act structure involving some sort of principle conflict, coherent or sympathetic characters, the unavoidable narrative arc followed by a strong catharsis, or the ever coined "Happy Ending" (Stam, 43). This is also very much influenced by pop-culture, and can have a massive impact on what producers decide to do to an adaptation to make it "fit" the current climate.

The last part in adaptation that I will address, which is certainly of great importance, is the physical limitations imposed on the script writing process that influences what can and cannot be used in the final production. The first issue to address in an adaptation is how to transform a novel that can span over several hundred pages into a 120 page script (La Volpe, para 2). According to Jim Kalergis the 120 pages equals about a minute of film a page, which roughly comes out to about two hours of film (para 2). This task alone seems rather daunting, but then one is reminded that your goal is a visual medium piece, so: "Your job is to cull and shape the 'cinematic' elements" (La Volpe, para 4).

This leaves a new problem, as to what those "cinematic" elements of a novel are. It all comes down to what the director and producer want to portray. This can be done using the many plot points already present in the novel. The rule of thumb here is as follows: "*each plot point must be unique and more powerful than the last.* This is the key to their effectiveness, and it will maintain a tight, fast moving script" (La Volpe, para 9, emphasis in original).

Another rule that was mentioned was that: "Do not make it more complicated by introducing new characters and situations. To do so creates a different story, not an adaptation of the original" (La Volpe, para 21). This is exactly the issue that will be addressed with the introduction of the Elf character Tauriel later on. The idea will be to discover whether or not introducing her has moved the film away from an adaptation or not, based on the purpose she serves to the plot. Another concept closely tied to this idea is known as "adaptation expansion" or when a simple tale is adapted into something larger. The storyline will be padded with "alternate character interpretations" with elaborate backstories, as well as minor characters with much larger parts, new characters, plot holes/expansions, and several subplots; the story is sometimes left unrecognizable from the original (allthetropes.orain.org, para 1-2).

This is a method that was applied to Bard the Bowman, Azog to a small degree, Tauriel, and Thorin Oakenshield. Each of the characters has been re-engineered or completely invented to fit the purposes of the filmmakers and the direction in which they intended to take the film. We will examine how this impacts the overall story in the analysis section.

The general rule in terms of adaptation was clearly laid out for screenwriters as follows:

> Ultimately, you should not make changes unless absolutely necessary to convey the character and events in the source material. If you must makes changes, stay within the spirit of the original story. This is the golden rule of adaptation. (La Volpe, para 23)

With this in mind, and the above mentioned limitation on script pages, screenwriters are left with no choice but to cull away hundreds of pages in order to find the "core" of what they are looking to adapt. This challenge holds many of its own problems, and not the smallest of which is the concept of "fidelity", which will be explored in the following chapter.

2.1.1 Fidelity

"If one has nothing new to say about a novel, Orson Welles once suggested, why adapt it at all? Simply adapting a novel without changing it, suggested Alain Resnais, is like reheating a meal" (Stam, 16). This one quote is best to start off the discussion on "fidelity". It is the "hot issue" of all cinematic adaptation, and is quite the hornet's nest when trying to decide whether or not a piece was a "successful" adaptation.

Let us begin by defining what "fidelity" might mean. This will be critical when examining how critics and audience members justify their complaints or accolades. According to Donald Blumenfeld-Jones in his essay "Fidelity as a criterion for practicing and evaluating narrative inquiry",

> "Fidelity" is contrasted with "truth" and characterized as moral in character. "Fidelity" is further characterized as a "betweenness," construed as both intersubjective (obligations between teller and receiver) and as a resonance between the story told and the social and cultural context of a story. (25)

When observed in this light, fidelity carries a heavy burden from the teller's side, as the receiver would then automatically become a critic of the teller's work. Fidelity, according to Dudley Andrew, abandons any techniques of simple matching through media for a creative transformation; instead it should look deeper (38). Rather than seeing something as being "faithful", it might be better overall to examine adaptations in terms of being "true to the spirit" instead. Fidelity has also been seen throughout the ages as having a single, correct "meaning", and it is up to the filmmaker to capture this meaning, or fail entirely (McFarlane, 8). This view is entirely closed-minded, and denies the very human nature of having different views on the same text. As this examination will show later on, to find that elusive single "meaning" is an impossibility in itself. We are inevitably faced with some form of "infidelity".

Infidelity has as much of a weight to it as fidelity does, as Stam observes; "Terms like 'infidelity,' 'betrayal,' 'deformation,' 'violation,' 'bastardization,' 'vulgarization,' and 'desecration' proliferate in adaptation discourse, each word carrying its specific charge of opprobrium" (3). Despite perhaps having created something new, admirable, and interesting about the text, the fact that it is not just the book in an audio-visual format already puts any adaptation in a negative ranking.

Objections such as Andrew's to the use of "fidelity" have also appeared in Tom Gunning's observations. Filmmakers and screenwriters use the objection to fidelity to maintain the overall value of film adaptations as being works of their own, independent of the source novel, rather than simply being a "re-edition" of a classic text. In order to achieve this form of independence, critics need to acknowledge adaptations as being specifically cinematic instead of

just a transference of the "essence" of a source text into a secondary medium (Gunning, 41). This

desire to have an adaptation seen as its own creation is the goal of most filmmakers, and is often

the point at which most critics find fault. However, if it is not different, how is it original? If it is

not the same, how is it recognizable? These are all valid questions in the field.

As mentioned before, with the numerous definitions for adaptation, how can a critic truly

determine whether or not a piece had indeed maintained "fidelity"? As each definition in turn

notes a different method of approach, how can a critic pinpoint where the fidelity might lie? This

would need to call for a plethora of categories for what "fidelity" might entail in each of the

creative instances, and that would cause in effect a slight chaos, followed by a clambering of

disagreements. This is the challenge that screenwriters sometimes face when choosing to take on

an adaptation.

It is fair to say that most screenwriters and producers have been slammed with a charge

of infidelity at some point or another, yet very few are appreciated for their work, concerning the

massive amounts of effort that went into it. All this is mostly missed by critics. Gunning

describes the errors encountered when trying to label something as "faithful" in terms of

adaptation,

> First error: Critics claim films have a duty to be faithful to a literary source.
> Second error: Critics ignore the unique language of cinema and thus do not
> acknowledge a filmic adaptation to be an independent cinematic work.
> Third error (most recent): Critics restrict adaptation to serious canonical literary
> works . . . (41)

With such apprehensions about adaptations, it makes the business of adapting anything quite

frustrating for screenwriters and filmmakers, however, the financial motivation seems to

overcome such issues. Filmmakers attempt fidelity, but focus more on creating a piece of art

with "roots" in a source text to gain the monetary income from carry-over fans. Stam claims that

the prestige of the original is actually *created* by the copies, because without copies the concept of originality would have no meaning (8), which in postmodernist views suits with the idea that originality is seen as impossible anyway. In other words, the impact of the book would perhaps be lessened without a copy of another sort to compare to. In this way, film is arguably emphasizing the novel in a positive light.

Andrew rather feels it is better to be subservient to a source text, but not all together slavish in the mechanical transfer of it, and that filmmakers will in this way achieve a form of deeper fidelity than from a straight transfer (37-38). This allows more freedom to the filmmakers, and eventually might be more successful in capturing the "spirit" of the original text. This "spirit" of the text is something that combats most often with fidelity. The spirit is what most filmmakers aim for, the spirit being a more general feeling created by the text, as it is less restraining in what can be achieved compared to fidelity.

Luckily, it seems that the tides are changing, at least on an academic level, to some degree. Andrew claims that the latest trend for the academic approach to adaptation has been to either ignore or disparage the over-whelming concern with the idea of "fidelity", finding its constraint to its original source exhausting (27). Naturally, if this approach was approved by the critical community, the pressure for filmmakers might be greatly lifted, allowing them to concentrate more on their own work, rather than "re-writing" the book into the new medium. Carroll agrees with this approach as she too says that any adaptation from a prior cultural text to film or television, no matter how faithful in attempt or aesthetic, will inevitably be someone's interpretation, and will *always* be a textual *in*fidelity (1).

Furthermore, Carroll notes that the critics are reduced to a form of passivity, in which they can only take note and criticize brazenly the ways that the adaptation fails, in terms of

departure from the original, or even worse, distortion (40). This seems to be a very general truth when examining magazine or newspaper reviews of a film. Instead of examining the piece as a whole, artistic work, the critic merely hunts for inaccuracies as we shall see in the analysis section. It is to be noted that this is not restricted to merely professional critics, but also everyday viewers. Furthermore, criterion for fidelity fails to acknowledge both the interpretive and transformative process that is adaptation, and fidelity further complicates this process with hierarchies of privilege; high culture is held over popular culture, as well as the written word over the visual format, and lastly the original over the copy (Carroll, 40).

No matter how hard the film industry may try, that hierarchy of privilege will almost always cripple the film when compared to the book. Even when a filmmaker out-right claims that it is only loosely based on a certain text, an "inspiration" if you will, he or she will still be criticized based on that original source. Carroll claims that fidelity is motivated by the emotional investment of the carry-over fans (40). Those who have read the source material expect the same emotional attachment to the film, and if it is not present, it has failed. Stam too claims that, "Words like 'infidelity' and 'betrayal' in this sense translate our feeling, when we have loved a book, that an adaptation has not been worthy of that love" (14).

Stam furthers this argument by saying that the discourse on fidelity usually is one of lamenting what has been "lost" in the transfer between mediums, instead of focusing what insight might have been gained (3). This concept is by far the most prevalent. The film "lost" touch with the book, it was not exactly the same, it did not create the same emotions as reading the book did. These are the most common complaints amongst the carry-over fans. This same conundrum is focused on by Stam as he notes that a "faithful" film is often criticized as being

simply uncreative, lack-luster, whereas an "unfaithful" film is seen as quite the betrayal of the original, if not shameful on the part of the filmmakers (8).

Is there truly a way to move away from fidelity and yet still maintain the spirit of the original in some way? Many filmmakers believe so, but most critics and audience members, stuck on the belief that "the book is better" believe not. Stam counters this thought by stating the importance of moving away from a "moralistic and judgmental" concept of "fidelity", while still acknowledging that it "does retain a grain of experiential truth" (14). Fidelity may not be the best category to judge a filmic piece of adaptation, but it does have its merits to some degree.

Stam elaborates here by saying that the discourse on fidelity asks relative questions concerning a recreation on film in terms of the plot, characters, themes and the stylistic aspects from the novel (14). This is true in the case of most adaptations; the original text lays out the story-line to follow to ensure fan satisfaction. How can the screenwriters formulate characters or create scenes to recreate a feeling that readers had when reading the books? In this sense, fidelity is a good tool as a diving board to get into the creative process of fleshing out the story. Often all that is required here is the overall "feeling" of the original text, or as I have used the term before, the "spirit". By only using this concept it frees up the screenwriter's creative abilities, and in the end may even be more true to the book than expected.

Continuing on this train of thought, Stam believes that when a critic refers to the "spirit" of a text, it usually refers to the consensus of an "interpretive community", such as Stanley Fish had constructed, to explain what the "spirit" may be (15). We all read and interpret a text differently, but groups of us can come together to agree on how we read and understood a text, and that is our interpretive community; we share the same ideas. This is what Stam claims the critics are doing, they have all come to their own conclusions as to what the text is about, and

base their criticism on that idea from their community, and back each other up in their findings. However, it is key to note that this interpretive community approach largely ignores the way that others might have viewed the book or film.

Furthering on the concept of fidelity, Stam points out the key idea that most critics should be aware of when tackling an adaptation:

> The question of fidelity ignores the wider question of fidelity to what? Is the filmmaker to be faithful to the plot in its every detail? . . . Should one be faithful to the physical description of characters? Or is one to be faithful to the author's intentions? But what might *they* be, and how are they to be determined? (15, emphasis in original)

Filmmakers have to be very careful which areas they pay attention to, and which they can casually push to the side. These areas are exactly those which critics and fans focus on when evaluating the success of an adaptation. However, as mentioned before, because of the interpretive communities, everyone focuses on a different aspect as important to their experience. In this way, a universally pleased audience simply is not possible. However, perhaps the discussion it brings back to the source text is of more relevance.

Stam suggests that due to the change in medium, film has at its disposal not only words, both written and spoken, but also music, sound effects, and moving images which would suggest to him a very "undesirability" for fidelity, as it would constrain the possibilities for the film (17). If you can imagine all the advances in today's film industry, it is easy to imagine why Stam would make such a conclusion. The fact that we have so many tricks of fancy at our disposal in film-making allows for spectacular scenes with bright colors, dramatic lighting, heart-wrenching music at epic moments, and little visual clues that words on a page could not portray. In understanding that the two are not the same medium, the critic will be freed of the idea of

fidelity, and be more open to creative license, and enjoy the two arts as separate, but equally valid.

In some cases, such as that of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, sometimes a small reprieve might be found for the filmmakers. With the existence of prior adaptations of any sort, (such as the radio show, the plays, and the early Rankin Bass movies), some believe that the pressure is relieved for fidelity, and may instead bring forth a sense of innovation (Stam, 42). This was true for the first animated movies of *The Lord of the Rings* by Rankin Bass, as the predecessors of those adaptations in other media had been harshly criticized. Peter Jackson's version was then met with more enthusiasm than the previous adaptations, and the uproar over fidelity was not too over-whelming. In the case of *The Hobbit*, however, since the making of the trilogy came first, pressure for fidelity to the other *films* is quite high. This will be further examined in my analysis section.

Despite controversies such as mentioned above, audiences and critics alike will always return to see "what the books 'look like'" (McFarlane, 7). This means simply that despite their complaints about apparent faults in an adaptation, audiences are always drawn to see what the visual representation of the book might be. This curiosity is what a lot of filmmakers bank on, hoping that if they are close enough to the spirit, it will draw in enough curious viewers.

McFarlane is careful to note the problems of the interpretive community, as mentioned above, in his view of how adaptation is initially received:

> [Adaptation] seeks with one concretized response to a written work, to coincide with a great multiplicity of responses to the original. Its aim is to offer a perceptual experience that corresponds with one arrived at conceptually. (21)

Already from a first glance, it would seem obvious that fidelity is far out of reach. However, we have only spoken thus far about those who have read the books to emphasize fidelity, but

McFarlane claims it is important to note those who have not been familiar with the text before-hand, that because of them, fidelity should be cast aside since to them the adaptation is no different from an original film (21). In order to lure those types of viewers, the film must have the creative freedom to make something that will attract the masses, and not just the fans of the original text.

After examining the pitfalls and strong-holds for fidelity, it would only be appropriate to move on to the next controversial area in the field: criticism. Criticism, like fidelity, poses its own multitude of issues for filmmakers to deal with when making the films, trying to anticipate areas of disagreement. The following chapter will address those issues in more detail.

2.1.2 Criticism and Current State

Adaptation seems to go hand-in-hand with criticism. No adaptation can go unnoticed by both cinematic and literary critics combined. Dudley Andrew used a very good example from Bazin to approach this topic, "Since the enterprise sends many viewers back to read the books, André Bazin noted years ago, what's the harm even of mediocre adaptations?" (31). This is the general idea (other than profit) that most filmmakers hang on to when making an adaptation. It is the two-way symbiosis of books and film. Each in a way draws attention to the other. If an adaptation, as Bazin stated, even one that does not "wow" an audience still brings more readers to the original story, was an adaptation necessarily so bad?

Critics often harp on what Stam calls "the myth of facility" in which there is the notion that films are, "suspectly easy to make and suspectly pleasurable to watch" (7). This fallacy often leaves the filmmaker in a tough spot, because they need to absolutely stun an audience to make a profit, and to keep the critics at bay. This, however, is not straight-forward. Stam goes on further to explain how the facility myth can actually be destructive to the final reception of a film,

> On the production side, the facility myth ignores the diversified talents and Herculean efforts required actually to make films. On the reception side, it ignores the intense perceptual and conceptual labor – the work of iconic designation, visual deciphering, narrative inference, and construction – inherent in film. (7)

For the most part, critics rarely have any background training in film-production, and merely seem to base their criticisms on the original source text, having nothing else to go on in terms of knowledge of the process involved. This is what Stam notes above in regards to the adaptation process. It is often over-looked just how much effort goes into the making of these productions.

The general dissatisfaction from the audiences and critics alike comes from a misunderstanding of the basic structure of the two media, as McFarlane clarifies. These dissatisfactions spring from "misapprehensions" about how a narrative truly works in these two separate media, and their "irreducible differences", and finally from a failure of understanding what can and cannot be transferred between the two (McFarlane, 12). In the case of Peter Jackson's work, he took a step which few other filmmakers before him had done, and filmed the production process to include in the DVD releases for *The Lord of the Rings* movies. Not only did this effectively show the efforts that went into the projects, but it also showed fans and critics just how much he and the production team seemed to truly care about "getting things right". This sympathetic ploy seemed to work, and also raked in a more favorable income from the DVD releases, as fans and critics were eager to see what exactly went into this huge empire.

These same efforts were used to promote the films with even greater gusto in the making of *The Hobbit*. Jackson's team seemed to realize that fans loved the "behind the scenes" approach, and this time, instead of waiting for the DVD releases to include the material, Jackson used his video blogs as teasers for fans to see what was happening before the release of the movies. This, in a way, was already buffering fans of the book for what was to come, and lured new viewers to the project. It seemed to work, as the sales for tickets went through the roof at a

smashing $84,617,303 on its opening weekend for *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* (Mendelson, para 2).

Another area which most critics seem to hang on to is the idea of a type of "class prejudice". Adaptations are seen as "dumbed down" versions of their original texts, only meant to please an audience that seems to lack "cultural capital" (in Bourdieu's terms), and this audience prefers the, "cotton candy of entertainment to the gourmet delights of literature" (Stam, 7). Cultural capital is the term coined by Pierre Bourdieu which is the collection of "symbolic elements" (skills, tastes, mannerisms, credentials et cetera), that is obtained by being a member of a particular social class; sharing these forms of "cultural capital" with others gives a sense of a "collective identity" (theory.routledgesoc.com). This is very much like an "interpretive community".

Most of the young population today would much prefer seeing a film to reading a book, and are thus losing out on the quality of what the original might have brought. Here the argument is that in order to make money, the filmmakers often gloss over many key concepts of the book, ignoring or creating ideas within the film to suite their purposes. The goal is a big blockbuster film with lots of lights, sound and glory. Rather than to sticking close to the idea of the original (which might be seen as "out of touch" with modern society), the story needs to be updated to suite the tastes of the modern audiences.

Geoffrey Wagner weighs in his opinion on the filmmaker and critic's approach to adaptation evaluation, and creates three categories to do so:

> (a) *transposition,* in which a novel is given directly on the screen with a minimum of apparent interference; (b) *commentary*, 'where an original is taken and either purposely or inadvertently altered in some respect . . . when there has been a different intention on the part of the film- maker, rather than in fidelity or outright violation'; and (c) *analogy* 'which must represent a fairly considerable departure for the sake of making another work of art'. (222)

Here Wagner tries to limit the need for criticism on unnecessary areas by narrowing down the categories. His hopes here are that films will then be given a more fair evaluation; but the problem comes from letting critics know what category they should be focusing on.

McFarlane tends to agree with Wagner, in that the assessment should always focus on the "kind of" adaptation the audience and critic are faced with (22). His suggestion on how to do this follows along Wagner's categories in a mixture of (a) and (b), in which McFarlane claims that isolating the man character functions from the source text and checking how well they are preserved in the film is the best way to comment on the adaptation (25). This seems to go back to the concept of fidelity, where the critics and audience will be looking to see how well that core characteristic of the film will be maintained in the final outcome. However, according to Wagner, fidelity or violation should not be the main focus of this transfer. For this thesis it can be argued that the focus should remain on the "spirit" of the original and the new discussions it brings forth.

So why do adaptations endure despite the criticism so often flung at them? What is the allure to this method? McFarlane claims that this phenomenon of novel-to-film adaptation's continuation is simply a blend between cross commercialism and a deep respect for literary works; furthermore the concept of the pre-sold and successful title's popularity might influence the piece in the new medium (7). Financial gain seems the most obvious answer, but it would seem more surprising that a respect for literature is involved. Hollywood just seems to be a factory for new movies, regardless of the quality, and criticism of newer movies only seems to become harsher.

Andrew feels that the Hollywood approach of simply buying up what they can to churn out mediocre works is a shame. He feels that something has gone wrong if filmmakers just buy

literary pieces to "convert them into poker chips", and that conservatives would rather "see

literature atrophy" than be degraded by the entertainment industry, denouncing the "blunting of

art's critical edge" by attempting to please a mass audience (Andrew, 31). This is the same theory

that Stam recalls when stating that critics note that certain adaptations "overwhelm and

vampirize" the original source texts (3).This use for financial gain riding on a famous title, and

"vampirizing" a text that is well respected is still a very hot issue amongst critics in the current

climate. Most people cringe at the idea of a well-beloved book being turned into a movie. The

fear is that the treasured story will certainly be butchered to make the "cinematic event" that

most directors aim for.

This fear of butchering a beloved story is most evident in the current trend of film-

making:

> In the case of Hollywood blockbusters, including those based on pre-existing
> sources like novels or comic books, the text becomes overwhelmed, as it were, by
> a commercial paratext. The film becomes a kind of franchise or brand, designed
> to generate not only sequels but also ancillary consumer products like toys, music,
> books, and other products of cross-media synergies. (Stam, 28)

This is very relevant to Peter Jackson's style of movie-making, as was mentioned above already.

In today's world, just making the movie does not bring in enough profit. Hollywood directors

and producers have to think of the "bigger picture" in terms of what other merchandise they can

milk from the film's success. This makes for a very sour note for the critics and audiences who

feel that the concentration is more on the merchandise than on the quality of the film, or the

fidelity to its source.

However, Stam also notes that critics fail to see the other aspects of adaptation that are

not all together so negative:

> Too much of the discourse . . . has focused on the rather subjective question of the
> *quality* of adaptations, rather than on the more interesting issues of (1) the

theoretical *status* of adaptation, and (2) the analytical *interest* of adaptations. (4, emphasis in original)

Stam clarifies some very valid points in terms of adaptation theory as a study, however, most critics and audience members do not go to see a movie to "learn" something, they go for entertainment purposes. The main point of investigation for critics and audiences is the fidelity to the written work, or how accurately the "essence" of the author is captured. This leads into the next chapter which discusses authorship, and what that really means in terms of adaptations.

2.2. Theory of Authorship

Harold Love explains that literary authorship can be detected in the unique style of writing of any artistic literary piece, very much like a fingerprint (98-99). For a concise filmic definition, authorship, or *auteur theory*, is described by Annette Kuhn and Guy Westwell as: "An approach to film analysis and criticism that focuses on the ways in which the personal influence, individual sensibility, and artistic vision of a film's director might be identified in their work" (25). This is key in adaptation, as the director not only has to produce a familiar piece in another medium, but he or she also has to make it is his or her own. As film is another art form, the director and producers must make the piece both faithful to its source, and original to their unique style so that it is not simply a *reproduction*.

First, the question of authorship is usually the crux of most criticism. Authorship's boundaries seem to blur when identifying the author; many individuals (the actor, the director, the screenwriter, the actual author), would all seemingly fit the claim (McCabe, 22). Most often an adaptation is still judged on the original style of the author's work and whether or not the director has captured that on film.

This makes for a tricky situation, since the film is a unique piece both separate and symbiotic of the original work. Many times an audience is unaware that a film is even an adaptation when it is so far removed from the original piece. Here the director's work is judged and not the literary author. Other times, when it is a quite beloved work being adapted, the most controversy arises. As we know from fidelity, when adapting, authors are expected to maintain the integrity of the original while also putting their own creative stamp on the work.

So how does a critic or an audience member bridge the gap when evaluating a film? Andrew suggests the following:

> The interpretant governs the choices made in adaptation. Rather than a mechanical transfer from one semiotic system to another, the filmmaker interprets the source via an audiovisual form that also includes attitudes and concerns brought to the project. [Lawrence] Venuti argues that we should isolate different "interpretants" operating in the two moments of creation, both to appreciate their respective achievements and also to assess the propriety of the filmmaker's choices. (32)

Quite simply put, as an audience and as a critic, it is important to remember that the producer and director's role is to be the "interpretant"; it is their decisions on what to include and what to discard that makes for the eventual version of the story that we see on film. When accepting that the book, in all its intricate details, cannot be fully transferred as we as individuals remember it, we are more able to appreciate the authorship on the part of the producers, directors and screenwriters.

In most cases, the original author of the written work is not on set to consult about decisions due to various reasons; therefore, the director becomes the new "author". Since a film must have an authority to consult during shooting, and it is the director who has the final say during all phases (script, preproduction, editing and release), then it is fair to say that it his "authority" that creates the final film (McCabe, 21-22). This is a point that must be stressed in

order to understand why certain changes are made. The new "author" of the new artistic creation

makes choices based on what he or she feels will work best on screen.

The type of adaptation also has an effect on the choices made by a director as to how

close to the original plot the final product will be. Carroll explains an example of this through

free adaptation:

> With the vehicle of the free adaption, contemporary film auteurs can attempt to
> make aspects of literary classics and other texts their own, over-writing them with
> their own traceable signatures, perhaps reconfiguring them by incorporating
> references to other (rewritten) intertexts. (37)

This format, despite being more liberating, is not quite as common as a more "accurate"

adaptation. The reason for this is perhaps that if the film is not easily recognizable as coming

from a certain source, the notoriety of that source is lost, losing the fans of that original source.

This area also brings about questions as to how far away from the original can a director take the

film while still claiming it as a source.

Another area that is tied into authorship is authorial intention. How can a director, an

audience, or a critic know what the original author's intentions were?

> Unlike new criticism's notions of organic unity, poststructuralist criticism
> emphasized the fissures, aporias, and excesses of the text. And if authors are
> fissured, fragmented, multi-discursive, hardly 'present' even to themselves, the
> analyst may inquire, how can an adaptation communicate the 'spirit' or 'self-
> presence' of authorial intention? (Stam, 9)

With this in mind, most directors can do as they please, as the authorial intention is almost never

fully spelled out in terms of how a text is meant to be interpreted. This gives the director more

freedom in his or her own goals. This is still problematic, since an audience and critics most

likely will not take such a notion as authorial intention, or the lack thereof, into account, and

thus, criticism still will be issued.

In the very early stages of film, there was, however, a time when films were seen on the same footing as their written counterparts according to Gunning. This occurred between 1912-14 with the creation of the multi-reel feature film, as the emphasis given to the author also put the films on an equal level with the literary works (Gunning, 46). When this reverence for film slipped below that of the literary work is not clearly expressed, but the more film developed, the less it was seen as the equal of literature, and it began to lack an "author". However, even though the medium is different, and it is a visual form as opposed to written, this certainly does not remove an author. As McCabe puts it: "If we reverse the perspective and look at it from the point of view of the producer, then it is quite clear that there must be an author on the set" (21). There has to be someone directing the flow of the story, and in the case of film, it is the team of people mentioned before (director, producers, actors et cetera), as opposed to the single voice of one author.

A rather large question begging to be answered in terms of authorship is: how can the director, producers et cetera truly be the author/s of the story, as they are clearly using someone else's work? McFarlane explains that this can be traced in areas where transfer is not possible, and how far the filmmakers have gone to create their own work in those gaps; the main point is that even if the filmmakers adhere to the novel as closely as possible, filmmakers can still make a film that "offers a markedly different affective and/or intellectual experience" (26). It is in the moments where transfer is difficult or not feasible that the "new" author makes his mark. This is where Peter Jackson, Fran Walsh and Philippa Boyens seem to excel. Some pieces from both *The Lord of the Rings* as well as *The Hobbit* are either too slow for film, too tricky, or have no real weight on the arc of the story. Therefore it is up to the trio to find ways of making the story blend well, work dramatically, and not to fall flat. They have, in their own processes, created an

atmosphere all their own for Tolkien's treasured works. All six of the movies are now forever linked with the name Peter Jackson, and may perhaps be what the younger generation comes to know first, before Tolkien himself. In this sense, Jackson has successfully become the new "author".

Often times there are still complaints as to the direction these new authors have taken the storyline to fill those "holes" mentioned above. Jack Boozer reminds us that: "Often overlooked . . . is that modern writer and directors tied to studio support are frequently asked to work with studio promotional departments to consider a film's marketing in relation to its final story construction" (3). This ties in to what was mentioned earlier about Jackson's marketing ideas to expand the movies into merchandizing of all kinds as well as key plot points (such as the love-triangle).

Pressure from the studios all too often dictates just what these new authors must or must not include in order to spin off into video games, toys et cetera. This is a factor that often annoys viewers as they can see sequences that have naught to do with the plot of the original story, but that have been added for obvious use in a video game to be released later. However, such inventions that authors, or in this case, directors and producers input into their versions of the story are all part of the authorial process. Thomas Leitch clarifies that status as an "auteur" is dependent on the filmmakers' temperament, working habits, triumphs over other aspiring authors, successfully turning themselves into brand names, and lastly their artistic goals and aesthetic features of their films (108). By immersing himself into all forms of marketing, as demanded by the studios, but also leaving his own unique stamp on the products, Jackson and his team are definitely making themselves stand out as authors in their own right.

As has been emphasized before, one *must* remember that it is not simply the book being put into visual format, it is a new art form all together, and therefore unique, and in need of molding. "The closed fixation only on literary source and finished film both in journalistic reviews and scholarly study has often shown indifference to the evolving intentions of producers, writers, and directors and their shifting levels of input and authority" (Boozer, 3). This situation is evident again in the DVD extras for each of the *Hobbit* movies released so far. Jackson, Walsh and Boyens take the time to explain changes along the way, and why some had to be made in their artistic opinions. This process can in a way help fans of the book be less critical of those decisions in the movies once they realize what it takes to get the productions made.

Something that is often mentioned in interviews with Philippa Boyens, an avid Tolkien fan herself, was that she had long since already had a relationship with the original texts, and had it in mind how she would bring them to a visual format. This is something quite common amongst adaptation writers, as Boozer notes: ". . . some later auteurs, who often locate and purchase their own source material, already have some connection to the source material and some intention in relation to it, which they continue to develop throughout the scriptwriting stage" (6). This seems to be key when taking on any adaptation, as the new "author" must be familiar with the text in order to do it justice, but must also have ideas of their own as to how to make the written text come to life on the big screen. This becomes the process of "adopting" the voice of the story as their own.

If one is truly interested in breaking down the process of authorship transfer, Boozer suggests simply observing the script drafts:

> How a critical analyst interprets the information provided by a late script draft can therefore make all the difference not only in assigning specific authorship to the quantity and degree of intended source alterations but also to recognizing how the

initial screenplay conception may have been altered by performative and technical factors in the production and postproduction stages. (ibid)

Furthermore, the idea that performative factors come into play was also something mentioned by Boyens in the DVD extras as well as interviews, claiming that actors gave her or Fran Walsh new ideas constantly, and as the actors harnessed their characters, they also helped lead the story in new directions. Boyens fully embraced this method. Boozer claims that an actor's performance can be adjusted to the script, or the script conversely to the actor; it all depends on the director's intention with the source material (8-9). In this way, the actors also become partial authors, feeding ideas to the script writers and producers in the manifestation of their characters in relation to the source texts. I will discuss Richard Armitage's role as Thorin Oakenshield in relation to exactly this concept later on in my analysis.

As we have discovered in our journey thus far, when it comes to film, there is not simply one author, as there often is in a novel. When examined closely, a film's particular elements (story treatment, visual style, performance, tone, scoring, editing and themes), can all be attributed to the decisions and efforts of individuals (Boozer, 22). To conclude this chapter on authorship, it should be noted that, in order for such a complicated piece of art, such as film, to be able to handle the transfer of complex stories into a new medium, the single author must be replaced by multiple to focus and handle the intricate sections that make up the whole. Karen Diehl states, ". . . film appeared to have effaced the 'hand of the literary author,' not least by replacing him/her with the subsequent authorial figures of scriptwriter, producer, star and most notably the director as *auteur*" (90, emphasis in original).

The following chapter will focus on the concept of "Reception theory", and examine how an audience might read the original source text. Many factors, such as authorship and casting decisions will make a dramatic impact on how the source text is read (for first timers), or re-read

by old fans, and whether or not such changes are deemed as helpful or harmful to the original. In the case of *The Hobbit* adaptation, reception theory is key to understanding how an audience might "decode" the story presented to them, and in turn how that interpretation affects the original.

2.3 Theory of Reception

The following two subchapters will briefly outline reception theory in literature, and reception theory in media. The differences are mainly based on the changes of medium, but can have a substantial effect on how something is received by a target audience. The main focus is on the concept of reception theory and literature, but it is important to understand reception theory in media, or audience reception as well since this thesis is based around novel-to-film adaptation. What this means for the target audience (carry-over fans from book to film), is how their reading of the original story is forever changed by this new paratext in film.

2.3.1 Reception Theory and Literature

In the online Oxford Reference, "Reception Theory" is defined as a modern literary studies branch focused on how readers receive literary works and is sometimes called simply "reader-response criticism"; it is associated with "reception-aesthetics" (German, Rezeptionsästhetik), coined by Hans Robert Jauss, a German literary historian in the 1970's (para 1). It is Jauss's theory that changed the way books were read. Jauss drew on philosophical hermeneutics to argue that literary works are received against an "existing horizon of expectations" which consists of readers' "current knowledge and presuppositions about literature", and as our horizons shift, the meaning of the works change as well (ibid). Reception theory, (unlike reader-response theory), focuses on historical changes that may affect the reading

public, instead of focusing on a single reader (Oxfordreference, para 1). The relevance of this particular theory in terms of this thesis is to clarify how a reader's established expectations affect how the book might be read in our *current* era (an issue brought up often in terms of theme and relevance in today's world). Lastly, after having seen the film version of *The Hobbit*, how it might alter the way in which the story, which we assume was previously read, is re-read.

James L. Machor describes reception theory as a study that examines the historical analysis of "changing conditions and reading practices through which texts are constructed in the process of being received" (XIII). Each generation of readers has different "horizons of expectations" or the "subjective models, paradigms, beliefs and values of their necessarily limited background" (Machor, 2). This means that all their experiences that they have had in life influence the way that they read a text, how they think about it, and what conclusions they draw from it based on these experiences.

Machor believes that reception theory today is not what it once was, when it first arose with Hans Robert Jauss in the 1970's. It has, in itself, also adapted to the times. It began as a way of showing author development, but transformed into a form of historical inquiry by limiting or rejecting the transformative force created by "theoretical ideals", rather focusing on the ever-changing "reading formations" and "interpretive communities" prevalent in reading practices (Machor, XIV). It is exactly these "interpretive communities" that influence how a book is viewed in a wider context. These communities, as have been mentioned earlier, group together based on how they view the text's meanings, and Stanley Fish believes that a text's effect on a reader *is* a text's meaning (Machor, 2). In these groups, individuals accept the "norms, ideals and methods" of that community, which will determine the final interpretations validity. The group will back up the individual's interpretation. These groups, although a natural evolution of the

reading process, can sometimes have a damaging effect on how an adaptation is received (as was discussed in the fidelity section).

However, even though Jauss did indeed emphasize the reader's "horizon of expectations" in terms of how the book is received, he did not ignore the author, rather, he used the author's intention to "ground the text's historical 'other' and to preserve its capacity to critique social life and transform readers" (Machor, 1). Robert C. Holub claims that reception theory is concerned with the shift of importance from the author and the work to the text and the reader (xii). Theorists tend to focus more on the "horizon of expectations" of the readership than the initial intent of the author. As Jauss also noted, the author's intentions are not ignored completely and this is also important later on in the analysis of the adaptation, as it is the author in whatever form that leads us in how we read, or later view, a piece.

In terms of viewing both the original written work and then later the adapted film version as works of art, it is perhaps a good idea to examine Holub's idea of exactly what happens:

> The function of art . . . is to dehabitualize our perception, to make the object come alive again. The role of the recipient is thus of primary importance; in a certain sense it is the perceiver who determines the artistic quality of the work. (17)

In terms of the adaptation, it is very much making a standing piece *come alive again*, and as Holub states, it will be the "recipient" that judges the quality of this newly resurrected piece. Keep in mind the numerous interpretive communities out there. Holub goes on to state that we cannot determine the literary value of a piece through our horizon of expectations, as the distance between our horizon and the works are not sufficient (62). In this case, he refers solely to a literary piece, claiming that our own experiences cannot be the sole determinate for the value of a work of art. This is true for the adaptation as well, if we wish to expand it to broader terms. We cannot bring our "horizon of expectations", now also including the original written text, to the

judging table of the adaptation. It must be a free-standing piece with roots in the "historic 'other'" that is the author; that author being both the original textual author and the new author/s of the filmic adaptation.

In reception theory a text is an event that derives meaning and actualization from the reading (or spectating) of the piece; it is not merely the portrayal of a pre-existing reality, rather both novel and film are considered "communicative utterances" which are "socially situated and historically shaped (Stam, 10). As we have seen before, each generation with their interpretive communities may receive a text differently, and thus also receive an adaptation of that text differently from generations before. In terms of the focus of this thesis, the generation that is currently being examined is highly linked with media, and it is more likely that the younger generations will see the movies before they read the book, and may thus "reverse judge" the book as better or worse based on the film. The question then becomes: are those who have seen the adaptation before reading the book disappointed that the original source is not as good as the film? (Stam, 14).

Reception theory, Stam believes, has no semantic core, or "nucleus of meaning" intrinsic to the novel which an adaptation must "capture" or "betray", therefore, adaptation is free to fill in the gaps often left in the literary text (10). This concept ignores authorial intent and a definitive "meaning" derived by one of the interpretive communities. Instead it is seen more as something to be determined by each individual, and is therefore free from mass expectations. However, why then, with this in mind, are audiences who have read the book first still so disappointed?

> When we are confronted with someone else's phantasy of a novel . . . we feel the loss of our own phantasmatic relation to the source text, with the result that the adaptation itself becomes a kind of "bad object." The clichéd response that "I thought the book was better" in this sense really means that our experience, our phantasy of the book was better than the director's. (Stam, 15)

We cannot so easily separate ourselves from Jauss's "horizon of expectations", which now would also include our reading, and interpreting of the book first. This influence is seemingly unavoidable, and must be taken into account when examining how different interpretive communities evaluate the final adaptation.

As the flow of this chapter has naturally progressed more towards the idea of media and reception theory, we will now continue on to that sub-chapter. The concept is broadly the same, but with the simple difference that it has become a change in media. This change in media is the crux of this thesis, and therefore it is relevant to include a short description of the slight difference in theory.

2.3.2 Reception Theory and Media (Audience Reception)

This subchapter will briefly cover Stuart Hall's concept of audience reception from his essay "Encoding/decoding" later on. First we will examine a more simple definition to begin with and expand from.

Film Reference online states that reception theory helps the understanding of media text by examining how they are read by audiences; the theorists who analyze media using reception theory focus on the "experience of cinema viewing" and how meaning is created thereby (para 1). Furthermore, it is important to note that the media text (movie or television program) does not have an innate meaning; rather, meaning is created by the spectator in the interaction with the text, namely by watching and processing the film (ibid). Much like the theory for literary reception above, audience reception focuses on the idea that contextual factors (such as the viewer's identity, the circumstances of the viewing, preconceived ideas about the film and its production, or genre, as well as our social, historical and political issues relevant in the day),

influence how an audience might view and pull a meaning out of media piece (filmreference.com, para 1).

Originally, however, there was classical film theory, as is explained in "Reception Studies and Classical Film Theory". Theorists believed that the *text* was the source of meaning, and that audiences were idealized, homogenous spectators that all came to the same final reactions when watching a film, rather than modern reception theory's varied audience view (filmreference.com, para 1-2). This concept claimed that the text was the final determinant of the viewer's response, whereas reception theory, or in the case of film, audience theory, is audience or reader activated. This basically includes all the features mentioned above about gender, age, location et cetera, affecting how the visual text is "read".

Stuart Hall came up with the concept of "encoding" and "decoding" a text for visual format. The text is "encoded" with information from the author/s or producer/s of a work, and it is that information that we as an audience must "decode". He suggests three frameworks for reading, or "decoding" texts in the form of a *dominant-hegemonic position*, or an "intended" reading, which accepts a texts ideology without question (136), *negotiated code or position*, which both accepts and rejects parts of a text's presented ideology to suit personals needs (137), and *oppositional code or position*, which fully rejects the ideology (138). These frameworks accept the fact that the viewer's experience is a complex and very individual one, and makes room for multiple interpretations, not just the homogenized, idealized result that classical film aimed for. This is called an "active audience", which gives them more credit in terms of how they might react.

The filmmakers essentially need to imagine what readers of the book might want to see, or as McCabe puts it: ". . . the author finds himself in the audience with whom he is trying to

make the film" (22). A director can only hope to get *near* enough to an audience's projected image, while also not losing the integrity of good cinematic viewing. For this thesis, it links directly with audience reactions to changes that were made from the original text to the adaptation, which we will examine in the next few chapters in the analysis section.

Audience reactions have been mixed about the resurrection of the character Azog, the inclusion of a non-Tolkien female character, Tauriel, the love-triangle she spurs, as well as the change in the character of Thorin Oakenshield. All these areas will now be covered in the following chapters of the analysis section.

3. Analysis

In the following subchapters, we will explore a brief history of the adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* into live action films by Peter Jackson and his team. Then we will focus on specific character changes and expansions to explain how certain changes were made, and to what effect.

3.1 Introduction to the History of Tolkien Adaptations by Peter Jackson

This subchapter will deal briefly with the predecessors (filmically) of *The Hobbit* trilogy, namely *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (to be termed as *LotR* from now on). In order to understand the choices made later on in *The Hobbit* movies (to be termed *Hobbit*), one must first look back at the process used in the first trilogy in order to understand how changes would be made to match in this new trilogy (so that there is a flowing effect between the six films). We will begin with Tolkien's own views on adaptation, then move on to concepts of fidelity, lightly touching on authorship, followed briefly by reception theory in terms of work on the *LotR* trilogy.

Tolkien was very clear about what he would not have wanted if *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of The Rings* were ever to be adapted to screen. Rick Marshall explains in his article that Tolkien

demanded a guarantee that The Walt Disney Company would never be allowed to adapt his work when he sold the film rights of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* (1). However, this did not mean that Tolkien was altogether against adapting his work, and he quite understood what an adaptation might mean. In Paul Simpson and Brian J. Robb's book Tolkien is quoted as saying: "[C]an a tale not conceived dramatically but (for lack of a more precise term) epically, be dramatized – unless the dramatizer is given or takes liberties . . . ? A very hard task" (99). Tolkien, being a scholar of literature and languages, was well aware of what adaptation might entail, and was not against it, but was rather more against taking something and belittling it.

He was adamant about this fact each time he was approached for an adaptation, and once claimed that, "I should welcome the idea of an animated motion picture, with all the risk of vulgarization. I think I should find vulgarization less painful than the sillification achieved by the BBC (on radio)" (Simpson & Robb, 99). This was very much his same attitude towards Disney, as was mentioned above, and therefore, Tolkien would never see an adaptation on film during his lifetime.

Tolkien rejected storylines that were not respectful to the original, in his eyes, since he was most interested in preserving the heart of the tale (Simpson & Robb, 99-109). He eventually gave up hope for a faithful adaptation while he was alive, and therefore he gave up on the movie rights (ibid). He liked the idea of a live-action adaptation, but sadly never lived to see one (Simpson & Robb, 109).

When looking at the concept of "fidelity", the question of whether or not Jackson's team's films had achieved it is often an area of debate. Knowing what we do now about the process, is it really relevant? Did they "get it wrong" in terms of how it should have been made? Although many fans cry out freely on message boards about the "failure", Sir Ian McKellen, who

plays Gandalf in all the *LotR* and *Hobbit*, films has stated that: "And, of course they *hadn't* got it wrong, they'd made a considered decision to change, amend or ignore Tolkien's text" (Sibley, 145, emphasis in original). So if we work on these grounds, we can observe *how* these changes were made, and to what effect.

It must be said that despite negative criticism there has also been a lot of praise concerning Jackson's team's films. One such discussion on *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy goes as follows: "Several authors acknowledge that, to most fans of Tolkien, the Jackson films are 'another road to Middle-earth'. And this group includes literary as well as film critics" (Bogstad & Kaveny, 2). This falls in line with the concept of the films being a "paratext" to the original. They help draw people to the original work to some extent, and are seen as a part of them. Bogstad and Kaveny go on to claim that the films have garnered a large, enthusiastic audience with some overlap of those who love the films, and those who love the books (2). Those who tend to enjoy both forms of the story's representation tend to have a more open-minded approach to adaptations, and therefore appreciate both separately.

Bogstad and Kaveny too feel that, ". . . Jackson's efforts cannot diminish Tolkien's accomplishments, they can only deepen them" (3). This is something that will be touched on further in the subchapters concerning character changes and additions in order to "beef up" what would otherwise have been a very flat children's story.

Returning to the concept of "authorship" from earlier on, it is important for Jackson and his team to put their creative "stamp" on the works, and not simply just visually portray the original text. Jackson himself has noted that the Tolkien novels will be of importance long after the films have been forgotten, and that perhaps one day better films will be made by someone else (Bogstad & Kaveny, 8). Jackson and his team never try to claim the idea as originally their

own, or in any way superior. Most of the time it is comments like these that are seen in interviews, where the filmmakers bow to the original author time and again.

In order to make the *LotR* trilogy work on film for viewers who had not read the books, Jackson and his team needed to make the layout slightly different from how it might be perceived in the books. Bogstad and Kaveny claim that: "Jackson admitted to accepting the need to change the narrative structure to appeal to those not familiar with Tolkien's story, so he focused on making the setting of Middle-earth as realistic as possible for 'book-firster' Tolkien fans" (10). This idea works with the concept of authorship in that Jackson and his team wanted to keep some element recognizable from the original, but it also had to work as a story without the book on hand. Jackson's team made their stamp on the work with their creative choices on how exactly to portray elements so that they still were true to the books and the "Tolkien Spirit", but understandable for those who had not read them. Here it became the case that: ". . . the filmmakers must make choices that either render the text as is but violate the spirit, or vastly alter the narrative" (Bogstad & Kaveny, 11). This same method was carried over to *The Hobbit* adaptation.

Reception theory, at least for the *LotR* trilogy, clearly shows that Tolkien's fandom influenced Jackson's films, but a new fandom was also produced by Jackson's films (Bogstad & Kaveny, 13). It is a symbiotic relationship to some degree. Tolkien fans are drawn to the movies to see what it might "look like", and fans of Jackson's films return to the books to indulge further in this fantasy realm.

There is little doubt that Jackson's *LotR* trilogy was a smash hit, grossing $313,364,114 for *The Fellowship of the Ring*, $339,789,881 for *The Two Towers*, and $377,027,325 for *Return of the King* respectively (boxofficemojo, *np*). The decision to move forward from here to *The*

Hobbit seemed like a plausible move. Ben Kendrick claims that Jackson has successfully expanded and shortened various story beats in the *LotR* installments, translating the narrative into the "best movie experience possible" (1-2). The difficulty here, however, was that *LotR* had more than enough material for three movies, as each movie briefly covered a book in the trilogy, but for *The Hobbit*, the controversy came when expanding it from two movies (which seemed appropriate), into three. This will be explained in further detail in terms of character expansion later.

Philippa Boyens, in an interview with Ethan Gilsdorf, explained how the previous trilogy, *LotR,* would inevitably have an impact on the making of *The Hobbit* films. They knew the *Hobbit* trilogy would be set against the backdrop of the *LotR* trilogy they made first, and that the fully complete characters from the first installments would carry over into *Hobbit* (Gandalf, Gollum, Elrond et cetera); however, they needed to make sure that *Hobbit* was its own story with its own tone and not a retelling, "adjunct", or "redux" of *LotR* (Gilsdorf, 2-3). This flexibility, in terms of having enough material to tell the "full" story allowed for more creative freedom, and eventually, an arguably deeper, and more epic feeling movie than the book that fell in line with their work on *LotR*. In order to make the films fit, some work needed to be done to *make* that match-up; when *The Hobbit* was written Tolkien did not anticipate continuing on to *The Lord of the Rings*, and therefore the feeling of the stories are distinctly different in the texts. However, having that noticeable split does not work on film and so we will now explore, briefly, some small changes made to create the flow needed between the *Hobbit* trilogy and the original *LotR*.

3.2 Focusing on *The Hobbit*

In this section we will be looking at the actual adaptation itself, and how certain changes were made and to what effect. We will begin here with a brief general introduction to changes in

the films themselves, and then move into more detail about adaptation points of some

controversy.

The Hobbit is upon first glance a rather misleading little book. It is a children's book of

about 340 pages. Tolkien himself admits that the story was actually written for his children in the

introduction to *The Hobbit*:

> I had the habit while my children were still young of inventing and telling orally,
> sometimes of writing down, 'children's stories' for their private amusement. . .
> *The Hobbit* was intended to be one of them. It had no necessary connexion with
> the 'mythology', but naturally became attracted towards this dominant
> construction in my mind, causing the tale to become larger and more heroic as it
> proceeded. (*The Hobbit*, viii)

This admonition puts into focus the audience the story was meant for, namely that of children.

However, if one were to adapt the film in the way that Jackson and his team intended (to a much

wider audience), the tone had to be a bit darker, and more "mature".

Philippa Boyens, one of the screenwriters for the films notes that the book actually takes

a dark and dramatic turn at the end, and this leads us towards the Middle-earth we've come to

know through *The Lord of the Rings* (warnerbroscanada.com, para 7). This new approach to the

story in the same dark light as in *LotR* would keep the same cinematic feeling flowing between

the two trilogies. It would, in effect, tie the stories together in a way that Tolkien himself had

tried to do with his several drafts of rewriting *The Hobbit*. He eventually created the appendices

to close the gaps. This choice to see the darker side of *The Hobbit* may have been the starting

point for how the story would be changed to fit with *LotR*, and what changes needed to be made

to do so.

Michael Martinez remarks that no matter how faithful or indeed unfaithful a film

adaptation is to its source material, history shows that someone will always complain about

(in)fidelity to the books (1). As we have seen before, fidelity can weigh heavy on a filmmaker's

mind in order to be able to attract and win over the audience he/she is seeking. Martinez further

goes on to lay out the difficulties that Jackson's team now have to face, post-*LotR*:

> Peter Jackson has to deal with a number of unusual challenges most film-makers do not deal with when adapting books to movies.
>
> - He must remain faithful to the world he created for his "Lord of the Rings" trilogy
> - He must help the audience learn about and love dozens of characters, some of whom will die
> - He must anticipate and explain in-world issues that are only explained in books he cannot legally adapt to film
> - He must make a *complete* story that runs from beginning to end and makes sense (within itself) all the way through (1-2, emphasis in original)

These obstacles already make the adaptation of *The Hobbit* problematic at best, as Jackson's

team must now keep together the continuity from the *LotR* trilogy by referencing back to

characters and places we have met before in that trilogy, but technically have not happened yet

before *Hobbit*. Such changes, including bringing Legolas in to the films and developing Balin's

character into a memorable one (compared to the flat character in the book) helped make it feel

like there was a flow between all the movies.

Martinez feels that the adaptations were not a failure, rather that,

> Everyone who tells the story tells it differently, and I think the longer, more thoughtful presentation will eventually earn a lot of accolades because it sets the pace for being more honest and faithful to the needs of the audience; if you follow the book exactly the audience will hardly have any time to learn about and come to care about any of the characters. (3)

This concept will come into further light when we explore characters such as Thorin

Oakenshield's expansion into a more "heroic" version. The inclusion of information from the

appendices at the end of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* books helps to further flesh out flat

characters, and we will also examine these changes through in drafts of the original text later on.

In Martinez's second article he explains that, "the film-maker's job is *not* to please all the

purists. His job is to make a movie . . . Two people are telling these stories: J.R.R. Tolkien and

Peter Jackson" (1-2, emphasis in original). Jackson and his team have taken multiple works of Tolkien's and molded them together to try and make a coherent story for film. This decision was further explained in an interview with Peter Jackson. With a vast amount of source material in the appendices (125 pages of additional notes the filmmakers had the rights to), Jackson's team was able to show Bilbo's story, Gandalf's disappearance, the story of the Dwarves of Erebor, the rise of the Necromancer, as well as the Battle of Dol Guldur, which otherwise would remain untold (Doty, 1).

This access to the appendices opened up a whole new world of possibilities for characters that were rather flat in the books to become more three-dimensional in the movies. In the book, children tend to gloss over the fact that there is no explanation for where Gandalf disappears to halfway through the story, and he gives little explanation upon his return either. This type of "brushing over" in books is usually acceptable, but to a wider, and more varied audience, this would cause a problem, and luckily for Jackson and his team, the appendices offer the solution. With aid of the appendices we find out exactly where Gandalf has gone, namely to face The Necromancer, or Sauron, in Dol Guldur which would later lead into his rise to power in the *LotR* trilogy. It might not seem like much, as he is not the main focus antagonist in *The Hobbit*, but for fluidity in story-telling from *The Hobbit* to *The Lord of the Rings* the connection must be made clear for a visual audience. In the books, Tolkien had to remedy his holes through the appendices, which is why Jackson's team pulled all the threads together to make a more coherent story through all six of the movies.

Some critics prefer not to see the fact that the expansion of the movies was done to make the above mentioned coherence. Erik Kain from Forbes magazine considers the film trilogy "an avaricious cash-grab" with an "absurd" amount of added material (2). Philippa Boyens

responded to such accusations by stating that: "[Making *The Hobbit* trilogy] was a creative choice, it wasn't a financial choice at all" (Gilsdorf, 1). In terms of developing the "rough-and-tumble" children's adventure story into a more adult story, Boyens, Walsh and Jackson all had a massive battle ahead. When adapting the action sequences, it would prove to be quite a challenge. Boyens explains that the story is episodic, tumbling from one adventure into the next, but none of them truly building on each other, and this would make the film grind to a halt; the screenwriters knew they had to take liberties, and in their experience fans understood this need and approached the work as an adaptation and not a definitive expression of Tolkien's work (Gilsdorf, 2).

These challenges that the team faced caused them to turn to the appendices for ideas on how to make the story flow better, and the abundance of material available to them helped inevitably to shape events. Examples of these are the inclusion of Dol Guldur to explain Gandalf's actions, and the return of Azog (deceased in the books) as The Necromancer's servant. Azog also doubles as the nemesis of Thorin (his story is slightly changed from what we find in the appendices to make him more heroic). These areas will be further explained in their own subchapters.

Boyens justifies their use of the appendices by saying that Tolkien himself never stopped writing *The Hobbit*, as we know from the re-drafts after publication, *The Lord of the Rings*, the appendices and other Tolkien works (Gilsdorf, 2). This is true when looking at the many drafts that *The Hobbit* went through, even after being published. In the end, Tolkien had to settle with filling the holes in *The Lord of the Rings* (1954) where he could, as well as the appendices and other writings such as *The Silmarillion* (1977), *The Book of Lost Tales*, *Part 1&2* (1983, 1984),

et cetera. There is no shortage of story-telling from Tolkien, only restrictions on the part of Jackson's team on what they are allowed to legally use.

When asked how she felt about stretching *The Hobbit* into a trilogy, Boyens stated that in the end naysayers were always going to be present who believe they understand how storytelling and film production works; as a screenwriter one has to accept that those individuals do not truly understand the process, and it is better to believe in yourself (Gilsdorf, 3). Simply trusting one's instincts seems to be the only way to successfully move forward. Boyens herself has admitted to being a huge Tolkien fan many times, and that upholding his work was their first priority. However, despite wanting to do the best job possible, they were still faced with an immense challenge, simply due to the fact that they had to measure up to their *LotR* success, and they had a far more child-oriented book that needed to be made into a more "mature" version for film.

This challenge of adapting the book which was simply meant for children into a more "mature" screen version was something Boyens addressed:

> It was a hard film to do, following in the footsteps of The *Lord of the Rings* Trilogy, and it's quite a different adventure than those films. . . Bilbo's not an obvious hero. He hasn't been given a ticking time bomb like Frodo is given with the One Ring, the ring of power, that he needs to destroy. He's basically coming out of his door on a rather strange quest to reclaim this homeland of the Dwarves. (warnerbroscanada.com, para 3)

It is because of this lack of an "obvious hero" that the team had to decide on a central hero, in line with someone like Aragorn in *LotR*, but who is also not the main character (in *LotR* the most emphasis is put on Frodo and Sam). To mirror this effect, Bilbo effectively becomes Frodo, in that we follow *him* on this journey, but the hero mantel is given to Thorin Oakenshield as the audience needs to get behind him or the quest to save Erebor seems rather fruitless. This will be expanded upon further in Thorin's own subchapter.

Furthermore, the idea of changing the tone of the overall story is seen as significant to Andrew Cunningham. He explains that the more adult tone of the movies is a step forward in terms of making a connection to *LotR*, and by integrating and "fleshing out" narrative threads (from the appendices), such as the Necromancer and the Dwarf war in Moria, the story feels more important than the overall small scale of the book when compared to *The Lord of the Rings* (2). He goes on further to include the changes made to characters in the *LotR* trilogy adaptations as consistent in their representation in *The Hobbit* adaptation, thus keeping the characters familiar from viewers' previous experiences (such as Gandalf being more in control, rather than flighty such as in the book) (Cunningham, 2). This heavier storyline, as opposed to the light-hearted book version, grips a wider audience in the same way that the apocalyptic *LotR* trilogy did. It is this very shift in tone that created a need for deeper, and more complex characters, which is what the analysis section will explore.

Another character change that will only be briefly mentioned here, but which makes a rather large impact on the story, is that of side-character Bard the Bowman. In the books, we meet Bard rather late into the story, but his role is never-the-less crucial as he is the one to slay the dragon Smaug. Boyens and the team decided to focus more on his character, as brushing over him would not make cinematic sense considering he has removed one of the central evils in the story. Boyens notes that Bard was an interesting character since he was introduced "after the fact" in the book; readers only meet him after the Dwarves have left Lake-town, and he suddenly takes on an extremely important role (warnerbroscanada.com, para 50). They knew right away that Bard's story would not work in the adaptation as it was, so the plan was to meet him sooner, to engage with his character, and give him a history with the Dwarves; furthermore they

expanded on the fact that he had children, and made him into a different kind of hero, driven by the need to protect his children (ibid).

This simple change of introducing Bard earlier on, and making audiences connect with him brings about the feeling of a natural leader, which makes more sense after the destruction of Lake-town when he takes control and leads his people to The Lonely Mountain to seek shelter and aid. If this move had not been made the story would feel disjointed. A random hero appears on the scene and slays the mighty dragon, then suddenly has immense authority, and we have to invest in him rather quickly. This is just part of what is technically known as "adaptation expansion" or when a short, simple story is given a much bigger adaptation with padded narratives and elaborate backstories, minor characters with much larger parts, new characters, and several subplots (allthetropes.orain.org, para 1).

These were just a few examples of some of the changes made from book to film that would carry weight in the long run. In the following subchapters we will delve deeper into changes made to specific characters, and how it changes the way the story reads, both in film, and in the original text. We will begin in the following chapter with one of the most controversial points, the resurrection of Azog the orc.

3.3 Azog Resurrected

Azog has been a very controversial change to the story from the original tale in the book. We are only introduced to Azog in a few lines at the beginning of *The Hobbit*, whereby we feel Thorin's hostility towards the orc:

> Your grandfather Thrór was killed, you remember, in the mines of Moria by Azog the Goblin [Gandalf speaking].
> 'Curse his name, yes,' said Thorin. (29)

The book does not explicitly state that Azog is in fact deceased, as the above is all that is ever said of him. This might have been exactly what Fran Walsh and Philippa Boyens noted when comparing the original text to the information found in the appendices. The book itself actually allows more freedom regarding what can be done with this evil character only briefly mentioned. In the case of the first target audience (the carry-over fans), the filmmakers must keep in mind that this classic book comes with certain expectations. In each adaptation, the filmmakers are faced with pre-existing expectations, as well as knowledge of the story that needs to be navigated; at the same time, a reworking of the familiar story helps in presenting fresh and meaningful material (Carroll, 111). This expansion is neither true nor false in terms of the book itself, as we are never offered an explanation as to his particular fate; although more devoted Tolkien fans are well aware of the real fate of Azog. As has already been established in the theory of adaptation section, directly comparing the plots of books to films overlooks the importance and number of changes in the transition from novel to film (McCabe, 13). In this case, the fate of Azog is actually relevant, as more dedicated fans would have found this out from the appendices, and his presence wholly affects the story, as he becomes the "central evil", whereas in the novel, it is meant to be Smaug.

Tolkien makes it explicit that Azog is indeed dead in *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* Appendix A III: Durin's Folk (here after RotK App),

> Then Azog with a swift swing hewed his [Náin's] neck . . . He turned and fled back towards the gate. Up the steps after him leaped a Dwarf with a red axe. It was Dáin Ironfoot, Náin's son. Right before the doors he caught Azog, and there he slew him, and hewed off his head. (1075)

A few lines later it is clarified that his head is then placed on a spike before the gates of Moria as warning to the goblins and orcs. It *cannot* be more explicit that Azog was indeed killed. This is the main point that this chapter will address, and which Philippa Boyens casually mentions in

The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey's appendices, part 8: The Denizens of Middle-earth, Azog the Defiler: "The problem is, in the appendices, Azog is killed, and so the simplest way to solve that was… to keep him alive. So we're sort of playing with the audience there, a little bit." The exact implications of this change to a reading of the original text will thus be examined below, although we will first begin with a description of Azog's history – according to the appendices – as well as his position in the film.

Azog was a hinge figure in Dwarven history, due to the fact that he killed Thorin Oakenshield's grandfather, Thrór, when he tried to reclaim Moria (an ancient Dwarf kingdom) after the fall of Erebor to the dragon Smaug. Azog's beheading of Thrór was a great insult to the Dwarven race, as Thrór was the eldest of them all, and also their king. Furthermore, not only did Azog kill their king, he also desecrated his body:

> Then Nár [Thrór's travelling companion] came up, and found that it was indeed the body of Thrór, but the head was severed and lay face downwards. . . Then Nár turned the head and saw branded on the brow in dwarf-runes so that he could read it the name AZOG. That name was branded on his heart and in the hearts of all the Dwarves afterwards. (RotK App., 1073)

His beheading began the War of the Dwarves and the Orcs, which came to a head at the Battle of Azanulbizar, where Azog finally met his doom, as is mentioned above. Despite the Dwarves winning the battle, their numbers were too few to reclaim and hold Moria, so they were forced to relocate to The Blue Mountains, or in the case of Thorin and his father Thráin, work as blacksmiths in the towns of men.

Even though Smaug was the chief instigator of the Dwarves' expulsion from Erebor, focus is shifted onto the orcs and goblins as having made them *truly* homeless (as they could not even take refuge in their ancient home in Moria), and depleting their ranks further (after the losses to the dragon). This was most likely done since the Dwarves knew they could do nothing

about the dragon, but needed something to vent their rage on (being a rather moody race), which shifted the focus onto a more manageable and immediate enemy, namely that of Azog and the orcs.

As such, once Azog was removed by Dáin (*not* Thorin; this is important to note for the next chapter), the immense battle was over, and the threat mostly gone. All that was left behind of Azog was his son, Bolg, who is indeed in *The Hobbit*, but only very briefly mentioned at the final battle in the book: "The Goblins are upon you! Bolg of the North is coming, O Dáin! whose father you slew in Moria. . ." (*The Hobbit*, 313). This would seemingly be the case that Bolg was coming to take vengeance on the Dwarves that slew his father, or at least that would make sense logically. However, the presence of Bolg is made rather redundant in the *films* due to the fact that Azog is in fact, *not* dead. However, what does the presence of Azog actually bring to the movies, and what does his presence do to those who return to the books after the fact? Let us begin with his purpose in the films, if indeed there was one.

"Thereupon Azog came forth, and he was a great Orc with a huge iron-clad head, yet agile and strong" (RotK App., 1074). This is the description we are given of the menacing orc in the appendices, which was obviously meant to create a fierce image. The role of Azog on film, according to Cunningham, is to bring a more "immediate antagonist" to drive the action forward, as Smaug (the chief villain) only appears briefly towards the end, and the Necromancer, although a larger threat, has no impact on Bilbo and the company of Dwarves (3). The fact that the story is split over three films creates the need to make several different conflicts in order to keep it interesting. As we have already been made aware in the theory section on adaptation, plot points must be successively more powerful and unique than their predecessors (La Volpe, para 9, emphasis in original). Since Smaug was only due to appear in movie two, this left a rather

gaping hole in the first film. In the book itself, no one is chasing the company; they merely

happen to fall into situations with wargs, trolls and goblins throughout their journey. Their only

enemies are Smaug, and the goblins and orcs that attack the mountain at the end. This does not

make for very climactic viewing, so the filmmakers had to decide what kind of villain they

would introduce. This is where Azog was brought in, and the problem seems to begin.

Boyens explains the inclusion of Azog. Bolg, Azog's son, and Azog were both needed to

explain the two parts of the story, the Lonely Mountain, and the fortress of Dol Guldur with the

Necromancer; Azog is pursuing Thorin's company for revenge for cutting off his arm (the

filmmakers' own addition), and simply out of psychopathic hatred of Dwarves of the line of

Durin in particular (warnerbroscanada.com, para 17). Azog hates the Dwarves for his own

reasons, but also had to prevent them from reaching the mountain due to maintaining his alliance

with the Necromancer (ibid).

This answer seems to bring about a few problems. Yes, using two perspectives on the

side of the "bad guys" would be necessary to cover both the Lonely Mountain and Dol Guldur,

but resurrecting a dead character to fill one of those roles as a main antagonist seems a bit

extreme. Knowing that Azog is indeed from Tolkien's canon, he fits into Geoffrey Wagner's

commentary category in adaptation criticism, whereby the original story is purposely altered for

the intention of the filmmakers, rather than outright violation (222). When the first movie was

released, it seemed plausible that Azog was perhaps resurrected by the Necromancer to serve

him, which would have made far greater sense, being that he was an enemy of the Dwarves who

were trying to reclaim a strategic strong point that the Necromancer wanted. However, with the

third and final movie having been released, there is nothing to suggest that this might have been

the case.

As Carroll noted in the subchapter on fidelity, no matter how faithful to the original the attempt or aesthetics are, it is still someone else's interpretation and, not being the original author's work, it will be a textual *in*fidelity (1). Although Azog is a Tolkien character, and (based on what we know about him from the appendices) his creation on film is not far off, it is simply the fact that he is explicitly dead and serves no true purpose that absolutely required him to be "resurrected" that makes his presence unfaithful to the "Tolkien Spirit". However, if this is the case, as we have already seen in the theory chapter, is fidelity in this instance (despite the complaints of purists) really a category by which to judge the success of his inclusion?

As Carroll has suggested before, the criterion used for fidelity fails to acknowledge both the interpretive and transformative nature of adaptation, and gives way to the hierarchy of high culture (the book) over popular culture (the films) (40). It is clear that another "focus antagonist" was necessary to drive a dramatic story as the dragon was so far away, and therefore logically such an inclusion is understandable. The crux of the issue here is simply that the criticism arises from the use of a character who was proclaimed dead and that by Tolkien's own intentions no longer had a use. In terms of authorship, the audiences tend to lose focus on who exactly is the "author" of the story that we see on film. McCabe, as we have seen in the criticism subchapter, claims that in adaptation authorship does indeed get lost as we can no longer tell whose story it is; the original author? The director? Screenwriters? All seem to have a valid claim at this point (22). Azog has now moved from Tolkien's creation to being "resurrected" and "reconstructed" by Jackson's team. It is the emotional investment of carry-over fans that usually brings the most criticism with it, and in this sense, the piece cannot be appreciated on its own as fans cling to Tolkien's work. However, this thesis focuses on whether or not Azog's inclusion actually benefits the piece, and how it affects the original in turn.

Philippa Boyens goes on to say that upon first examination of the story the filmmakers wanted to get to the dragon, and attempted to do so in one draft, but lost too much along the way by doing so; the Necromancer was also too "ephemeral" to bring to the foreground, which caused problems since there is no actual, physical enemy in the story (Adler, 1). Although this lack of an enemy makes for a rather anti-climactic action film, there were other options that could have been explored. For instance, introducing a minor side character, which has already been done in *LotR* in the orc ranks (such as Lurtz, an Uruk-hai captain sent to capture the hobbits, who was pure invention on Jackson's team's part), and would not be inconsistent with that trend.

A minor side character could have been introduced to serve Bolg in his vengeance, perhaps one of his bodyguard (which are mentioned in the battle), a "Lurtz Mark Two" if you will, and it would have made for a less radical change to the story than the use of the deceased Azog. In all circumstances, Bolg could have taken on the main role that was given to Azog, which would have been more in line with the book, as we know he is present and par-takes in the final battle. Bolg hunting the Dwarves, in conjunction with the changes made by Boyens and Walsh (namely making Thorin attack Azog in Azanulbizar after Azog beheads Thorin's grandfather in front of him, rather than having Dáin slay him), would have made a more believable vengeance story and fit the "Tolkien Spirit". Azog has no real malice towards the Line of Durin in the appendices, in fact he seems completely indifferent to all Dwarves, as he only killed Thrór for trespassing. Therefore, his vengeance story was a complete fabrication on the part of the filmmakers for a more dramatic effect, whereas the death of Azog would have made a more believable point of revenge for Bolg. This would have foiled Thorin's own revenge for Thrór.

Another angle that was used was one that was mentioned on theonering.net, a site endorsed by the filmmakers, that, "The filmmakers instead use the Azanulbizar to emphasise the heroism of our central character Thorin and establish back stories for Balin and Dwalin." (Ruddy, 2). A scene with Azog in which he is slain at the end, as in the original work, would have been no less heroic for Thorin, nor provided less of a back story for Balin and Dwalin. Again, Azog could have been present but perished; thus introducing us in the same moment to an enraged Bolg to tie in later to his hunting of Thorin and his company. This would have been a far smoother transition, and more faithful to the facts and the "Tolkien Spirit". However, in terms of viewers who are not familiar with the original text, McFarlane argues that fidelity can be cast aside, as the adaptation to them is an entirely original film (21). This is true, although, in order to please both types of audience, Bolg could still have been used as mentioned above, and the new audience would be none-the-wiser, but carry-over fans would have been more satisfied with the result.

A last potential reason for Azog's inclusion was to have the final epic face-off between Thorin and his bloodline's enemy. The one-on-one battle with Azog makes for a more powerful death for Thorin, rather than the complete lack of detail about his downfall in the book. This heroic standoff against an enemy with a relentless grudge was basically only used as a backdrop for Thorin's redemption after his dragon sickness (gold lust), and to give him a proper catharsis. However, everything that Azog does could still have been done by Bolg in exactly the same way and still have been believable, and perhaps more powerful.

The final point of criticism towards Azog is that many believe his addition was simply aimed at a bigger cash grab through merchandise and games. As Stam had noted in the adaptation criticism section, certain texts become overwhelmed by their paratexts in the

Hollywood blockbuster arenas, making the films a franchise or brand of sorts, made to justify churning out consumer products such as toys, video games et cetera (28). Many of the scenes with Azog do indeed feel as if they were a layout meant to be used later in video games to further milk the use of his presence. However, this brings nothing of any real use to the story-telling in itself.

The inclusion of Azog brings very little to the table in the film, other than giving Thorin Oakenshield another focus for his hatred and rage besides the dragon, who is too far off to be convincing as a point of anger in the films. Overall it would seem that his so-called "resurrection" serves no real purpose in the films, and his inclusion was entirely unnecessary for the final plot.

So what exactly does the presence of Azog in the films do to our reading of the book? Here reception theory is of the utmost importance. According to Machor, reception theory today, the focus is on the changing "reading formations" or "interpretive communities" that govern modern reading practices (XIV). It is these "interpretive communities" that have quite an impact on the reception of an adaptation, and as Machor stated, it is the text's effect on a reader that *is* the text's meaning (2). Here, in relation to Azog, these communities have a very mixed review of the inclusion of the deceased character. Two of these communities carry a great weight on his criticism: those who have read the book first, and those who came to the book post-films.

For those who read the book first, the inevitable reaction to Azog is not necessarily good. As Stam elaborated in the reception theory section, when we are faced with someone else's imaginings of a novel, we experience a loss of our own imaginative connection to the source text, turning the adaptation into a "bad object" (15). This idea of the adaptation not matching up with our horizon of expectations also falls in line with Stuart Hall's idea of decoding and

encoding. The film is encoded with Azog as the main antagonist (as Smaug is so far away and only briefly plays a role), and then the audience, in viewing the films, are left to decode that information according to their horizon of expectations, allowing for multiple interpretations, as they are an active audience.

In the case where the viewers are disappointed by Azog (whether or not they know the story from the book), they fall into the category Hall terms *oppositional code or position* which fully rejects the idea presented (138). This is more often than not the case for Tolkien purists when examining the presence of Azog, but it is not the only one of Hall's categories that Azog falls into. This oppositional code is also in line with Gunning's idea of adaptation criticism springing from the focus on the rearrangement of events from the original narrative to the final cinematic piece (49). For Azog, taking his history from the appendices, and then blatantly changing his fate, and in so doing, his entire role in *The Hobbit* has caused the story to effectively become something other than what Tolkien presented.

Readers of the book can also take on the category of *negotiated code or position*, whereby the audience can both accept and reject parts of a text's ideology (Hall, 137). This position is usually taken by the less avid or, perhaps, more open-minded fans, as they realize that the book was rather flat, being that it was meant for children, and could not be too complex; but this also leaves holes in the story that would not suit a wider audience. In this sense, the audience is neither necessarily heavily opposed nor inclined to Azog's presence, and it does not affect their reading of the book.

In terms of someone coming from the films to read the book for the first time, the effects can be manifold. Adult readers, who come to the book unaware of the fact that it was written for children will immediately notice the absence of the main antagonist, Azog. This audience that

goes from film to book is usually in Hall's *dominant-hegemonic position*, or the audience that accepts the information presented without question (136). They come in unaware of the fact that Azog plays no role in the tale of *The Hobbit*, and therefore their first experience with his character is one of accepting his presence as part of the story, whether or not they thought he was a great character. When they then turn to the book, this might make it a far weaker and more disappointing read, especially if the fan of the films thought Azog was a great villain.

Furthermore, for the first-time reader, in the films, Azog chasing the Dwarves gave a deeper sense of urgency to the story, which the book somewhat lacks (other than the necessity of reaching the mountain before Durin's Day to open the secret door). This lack of urgency might make the book feel a bit disconnected, as no events really tie together to the greater whole. Most are unaware that this was meant to be a children's story, after all. Since this was Tolkien's first real tale about Middle-earth as it would come to be known, he did not yet have a sense of where the story might be going, hence the many re-writings of the story post-publication as well as the extra information in the appendices. In this sense, *The Hobbit* does feel slightly more disjointed from *The Lord of the Rings* as Tolkien did not yet know the full extent of the story he was telling, and thus certain ideas were not yet concrete. In terms of the adaptation itself, the audience that goes from film to book might realize that Azog was included in what Stam calls a reinterpretation of the original work through new "grids and discourses"(45). He is meant to help the flow of the story, although Bolg would have been a better option, as these readers will notice once they have read the book. What this means, in the case of reception theory, is that the film-to-book carry-over fans cannot use their horizon of expectations (namely their experiences now gathered from the films) to judge the literary value of the book (Holub, 62), as they are in essence coming to it backwards.

As for younger readers coming to the books for the first time after having seen the movies, depending on their age, they may or may not notice Azog's absence. The heavy revenge theme and emotional battle for Thorin might be too over-whelming in the movies for them to process as is. In this sense the book would be an easier and more enjoyable read for the younger audiences. The story in its original form, sans Azog, would probably be less dark and scary for them, and therefore something they would prefer over the more tragic film versions.

When seen from these angles, the inclusion of Azog in the films remains hard to justify. We have examined Azog through the lens of what Stam calls "a comparative narratology of adaptation" in which we examined "the ways in which adaptations add, eliminate, or condense characters" (34). His character truly brings nothing special that only Azog specifically, versus some generic side-general or Bolg, could bring. His presence also only seems to irritate purists who believe that Azog should remain as Tolkien wrote him: dead. So due to these points, it can be argued that Azog the Defiler was overall a redundant character, bringing nothing of any substantial value to the films or the discussion of the book.

However, not all changes to the film failed in bringing substance to the story, or detracted from the book. In the following subchapter we will examine a character who was arguably the most improved and who brought a truly heroic, and epic feeling to the films, as well as bolstering the reading of the book, namely: Thorin Oakenshield.

3.4 Creating a Tolkien Hero: Thorin Oakenshield

A heroic figure is key to any real adventure story, and in the case of *The Hobbit* book we do not really encounter any truly heroic figure other than Bard the Bowman, who only comes up much later in the story, and only briefly. This lack of a hero causes a problem, as a movie audience needs to invest in the characters and hope for their success. Bilbo, although being the

focus of the story in the book, is not all that heroic. Frodo in *LotR* has a much weightier task of being the ring-bearer and taking the ring for destruction in Mordor, often facing great evil and having to battle it along the way. Bilbo barely does any fighting, and rather uses the ring to hide from most violent interactions, and altogether misses out on the final battle. This will certainly not work as a heroic figure on the big screen, so something had to be done to the story to adapt to our expectations of a hero. As we know, adaptations *adapt to* changing environments, tastes, a new medium with its own industrial demands, commercial pressures, and aesthetic norms (Stam, 3). This lack of a hero in the story would have caused problems in the Hollywood "hero adventure" format. Therefore, for the film, something had to be done, and this came in the form of Thorin Oakenshield.

In order to understand changes made by the filmmakers to Thorin's character, it is best to first begin with how Tolkien himself described the Dwarves, and then narrow down to his working, and reworking of Thorin's character to see where the ideas might have come from for the representation of Thorin on film.

When Tolkien first began to write tales about creatures in his early years, his influences mostly came from fairytales. The more he wrote, the more sophisticated his ideas became, but at first, as John Rateliff explains: "In their earlier appearances in Tolkien's tales, the dwarves had always been portrayed as an evil people: allies of goblins, mercenaries of Morgoth, pillagers of one of the great elven kingdoms" (76). However, as his writing continued on, more and more of his historical studies crept into his characterization of what would become a race of mighty warriors.

Rateliff explains that, "Here again we see a tie to Tolkien's philological studies: for the Langobards, or Longbeards, were one of the Germanic tribes who invaded the crumbling Roman

Empire in the sixth century. . ." (77). In Tolkien's writing, the Longbeards are a race of Dwarf.

This concept definitely informed the Dwarves that would eventually arise in *The Hobbit*, where,

as we will later see, they were formed into mighty warriors. However, they were not the

stereotypical "human" warriors that we might picture; young, tall, perhaps handsome, but

definitely imposing. Instead, Tolkien's Dwarves were almost always described as little old men,

which fits with both Norse myth and folklore (79).

Once Tolkien had a more firm idea in mind of the direction in which he would take his

Dwarves, he was able to give us a description in *The Book of Lost Tales: Part Two*:

> The Nauglath are a strange race and none know surely whence they be; . . .
> Howbeit in crafts and sciences and in the knowledge of the virtues of all things
> that are in the earth or under the water none excel them; yet they dwell beneath
> the ground in caves and tunneled towns. . . Old are they, and never comes a child
> among them, nor do they laugh. They are squat in stature, and yet are strong, and
> their beards reach even to their toes, but the beards of the Indrafangs are the
> longest of all, and are forked, and they bind them about their middles when they
> walk abroad. All these creatures have men called 'Dwarves'. . . (Tolkien, 223-4)

This image, it has to be noted, is given by Elves. The Dwarves themselves are notoriously

secretive (even having their own secret language), and therefore such beliefs that there are no

women amongst them, and that no children are born but rather spring fully grown from rocks, are

perpetuated by Elves. Furthermore, the fact that they can live hundreds of years is completely

omitted. However, some of the description is true, namely that they are excellent craftsmen,

(which is well-noted in *The Hobbit*), and their build. When faced with descriptions such as these,

it might make for a challenge when trying to create "heroic" figures that are not simply little old

men, which for a popular audience would not give much motivation to support them.

Although, as we will see, this description of the Dwarves is adhered to in the films to a

great degree, some liberties were also taken to make them more "appealing" to a human audience

with human sensibilities of what might be attractive. Furthermore, after Tolkien gave us a

description (although through Elven eyes), he felt it necessary to give a little more background to these mysterious creatures. Here authorial intention, such as we have observed in the theory section is of great importance. It was Tolkien's intent to make the Dwarves a mighty race that influenced the filmmakers' decisions on how to shape the eventual characters. This also helped with fidelity to the feeling of Middle-earth and the "Tolkien Spirit", as all the sources of its history were tapped into to combine all the knowledge about its denizens. The historical richness of their background is what helped create such amazing backstories, as some influences from our own history helped bring a pathos to the Dwarves. This is also a form of "adaptation expansion" that the filmmakers used, whereby certain characters are given rather elaborate backstories to enrich their stories (allthetropes.orain.org, para 1).

Tolkien used a more tragic grouping of humans as inspiration for his Dwarves in *The Hobbit*, namely the Jews. Tolkien's history of the Dwarves is like that of the ancient Hebrews, whereby they "have been driven from their homeland and suffered a diaspora"; the Dwarves then settled in scattered groupings, but managed to preserve their own culture (80). This instantly draws sympathy to a race that is otherwise not too well-liked in Middle-earth. This depth to their story was something the filmmakers could grab onto and use to flesh out their struggle further. However, this was not the only link to Jews that was implied; Rateliff claims that, "Their warlike nature could have come straight from *Joshua*, *Judges*, or the 1st and 2nd *Maccabees*, while their great craftsmanship harkens back to the Jewish artisans of the Medieval Iberia, whose work was renowned throughout Christendom" (80). This craftsmanship is a point of great pride for the Dwarvish race, as all the gold and gems in the Lonely Mountain were forged within it by them. This pride, followed by a distinct greed, was something the filmmakers also employed in building up the characters of the Dwarvish company.

Nomenclature was also a huge point of importance to Tolkien. When he first began *The Hobbit*, he had named Thorin "Gandalf" but, realizing that it was a mismatch, he renamed the Dwarf king "Thorin". Tolkien turned, once again, to his beloved Scandinavian epics for inspiration for this majestic race. Rateliff notes that Jean Young's translation of the *Prose Edda* reveals "Thorin" as "Bold One", whereas Ursula Dronke's edition of *Völuspá* translates the three names (of Thorin, his father and grandfather) as "Darer" (þorinn), "Yearner" (þráinn), and "Thrive" (þrór) (455). These very strong names only add to the majesty of this royal line of Dwarves, suggesting a power to each, and a destiny of sorts. Thrór, Thorin's grandfather, was the most successful king before Smaug's attack; Thráin, Thorin's father, yearned to return to Erebor, and went on a quest to try and do so, failing miserably; and lastly, Thorin is the last in the line to dare to try and take down the dragon and reclaim his right. All of these factors feed into a very epic feeling which the filmmakers put to use.

The last piece to Thorin's puzzle was his description in the appendices at the end of *The Lord of the Rings: Return of the King*:

> Thorin Oakenshield became the heir of Durin, but an heir without hope. When Thráin [Thorin's father] was lost he was ninety-five, a great dwarf of proud bearing; but he seemed content to remain in Eriador. There he labored long, and trafficked, and gained such wealth as he could; and his people were increased by many of the wandering Folk of Durin who heard of his dwelling in the West and came to him. Now they had fair halls in the mountains, and stores of goods, and their days did not seem so hard, though in their songs they spoke ever of the Lonely Mountain far away. (RotK App., 1077)

This description of Thorin portrays a competent leader who is not afraid to work hard to earn his place. He successfully re-homes most of his people, and even makes them fairly wealthy, which makes him a good king; a conception of leadership which has strong connotations with medieval notions of rule. This portrayal of Thorin is what drives the first part of the trilogy on film, and

gives Thorin a noble and strong quality worthy of respect that the book lacks. This is what could

be latched onto to flesh out the noble king on film, and make him worth following.

Much like the role of Aragorn in the *LotR* trilogy, the audience needed a strong, heroic

leader to follow. Tolkien was very careful in what characteristics he gave to Aragorn. Aragorn is

portrayed as a true king, who is heralded to return in an ancient prophecy; Tolkien further

endowed him with the characteristics of an "ideal king", with healing hands and humility, the

sacrifice of years being a Ranger, and finally his triumph over evil (Duriez, 67). This was the

model upon which the filmmakers also had to foil the new king of the current story, Thorin. In

fact, the filmmakers even gave Thorin his own prophecy of return, which is not present in the

book, so that it would foil Aragorn in *LotR*. Much like Aragorn, Thorin is left to wander the

wilds, but as a blacksmith in the towns of men rather than a Ranger. Thorin is not as humble as

Aragorn (at least later on in the films, and not at all in the book), and he gives in to the

temptation of the dragon sickness, although over-coming it in a triumphant arc, whereas Aragorn

is never tempted by The One Ring. This comparison to a beloved characterization makes us

further invest in Thorin in a way we cannot in the book reading, and also compliments the

atmosphere built in *LotR*.

However, as was described above, Thorin had a comfortable life in the Blue Mountains,

unlike Aragorn who lived in the wilds. In order to make Thorin leave his comfortable life,

Tolkien had to account for his change of mind, and this came in the form of revenge and a desire

to reclaim what was taken:

> The years lengthened. The embers in the heart of Thorin grew hot again, as he
> brooded on the wrongs of his House and the vengeance upon the Dragon that he
> had inherited. He thought of weapons and armies and alliances, as his great
> hammer rang in his forge; but the armies were dispersed and the alliances broken
> and the axes of his people were few; and a great anger without hope burned him
> as he smote the red iron on the anvil. (RotK App., 1077)

This exact idea of Thorin working as a blacksmith was used in the film to show his climb from lowly blacksmith to king. This inner feeling that Thorin has is never explicated in *The Hobbit*, and therefore, the inclusion of this makes Thorin more believable on film, and even gets an audience to feel his need to take revenge. It is this motivation that separates him from the nobler Aragorn, who is not motivated by hatred or greed.

As Francois Truffaut noted, there must be a possibility of producing an adaptation that would allow films to develop and expand on the original source text (McCabe, 6). Armed with the knowledge about Thorin and his race (although it is scattered throughout Tolkien's many books on Middle-earth), the filmmakers had more than enough information to begin to flesh out a hero in the shape of Thorin Oakenshield. Even though they had all this scattered knowledge about Thorin, it simply served as a backbone for what they could do. Reception theory ignores the idea of a semantic core, or a "nucleus of meaning" in novels which adaptations are expected to maintain or betray, and by doing so the adaptation is free to supplement the gaps of the literary text (Stam, 10). This idea of not having a nucleus of meaning gives the new "authors" the ability to take the characters in new directions, still using the original author as a historical reference for ideas, allowing for a more "enhanced" story-telling. This concept is also part of what we have examined earlier with Bard's character, an "adaptation expansion" (allthetropes.orain.org, para 1). In order to make his character memorable, the filmmakers had to follow the age old formula already laid out by Aristotle of, ". . . strong, noble characters, cause-effect logic, catharsis" (Stam, 2). This layout requires a three-act structure involving a principle conflict (Azog/Smaug), coherent or sympathetic characters, (Thorin/Bilbo), an unavoidable narrative arc followed by a strong catharsis (Thorin's death), or the "Happy Ending" (Middle-earth is saved) (Stam, 43).

As Philippa Boyens explains in the DVD extras on *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* (*Extended Edition*), the audience needed a hero to invest in, and the innate strength the character needed was what they saw in the actor Richard Armitage (appendices part 8: The Company of Thorin Oakenshield). The initial problem with Thorin, if one is to be faithful to facts in the book, is that he is quite old, and unlikeable. Peter Jackson also addressed this point of age where he notes that Thorin is over 190 years old, which in human years equates to somewhere between 60-70 years of age (*AUJ's* App., 8: Oakenshield). This in itself was a hurdle, so in order to make Thorin more appealing to a general audience (as he was described as being rather stiff by the narrator in the book), the decision was made to change him into the figure they needed. Boyens explains their move as follows:

> We made a decision early on that he needed to be younger than he is in the book. We knew we wanted to tell the back-story, and we wanted someone who could potentially play himself as a young prince. You need the audience to invest in the notion that this guy is going to take back Erebor, and has the potential to be a king and produce an heir, and live a long life after that. We also knew he needed to be a great warrior, and, it would have been, I think, difficult for someone in their 70's or 80's to actually physically play this role. (*AUJ's* App., 8: Oakenshield)

This change was crucial in making Thorin into a character an audience could get behind and support on screen. In the book he is old, as Peter Jackson had already mentioned, and that works fine for a children's book, but for aesthetics and practicality (such as casting older actors to have to portray warriors) on film, Thorin had to have both a physical, as well as mental makeover. As Dudley Andrew clarified, fidelity should abandon the idea of simple matching through media for a creative transformation; instead it should look deeper (38). Thus, the exploration into Thorin's character would create a more faithful representation of the "Tolkien Spirit", pulling together all the sources on Thorin to make him a comprehensive, multi-dimensional character when compared to the flat character in the book. The aesthetics, such as appearance, are necessary to

appeal to a far wider audience, such as when posters and trailers are released to draw in viewers and then, once they are hooked when they come to see the films, Thorin's personality had to shine to create a hero in the same light as the already known Aragorn from *LotR*. This all complies with the Hollywood standards for filmmaking (beautiful people in epic films), and Thorin's reinvention was yet another way for Jackson's team to put their creative stamp on the work as authors, by making him into an iconic figure.

Anna Klassen comments in her review that in *LotR* we are presented with characters like Arwen, Legolas and Aragorn that satisfy Hollywood's formula of beautiful people in blockbusters, but *The Hobbit* rather consists of old, unattractive Dwarves, wizards, and the slimy creature Gollum; Jackson then had to alter Thorin to make him a more appealing hero with a "deep, creamy voice and calm demeanor that completes his fallen-hero façade (Klassen, para 16). However, this is not the Thorin we encounter in the book, who is greedy, a seemingly inexperienced leader only after revenge on Smaug to regain his gold, the film presents a king in exile with honorable intentions (ibid). After this rather remarkable, and arguably enhanced version of Thorin was put on film, it was much easier for an audience to believe in, and follow him. Stam claims that most audiences lack cultural capital, choosing the dumbed down media entertainment over literature (7), but Thorin is rather more fleshed out than dumbed down, actually enhancing one's reading of his character when returning to the book. Furthermore, this foil to someone like Aragorn from *LotR* leaves an audience with a feeling of familiarity, a type of link back to the Middle-earth they may have encountered before in Jackson's *LotR*. By doing this "encoding" if you will, Jackson's team has set Thorin up for a type of success in terms of being seen as an iconic hero in the light of the well-beloved Aragorn, as well the tried-and-true Hollywood formula.

The inclusion of Thorin's backstory from the appendices was a calculated move on the part of the filmmakers, in that all of the richness of Thorin's character was built there. Boyens justifies this decision by saying that Tolkien kept writing about the Dwarves; their history comes from several sources (especially Norse mythology), and their portrayal has little to do with their size, and more to do with their race, culture, and personal identities (Gilsdorf, 4). The filmmakers knew they could not underserve the Dwarves as simply those known from fairytales, instead they created deeply rich characters, such as Thorin, who would "earn their moments" (ibid).

Not only was it important to give the Dwarves some sort of status, but in the case of Thorin in particular, his story, only hinted at in the book, is quite a complex and rich one. Thorin's grandfather, Thrór, suffers from dragon sickness (gold lust), and it drives him mad. It is this gold lust that draws Smaug in to the Dwarven hoard, bringing all the misery on the race of Dwarves from Erebor thereafter. Thorin too falls prey to this sickness once he reaches the Lonely Mountain. It was exactly this briefly mentioned sickness that helped give the character of Thorin a larger emotional arc. The book never elaborates how Thorin recovers, or if he truly does, from the dragon sickness when the Battle of the Five Armies begins. In reception theory, as Holub tells us, there is a shift in concern from the author of the original work to the text and the reader (xii). In this case, Tolkien's original writings have holes that leave Thorin's character wanting. To satisfy those who return to the book, or who turn to the book for the first time, the film fills the gaps. In The Battle of the Five Armies we follow Thorin further down his spiral into gold-driven madness and greed, and watch his internal battle as he protests inside the great hall alone, "I am not my grandfather". Finally he comes out of his hoard of treasure to join in the battle outside to protect his homeland and earn his right as king. His overcoming this consuming sickness that defeated his grandfather further cements his characterization as a hero.

Another angle of the story that was changed from book to film was the importance of the Arkenstone. The Arkenstone is something that feels like a happy accident of discovery in the book, whereas in the films, it needed to have a more dynamic significance. The filmmakers decided that the Arkenstone would represent the right to rule the seven Dwarf kingdoms and would therefore be of epic importance for Thorin to find in order to claim his right. This simple move gave more weight to the overall story, and made Thorin's narrative arc more essential, as he could not truly be king without the Arkenstone. Boyens also describes other important factors that the Arkenstone influences. Upon his return to his homeland, Thorin's intentions are pure of heart, his goal is to reclaim the King's jewel, the Arkenstone; this was a deviation on the part of the filmmakers from the book, but it was an important one, as the Arkenstone carries a lot of weight in the story, and also gave Bilbo a stronger reason to enter Erebor (warnerbroscanada.com, para 65).

This simple move helps to give importance to Bilbo's mission upon entering Erebor, and it also makes for more dramatic storytelling when Thorin's right to the throne hangs in the balance. This makes the urgency of going into the mountain far stronger, and gives Bilbo more motivation to go in, rather than just going to see if the dragon is still there. Thorin's fierce desire to find the jewel creates tension among the company, and causes Thorin to become suspicious of his own men, creating more drama and adding to his downward spiral as the leader we had come to respect. The book does not make these distinctions, and Bilbo simply finds the stone by luck; we find out off-hand later what it is and just how important it actually is to Thorin's family. Here again the recipient's role is of prime importance, as it is they who determine the artistic quality of a work (Holub, 17). The focus here is not directly on what Tolkien wrote in *The Hobbit*, or rather what he did not write, but more on what would make sense for the "reader/viewer", and

how to enhance the story for them. Tying the threads together the way the filmmakers have gives

the story more dramatic sense, and definitely makes it feel more epic in its quest.

Another thing to be noted was the way that some of the thirteen Dwarves were put to use

as bolsters for Thorin's character. We need to believe in him, and not just because he says so, but

because others do too. One crucial character that was picked out by the filmmakers was Balin,

for his familial link to Thorin, as well as his ties into *LotR*. Balin is a cousin of Thorin's, and

although he is seventeen years younger than Thorin in the book, he is portrayed as older and

wiser in the films to make him a more reliable source for audiences. This was done to give

Thorin more credibility as a heroic figure with the support of the wise Dwarf in the group; Balin

also ties in to *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, as his tomb is found by Gimli (one of the key

members of the Fellowship) in Moria.

Boyens goes on to say in the DVD extras, that "Balin was really important to us. We

needed the audience to care about him." If the audience cares about Balin, they are more likely to

take his word when he claims that Thorin is indeed a good leader when he says: "There is one

who I could follow. There is one I could call 'King'" in the flashback scene in *AUJ*, after the

battle of Azanulbizar before the gates of Moria. If his men invest in him, and support him, it is

more likely the audience will too. In the books no such zeal is shown on the part of the Dwarves

to help their king, as the Dwarves in general are rather flat and are simply there to fill space in

the tiny troop. Because of this exact lack of support, readers also do not feel particularly attached

to Thorin, and it might make the mission seem quite pointless if it is undertaken for someone not

very well liked.

The last factor that was put into play to make Thorin more heroic, other than his two

face-offs with Azog (the final time resulting in his death in the final film), was the change from

the book's plot in relation to his interaction with the dragon Smaug. In the book, the only one to ever meet Smaug is Bilbo, who plays a game of riddles with him for a while, then escapes back to the Dwarves. In his rage at the intruders, Smaug hunts all around the mountain for them, forcing the Dwarves to hide within the passage inside the hidden door. No one else ever comes face-to-face with him, especially not Thorin. This was a major change in the film.

A very drawn-out scene was invented whereby the Dwarves enter the mountain to save Bilbo, as he is taking too long inside. This results in a face-off between the Dwarves and the dragon in the furnaces deep within the mountain. In terms of our horizon of expectations, readers bring their own limited backgrounds (subjective models, paradigms, beliefs and values) to interpret a text (Machor, 2). For readers of the book, that means not only all factors of their lives (age, gender, race, social class et cetera), but also their reading of the book have an effect on how such changes would affect their evaluation of both paratexts. In Thorin's case, his background in the book is not a very exciting one, whereas on film he encounters and faces down far more dangers, such as this scene with Smaug. For non-readers, their horizon of expectations is mostly fed by the typical blockbuster structure (the three-act structure we have addressed before), and they therefore expect heroes and villains on epic scales.

The scene finally culminates with Thorin facing down his age-old enemy in a great hall with the use of a molten gold statue. Thorin thinks he has defeated Smaug by unleashing the molten gold onto him, but he has only caused Smaug to become more enraged, and to go to Lake-town to take out his rage on the humans who helped the Dwarves. This show-down was perhaps meant to show a more heroic Thorin than the one cowering in the tunnels in the book. Indeed, Thorin even has a dramatic line inside the Mountain where he claims, "If this shall end in fire, then we shall all *burn together*!" (*DoS*), making him seem like the give-all hero, rather

than the cowardly king of the book. What this does in adaptation theory is "mutate" the story, possibly in a positive way. If mutation is seen as a method by which evolution advances, then filmic adaptations can also be seen as "mutations" that help their original source text to survive (Stam, 3). Here, "mutating" the story to display a more heroic Thorin might make his character more memorable, draw more readers to the books, and fill in the gaps for the carry-over fans. Here his mutation from the "norm" must be understood with the book as the backdrop of what we know as "Thorin".

All of these factors weigh heavily on how Thorin is read in the book, when going in reverse from film to book. For anyone who is reading the book for the first time, they might feel disappointed at how flat Thorin's character actually is. Apart from being mostly flat in personality, on the occasions he does show some emotion, he is usually rather disagreeable and haughty. He altogether lacks the heroic or sympathetic nature we come to discover in Thorin's character in the films. Furthermore, as the book is entitled *The Hobbit*, it already tells readers where the focus *should* lie; however, the films have shifted the main focus onto Thorin, leaving Bilbo as an after-thought, and merely the eyes through which we see *Thorin's* journey. This may leave readers with a sense of disappointment in the book, which they perhaps might have hoped to be as deep and epic as the movies. However, it might also be the case that the new readers simply fill in the gaps mentally with what they have learned in the films. As Thorin's character is so much stronger on film, these readers may choose to see him as a paratext to the original, which is quite acceptable, as no large deviations are made to him from what we know in the appendices.

For those returning to the book after having seen the films, the image of Richard Armitage's portrayal of Thorin will now forever trump the image of the old, cantankerous Dwarf

king (luckily his physical description in the book is limited, so this overlap becomes slightly easier). Furthermore, this new portrayal of Thorin for previous readers might automatically fill in the gaps left in the book, by integrating the information we have seen in the movies into the tale (which is essentially combining the appendices with the story). This will help readers to imagine the more heroic and likeable Thorin from the films, and perhaps enhance the beloved story. As John Ellis wrote, a truly successful adaptation can replace the memory of the novel (20). The more in-depth, dramatic portrayal of Thorin in the adaptation will forever overshadow the flat character we encounter in the book. In this sense, the adaptation has been successful, in that a character was on all accounts arguably bettered from the original, forgettable book representation.

   If we see the films as a paratext to fill in the gaps of the novel, Armitage's portrayal might improve the reading of the book quite a lot. It would clarify the quest more, and why so many people were willing to follow this flat character from the book, overall making it into the epic piece Tolkien aimed to create with the additions to the appendices. Unlike with Azog, the changes to Thorin can only enhance the reading as his character now coherently fits in the "Tolkien Spirit". This works well in Hall's categories of both *dominant-hegemonic* (136), as well as the *negotiated code* (138). The audiences generally seem to either fully accept Thorin's character enhancements, or note that the characterization is not 100% true to the books but it is rather more in line with what Tolkien's characters are like. This creative choice by the filmmakers helps to bring together all aspects of Thorin's character, to flesh him out the way he was meant to be, to make his life and journey seem worthwhile, and furthermore, to make his loss more memorable, which the book on its own fails to do.

In terms of fleshing out the story more, other decisions needed to be made about what to do character-wise to please a wider audience, and create a more diverse cast, as well as to allow it to tie in smoothly with *LotR*. One such crucial element was the creation of a non-Tolkien character, Tauriel the female Elf.

3.5 Tauriel, a Non-Tolkien Female Addition

The most controversial of changes was the inclusion of an entirely new, non-Tolkien creation in the form of the female Elf, Tauriel. The following two subchapters will explore her inclusion and how she impacts the films in terms of the "Tolkien Spirit", and eventually what that might do to the reading of the book.

3.5.1 Bringing in a Female Presence

A problem with *The Hobbit* is the fact that there simply are no female characters (save for the mere mention of Bilbo's mother Belladonna). This might work for a children's book, but for a film that is meant to be mainstream and appealing to pop-culture, this is problematic. Hollywood needs to include female characters and some hint of a love story to pull in a wider demographic, which is connected with Stam's concept of adaptations adapting to changing environments, tastes, industrial pressures et cetera (3). This put Jackson's team at a crossroads. Philippa Boyens even admits that: "I love 13 dwarves and they're all gorgeous, but you do feel the weight of that lack of femininity" (Nemiroff, 2). This "testosterone fest" would have been too much for a varied audience, and the punctuation of more females was needed as a respite.

Middle-earth is indeed full of many female characters of Tolkien's own creation, but since the book of *The Hobbit* lacks any of these explicitly, Jackson's team had to take some creative license. Other than bringing Galadriel back into the narrative, the filmmakers had no other potential female characters from the book (warnerbroscanada.com, para 36). Galadriel was

an easy character to reintroduce; thanks to the *LotR*, the audience knows she is in Middle-earth during that period already, and (the more dedicated fans), know from the appendices that she was part of the White Council that marches on Dol Guldur during the time that Gandalf leaves the company. However, Galadriel was most likely not enough, as in *LotR* we also encounter Arwen and Eowyn, which gives more of a variety of females. So, trying to only use Galadriel would have placed too much emphasis on her character, who is actually not even mentioned in the book itself. Hence, Galadriel was put aside for short bursts, but something else had to be done. As has been noted, Truffaut believed that an adaptation needed to exist that allowed for expansion on the original source text (McCabe, 6), and the filmmakers could use all the sources they had (original text and appendices). Thus, with a bit of creative license, they could create a female that would be acceptable in Tolkien's world and fit the "spirit". It is this connection and intention towards the source material which is continuously developed in the scriptwriting stage (Boozer, 6) that allowed the filmmakers to make a character that was canonical in representation, but from there they over-stepped the character boundaries of an "extra character".

In *The Desolation of Smaug*, the second film of the trilogy, the team had to think of what other females they could introduce to break up the all-male cast a bit. It was then that the (then) director, Guillermo del Toro and Fran Walsh and Philippa Boyens brain-stormed ideas. Boyens discusses the reasoning behind their decision for a female character. The filmmakers knew early on they needed a female character, and looked at several ways of bringing one in: Bard could have a wife, or someone like Elrond's wife, who exists within Tolkien's world could be used; the team realized she had to be her own person, not someone's wife, and then the decision was made to make her a fighter, which lead to making her an Elf, and finally a guard so that she would be able to interact with all the characters freely (Lambie, 2).

Thus the character of Tauriel was born, and with her, a string of controversy. It is key to note, in conjunction with reception theory, how these decisions came about, and how they affect the final story. Recent studies have added to our knowledge of "the performativity of adaptation", but they ignore the ways in which people talk about adaptations, and arguably more importantly, how cast and crew of a film talk about creating an adaptation (McCabe, 7). It is this conversation among filmmakers that can drastically alter a story, in ways that either enhance or detract from the original story. The problems of her addition to the story will be expanded upon later in this chapter, but it will be the aim here to discuss how her character helps to draw the other protagonists into the films and create a new plot-line from the original.

When examining the story closer, with all the additions the filmmakers intended to add, something had to act as a type of glue between all the characters so that the different vignettes blended together better than in the book. The book is, as has been mentioned before, a series of events that never really tie together; for film this would be confusing. This would lack any real punch, and as we know from film theory in adaptation, plot points need to be more powerful and unique than their predecessors in order to be effective and maintain a fast moving, clean script (La Volpe, para 9, emphasis in original). In this way, Tauriel was an easy tool to use to help do this, as she brings all the elements of the story together. However this also brings about a major problem in terms of her character importance, which will be addressed further on.

When we first encounter her in *DoS*, she is far from the wise, elegant Elves we are used to from Lothlorién or Rivendell; she is more reckless and slightly wild. Boyens describes her as being inexperienced with the outside world, with very little knowledge of it, and when the Dwarves and Hobbit interlope into her world they hold a unique fascination for her that Legolas or Thranduil do not experience, as they are more worldly creatures (warnerbroscanada.com, para

38). Tauriel's fascination with the Dwarves draws her, and in turn also Legolas (whom we know

is Thranduil's son, and is definitely present at the time of *The Hobbit*, despite having no

mention) into their adventure.

It is made evident by Thranduil that Legolas has grown fond of Tauriel, and when she

inevitably goes to the aid of the Dwarves, Legolas follows. The inclusion of Legolas into the

story is acceptable logically (tying neatly to the *LotR*), even explaining his hatred of Dwarves

when he first encounters Gimli in *The Fellowship of the Ring* (this will be explained in the

second subchapter). This inclusion of Legolas was something that Boyens also admitted was an

easy decision: "Our fans would have killed us if we hadn't. The Mirkwood is his homeland. He

is Legolas Greenleaf. . . He's from the Woodland Realm. His father is the Elvenking Thranduil.

. ." (warnerbroscanada.com, para 33). Thus, for those returning fans of the Tolkien films,

excluding Legolas from the pivotal introduction to Mirkwood would seem sacrilege. However, it

definitely seems that Legolas is more of a side-kick to Tauriel, which brings about further

problems that will be addressed a little later on.

From a theoretical standpoint on fidelity, when attacking Tauriel critics commit two of

Gunning's errors of criticism, namely the first two. Firstly, the critics claim that films have an

inherent duty to be faithful to the original literary source; secondly, critics freely ignore the

"unique language of cinema" and do not credit a filmic adaptation as being an independent

cinematic piece (41). In this case, Tauriel is not something that is non-canonical; she in fact fits

in quite well with the "Tolkien Spirit" of Middle-earth due to the fact that she does not deviate

from what we know about Elves. The problem with Tauriel is not that she exists, but rather the

way in which she was used. As a tool to drive the story along, she was a good alternative,

however, what she ended up becoming was perhaps something the filmmakers did not really

notice they were making. She went from being a simple cinematic tool to being an important figure, and therein lie the difficulties.

If we look further at Tauriel's inclusion in relation to the concept of fidelity, is it not true that Tauriel in fact aids the prestige of the original? As Stam claims, the prestige of the original is *created* by the copies, since without copies there is no concept of originality (8). If one examines this from either an appreciator or critic's point of view, she brings the discussion back to the book, as either having improved it through being a paratext or by elevating the book by not being in it.

The main criticism of the adaptation's inclusion of Tauriel is what McFarlane calls the concept of "tampering" with the original story (12). The belief is that since there is no mention of any such character, female or male, by including her the story has been entirely altered, and, as we shall see as we continue, this is in fact the truth. However, it also cannot be ignored that a female presence was necessary, as McFarlane states:

> To say that a film is based on a novel is to draw attention to one – and, for many people, a crucial – element of its intertextuality, but it can never be the only one. Conditions within the film industry and the prevailing cultural and social climate at the time of the film's making (especially when the film version does not follow hot upon the novel's publication) are two major determinants in shaping any film, adaptation or not. (21)

All the factors mentioned, especially the cultural and social climate, are mostly likely what factored into the fact that an all-male cast for the movie could not work. With feminism always on the rise, and with it a cultural belief that no movie can truly be successful without both sexes involved (no matter in how limited a range), the filmmakers answered this problem with the invention of a female character. Ultimately she had to help fill many gaps, namely the female presence, and also the tie in of Dwarves, Elves and Men.

Tauriel is inevitably the character that brings the Dwarves together with the Elves. She convinces Legolas that the fight of the Dwarves is also the fight of the Elves, with her pivotal line in *The Desolation of Smaug* where she responds to Legolas's reluctance to pursue the orcs and help the Dwarves: "It *is* our fight, are we not part of this world?" Tauriel seems to be the only one alarmed by the presence of a much bigger evil on the move, signaled by Azog and Bolg hunting the Dwarves so fiercely. Tauriel's move to engage in the outside world, despite king Thranduil's decision to stay isolated, causes Legolas to have to step out too; once the king finds this out, it causes him to have to come to the scene as well to save his only child. Tauriel is a catalyst for plot movement. She helps to explain why such a stubborn, isolationist king as Thranduil would bother to come to the aid of the people of Lake-town at all. As we have seen already in the theory chapter discussing authorship, by choosing to either adhere to, or, in this case, create a new part of the story, the filmmaker essentially puts their stamp on the work and creates a new (intellectual) experience (Stam, 26). This is a much needed tool in the storytelling, as Thranduil's arrival to help the humans is simply explained in the book by his Elven nature (namely that Elves are not bad people), but his attitude throughout is of someone who truly does not seem to care. By changing the story to explain the gaps better, the filmmakers are enhancing its quality.

In an article by Natalie Wilson, Evangeline Lilly who played Tauriel, addressed the lack of female characters on film:

> I keep repeatedly telling people that in this day and age, to put nine hours of cinema entertainment in the theaters for young girls to go and watch, and not have one female character, is subliminally telling them, 'You don't count, you're not important, and you're not pivotal to story.' (Wilson, 1)

From a feminist standpoint, this is true, and very important to modern day issues. Furthermore, Tauriel is one of the few characters (other than Bard), that actually fights for a good reason,

showing viewers that Middle-earth is not entirely corrupt and greedy. It was most likely in the beginning stages of her formation that the filmmakers saw ways that the character Tauriel could be implemented to get bigger balls rolling in the storytelling process. The scripting process is usually the stage where a new way of expressing and emphasizing certain meanings in the narrative may arise, and can also help a director see further possibilities in the cinematic storytelling (Boozer, 6). With this new, strong female character onboard, what was simply a rollicking treasure hunt in the book becomes something more deeply in tune with the issues of the social climate in Middle-earth. Tauriel highlights the racism between Dwarves and Elves and how petty it seems; as her pivotal statement from earlier acknowledges, she knows she is part of Middle-earth and therefore that the evil on the move is indeed a concern for all, not just the company of Thorin Oakenshield. This bit of authorship on the part of the filmmakers was necessary to make everything flow together and create a true sense of danger, if all races were involved. However, despite all that she brings, Tauriel's inclusion is problematic.

Despite much criticism that is levelled at the introduction of a non-Tolkien creation (there is even a Facebook page entitled: "Tolkien Fans Against Tauriel"), there is also some praise, as Tin Robey says in his review, "Freeman, and Evangeline Lilly as the not-in-Tolkien elf maiden Tauriel, inject some unforced pathos which puts many of their dewy-eyed co-stars to shame" (para 5). The female presence no doubt does soften the often male-oriented "smash and bash" attitude a bit in the way that Arwen and Eowyn did, and this helps keep the mood more subtle for the wider audience. Peter Jackson himself admitted that a certain "emotional depth" is altogether missing in *The Hobbit* (Rottenberg, 2), so the inclusion of a female character might bring more depth to the emotional levels of the story. Such levels of emotional depth would include a love-story, which adds another dimension to a rather flat tale.

Daniel Wood explains, "Reaction to Tauriel has been mixed, with many people feeling that Jackson is unnecessarily deviating from the books just to add in some sex-appeal, which a romance sub-plot would seem to suggest" (para 10). Furthermore, as the article continues, certain fans just are not happy to accept anything that might be an unnecessary change from Tolkien's original text, but others, again, understand the need for a more balanced gender ratio (ibid). Here Hall's three categories (*dominant-hegemonic*, *negotiated code*, and *oppositional code*, 136-138) are all covered by the spectrum of fans and critics alike. Although there was a definite need for a new female presence to help move the story along in a more understandable, and less disjointed manner, Tauriel went from being a good chess piece to becoming a main catalyst.

For an audience unfamiliar with the book beforehand, fidelity should be cast aside, since the adaptation is to them no different from an original film (McFarlane, 21). In this case, the audience would not judge Tauriel based on the fact that she is not present in the book, but rather on the merits she brings to the plot of the story. Here Tauriel, like Azog, falls into Wagner's *commentary* category, in which the original is either purposely or inadvertently changed due to different goals from the filmmakers rather than pure infidelity or straight violation (222). As was mentioned before, she is indeed the glue for the vignettes, and such a character was needed as a plot device. This filling in of the gaps fits in with contemporary theory, which, "assumes that texts do not know themselves, and therefore seeks out the unsaid (the *non-dit*) of texts. Adaptations in this sense might be seen as filling in the lacunae of the source novels, calling attention to their structuring absences" (Stam, 10). However, as has been emphasized, it is how much importance is placed on her that becomes exactly the problem with her presence.

Furthermore, it is perhaps necessary to acknowledge that sometimes it is best to keep the book and films separate, as novel and film may share a narrative (the same "raw materials"), but

distinguish themselves through different plot structures and sequences, thereby highlighting different emphases and "defamiliarizing" the narrative (McFarlane, 23). *The Hobbit*'s film adaptation has in this sense definitely "defamiliarized" the story from what we know, but not simply by including a new character (which Jackson has done in *LotR* as was discussed in Azog's chapter), but by making her a substantial protagonist and giving her a love-story with one of the main protagonists. This becomes problematic as a return to origins cannot really occur, as a film adaptation has changed the book that was adapted (Elliott, 230-1). Tauriel cannot be ignored, whether and audience member is returning to the book or coming to it for the first time. She has forever changed the discourses about *The Hobbit*, and as Carrol notes the concept of a remake or an adaptation as such is not inherent in the text itself, rather, it is a result of the discourses surrounding it (38). The creation of such an impactful character (whether loved or hated) has inevitably changed the way the book will be read.

The main issue with Tauriel is the fact that, despite being in synch with the canonical idea of Elves and the "Tolkien Spirit", she is a *brand new* character. Firstly, as a new character, she is not simply some side henchman she is in fact a *main* character. She is given more weight even than Legolas, which firmly puts the story in a new category. It now moves from being an adaptation to an *entirely different story*, as we know from the theory section, one should not make it more complicated with the introduction of new characters and situations, since this makes for a different story rather than an adaptation (La Volpe, para 21). The invention of a new main character is no slight thing; if she was just a side character that helped things along (like Legolas in this case), she would pass under the adaptation banner, if just barely. The fact that she steals the spotlight, *and* creates a new subplot with a love-triangle leaves no doubt that she is indeed a main character, and that this is therefore not *The Hobbit* anymore. In this way, she

deviates from the concept of "adaptation expansion" as well, where new characters and sub-plots can be freely added (allthetropes.orain.org, para 1), but not new *main* protagonists.

What this does in terms of reading the book for a first-timer who has seen the films first, is that when reaching Mirkwood in the book, they will notice a giant, glaring hole as a *main character* has suddenly completely disappeared from the story without a trace to be found. She also takes Legolas, as well as her love-triangle along with her. Furthermore, if they attempt to find her in the rest of the canon (such as in the appendices where we find Azog), their disappointment will only grow. In this case, is it possible that the readers who encounter the adaptation first are disappointed that the original source text is not as good as the films? (Stam, 14). In this sense, her inclusion in the films damages the "Tolkien Spirit" of the original book, as the films are now an entirely different story, and this loss of a (perhaps well-liked) character so central to the story will turn readers away. Without her inclusion in the movies, the story might have been a lack-luster adaptation due to being too "faithful" (Stam, 8). However, if the filmmakers had played her role down slightly and not made her such a catalyst, she still would have served as a female presence without taking on major importance and changing the overall plot of the story.

Not only is the lack of this new main character going to cause an issue for new readers, but the complete lack of *any* female presence could also potentially make it unappealing for wider readers who have come to know a strong female characters in the films. This goes against the general horizon of expectations, in which literary works are received against the backdrop of reader's current knowledge and "presuppositions" about literature (oxfordreference.com). In most cases, more adult readers crave a female presence to break up an all-male story, whereas younger readers do not yet pick up on such nuances (and indeed the book was meant for younger

readers). However, these new readers could still potentially see the film as some sort of enhanced

paratext for the book and prefer the filmic versions to the book, but this would still inevitably

cause a loss of readership.

If we examine Tauriel from the perspective of the book carry-over fans, their interpretive

communities would inevitably dictate whether or not Tauriel is a valid addition or not. For those

who like, Stanley Fish, believe that a text's effect on a reader *is* a text's meaning (Machor, 2), the

all-male romping adventure story was perhaps simply about male comradeship, and therefore,

the addition of Tauriel has changed that essential "Tolkien Spirit" of the story. This stance only

allows for the author's intentions, and, as we know, Jauss had suggested that authorial intent be

used to, ". . . ground the text's historical 'other' and to preserve its capacity to critique social life

and transform readers" (Machor, 1). Here the filmmakers could use what they knew about

Tolkien (his critique on love of riches through dragon sickness, and his ideas on Middle-earth),

to create a *new* way of critiquing modern issues (such as greed or reluctance to give aid), to

essentially widen the awareness of readers, as well as highlight the same issues Tolkien did in a

new light. It is thus, that the carry-over fans have a great weight on how the piece is received

overall, as Holub suggests that art should "dehabitualize" our perceptions and make an object

"come alive again"; thus the role of the recipient is emphasized, as the perceiver determines the

artistic quality of the work (17).

As the book is now included in these carry-over fans' horizon of expectations, evaluating

the quality of the work becomes a task of sheer will. Those who truly appreciate the process of

adaptation and the work that goes into it will accept that Tauriel was needed to fill certain gaps,

making her a *dominant-hegemonic* decoding (Hall, 136). Those who accept her presence, but

disagree with the degree to which emphasis was put on her character, and, above all, to the

unnecessary love-triangle, would fall into the *negotiated code* (Hall, 137), while those who

strongly oppose her presence all together as a major textual infidelity land in the final category of

oppositional code (Hall, 138). However, as Andrew had noted in the section on fidelity, fidelity

should look deeper (38), and in this case, look deeper into what Tauriel *does* bring, or what has

been gained (Stam, 3). It should also be remembered that, as has been explained before, she has

now effectively changed the entire story, not least of all through a rather clumsy love-triangle.

For those who thought the love-triangle was distracting or just degrading, this absence in

the book might bolster the original tale. This problem is further expanded on in the following

subchapter on the love-triangle as well. For fans of this somewhat clumsy love-story, its utter

and pure lack will do damage to the book. Such an expansion of a story cannot be rectified in

terms of what it is taking away from the book. So what, if anything, does the love-triangle do for

the films, and more importantly, how does it affect the book?

3.5.2 A Misplaced Love-Triangle: Kili-Tauriel-Legolas

The inclusion of Tauriel was controversial, not simply because of her presence, but

because she is in essence a main protagonist in the story now, and that has a massive effect on

how the book is read. Her presence not only ties story-lines together, but also has an impact on

how other characters in the story are viewed. This subchapter will focus on the love-triangle

between Tauriel, Kili, and Legolas, and how her character in turn affects theirs, and overall what

it does to our reading of the book.

In terms of fidelity to the story, Carroll suggests that it is motivated by the emotional

investment of the carry-over fans (40); however, as has been noted in the previous chapter

fidelity to the original would have meant leaving out any female presence, and as a further result

the loss of a romance plot often linked to a female presence. This is where the weight of

Tauriel's character shifted from just a side-character to a main protagonist, being the romantic

focus of one actual protagonist (Kili), and a protagonist that we recognize from *LotR* (Legolas).

The love-triangle featured in the films was actually not meant to take place at all, but in

order to tie in to *LotR* better, and to fit into the Hollywood blockbuster arena, a love-story needed

to be added. This was explained in an article by Natalie Wilson:

> Lilly had one condition before agreeing to the role: that her character not be
> involved in a love triangle. Alas, this condition was ultimately not met.
> Screenwriter Boyens justifies this change, arguing that the triangle that results
> between Kili, (a dwarf), Legolas (an elf) and Tauriel "aids a storyline in *The Lord
> of the Rings*," making it clear that Legolas' animosity toward dwarves springs
> from Tauriel's fondness for Kili. Thankfully, the film does not spend much time
> on this love triangle, nor does it become the defining part of Tauriel's role.
> (Wilson, 2)

There were other ways to make Legolas have a hatred for Dwarves that would have perhaps been

less annoying to audiences than the love-triangle ended up being. This blatant toying with events

from the book, and the addition of this love-triangle can be quite frustrating when thinking of

fidelity; however, the filmmakers, as the new authors of this new piece (as it does become an

entirely new piece with Tauriel as a main protagonist), must continue telling their story in a way

that feels respectful to their end goals, as well as to the original. Here the screenplay can show

the decisions made for the initial change in the story and dialogue, revealing the conceptual goals

of the filmmakers; thus authorial intent is vital to discussions on adaptation fidelity (Boozer, 9).

Placing Tauriel in a love-triangle allows her to take part in both the world of the Elves (dragging

Legolas in), and partaking in the quest of the Dwarves. Although there are other ways to do this,

it would seem that this also works for filmmakers in terms of including some sort of love-story,

as is often sought in in pop culture. Here the authorial intent of the filmmakers is inevitably what

drives Tauriel's actions.

The inclusion of a love-triangle most likely is aimed to draw in more viewers, as a hero with a love interest is far easier to sell to a wider cinematic audience (Bogstad & Kaveny, 19). We know the filmmakers had already used this tactic in *LotR* with Aragorn and Arwen, but arguably more successfully. Although Arwen is not really present, her inclusion gave a love sub-story for Aragorn that seemed to work cinematically. They even took it one step further with the semi-love story with Eowyn. These two love-stories made the films more *emotionally powerful*. This was most likely the goal for the filmmakers here as well, to emulate the success they had before, and to make the story feel more emotionally diverse. However, another problem that arises from such a love-match is a "historically" inaccurate layer in Tolkien's Middle-earth history. A love-match between a Dwarf and an Elf is all but an impossibility within Middle-earth, as Tolkien made it explicit how deeply the Dwarves and Elves hated one-another. By creating this love-story between Tauriel and Kili, Jackson's team are taking extreme liberties and adding an entirely *new* historical event to Middle-earth. By doing this, they have essentially changed a plot point in all of Tolkien's writing that caused tension and drama intentionally, and thus have changed the canon in arguably an unwanted direction, attempting a "Romeo and Juliet" type of effect rather than keeping with the "Tolkien Spirit".

Erik Kain's review claims the romance is "jarring" and speaks clearly about Jackson's storytelling abilities; a female addition was understandable, but not with a "hamfisted" love-triangle attached to her, in his view, it borrowed too much from the previous trilogy of *LotR*. (para 22). Although Kain, believes that Tauriel is simply a re-draft of Arwen, when put in comparison to one another, Arwen's story is far more subtle. It is this insistence to be in the spotlight that changes the whole story, and drives many an audience member away with disgust. Although, when seen through a theoretical lens, as Michael Klein and Gillian Parker explain, this

love triangle can be seen in three different ways. First, fidelity in the story is kept in the "main thrust of the narrative"; second, the core of the narrative structure is kept while reinterpreting or completely deconstructing a source text; and third, seeing the source as mere raw material (9-10). Here Tauriel does not stop the original story or main thrust of the narrative, but she does create a whole new branch of it; expanding on characters, and thus not keeping it with the original story, but also not breaking entirely from it. As this narrative structure is kept, we also see the massive reinterpreting of the source text, namely by creating an Elf character that is canonical, although not created by Tolkien himself.

Lastly, expanding on this idea, the book and appendices as source materials were used to create Tauriel, using everything that the authors knew about Middle-earth to make her accurate. In all three cases, she is still in some way faithful to the overall "Tolkien Spirit". However, she was also just an act of creative license, as in Hollywood some directors simply add materials for their own enjoyment (Stam, 34). In all cases, this approach could explain why the love-triangle could be included.

Sheila O'Malley's review of *DoS* is no less critical of the love-triangle than most audiences, claiming that the romantic triangle Tauriel sparks has no real purpose (O'Malley, 2). This feeling of the love-triangle being nothing more than a Hollywood inclusion for drama's sake actually seems to hurt the story, which already has a powerful emotional arc through Thorin Oakenshield. Such a clumsily portrayed love-triangle actually detracts from that emotional depth. However, Tauriel's love-triangle could also have been another tactical move on the part of the filmmakers to bring new discussions about the story:

> The film adaptation's tendency to create or to reenergize public interest in the literary source, and through this renewed interest to spark a wider discussion of the aesthetic force and cultural meanings of the page and screen texts and their

> temporal contexts, reinforces the intermedial as well as historiographic
> dimensions of adaptation study. (Boozer, 10)

Although the love-story could have been done far more subtly, it does give cause for discussing the story. Whether readers of the original story thought it was a good move or not, it still brings the discussion back to the original text in a new way. Is a female character really needed to have a good story? Is her worth only in the love-story? Could she have been as impactful without a clumsy love-triangle? Would the other characters have been stronger or weaker without her presence? These are all issues that can and have been heatedly debated as the critics' comments here have shown.

Ben Kendrick's article on *DoS* notes that Tauriel's interaction with a "semi-smitten" Legolas tends to border on melodrama, and might in the end weaken the beloved character's reputation (para 7). After viewing the final film in the trilogy, *The Battle of the Five Armies*, one is left with exactly this sense that Legolas's character has somewhat lost his mystique due to the badly portrayed love-triangle. Here the question of authorship becomes an issue, as not only is Tauriel creating a whole other story, but Legolas's inclusion in *her* story also changes who the author of *this* story is. As we have seen in the theory section, such a confusion of authorship is quite common, as one does not know if the author is the actor, director, screenwriter, or the original author, as at this point, all could lay a claim (McCabe, 22). Here Legolas is no longer the calm, and in control Elf, oozing with mystery that we have come to know from *LotR* or the original books. Instead we find a jealous, love-smitten Elf that does very little in terms of plot for the overall storytelling, and he is therefore entirely of the recreation of Jackson's team.

Another possibility for the use of the love-triangle is to make the impact bigger when we lose one of the members of Thorin's company, namely the Dwarf prince Kili. The idea is basically to bring him more to the foreground in the story (as in the book he is yet another flat

character, despite being a prince). Once the audience have invested in him, through Tauriel, his loss will be even more dramatic. The issue here is, is the love-triangle necessary for that? Kwame Opam and Elizabeth Lopatto discuss this point in their review of the last film:

> That's my biggest problem with Tauriel as a character. I can appreciate that there is a serious paucity of female characters in this franchise, but her biggest arc is falling in love with Kili, and all it boiled down to was her being sad for losing him. . . He's [Kili] a great character without Tauriel's loss — the audience will mourn him, you don't need to telegraph to us that he's worth mourning. (4-5)

This ties in to what we know about film criticism, as Andrew had stated in the theory section, that staunch conservatives would rather see literature "atrophy" than be destroyed by the entertainment industry pandering to the masses (31). This "over-doing it" seems simply a ploy to beef up sympathy at the loss of Kili in the end, which is completely down-played in the book. This character carries quite some importance and his death cannot be so easily ignored on film when we have been made to connect with him. Another issue with this is that the authors are simply trying to make their "stamp" on the work, and even by mostly adhering to aspects of the novel, they have now created a noticeably different "affective and/or intellectual experience" (Stam, 26). Now, when examining it from a carry-over fan's perspective, Kili could be seen as "silly", a thing that Tolkien feared most, as we have seen in earlier chapters. The intent was most likely to make him more likeable and memorable. However, it would have perhaps been better to leave Kili out of the triangle in order for him to keep his dignity, even if it meant less sympathy for him in the end. Furthermore, on this same concept, once his brother Fili dies, it is arguably no less tragic than Kili's death, in fact it is more like a warrior's death without the distracting romance.

As for Tauriel's role on her own, she would have brought more strength to the story as one of the only ones who was not swayed by greed or power lust, but rather moral conviction.

The love-triangle only serves to damage any power she would have had as a strong feminist

figure, as Rebecca Pahle's review of *The Battle of the Five Armies* notes:

> She [Tauriel] went from being a character driven by moral and political
> convictions to one for whom 95% of her screentime revolved around her being in
> love with Kili and/or having her Elvish bacon saved by Legolas . . . by the time
> the credits roll she's a damsel almost entirely defined by her romantic
> attachments. (3)

It could be argued that perhaps what might have been made into a well-beloved character was

actually ruined by the love-triangle. Not only did it detract from the potentially strong female she

was set up to be, but she also dragged down both Legolas and Kili in the process. Her inclusion

into the story could have had a good impact, in terms of reception theory for modern

viewers/readers as the indeterminacies of a text are completed in the viewing or reading of a

textual event, and as it does not merely portray a pre-existing reality, novel and film can be seen

as "communicative utterances" that are "socially situated and historically shaped" (Stam, 10).

Tauriel would have fit more into the modern climate of equality feminists strive for, and thus the

conversation might have been turned towards a more positive view of the overly-male story.

However, most readers do not read stories looking for an equal playing field for both genders, it

is the *story* that is the most important part. As we know from Tauriel's chapter, the story readers

know and love has now been altered into something completely different, and rather than in a

positive way, has been arguably ruined by an unnecessary love-triangle.

However, as was noted already in the theory chapters, a filmmaker must imagine

him/herself in the audience of the film he/she is trying to make (McCabe, 22). In order to make a

movie that fits in to all of the modern expectations of heroes and love-stories, a love-story had to

be pushed into the plot somewhere, and since Tauriel was already pushed in as well, she became

the only viable option for this to happen. To tie her in to the Dwarves' struggle, she had to feel

strongly for them, and the only logically strong enough bond in this case would be love. Furthermore, to get the Elves of Mirkwood involved, someone higher in rank than Tauriel had to want to step forward, which is logically where Legolas was brought in. His involvement would also bring his father, the king. As was stated before, it was not each character's inclusion that is unwanted, it is how they are each changed by this addition that causes controversy.

Some critics believe that Tauriel rather keeps within the discussion on reception theory, in that she reminds us that not all is lost, and the love shared in the triangle actually *does* benefit the story for some. Duncan Bowles argues that the love shown between Kili and Tauriel, as well as Bard and his children holds the audience when it seems that no other characters are capable of "doing the right thing"; he further argues that the love-triangle is the strongest asset of the last two films (para 2). As we know from the section on fidelity, pleasing all audiences is not a possibility, however, for some, as Bowles's review shows, the love-triangle inclusion was not a complete failure. Tauriel was needed to soften what would otherwise have been a mere greed-fest, in a world that would seem devoid of love, much like the book when examined on closer terms. This pure lack of compassion, and any empathy for the suffering of others would not have sat well with the varied and wide audience with their manifold horizons of expectations.

Although such themes, as Tolkien undoubtedly meant to portray, are still very much a part of our current world, people do not go to see movies to be reminded of the dire world we live in; instead, I suggest that people go to find hope, and gain a renewed sense that all is *not* lost. It would perhaps have seemed a far harsher story without the inclusion of Tauriel and a love-story for readers of the book being faced with the reality on screen. Therefore I argue that, despite its somewhat flimsy, and overly indulgent inclusion (emphasizing Tauriel for all the wrong reasons), its presence, if done in the right way, would have given a more realistic and

mature feeling to the overall tale, and would have lined it up with *LotR*. The different views on the love-triangle all are valid in terms of discussion of the story, as the status of the adaptation (as an adaptation) is not inherent in the text itself, but is rather shaped by the discourses around it (Carroll, 38). It is because of the inclusion of Tauriel, and the changes that she makes to other characters and the story, that it is important to discuss *how* she does so.

When examining the love-triangle from an adaptation point of view, the fact that Tauriel (a created character that was supposed to be a background catalyst), became the center of attention for two main protagonists squarely brings her to the foreground, and makes her a main protagonist. The love-triangle bolsters this act by taking what would have been another side character (like Lindir, Elrond's assistant), to making Tauriel a pivotal, main focus character. This is what makes Tauriel's presence so unacceptable, as she is no longer just a side addition, but by all the attention she gets, and all that she does, she is now known to those who have not read the book first as a main protagonist. What this does when they read the book for the first time, as we already examined in Tauriel's chapter, is that this main character, along with her love-story, and Legolas, are all missing. This character that carried so much weight and had such a prolonged sub-story just vanished altogether. For those who took on Hall's *dominant-hegemonic* view, namely accepting the idea without question (136), would turn to the book, and notice this gaping hole. However, to some, the fact that she and the love-triangle are missing might actually give the original more dignity.

Overall, I would argue that the love-triangle (although its intent was to bring empathy through a female presence and some sort of love-story to pander to the Hollywood machine), could have worked if it was done on a more subtle, less clumsy level. As it stands, it not only brings Jackson's team clearly forward as the "authors" of *this* story, but by setting up

expectations that the story they told would also be present in the books might negatively impact the reaction to the book itself. There would be no Tauriel, no Legolas, and Kili would just be a rather flat, and disappointing character with no agency. To some, it will be a loss, as we have seen in the reception theory section, when readers who have encountered the adaptation first find the original source novel disappointing (Stam, 14). The potential of the love-triangle would have greatly enhanced the overall tale as a paratext to feed a more modern audience's sensibilities, but as it stands, it would seem it only marginally achieves that goal (through a female presence). Therefore it could have been struck off all together in the end. What we are left with are unmet expectations for those who carry over from the films to the book, as the story is perhaps "less" than what they got on screen.

In the end, with the inclusion of the love-triangle, what we are left with is no longer *The Hobbit*, but rather some new story that branched off of the life-source of the book. As we know, the inclusion of new main characters changes and complicates the entire story by introducing new situations (La Volpe, para 21), and therefore, we are not faced with what can be truly called *The Hobbit* anymore, simply for the fact that we have a *brand new main character*, and a new and complicated love-triangle that is the catalyst for plot movement in this new story. As for reception theory in a literary sense, we are examining the changing conditions of society and the reading practices linked therein that affect the way that texts are constructed during the process of being received (Machor, XIII). Here that means that readers, returning or reading for the first time, are inevitably affected by the story that they were exposed to on film, and that will make a background commentary to their reading of the original. They can never truly separate the story from what they have seen thereafter, and therefore, the reading of the book is forever changed.

4. Conclusion

This thesis examined how certain changes were made from book to film and how those changes inevitably changed the "Tolkien Spirit" of *The Hobbit*. The character additions of Azog and Tauriel, and the amplification of one of the main protagonists, Thorin Oakenshield, gave opportunities for discussion on adaptation theory, fidelity, criticism, authorship, and reception theory.

Azog set up an interesting discussion about the fact that an explicitly dead character was "resurrected" for the films in a way that truly was not needed. Although the book itself was *not* explicit about his fate, the use of his character by the filmmakers does not really stand to be justified overall. As we noted through Carroll, classic books come with certain expectations that need to be "negotiated", while still reworking material to keep it fresh (111). Here, by trying to keep the material "fresh", the filmmakers had actually gone through quite a *dead* end.

Although Azog does fit into Wagner's *commentary* category, whereby the story is altered to fit the needs of the filmmakers, rather than being just a pure violation (222), his presence again cannot be justified as being more important than that of his son, Bolg, who *is* alive and present in *The Hobbit*, and is the final antagonist in the story. Overall, Azog's impact on the reading of the book is influenced by the interpretive communities of readers, either by those who have already read the book, or those doing so for the first time. Azog is now a part of their horizon of expectations, and despite the fact that Holub claims that we cannot use our horizon of expectations to judge the value of a literary work (62), inevitably Azog's presence has an undeniable influence.

In the case of the examination on Thorin Oakenshield, a straight transfer of his character from the book simply would not work on film. Thorin, despite Tolkien's later corrections in the

appendices, is an extremely flat character. The problem in this children's tale is that there really

is no central hero. Although the book is called *The Hobbit*, and we know Bilbo is the main

narrative protagonist, he is not very heroic, and no one else, except for Bard the Bowman (who

has barely any presence), shows any real heroic qualities. Thus the filmmakers took a stand as

authors, and restructured Thorin drastically.

By using Tolkien's many different writings on the Dwarves, the filmmakers were able to

flesh out Thorin's character in keeping with the "Tolkien Spirit", and to create the heroic figure

that was missing from the story. Although the filmic Thorin is not the one we encounter from the

book, as we already know from reception theory, a story can be seen as having no nucleus of

meaning, and therefore adaptation can supplement the literary gaps (Stam, 10). Thorin was

needed to fulfill the three-act structure: a principle conflict, coherent or sympathetic characters,

and an unavoidable narrative arc followed by a strong catharsis (Stam, 43). His character seemed

the most obvious one to use for this, with the wealth of knowledge filmmakers found about him

in Tolkien's other writing. It also helped make his character more memorable, and his quest

worthwhile, as in the books no one questions why Bilbo decides to help the rather grumpy Dwarf

king.

Furthermore, we examined how, as Andrew explained it, it is best to use fidelity to *look*

deeper (38), thus being more faithful to the "Tolkien Spirit" by combining all the scattered

knowledge about him and his race, and making him the coherent character that these

supplements were attempting to do. His expanded character improved the depth of the reading of

the book. In terms of media reception, most viewers would fall into the *dominant-hegemonic*

view of accepting the information without question (Hall, 136), as Thorin's improvements can in

no way truly damage the reading of the book, and rather improves it, and puts it in league with its filmic predecessor *LotR*.

Tauriel was by far the most controversial change made by the filmmakers, as she was not only their creation (not Tolkien's), but because she also took center stage as one of the main protagonists. Although it cannot be denied that perhaps a female presence was sorely needed for the films, it was the way that Tauriel was eventually used that ruined her presence.

As was noted before, there has been a need for an adaptation that allows for expansion on the original source text (McCabe, 6), and Tauriel is not by any means a deviation from the canon, but rather it is the *emphasis* on her character (which the filmmakers tried to avoid giving Galadriel), that makes Tauriel problematic for carry-over book fans.

We know Tauriel is judged on the first two errors of Gunning's fidelity criticism categories, namely that critics claim films must be faithful to their literary source, and that critics ignore the unique language of cinema, further ignoring adaptation as an independent cinematic work (41). However, her presence could be accepted in the film, if it was more subtle, because she still brings discussion back to the original, and as Stam noted, the prestige of the original is only created by the presence of copies (8). In this way she elevates the original story as a paratext, or simply by *not* being present in it at all.

We further examined the fact that Tauriel acts as a plot catalyst. Her sub-plot romance helps get the Elves involved in the troubles of Middle-earth, and helps tie the vignettes of the story together more coherently. In this sense, through the filmmakers' authorship in creating a new part of the story, they have created a new intellectual experience (Stam, 26). Tauriel brings new emotional depth to the story, showing an empathy for the denizens of the world around her, and bringing what some critics might call a much needed love-story.

In order to make the new story work the way the filmmakers intended, they needed to do what McFarlane terms as "defamiliarizing", or when a novel and film share the same story's raw materials, but differentiate through different plot strategies that in effect alter the sequence of events, and highlight different areas (23). Tauriel and her sub-plot have indeed "defamiliarized" the original story for carry-over fans, and this has been rather problematic in that as a main protagonist, we know she makes a truly different story, and as Elliott claims, we cannot return to any "origin" because the film adaptation changes the book that has been adapted (230-1). Tauriel has now forever changed the way *The Hobbit* is read, and since her presence was so deliberately in the spotlight as a protagonist, her absence for the original story *cannot* be ignored. Her presence, whether enjoyed or disliked, at least brings discussion back to the original story, and furthermore highlights the current social climate in terms of the discussion of a strong female in a male dominated world.

Despite all the changes necessary to transfer a story from book to film, the simple fact is that in the end the book is forever changed by the adaptation for those who have read it, or read it for the first time post-films. In some cases, the adaptation can replace the memory of the book (Ellis, 20). No matter how an audience receives the adaptation, if they return to, or read the book for the first time, they will forever be informed by the story of the films, as it is now a fixed part of their "horizon of expectations". The films are now, for better or worse, a new paratext of the original book, and in the end they bring discussion back to the original. So as Bazin stated, "Since the enterprise sends many viewers back to read the books . . . what's the harm even of mediocre adaptations?" (Andrew, 31).

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