

An Eurhythmic Response to Adaptive Accrual:
A Rhetoric of Adaptation

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A thesis
presented to the University of Waterloo
in fulfillment of the
thesis requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
English

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2007

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Abstract

This dissertation applies to the study of adaptation principles of rhetoric, transtextual analysis and visual semiotics. It posits that adaptations are imitations-with-variations and that rather than existing in binary, one-to-one correspondence with their models, adaptations and their models accrue semiosis, forming large “megatexts.” These megatexts are composed of networks of associations that have meaning and change according to their contexts. Adaptation analysis becomes a matter of reading associations and textual linkages, or “reading through” the accrued texts. Eurhythmic analysis, an analytical strategy drawn from both ancient and modern rhetoric, accounts for these variations while emphasizing the material contexts out of which variations emerge.

This project uses these rhetorical strategies to address issues particular to new media adaptations, such as the nature of authorial ethos and identity in a marketplace of competing adaptations and collaborative creation. It examines the process of rhetorical identification that occurs in video game adaptations which ostensibly claim the same model, yet vie for legitimacy – children squabbling for the birthright of the recognized heir.

Finally, this thesis examines the new adaptive possibilities opened up by the DVD anthologizing process whereby diverse texts are brought under a titular umbrella. These texts and the navigational overlays designed to constrain and control them, blur the otherwise clear boundaries between adaptation and model, between inside and out. In transtextual terms, this distinctive adaptive form is an internal hypertext, or an adaptation situated on the threshold that distinguishes the paratext from the hypertext.

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank my committee. Specifically I want to thank Dr. Andrew McMurry for his steady hand, quiet confidence and guidance – a calm port in often stormy seas. Thanks to Dr. Randy Harris for his invaluable suggestions and insight as well as his unflinching “tough love.” I would like to think that my soul has been salvaged by the process. And thanks to Dr. Neil Randall for his early lead, encouragement, and unwavering support throughout my graduate studies.

Thanks to Dr. Murray and Kathy McArthur, who always knew what to say to keep me going and always had my back. Thanks also to Dr. Michael MacDonald for steering me away from perilous theoretical shores early on, his career advice, and frequent morale boosts. Thanks also to Dr. Glenn Stillar who first inspired me and Dr. John North, who gave me a chance when no one else would consider me.

Thanks to Dr. Mike Truscello and Karl Wierzbicki for sharing in the insanity.

Thanks to Dale Wallin – a quiet centre in a tempestuous world. Someday I hope to live up to the example you set me every day.

Finally and most importantly, unbounded thanks to Josephine, Celeste, and Sophie Graham for their constant faith in me. I could have never done this work without them beside me.

Dedication

To Barbara and Tim: “gentle ghosts, with eyes as fair/As star-beams among twilight trees,” “lovely ministers” who have always guided my feet.

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Introduction

In the introduction to his translation of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, John Dryden collapses the modern distinctions between translation, plagiarism, adaptation, and originality into a metaphor of transfusion. This generative image of a donation of life-giving substance suggests that Dryden's translation generously vivifies the presumably ailing body that was Chaucer's text. After noting that Chaucer had, in fact, translated and "amplified" *Troilus* from a "Lombard Author" Dryden admits to his own additions and improvements on Chaucer. For Dryden, this necessary act of aesthetic transfusion flagrantly plagiarized, but by so doing breathed new life into an old text (Bruns, 1980, 117-118). Such transcoding of material from one context to another, across time and space, gives a new life or, in Walter Benjamin's terms, an *after-life* (1968, 73) that is more rich for the telling, bringing the model closer, in fact, to a pure language (79). These powerful metaphors suggest something organic and profound about the process of the palimpsestic adaptation. Yet, as Linda Hutcheon rightly identifies, the ubiquity of the adaptation (for that is what we must consider a translation that eschews a one-to-one correspondence with its model in order to conform to a new audience, purpose, and/or context) has not brought it respect, quite the opposite in fact. Adaptations are viewed with caution, even hostility by some critics as somehow inherently-lesser-than their models.

For Vitruvius, borrowers and plagiarizers did not so much breathe life into new texts so much as sacrifice their own. In an appeal to Caesar, Vitruvius suggested that those who attempt to gain fame from the works of others be at least censured, if not

executed (1999, 85). Vitruvius's representative anecdotes are telling in that they create distinctions between the learned and the simply arrogant: by deploying the way that Aristophanes exposes the plagiarizers at a poetry contest and the execution of Homeromastix, Vitruvius extols the values of extensive reading and the dangers of artistic hubris. So, while he is obviously contemptuous of those who "steal the writings of ...others and pass them off as their own" (85) and those who "bring charges against" or attempt to profit from egregiously attacking the work of revered cultural heroes, he tellingly does not attack those who engage in *imitatio*. In fact, he extols the virtues of imitation throughout *De Architectura libri decem*. How, then, can we distinguish between those acts of borrowing that are deserving of condemnation as theft and those deserving of praise as generous donors of cultural rejuvenation? The distinction is that those acts of borrowing which do not contribute or return "with interest" to their models are both cynical and unworthy. Conversely, as Quintillian notes, the imitator who adds "to these borrowed qualities excellences of his own, so as to supply what is deficient in his models and to retrench what is redundant, will be the complete orator (*Institutio Oratoria*, X.ii.28). From a rhetorical perspective, then, artistic perfection arises out of imitation-with-variation, or adaptation.

But at the same time that the adaptation transfuses the older text it also transforms it. Just as the blood from the transfusion changes the transfused, so the adaptation alters its model: "for in its afterlife – which could not be called that if it were not a transformation and a renewal of something living - the original undergoes a change" (Benjamin 1968, 73). In adapting, in donating its substance to its model, both texts are changed, transformed and at the same time joined. We now begin to witness the power

of the transfusion metaphor: the two texts are simultaneously distinct from and consubstantial with each other. If adaptations are continually added, after-lives repeatedly offered, what we find is that Benjamin's metaphor of the translated text as a renewing flower becomes a cross-pollinated field of vibrant blooms, all separate flowers, yet sharing a single genetic substance. In short, this multiplication of culturally venerated textual instantiations forms a larger text, a megatext, a single clan that shares attributes with anthologies, palimpsestic medieval manuscripts, and rabbinical traditions.

Yet an analysis of such a constellation of floral siblings can be elusive. How can clan associations be traced, variances in fraternal genetics catalogued, and insights gleaned as to the nature of the fertile cultural soil from which springs these aesthetic blood-relatives? *Eurhythmic* analysis, or an analysis of the "proper fit" between adaptation and model, offers a method of accounting for these linkages from the ground up by tracing the roots of each. Adaptations' associations are not only with their models but also with texts within their own modes. Cinematic adaptations of novels will necessarily draw heavily on expressive strategies within the film tradition in order to translate the effects of their linguistic models. Video games will necessarily employ the conventions of interactive media when transcoding a narrative film. But just as the progeny draw sustenance from like-modal or homomodal associations, so do the parents too draw upon a host of their own homomodal resources. At the same time, the accounting of heteromodal associations can demystify the model. Genette points to the deflating power inherent in such textual archaeology when he looks to Laforgue's *Hamlet* as a model by which "the hypotext can be circumvented or undercut by being confronted with its own hypotext" (*Palimpsests* 1997, 284). That is, the dredging up of the

hypotext's hypotext (the model's model) not only begins to explain the mechanisms of the diachronic adaptive process, but also deflates the edifice of the model-as-original – the constant bugbear of adaptation scholarship.

Additionally, the eurhythmic analysis, like all rhetorical analysis, must account for shifts in audience, purpose, and context. In other words, there is something about the material realities – something in the soil – that summons adaptations. This blend of symbolic elements and material context manifests itself as a type of cultural resonance that acts like natural selection; Benjamin would call such resonance a natural or vital connection between the adaptation and the model so that the adaptation issues “not so much from [the model's] life but from its afterlife” (1968, 71). Thus, it is not the model text itself as it existed (the text in its life) that makes it adaptable, not the beauty of the flower as it was that makes it a candidate for sexual selection. Rather, those genetic elements of the model interact with the soil of material context to make it fertile and ready for an afterlife. An audience must come and pollinate those aspects worthy of continuance into a new host so that its life after-life (after-life, etc.) can begin. But we must always recognize that this is a new life – not the same one. The adaptation is of the model, but not the model.

Yet in every rhetorical event there is a text which is produced by an audience, purpose and context, but texts cannot exist without an agent. Rhetorical analysis is profoundly concerned with the speaker or the author. In her *Theory of Adaptation*, Linda Hutcheon chronicles the list of unusual suspects for the mantle of “author” of the new media adaptation: everyone from the (countless) scriptwriters, actors, to the scorer, even the editor. Invariably, the final credit is showered upon the director. The difference

between these various author-figures, for Hutcheon, is one of “distance” (2006, 83). The further each of these various authors is down the production line, the further away from the model they are. Therefore, the process of new media adaptation becomes not a single adaptive act, but a sequential, emanative lineage of texts under the shade of the adaptation’s title. While this is doubtless the case, the rhetorical approach to the adaptation’s author must also account for her ethos, or authority. With so many creative elements collaborating towards the production of a single text, we must detangle the various types of ethos recognized by the public, the law, and by the producing organization itself. Additionally, this power of credibility is the neurotic anxiety of any adaptation, as unlike the normal new media process of polyauthorship so accurately expressed by Hutcheon, adaptation must add the specter of another author: the model’s. If, as Benjamin claims, the adaptation is the model’s afterlife, so it is the model’s author’s afterlife as both shades are summoned by the adaptation invocation. So, then, for audiences trained to value auteurist sensibilities, trained to venerate authors as the genius/owners of their texts, adaptations can lead to conflicting loyalties. Even if we arbitrarily settle on the director as the author of the new media adaptation, those audiences who value the model’s author over the adaptation’s will be, in rhetorical terms, resistant audiences, their gift of credibility (for who is it that bestows credibility on authors but their audiences?) stretched thin. What we see, then, is that new media authorship is indeed fragmented, its ethos divided between that of legal authors (often in the form of multinational distribution corporations), collaborative labor authors who do the work of composition, but also, in between them, and created by audiences’ desire for a unified author figure, is the symbolic author (most often in the form of the director, or

in the case of video games, “the designer”). Within this symbolic and material system, the model for the adaptation acts as a secondary symbolic author, lending credibility to the text, but at the same time entering into competition with the adaptation’s symbolic author.

Our study of the eurhythmic response to adaptive accrual is tested when we take up the specific example of the *Lord of the Rings* video game adaptations in chapter five. While adaptations are most often deployed periodically, occasionally competing adaptations, seeking to capitalize on the same rhetorical exigencies, are released simultaneously. Like siblings in combat over the attention of their parents, so these adaptations wrestle against each other, each attempting to prove that they are the most authentic, most authoritative progeny of the revered ancestor. By using eurhythmic analysis to discuss the complex diachronic (between adaptation and model) and synchronic (between competing adaptations) relationships that are forged between these multiple texts we begin to, as Hutcheon advocates, treat adaptations as adaptations.

But how far can we stretch our understanding of what constitutes an adaptation? Can narrative models be transformed into static adaptations? Can we really see the modern new media adaptation as unified? Or can it be an assemblage of different types of texts, each in themselves an adaptation but often gathered together into bundled units of adaptive anthology, a type of controlled accrual? In chapter six we explore how paratextual material, those elements of text at the porous boundary between one text and another, the hyper- and hypotexts, can be seen as types of adaptations of the texts to which they are anthologically associated. We will see how the interface of *The Lord of the Rings Special Extended DVD Editions* use semiotic tools to adapt the narrative of the

film they overlay, but at the same time, directly involve and control users' experiences with that underlying text by means of their interactive elements.

The goal of the project then, is to initially explore past and current approaches to adaptation theory and then propose a perspective drawn from rhetorical principles that provides for a profound growth of semiosis among and through adaptive additions.

Rather than picking out two individual flowers from a vast field of genetically related blooms, eurhythmia attempts to take into account the whole field and demonstrate what the relations between texts mean for the audiences who engage with adaptations. An audience's sense of the field of associations of *Lord of the Rings* will vary with their awareness of the larger family, and which member they met first. If my first awareness of the text was Ralph Bakshi's 1978 *Lord of the Rings*, each encounter with the large *Rings* family will alter and expand my experience with the text, but not erase it, even if another supplants it as my primary experience. In other words, when we approach successive adaptations, we must see them as we would a large family: with dissonance and harmony between them, some more alike than others. But with each member of the family one meets, the impression of the whole is slightly altered. As the family accrues members, so do they accrue a larger narrative – a total network of signification.

Adaptation studies would do well to account for this growth of megatexts for it is the relationships between these blooms, the cross-pollinations that give the adaptation process its rich allure.

Chapter 1

The Major Players: An Overview of Adaptation Theory

The analysis of adaptation is not unique to the twentieth century. Eighteenth century Europe witnessed a wave of personal, critical and aesthetic mania over Richardson's *Pamela* that would have made J.K. Rowling jealous. Pamela found her way into every conceivable aesthetic media: operas, dramas, parodies (no less than Fielding's *Shamela*, among countless others), paintings, patchwork screens, fans, even garments all constituted an adaptation tsunami (Turner 1994, 71). But the mass dissemination of film and subsequent new media manifestations have given birth to an increasing concern about the integrity, motives, and aesthetics of the practices of appropriating and reconstituting earlier art forms. As films and television grew more significant to popular culture and increasingly became the primary lens through which people perceived reality and themselves, the voices of the artistic and critical community felt compelled to comment on and critique the proliferation of adaptation. Predictably, the earliest commentators arose from the literary community who, in general, were agreed that film was a lower form of art than literature, incapable of transforming the nuance, subtly, and interiority of language because of the seemingly literal, objective, and exterior appearance of the image. These critics proliferated under the banner of narratology, with the seminal 1968 text written by George Bluestone, *Novels into Film*, or even such recent texts as Seymour Chatman's essay "What Novels can Do that Films Can't (and Vice Versa)." These significant literary figures, often against their own protestations, became

entrapped in contentions of the purity of origins and the responsibility of the adaptation to the model.

Running a parallel course to the literary-leaning narratologists, structuralists and semioticians also began to pay attention to the impact of adaptation. Yet their interest in the field is often indirect; Roland Barthes denies the very privileged assumptions of any discussion of adaptation (with its source and derivation), subsuming it under the rubric of intertextuality and subjecting it to the structural and persuasive power of myth. Christian Metz, on the other hand, is interested in the interface between the adaptation and desire, addressing the impossibility of a satisfactory adaptation.

Throughout the nineteen seventies and eighties, Metz's form of psychoanalytic film semiotics dominated the critical discourses, yet in the early nineties, new branches of theory began to influence adaptive debates. Primarily, there arose a renewed concern in cultural studies as to adaptation's significant impact in bridging high and popular cultures. Marxist writers such as Robert B. Ray emerged as significant theoretical voices, while, in a parallel development, social semioticians such as Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, drawing on functional linguistics, cultural studies, and gestalt theories of art (largely derived from the work of Rudolf Arnheim), turned to fields of study long neglected and began to map systems of meaning emergent from visual and auditory expression, analogous to those in linguistic expression.

Back in film studies, rhetoric, particularly Bakhtinian rhetoric, was born from the interface of film with popular culture and the growing pressure to clarify genres and new textualities. Robert Stam, who based his early work on examinations of cinematic reflexivity, found himself addressing adaptation as a matter of course. While he initially

approached adaptation as a stylistic metaphoric between two art forms, his theories grew into a complete system of adaptive analysis.

Yet the whole of adaptation theory takes Bluestone's *Novels into Film* as its touchstone. It stands as the first exhaustive analysis of the phenomenon of adaptation, wherein he articulates a theory of adaptation and its mechanism, and then enacts these theories on such classic sources as *Madame Bovary*, *Grapes of Wrath*, and *Pride and Prejudice*. Most, if not all of those who follow him, even as they diverge from the narratologist camp that he so firmly established, look to elements of his work for inspiration.

Pre-Bluestone Adaptation Theory

Before Bluestone, twentieth century cultural critics were largely uniform in their dismissal of the process of adaptation. Many could see certain social advantages in translating novels, plays, and even poems into other media. The promotion of literacy was a traditional justification for the practice of adaptation, rhetoric, and literature in general until the aesthete movement at the end of the nineteenth century supplanted theories of art's social benefits for an appreciation of art for its own sake. But twentieth century cinema's explosive popularity among the general public prompted a hybrid aesthetic of realism (drawn from the literary conventions of the day), spectacle (appealing to lower-middle class patrons that swelled the cinema's halls to bursting), and drama (a predictable modal adaptation, given close association between the stage and the screen) that marked a radical departure from the forms of high art enshrined in the Arnoldian

university canon or the drawing rooms of the aesthetes.¹ In an attempt to blunt increasingly vocal anxiety about a new populist art form, the film industry rejuvenated the educational argument for the legitimacy of adaptations yet the caretakers of cultural capital were wary of this new artistic form, viewing with suspicion the reductive projects that so typified the *Societe Film d'Art* and its imitators in England and the United States.²

Sergi Eisenstein

Perhaps the most significant early comment on new media adaptation comes from Sergei Eisenstein in his 1944 essay “Dickens, Griffith, and the Film Today,” where he credits early technical and stylistic advancements in film to D.W. Griffith’s attempt to emulate Charles Dickens’s prose style, in film. The close-up, the mobile camera, even principles of early montage are all credited to Griffith’s metaphorical reproductions of Dickens’s narrative techniques. For Eisenstein, the levels on which filmic adaptation of literature operate are twofold: first, that film borrows from literature the manners of narrative construction with its strategies of rendering time and detail; second, that the strategies of filmic narration are metaphorical equivalences for linguistic ones.

Griffith’s wife, Linda Arvidson Griffith tells of a conflict between Griffith and Cristy Cabanne in the production of *Enoch Arden*. The disputed edit involved a jump-cut from a scene of Annie Lee waiting for her husband to return to a scene of Enoch cast away on a desert island on the grounds that it was

altogether too distracting. “How can you tell a story jumping about like that? The people won’t know what it’s about.”

“Well,” said Mr Griffith, “doesn’t Dickens write that way?”

“Yes, but that’s Dickens; that’s novel writing; that’s different.”

“Oh, not so much, these are picture stories; not so different.” (Griffith 1925, 66)

With a single shrug, Griffith’s exchange embodies the battle of adaptation, and suggests that a story is a story; the strategies of the telling are flexible and adaptable to any medium. Eisenstein contends that both Dickens and Griffith capture themes by manipulating tempo by means of cutbacks or the fragmentary movement from one image to another. A literary equivalent can be found in *Oliver Twist*:

It was market-morning. The ground was covered, nearly ankle-deep, with the filth and mire; and a thick steam, perpetually rising from the reeking bodies of the cattle, and mingling with the fog, which seemed to rest upon the chimney-tops, hung heavily above...countrymen, butchers drovers, hawkers, boys, thieves, idlers, and vagabonds of every low grade, were mingled together in a dense mass; the whistling of drovers, the barking of dogs, the bellowing and plunging of oxen, the bleating of sheep, the grunting and squeaking of pigs; the cries of hawkers, the shouts, oaths and quarrelling on all sides; the ringing of bells and the roar of voices issued from every public house... (Dickens 1982, 130)

The tempo and imagistic structure create a perfect amalgam of an establishing shot in a film – the conflation of the visual and aural into a temporal jumble seems ready-made for the simultaneity of cinema. In fact, Eisenstein designates the Griffith school as one of “tempo.” This carefully paced movement whereby narrative interruptions generate meaning and significance in both Dickens and Griffith is accomplished not just by an

imagistic accrual but by the interweaving of two separate narratives together into a signifying braid that lends value to both: a grafted unit that generates its meaning-making potential precisely from the interruptive, montage process.

Thus, as Eisenstein notes, the emergence of the narrative film process is a fusion of literary technique and technological innovation. Film literally adapted formalistic structures from literature, creating a new system of signification. So, not only are literary texts rendered by early filmmakers but also the corresponding strategies of expression needed to capture the form and structure of the source texts. Such a process of mining previous artistic forms for possible semiotic strategies is a type of archaeological investigation whereby Eisenstein anticipates the compulsion to establish analogous relationships between film and literature, based upon their common ancestry in narrative form. Yet such a strategy of association, which seemed at the time to lend to the credibility of film's aesthetic aspirations, was later invoked by the narratologists as the measure of film's inadequacy: because imagistic systems could not replicate linguistic expression, those systems were deemed inferior.

Bertholt Brecht

In Brecht's writings, the cinema brought a kind of doom to previous forms of art. Assuming that all aesthetic forms are inextricably linked, Brecht contends that "the old forms of communication are not unaffected by the development of new ones, nor do they survive alongside them" (1964, 47). He is not predicting the death of literature and

drama, merely the mutation of expression as a result of the transformative power that mass distributed multimedia wields by means of its cultural reach. From this vantage, “the mechanization of literary production [cannot] be thrown into reverse” (1964, 47); the same capitalist structures that allow and are reproduced through film infect all expression in an attempt to turn art into product. In retrospect, of course, Brecht was completely correct. The corporatization of art has proliferated on a mind-boggling scale affecting every level of art. Microsoft owns the digital rights to every artifact in the United States National Gallery. Novels are optioned into films before they are even written. Video games have become the newest and, and in many ways, most powerful media crossover, acting as supplements to, and in some cases inspiration for, blockbuster film.

Predictably, Brecht embraced the possibility of an action medium, unencumbered by sentimentality. For the Marxists, Modernist realism represented the worst aspects of aesthetic potential by transforming the ideologically disruptive power of art into a new ideological apparatus. Introspection and subjectivity, the hallmarks of this new artistic perspective, re-inscribed capitalist hegemony by erasing the materiality of life in a sea of uncertainties. Film’s purported objectivity contained the potential for release from this vicious ideological circle, for “what the film really demands is” external action and not introspective psychology:

Great areas of ideology are destroyed when capitalism concentrates on external action, dissolves everything into processes, abandons the hero as the vehicle for everything and mankind as the measure, and thereby smashes the introspective psychology of the bourgeois novel. This

external viewpoint suits the film and gives it importance. (Brecht 1964, 50)

By attempting to posit film as external, objective, even scientific in its clinical dissection of capitalist ideology, Brecht unintentionally recalls the infancy of film as a data collection system – an infancy shared with film’s close cousin, the computer. Unlike literary narrative, claims Brecht, the camera records data in an objective manner, unencumbered by the subjectivity inherent to linguistic expression. The recording and mass-distribution potential of film as it captured the horrors of proletariat life represented a new potential for the unification of workers in a common struggle. Capitalist individuality could be erased by the everyday-ness of the cinematic mode, insofar as the camera captures “what is,” as opposed to the sanitizing and explanatory impulses of “how” or “why.” In order to battle the modernist literary introspection and its commensurate distraction from the material realities of the worker’s struggle, Brecht (anticipating Bluestone) posits film’s inability to express internal states; but in this case, the potential is not limiting but liberating. The comedy, in particular, becomes an articulate vehicle for the principles of Epic Theatre,

for [in] the film, the principles of non-Aristotelian drama (a type of drama not depending on empathy, mimesis) are immediately acceptable. ...In the great American comedies the human being is presented as an object, so that their audience could as well be entirely made up of Pavlovians. (1964, 50)

In Brecht’s “epic theatre,” this objectification of character is requisite for the “work” of art: Aristotelian forms which induce empathy, sympathy, and a perception of heroism, all

create the illusion of reality (in actuality, an ideological construct), but only when the audience is at a distance, when they feel no personal kinship with the characters, can the destructive mechanisms of capitalist ideology be exposed and resisted.

Brecht's second major contribution to our discussion of the function of adaptation is the analysis of the larger cultural mechanism of the cinema. While such extratextual analysis was undoubtedly an attempt to come to an understanding of his sense of deep-seated betrayal at being removed from control of the film rendering of *Threepenny Opera*, its practical application extends on through the work of Christian Metz and provides another chink in the armor of the essentialist representations of the pure, sacred, and original text. By exposing material forces of influence that drive the production of new and old-media texts while at the same time undermining any sense of artistic authority, Brecht gives us a first glimpse of the wide net of textual relationships that extend far off the page and screen. The "film apparatus" is a part of the larger network of ideological apparatuses that re-inscribe the hegemonic forms of discourse. But the transformative power of mass media can be harnessed to effect a change in all types of expression, because of the interlinking of media in the chain of production. Film, then "can be used better than almost anything else to supersede the old kind of un-technical, anti-technical 'glowing' art, with its religious links. The socialization of these means of production is vital for art" (1964, 48). It is precisely this quality of the interconnectedness of artistic strategies that provides revolutionary possibilities for "the whole of art... is placed in this new situation; it is as a whole, not split into parts, that it has to cope with it; it is as a whole that it turns into goods or not" (1964, 49). Capitalism, then, has erased distinctions between forms, levels, and divisions of art in favor of its new

matrix of “product.” Contrary to the belief of the artistic elite, there is no kernel untouched and sacrosanct from this process of leveling, for it is built into the very fabric of the financial systems that sustains those venerated texts. Later critics, such as Linda Hutcheon, would use the very product-ness of the text to emphasize the material elements that contribute to the adaptive process.

Brecht, like Bazin who followed him, perceives that the Modernist aesthetic perspectives of an artistic hierarchy have been effaced by the transformative power of new media. But unlike Bazin, who perceives new media’s power as one of reproduction, Brecht vigorously attacks the idea that adaptation represents a hierarchy of “source and emanation,” and instead, vests the cinematic apparatus with the revolutionary powers to return all modes to a pre-Aristotelian art that rather than replicating dominant ideology, exposes and challenges it.

André Bazin

In his 1948 essay “Adaptation, or the Cinema as Digest” André Bazin posits that critics think of the adapted film as a “digest.” As one would assume, the term designates a certain condensation of information, yet Bazin plays with the term, indicating that the reason that literary and aesthetic communities feel threatened by the adaptation of traditional art forms into new media is the looming specter of a ubiquitous art: “the digest phenomenon resides not so much in the actual condensing or simplification of works as in the way they are consumed by the ... public” (2000, 19). When exclusive and elite forms of art (such as literature and music) become pervasive, they surround the

consumer, creating a perpetual experience akin to “the warm atmosphere created by central heating” (2000, 21). Yet Bazin perceives the filmic adaptation as a democratizing mode, situating it as the early precursor to such pedestrian phenomena as *Reader’s Digest* and *CliffsNotes*. If this analogy seems less than enthusiastic, it gestures at a measured ambivalence towards the democratization of art that adaptation represents. On the one hand, he revels in the destruction of “classical modes of cultural communication, which are at once a defense of culture and a secreting of it behind high walls.” Yet at the same time he is vaguely contemptuous of a mass media that grinds complex works into “an extended culture reduced to the lowest common denominator of the masses” (2000, 21). Still, it is precisely the feature of mass participation that appeals to Bazin’s respect for cinematic adaptation, for the rise of the masses to power, he says, must be accompanied by a corresponding aesthetic: the new art forms must be interactive and *co-operative* – a return to previous forms, particularly those of *medieval collective notions of authorship*.³ What better way to appropriate the evolution of the history of art than to enlist that history in the development of a new art form?

While he is dubious because of its abuses, Bazin sees in film an opportunity for social transformation and a democratization of cultural mythology. He advocates a return to a medieval perception of art; rather than mythologizing texts and authors, those in middle ages evaluated texts within the larger tapestry of social influence as “a work of art was not an end in itself; the only important criteria were its content and the effectiveness of its message” (2000, 24). Rather than protecting certain aesthetic works as sacred, cloistered off by a select priesthood, adaptation allows for the creation of larger cultural myths by telling stories over and over in a multiplicity of forms. James Naremore notes

that the transformation of Twain and Shakespeare into cultural icons outside the academy occurred largely because of the wide dissemination of their talents through the vehicle of mass media: “how many of us have actually read *Moby Dick*?” he asks, yet “how many of us have seen one of the comic books, theatrical, television, or film adaptations that give it folkloric significance?” (2000, 14). For Bazin, it is this mythic concentration on character and story that creates the adaptation’s potential. Adaptation absorbs the most generally appealing qualities and traditions of literary expression towards its own ends: “the cinema borrows from fiction a certain number of well-wrought, well rounded, or well-developed characters, all of whom have been polished by twenty centuries of literary culture” (2000, 25). Thus, the adaptation, or the ruminated literary form, can also be seen as “a literature that has been made more accessible through cinematic adaptation, not so much because of the oversimplification...but rather because of the mode of expression itself, as if the aesthetic fat, differently emulsified, were better tolerated by the consumer’s mind” (2000, 26).

But perhaps most importantly, Bazin takes to task the all-too-frequent attempts to evaluate film using the language of literature. The nineteenth century “idolatry of form, mainly literary” (2000, 20) endures. But the notion of faithfulness to form, so frequently demanded by adaptation’s critics is meaningless. Rather, he suggests that stylistic substitutes be found to capture the “spirit” of the literary work: “faithfulness to form, literary or otherwise, is illusory: what matters is the equivalence in meaning of the forms.” (20) Thus, for Bazin, the primary evaluation of an adaptation’s relationship to its source is a metaphorical one, based on the radical differences in the signifying systems of each. What remains of the conflict between the adaptation and model is lost in the

segmentation of aesthetic genres; the true aesthetic differentiations are to be made not among the arts, but within genres themselves – “between the psychological novel and the novel of manners rather than between the psychological novel and the film that one would make from it” (2000, 26). Attempting to eliminate the tension between the two linked texts, Bazin weakens the connection that binds them. If the adaptation has only the metaphysic of “spirit” as its obligation to the novel, one could hardly imagine a robust criticism of an adaptation, for the spirit is ephemeral and subjective. To hinge aesthetic argument on discovering the spirit of one complex art object so that such a phantom could be transplanted into another art object of a different form is akin to passing the proverbial camel through the eye of the needle. It is demeaning to both the adaptation and its source to suggest that such a profound distillation could occur (what indeed is the spirit of *The Tempest* or even *Prospero’s Books* – other than Ariel, of course?). Thus, the fragile thread with which Bazin attempts to thread the adaptation and model cannot sustain serious critical inquiry and we are left looking at each text at the level of each distinctive meaning-making system. In other words, the adaptation stands or falls on its merits within its own aesthetic medium, independent of its relationship with antecedent texts.

Narratology

I have elected to separate the narratologist and translationalist camps, although their positions are very closely aligned. The distinction is less the result of the criticism (as both finally perceive the linguistic and the visual as radically different and invoke the

notion of translation to emphasize linguistics' superiority) and more of origin: the narratologists perceive the classic, literary narrative as the central basis of comparison with all its attendant concerns with character, trope, style, etc., while the translationalists draw their similar conclusions from a study of semiotics.

The narratologists are overtly concerned about the difference between literary and cinematic form and pay "close attention to the problem of textual fidelity in order to identify the specific formal capabilities of the media. ... The problem with most writing about adaptation as translation is that it tends to valorize the literary canon and essentialize the nature of cinema" (Naremore 2000, 8). Despite the best efforts of many of its practitioners, narratology, by the very terms it uses to frame its discussion, diminishes the multimedia forms of expression, subjugating them to the tyranny of the linguistic.

George Bluestone

George Bluestone's seminal text *Novels into Film* appeared on the academic scene in 1957, was in its fourth printing by 1968, and is still widely read and promoted in both film and literary circles. The most significant reason for its popularity is that it represents the first, thorough theory of adaptation, and in many ways still represents the critical debate on the subject. Emerging from an English literature department, Bluestone carries with him many of the reservations that previous theorists expressed: a distress with the "simplifying" tendencies in popular film; the radical inferiority of film to represent character with any depth; and the insufferable detachment of the novelistic

theme from the language in which it is imbedded. Yet the reason he is still read is because he manages to move the discussion of adaptation to a new level of analysis.

The beginnings of the incompatibility of film and literature for Bluestone are their divergent parentages. The origins of film, claims Bluestone, are grounded in folk art: banal images; burlesque anecdotes; pornography. Contrastingly, the novel has a long and noble tradition that culminates in the emergence of language as its primary character (1957, 11). While the novel is defined by plumbing the depths of human cognition through language, film must operate on the surface. A film's director

looks not to the organic novel, whose language is inseparable from its theme, but to characters and incidents which have somehow detached themselves from language and...achieved a life of their own. Because this is possible we often find that the film adapter has not even read the book, that he has depended instead on a paraphrase by his secretary or his screen writer. That is why there is no necessary correspondence between the excellence of a novel and the quality of the film in which the novel is recorded. (1957, 62)

Filmic complexity thus relies on overt action and context, wrenched from its origins in the naturally complex and expressive language. The director, relying on often ignorant writers, transforms a heroic, individual art form into a corporate, external act. While the novel self-consciously creates a subjective reality, the film pretends at its "objective" reality.

Beyond this rather simplistic and naive perspective of the novelistic tradition, what strikes one are the obvious limitations Bluestone places on filmic expression. Well

before Bluestone, experimental filmmakers such as Sergi Eisenstein and Jean Cocteau, and even more mainstream directors such as Orson Welles and Billy Wilder, were adapting literature in ways that challenged the filmic assumptions of “objectivity.” Furthermore, such directors often attempted to intertwine form and content in the same, indistinguishable way Bluestone claims language and theme operate in the novel.

Bluestone makes perhaps one of his most problematic claims in his critique of filmic metaphor. Essentially, he believes metaphor in film to be a contradiction in terms as a result of what we see as the image’s objectivity. The image, particularly when coupled with sound (voice, sound effects, ambiance), demands a “realistic” interpretation. Any suggestion that the image is anything but what it purports is counterintuitive and, literally, outside the definition of film. Thus, an inability to effectively translate the literary trope of metaphor becomes the marker of film’s limitation. The “connotative luxuriance” of language is beyond the image’s ability to express. Rather, the film trope must arise from the setting: “If disparate objects are compared, the film metaphor must be predicated upon a clear suspension of realistic demands (as the invasion montage in the Marx Brothers’ *Duck Soup*)” (1957, 22). The metaphoric dependence on context is film’s most damning limitation, compared to the relative freedom and ubiquity of the trope in language. “Film tropes are enormously restricted compared to literary tropes,” Bluestone asserts as a prelude to an examination of Marcel Proust, from which he concludes that “...packed symbolic thinking...is peculiar to imaginative rather than visual activity. Converted into a literal image, [Proust’s evocative metaphors] would seem absurd” (1957, 23). Of course, this insistence on a one-to-one correlation of a distinctly linguistic feature is unfair. Rather, later critics, primarily those from auteurist

circles, point to the metaphorical power of intertextuality as a possible alternative to the cinematic limitation in adapting the traditional trope. As we will see, intertextuality provides the opportunity to convey a semiotic code in terms of another text, creating an accrual of significance. And as George Lakoff points out, “the locus of metaphor is not in language at all, but in the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another” (1989, 203). Thus, this quality of perception “in terms of” is implicitly metaphorical. The limitation that Bluestone applies to filmic metaphor, then, can be seen not necessarily as a limitation of the medium but, rather, as a criticism of the relative size of the reservoir of potential references upon which to base a system of comparison. In other words, as a mode grows and matures its expressive and intertextual reservoir also grows and matures.

Along with the impossibility of the cinematic metaphor (beyond the level of montage), Bluestone contends that film is unable to express a subjective, internal life. Like Brecht, Bluestone perceives the filmic mode as one of materiality, an assumed objectivity that operates in opposition to the modernist sensibilities that the expressions of language are of internal states, of subjective impressions:

The rendition of mental states - memory, dream, imagination – cannot be as adequately represented by film as by language. If the film has difficulty presenting streams of consciousness, it has even more difficulty presenting states of mind which are defined precisely by the absence in them of the visible world. Conceptual imaging, by definition, has no existence in space. (1957, 47)

In his essay *The Imaginary Signifier*, Christian Metz denies this accusation vociferously, suggesting that film is *uniquely* positioned to speak to and reveal the inner workings of the human consciousness. Drawing upon Lacanian theories of the imaginary, pre-symbolic reservoir in human consciousness, Metz asserts that the very structure of the filmic signifier (the image) is imaginary: “unlike the literary or pictorial arts – whole signifiers pre-exist the imaginative work of the reader or viewer ...-- films themselves only come into being through the fictive work of their spectators” (Stam, 1992, 139). The signifiers of cinematic aesthetics are activated in the viewing; the spectator must work unconsciously, says Metz, to produce the film, and the meaning is therefore, literally, a production of the viewer. Thus, Metz casually reverses Bluestone’s order of psychic primacy. The linguistic code, he contends, is a pre-existent system of signification: monologic and opaque in its representation of internal states. In contrast, the filmic system – from beginning to end⁴ – represents and draws upon the inner-workings of the human mind. Bluestone counters that “the film, by arranging external signs for our visual perception, or by presenting us with dialogue, can lead us to infer thought. But it cannot show us thought directly” (1952, 48). Psychoanalytic critic Jean Louis Baudry cannot help but respond that the filmic enterprise is nothing short of a mental state. In fact, the most salient feature of Baudry’s film apparatus is precisely that the film constructs a perpetual dream state in viewers; so when viewers watch a film, they do not see reality, but visually expressed thought. Many filmmakers, including Jean Cocteau, Stanley Kubrick, and David Lynch have used such a perspective of film’s inherent dream-invocation to guide their work.

Perhaps the most significant point of distinction Bluestone invokes is his address of literary versus filmic time. The two media diverge sharply here, he claims, as both novel and film are time arts, but whereas the formative principle in the novel is time, the formative principle in film is space. Where the novel takes its space for granted and forms its narrative in a complex of time values, the film takes its time for granted and forms its narrative in arrangements of space. (1952, 61)

In other words, the unfolding of narrative through a linguistic medium is primarily a temporal one as “subject and predicate are gleaned sequentially,” so naturally, “the revelation of the nature of the image occurs sequentially” (1952, 59). Conversely, with film, the two occur at the same time. Of course, this suggestion denies the essential materiality of the text while at the same time mistaking the signification of the image for the signification of the film. Subsequent semioticians (notably authors such as Metz and Bettetini) identify the primary system of meaning-making in film to be the temporal sequencing of images that gather semiotic value as the text unfolds. Gianfranco Bettitini illustrates this semiotic unfolding by describing a cinematic sequence where a car moves along a dirt road towards a shack in the desert. He notes that the meaning of the scene occurs by the association of trajectory as the car moves from one point to another. Thus, while the movement of the car is a spatial one, it is not, as Bluestone suggests, a spatial simultaneity; rather, the meaning of the scene emerges, as does a linguistic text, through the syntactic ordering of individual shots.

Even more damning, and perhaps less accurate, is Bluestone’s suggestion that the consumer’s temporal relationship with a text defines that text’s “density,” or signifying

complexity. He contends that the novel, having “the fifty or so hours allotted” to its reading, achieves a “complexity not available in two hours” (1952, 50). Yet filmic complexity arises, as Bluestone himself notes, simultaneously on the level of space as well as time.⁴ While, as I have noted earlier, the primary mode of cinematic expression emerges syntactically, through the relationship of one frame to another, there also exists the internal semiotic systems of the arrangement of objects in space.⁵ These relationships of objects to one another within the framing of a given shot are simultaneously distinct from the signification of movement and action, and in concert (either in harmony or dissonance) with them.

While many of the criticisms Bluestone levels at film are plainly wrong, he anticipates several significant critical innovations that emerge later. For example, he looks to the phenomenological aesthetics of Arnheim in order to root the difference between the linguistic and the imagistic in apprehension:

word symbols must be translated into images of things, feelings and concepts through the process of thought. Where the moving picture comes to us directly through perception, language must be filtered through the screen of conceptual apprehension. And the conceptual process, although allied to and often taking its point of departure from the percept represents a different mode of experience, a different way of apprehending the universe. (Bluestone 1957, 20)

This principle, of course, is a direct appeal to Arnheim’s appraisal of the role of the image in his text *Film as Art* (1932). This concern with the role of language in the apprehension of film is first taken up by Metz who concludes (in at least partial

agreement with Bluestone) that the cinema, while a language, is not a *langue* because it lacks the equivalent of the arbitrary linguistic sign; the imagistic system is a motivated one.⁶ Much later, theorists Kress and van Leeuwen invoke the Gestalt perspective in the hope of reclaiming Arnheim “as a great social semiotician” (*Reading* 1996, viii).

As to Bluestone’s suggestion that there are differing systems of perception in the linguistic and the visual, Kress and van Leeuwen infer that what is missing from this phenomenological approach is the influence of the social on the shaping of what is “real.” In other words, for the social semiotician, the difference in apprehension between the novel and the film is not of thought and concept but of modality. Modality “refers to the truth value or credibility of ...statements about the world” (*Reading* 1996, 160), and it affects how different social groups perceive texts. The perceptions, in turn, determine reality:

A “realism” is produced by a particular group, as an effect of the complex of practices which define and constitute that group. In that sense a particular kind of realism is itself a motivated sign, in which the values, beliefs, and interests of that group find their expression (1996, 163)

Thus, the modal difference between film and literature is one of context. To a community of literary experts the modality of the linguistic sign is high: it represents a significant degree of “reality” in perception. Conversely, the larger population perceives reality to be synonymous with images on 35mm film, as the photograph represents the socialized norm of “the world as it is.”

Another level at which Bluestone’s work is anticipatory is in his recognition of the weight of material realities on the selection, production, and reception of adapted

texts. He works with an Ian-Wattsian perspective of the novel's rise in order to distinguish it from its low cousin, the film, because "while the novel is a product of a conflation of the rise of Puritanism, industrialism, and the middle class, the film is a product of a consumerist society." This stamp of consumerism seems to gesture at the crassness of the mass taste, as Bluestone perceives it. Somehow this lowering of the aesthetic bar creates a mediocrity in the adaptation, as the creation of a film (unlike a novel) is a corporate enterprise requiring immense amounts of capital. Therefore, the industry's attention to authorial intent and craft will not be the same as the novelist's.⁷ These corporate demands (both financial and artistic) that go into the making of a film ensure that "the signature of social forces is evident in the final work" (Bluestone 1952, 35). Thus, even though Bluestone makes the most egregious of New Critical blunders in extracting the literary "text" from its material and contextual moorings, he sets forward a critical model whereby production and cultural context become valid tools of interpretive analysis for adaptive texts.

While Bluestone contributes much to the developing legitimacy of adaptation studies, he strongly reinforces the privileged position of the linguistic over the imagistic. His reasons are clear and predictable: language's semiotic richness, and flexibility in perspective and experimentation, produces a medium unrivaled in human experience. The filmic image is comparatively weak, and it is wielded by an industrial complex towards the simple goal of profit, whereas the novelist's primary concern is artistic.

Translationalism

As noted earlier, the translational approach to adaptation is similar to narratology in its perception of the weaknesses of the visual medium, yet its trajectory of approach is based in linguistics and semiotics, rather than literature. While the narratologist camp sees multimodal adaptations as hollow imitations of source texts, the translationalists view the weakness of the image as emerging from its inherent semiotic “emptiness.” In other words, what is lacking in the image is the slipperiness of language – the tension of meaning that arises from the arbitrary signifier gesturing at the motivated signified. Barthes (perhaps unintentionally) opens the door for adaptation and filmic expression to create meaning by suggesting that it will always operate, as a result of its imagistic quality, at the “mythic” level.

Similarly, Metz grants the limitations of the image and concentrates his study of adaptation on one of expectation and the impossibility of faithfulness. Essentially, Metz dodges the issue of the process of adaptation because by hiving off each medium from the others, he presents them as inherently incommensurable; the film can never faithfully render the linguistic source because they are too fundamentally different to compare. The limitations of this “transcoding” approach, “even when it assumes a tone of quasi-scientific objectivity, [is that it] betrays certain unexamined ideological concerns because it ...cannot avoid a gendered language associated with the notion of ‘fidelity’” (Naremore 2000, 8). So just as the narratologists become weighted down by an implicit assumption of responsibility to a source text, so the translationalists often arrive in the same location by imputing a semiotic transformation.

Roland Barthes

While Barthes only obliquely addresses the matter of adaptation, he is unequivocal about the semiotic structure of image itself: it is entirely empty as a result of its proximity to the “real.” In other words, denotatively, the image is what it purports to be. Therefore,

...there is no necessity to set up a relay, that is to say a code, between the object and its image. Certainly the image is not the reality but at least it is perfect amalgam and it is exactly this analogical perfection which, to common sense, defines the photograph. Thus can be seen the special status of the photographic image: it is a message without a code...the photographic message is a continuous message. (1988, 17)

On the other hand, the image’s semiotic power arises from the mythic connotations that it accrues, but that connotative power is “cultural, thus the reading of the image is always historical” (1988, 28). The image itself is composed of two components: the denotative emptiness (which arises from the plenitude of uncoded, iconic meaning), and the connotation, arising out of immediate cultural association and which is particularly ideologically potent.

Beyond his structural analysis of the image, Barthes’ contribution to adaptation theory arises out of *S/Z*, from the principal of radical intertextuality. Of course, intertextuality presumes that certain conventions, forms, topoi, and codes circulate from text to text, medium to medium, lending and regenerating semiotic value: “The cultural

codes [invoked by any story] ...will emigrate to other texts. There is no lack of hosts” (1974, 205). These forms, interestingly, perform the same social function as the commercial adaptation: they produce immediate cultural capital – aesthetic transfusion and renewal – and draw upon the same connotative register as does the image itself.

This concept’s significance to the study of adaptation cannot be understated. First, radical intertextuality “de-privileges” the linguistic code as an original or source. The topoi present in Dickens’ *Great Expectations* are the same as those in David Lean’s, which are the same as those in Alfonso Cuarón’s, which are, in turn, the same as an earlier, oral or poetic form, prior to Dickens. In fact, adaptation stands as merely the most overt of intertextuality’s subtle network of manifestations. Second, Barthes’ principles pave the way for our definition of “textuality,” expanding our understanding of what constitutes the boundaries of the text.

Christian Metz

Metz’s significance to film is unrivaled. For nearly three decades most if not all film scholarship engaged directly with his theories. Single-handedly producing at least two distinct varieties of film criticism (semiotic and psychoanalytic), Metz’s potent influence is still germane as one peruses a film studies syllabus or examines a critical journal. Semiotically, Metz’s expansion of Brecht’s “cinematic apparatus” to denote the totality of the filmic experience continues Barthes’ project of redefining text by directing analysis to those features that narratology and traditional structuralism consider as extra-textual. The schematic of the cinematic apparatus includes the technical base (consisting

of such elements as camera and effects equipment, lights, film, even the projector – the material of film production), the film projection experience (immobility of seating, projection of the light beam from behind the viewer’s head to the illuminated screen in front), the filmic text itself, and the “mental machinery” of the spectator (including mental states along with both conscious and unconscious work). In terms of adaptation, this principle moves part way to introducing the ideological/political underpinnings that operate in the cultural studies approaches of such critics as Joanna Hitchcock and Robert Ray.

But Metz directly addresses adaptation on the level of psychoanalytic desire. He presupposes that the filmic mental state is analogous to that of the dream state, as the image operates on the pre-linguistic level of the imaginary – the same workings as the unconscious. He then notes that as we consume a text, say a novel, “following the characteristic and singular paths of [our] desire” (1977, 112), we consciously (and unconsciously) transcode the linguistic into mental, or imagistic forms. When we go to see the film rendering of that novel, we are, in fact, going to see it *again*, replicating the very means by which we acquire language. This process produces a kind of filmic “fort/da,” for the power of the adaptation’s appeal is the “force of repetition that inhabits desire, driving the child to play unceasingly with the same toy, the adolescent to listen unceasingly to the same record, before abandoning it for the next, which in its turn will fill a proportion of his days” (1977, 112). But in the end, this urge for repetition, like desire, is unquenchable, precisely because the work of the individual unconscious is unique in its imaginary articulation. So when we see an adaptation we are doomed to the “phantasy of disappointment” because we want to see *our* images on the screen and are

inevitably denied because we “will not always find [*our*] film, since what [we have] before [us] in the actual film is now somebody else’s phantasy, a thing rarely sympathetic (to the extent that when it becomes so, it inspires love)” (1977, 113). Thus, the adaptation’s appeal lies in the promise of unconscious restitution that, of course, is impossible. We return to the experience (if it remotely interfaces with our unconscious articulation) again and again in hopes of quenching an unquenchable desire. In some measure, this experience of adaptation mirrors the foundation of the linguistic split: the subject gazes into the mirror of the movie screen and is confronted with the Other’s vision. This schism produces the psychic work that for psychoanalytic critics, composes the body of analysis.

Auteurism

The features of auteurism arise in direct antagonism to the narratologist/translationalist movements. Auteurism emerges as a kind of declarative statement from within the avant-garde film industry when Francois Truffaut first proposed a “politique des auteurs” (literally “author’s policy”) in his 1954 article “Une Certaine Tendence du Cinema Francais.” In it Truffaut asserted that a single person, usually the director, has the sole aesthetic responsibility for a film. Quite literally, the auteurs presume a conceptual equivalence between filmic directors and linguistic authors. Naturally, such presumption also assumes the deep-seated authority vested in authorship that is such a hallmark of the modernist literary tradition. It is interesting to note that on this fundamental point narratologists and auteurs agree implicitly: the author is the source

of the text. The differences between the two lie in who is admitted into this fraternity and the possibilities/limitations of various modes of expression. Whereas the narratologists err on the side of the linguistic, given its inherent subtlety and nuance as a *langue*, the auteurists tend to dismiss discussion of *langue*/language as obscuring the denseness, richness, and complexity of filmic expression.

James Naremore

For James Naremore, the main problem with narratology is that it critiques from an unfair and ideologically skewed vantage. Assuming the high ground of modernist aestheticism (as Bluestone does), “film cannot acquire true cultural capital unless it first theorizes a medium-specific form” (2000, 6). Additionally, narratology proceeds from the “great source” assumption which suggests that adaptations owe a debt to an inherently superior origin. But when one presupposes linguistic techniques of articulation as touchstones, any multimedia form, regardless of its elegance and complexity, will fall short. The only effective response to critics such as Bluestone, claims Naremore, is to “devalue straightforward, high-cultural adaptation altogether” (2000, 6).

The most effective way to accomplish this goal of de-privileging the “source” text is by revisiting the auteurists. As has been noted, these auteurist attacks manifested themselves not as ones against the value of the literary canon per se (even as Truffaut railed against the “tradition of quality”) but rather in sustained and concerted efforts to portray the production of cinematic and linguistic textualities as metaphorical equivalences. The pen became the camera; the paper, the celluloid. The auteurists ceased to focus on “the scenario” and instead spoke of “mise-en-scene.” They began to

whisper in hushed tones of a cinematic canon that actually improved upon its literary origins. For at the same time, significant directors began to consciously change how they selected texts to adapt. It became an open secret that auteurs would intentionally select minor or weak stories, strip them of their plots, and impose their own order. Alfred Hitchcock once confessed in an interview that when preparing to adapt a story (and very few of his films were not adapted), he would “read a story only once, and if [he liked] the basic idea, [he would] just forget about the book and start to create cinema” (Truffaut 1985, 71). As the auteurist movement gained momentum, this displacement of traditional authority became commonplace in the case of more significant adaptations. Even now, though the general public is wary, critics tend to prefer the more daring, and free adaptive strategies, as long as the genius of the director is highlighted.

Naremore attempts to establish the relevance of adaptation scholarship by contending that it is “universal.” “Writing about adaptation” he says, should provide an animating discourse in multimedia studies, “if only because it can address such a wide variety of things.” When we signify, he suggests, we transform, or adapt that thing, coding it into another form. Hence, every instantiation of representational multimedia “can be regarded as an adaptation – hence the very word *representation*” (2000, 9). But if we grant this perspective – if representation and adaptation are completely interchangeable terms – then in some measure the project of adaptation loses its significance. If all expression were adaptation (or metaphor, or representation) then adaptation’s distinctiveness is lost in its ubiquity. It would seem, rather, that the important matter here is one of scope. While representational artifacts do “adapt” that which they gesture towards, it is on the level of signification: as Barthes identifies, the

image of the thing is not quite the thing, but pretty close. That slight slippage is a kind of metaphor, or adaptation; the Latin term for metaphor, *translatio*, suggests this turn, this movement from one thing into another. Yet the discourse of adaptation as it applies across complex media quickly moves beyond the one-to-one correspondence of the sign (even if we take into account the connotative and mythic levels of the sign). Perhaps in his gesture of ubiquity, Naremore moves too far, but in it we see the spirit of the Auteur. We see the impulse to create equivalence between modes: between linguistic, visual, and aural, without directly attacking the “greatness” of canonical texts. In other words, Naremore, rather than directly attacking the canonical process, raises the new media text up to the level of the old one, for to challenge the evaluative system would undermine the genius of the auteur.

Rhetoric and Social Semiotics

The Rhetorical position sits near the structuralist/ translationalist ones if only in that it has its roots in Russian Formalism. Rhetorical critics look primarily to Bakhtin for his use of genre, chronotope, and heteroglossia. Even Bakhtin’s relatively obscure notion of “tact” comments on adaptation in that it represents the unspoken cadence of everyday linguistic exchange. While “written language can evoke such discursive phenomena”, cinema is uniquely positioned to “present them, as it were, ‘in tact’” in a way that more “literary” modes cannot (Stam 1988, 125). Thus, the rhetorical approach re-establishes the centrality of the text, focusing on its structural features; at the same time it refuses to engage the matter of authorized (as distinct from authored, or ethotic) textuality. One

moment of social discourse has the same value as another; their distinctions arise out of generic rather than intrinsic differences. In this way, rhetoric provides an answer to the persistent problems of legitimacy posed by the narratologists and auteurs by engaging a text's dialogic features, all the while maintaining an awareness that the tendrils of those features move into the realms of the material and contextual, ostensibly outside the text.

Social Semiotics emerges from a fusion of semiotics, functional linguistics, aesthetic gestalt theories, and a heavy dose of cultural studies materialism. What emerges is a systems approach to the invention, selection, production and distribution of texts. Deeply devoted to grammar, social semiotics seeks to articulate ways of expressing otherwise diverse expressive phenomena in a generative manner.

Robert Stam

Robert Stam, an expert in Brazilian cinema, draws his interest in adaptation from his concern with the crossover of narrative strategies, reflexivity and distancing into film. His critical approach combines Bakhtin's rhetoric with the kind of psychoanalytic-rhetorical-structuralist impulses of Genette to return to the centrality of the text in its vast social and material ramifications. While not precisely *diminishing* the authority of the so-called creator, this rhetorical perspective confronts authorship as yet another form of cultural text – a construct arising out of discursive strategies. Rhetoric moves the discussion of author/authority away from canon and towards authorship's ideological underpinnings.

Like Metz, Stam condemns the flawed notion of adaptive fidelity as a product of subjective disappointment. Simply because certain adaptations fail to “realize or substantiate that which we most appreciated in the source novels,” our unmet expectations do not establish a responsibility or dependant relationship between the two texts (Stam 2000, 54). In fact, the notion of fidelity is just as essentializing to the privileged linguistic model as it is to the rendering. The narratological position presupposes a portable core or heart of the linguistic text to which the adaptation must adhere, but,

there is no such transferable core: a single novelistic text comprises a series of verbal signals that can generate a plethora of possible readings, including even the readings of the narrative itself. The literary text is not a closed, but an open structure (or better, structuration, as the later Barthes would have it) to be reworked by a boundless context. (2000, 57)

Thus, Bazin’s vision of an adaptation that is true to the “spirit” of the novel becomes impossible given the complexity of the model. The novel is polyphonic with “a plurality of voices which do not fuse into a single consciousness but rather exist on different registers, generating dialogical dynamism among themselves” (Stam 1988, 129), so to suggest such fidelity is not only impossible, but also reductive.

Stam also confronts Seymour Chatman’s suggestion that certain media are better at expressing certain aesthetic features than others. This “medium-specificity” position identifies what a mode does well, and what it does badly. Bluestone’s often cited suggestion that visual media are action modes and unable to portray subjective states imposes a final judgment, Stam suggests, on a non-finalized set of practices. Rather than

focusing on a kind of ontological essence in each, a diacritical specificity exposes that the cinema may not have “lesser, but rather greater resources for expression than the novel...”(2000, 59) in the simultaneity of articulation. In other words, pages and pages of narrative words may be encapsulated in a momentary fusion of image, sound, and motion that articulate those linguistic expressions just as powerfully.

Stam seeks to add to the semiotic principle of intertextuality by suggesting a rhetorical alternative: intertextual dialogism. From the dialogical position the adaptation is not an invocation of a sacred and original text, but an ongoing process by which significant features of cultural exchange move in and out of texts as “infinite and open-ended possibilities generated by all the discursive practices of a culture” (2000, 64). These synchronic dialogs produce texts of accumulating connotative significance. Thus, Stam extends Bakhtin’s concept of novelistic dialogism and polyphony to a much broader textual understanding, as envisioned by Barthes.

Finally, Stam draws upon the work of Genette, who (inspired by Kristeva and Bakhtin) proposes that this new perspective of broad-based dialogic exchange be termed “transtextuality.” There are five types of transtextual relations:

- 1) Intertextual – the “effective co-presence of two texts” in the form of quotation, plagiarism, and allusion. Adaptation, in this sense, participates in a double intertextuality, one literary and the other cinematic.
- 2) Paratextual – “the relation, within the totality of a literary work, between the text proper and its ‘paratext’ – titles, prefaces, postfaces, epigraphs, dedications, illustrations, and even book-jackets and signed autographs – in

short, all the accessory messages and commentaries that come to surround the text and at times become virtually indistinguishable from it.”

3) Metatextual – the critical relation between one text and another, whether the commented text is explicitly cited or only silently evoked.

4) Architextual – the generic taxonomies suggested or refused by the titles or infratitles of a text. These elusive properties have “to do with an artist’s willingness or reluctance to characterize a text generically in its title”

5) Hypertextuality – the relation between one text (hypertext) to an anterior text (hypotext), “which transforms, modifies, elaborates, or extends” each.

“Both the Aeneid and Ulysses are hypertextual elaborations of a single hypotext, the Odyssey.” Thus, diverse adaptations of classic novels can be seen as variant hypertextual readings emerging from the same hypotext.

Indeed, the diverse prior adaptations can form a larger, cumulative hypotext that is available to the artist who comes relatively late in the series. (Stam 2000, 66)

This expansion and rearticulation of intertextuality encompasses all levels of expression: from the cultural codes that precede an arbitrarily demarcated source, through ancillary criticism, promotion, and otherwise extraneous material that lends a sense of authority and legitimacy to the text. What is significant about this vision is that it replaces the metaphors of binary textuality with a kind of accrual or snowballing – a Talmud without a Torah. These texts are products of pollination by other, often extra-aesthetic texts and they all swirl in eddies and flows of cultural exchange and transformation with no single point of origin.

Robert Ray

Ray's interests lie, ostensibly, in the realm of cultural studies, yet his textual emphasis and discourse analysis tend to land him with at least one foot in the rhetoric camp. In the end, though, he continually returns to the centrality of cultural capital. In an attempt to explain the evolution of the cinema, he suggests that its narrative direction was inevitable as a result of the dependence of the medium on private capital: "Under different circumstances, [films] might have become primarily lyric expressions, theoretical essays, scientific investigations, vaudeville reviews, or all of these things and others besides. That they did not, of course, has everything to do with money" (2001, 124).

He gently chides the academy for lagging behind Hollywood in its understanding of the breadth and power of the adapted text. He notes that Hollywood understood the nature of intertextuality far better than the academic or even artistic communities, and quickly recognized that the tropes of one medium could be effectively imported into another. The film industry did its work so well that it "sought to codify even its leading actors, turning them into predictably signifying objects, not only throughout consistent cinematic use (typecasting), but also through extra-cinematic, [and] semi-literary forms of publicity (press releases, [and] fan-magazine articles)" (2001, 122). Thus, as Brecht points out, the capitalist machine quickly gained from the fluid exchange between mono and multimodality; yet the critical systems intended to interpret those forms of expression took much longer to recognize this expansive potential for meaning-making.

Ray forces us to consider the overlap between avant-garde literary texts and those in multi-media. Using Barthes' concepts of "readerly" and "writerly" texts, he extends the definitions to include new media as well as old. He chastises academia for overlooking this distinction when addressing the cinema, contending that traditional English departments have blinders on, considering all new media to be popular media. Rather, he points out that popular narratives differ significantly from avant-garde texts because, 1) popular film depends on general, cultural codes, whereas more avant-garde texts are more media-specific and 2) the use of those cultural codes is vastly different: while avant-garde texts use culture-codes to ironize, and criticize society using strategies of heteroglossia, pop film valorizes those codes by means of uncritical repetition (2001, 122).

In an attempt to reconfigure the critical approach to film studies (particularly as it concerns academia), Ray proposes a perceptual shift in metaphors. The English department's failing, he contends, is that it perceives an implicit connection between multimedia and literature, because both are, by and large, narrative in format. Yet he proposes that architecture is, in fact, a more accurate metaphorical mapping, as

both forms are public, collaborative, and above all, expensive. In both arts, economic constraints have always dictated the shape of the work produced. In comparison, literature (especially "serious" literature) seems almost a priestly calling: novelists and poets, at least since Romanticism, have...been largely able to write whatever pleased them, without regard for audience or expense. (2001, 124)

Thus, Ray returns to the narratologist's fallacy of the absent machinery of publishing. While the metaphorical addition of architecture contributes to the whole picture of the relationship of new and old media in that it allows us to perceive the multimodal artifact as a collaborative enterprise, constrained by material concerns, Ray's assertions as to the nature of authorship represents a step backwards towards a valorization of the "independent authorial genius."⁸ The suggestion that authors write "whatever pleases them" refuses to consider the systems of text editing, publishing, and distribution that run parallel to those in more mass-media forms. The addition of the apparatus of print undermines such a simplistic view of authorship.

Linda Hutcheon

Linda Hutcheon's work on adaptation represents a watershed for adaptation studies: a renowned literary theorist has taken up the cause of adaptation's uniqueness as a distinct and viable field of scholarship. In *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006), she has crafted an exhaustive and detailed study of adaptation's analysis and practice emphasizing, like Ray and Stam, the study's dual interest in textual form and material context. Adaptation studies, she argues, concentrates on the summoning of the specter of a text's precursors – its palimpsests – and examining the relationships and associations that are created between them, as well as the material contexts that give rise to or shape an adaptation's cultural resonance: "although adaptations are also aesthetic objects in their own right, it only as inherently double- or multilaminated works that they can be theorized *as adaptations*" (2006, 6). In order to quantify the adaptation as a tangible

object she approaches texts as products. This move assures that the material aspects of production are always accounted for in any adaptation analysis.

It is through this material emphasis that Hutcheon too eschews the myth of fidelity, seeking to supplant it with a broad reading strategy designed to tease out relationships between texts. First, she argues, adaptations should be examined as formal entities or products, a process attuned to “a shift of medium (a poem to a film) or genre (an epic to a novel), or a change of frame and therefore context: telling the same story from a different point of view, for instance can create a manifestly different interpretation.” (2006, 8). Second, adaptation scholars should attend to the process of its creation. And finally, adaptations’ process of reception must be examined. Essentially, Hutcheon adds to a structuralist approach, the rhetorical principles of audience, purpose, and context.

Another significant contribution Hutcheon makes is to emphasize an audience-response approach which highlights the varied effects adaptations have. Such an approach further grounds the relationships between adaptations and models by insisting that the view of those texts, the audience’s approach, will fundamentally alter the interpretation of that relationship. She insists that in order to give “meaning and value” to adaptations as adaptations we must recognize that “audiences operate in a context that includes their knowledge and their own interpretation of the adapted work” (111). For example, the audience’s awareness of an artist’s life and creative process can profoundly alter the way those audiences interpret the text. By extension, if a person consumes an adaptation before its model, their experiences of that relationship and the corresponding associations with each of their like-mode texts will be different than if they experienced

the model first and then the adaptation. This experiential quality places an emphasis on subjective priority, rather than diachronic priority.

Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen

Kress and van Leeuwen represent another move away from the field of film theory, primarily because they do not address the moving image. Yet standing behind their work is decades of analysis of imagistic structures from such diverse sources as Metz, Arnheim, Barthes and Halliday. From Kress and van Leeuwen we draw the term “multimodality,” representing both a means of signification (print, image, or sound) and the layering of these expressive modes to create various levels of meaning. These modes are orchestrated towards a single goal, like diverse instruments in a symphony, but are not held discretely, separately, as autonomous domains in the brain, or as autonomous communicational resources in a culture, nor are they deployed discretely, either in representation or in communication; rather, they intermesh and interact at all times. (1996, 39)

From the perspective of multimodality, texts are products of the interaction between contexts and agents. Agents select from resources that are often determined by various constraints and then arrange these selections into texts. Kress and van Leeuwen break this process down into four “strata of practice,” or multimodal metafunctions that express the creation and transmission of texts: Discourse, Design, Production, and Distribution. Every realized multimodal text

is a product of these metafunctions; they operate in a parallel way to discourse analysis's linguistic metafunctions (textual, interpersonal, and ideational).

Texts inherently convey an image of the world, and through that image distinguish themselves from some visions while aligning themselves with others. *Discourse* represents “socially constructed knowledges of (some aspect of) reality” (2001 8) that hail viewers based on the sharing of that cultural frame of reference. They constitute texts that, in turn, are designed from shared lexicons and arranged in simultaneously distinct and intertextual ways. *Design* refers to the shaping of these resources, as it “stands midway between content and expression. It is the conceptual side of expression, and the expression side of conception. Designs are uses of semiotic resources” (2001 8). Whereas design is an abstract mapping (a “storyboarding,” if you will), *Production* is the material application of the text, and it represents the “organization of the expression, to the actual material articulation of the semiotic event or the actual material production of the semiotic artifact” (2001 8). Its constraints are primarily manifest in the skills required to effectively work in a particular mode, but also in all the contextual elements generally associated with the production of any specific media text. *Distribution* grants the “semiotic artifact” a mass audience through a process of “re-coding” so that the text can be recorded (replicated) for transmission, in whatever medium is distinct to that text.

Given such music-industry metaphors, distribution summons an image of the transference of a multi-track musical work into a digital format for the purposes of replication and dissemination. Yet Kress and van Leeuwen's vision of distribution is far more nuanced, expressing the entire spectrum of textual movement between replication

(the production of a series of identical texts) and adaptation (the recoding of one text into another, distinct text). Thus, from the perspective of social semiotics, the adapted text would fall under the function of distribution, in that, it is a recoding of source data for a new purpose. In fact, the principles of adaptation as they evolve throughout this chapter (the power of multimedia to extrapolate and independently signify material imported from other media) come to bear in this understanding, in that it runs the gambit of interpretive frameworks. Kress and van Leeuwen suggest that it has been “of fundamental importance that the traditionally most highly regarded cultural forms should be seen to re-code an original, as faithfully as possible, to leave that original untouched, and to make it well-nigh impossible to tell reproduction and original apart” (2001, 88). From a recording of Hector Berlioz to the adaptation of Jane Austen, many feel a compulsion to protect those moments of cultural significance. But even given this predictable sentiment, the new transcoding technologies eventually move beyond the level of simple code transmission and develop “a semiotic potential of their own, [whereupon] the technological element recedes into the background” (2001, 92), so that we no longer speak about the system of distribution as a technological function, but as a meaning-making one all on its own. Transformation is apparent from the development of the film adaptation: first perceived as a means of storing information, film became a representative form whereby the technological achievements of the Lumieres and Edison began to be supplanted by semiotic ones (of Griffith and Eisenstein). Thus, to speak semiotically about the distribution function, particularly in terms of multimedia adaptation means,

in the first place, acknowledging that the technologies may be used in the service of preservation and transmission as well as in the service of transforming what is recorded or transmitted, of creating new representations and interactions, rather than extending the reach of existing ones. It also means that this is not an either/or distinction but a sliding scale. On the one end is the “faithful recording,”... [and in the middle] transformation which creates a new order amongst these [source materials]. ...Further down the scale there is no longer any attempt to disguise the physical impossibility of the subject position created by the mix. (2001, 93)

Still further on the scale is the vanishing point, where there is no discernable “original.” In other words, the distributive scale runs from an attempt at faithful reproduction (always within the constraints of the encoding medium), via transformation (in the form of editing), to origination: the point at which the distributive and productive functions merge into one and the “recoding medium becomes an originating medium and does not recode anything else any more, just as the written word, in the end, no longer recodes speech, at least in many of its uses” (96). Thus, Kress and van Leeuwen present to us a way to articulate this vast development of the adaptive strategy, and critical means to express it, as a sliding scale that is both synchronic and diachronic: the scale situates both the reservoir of possible choices in, as well as plotting the historical development of the adaptive process.

Conclusion

In the same way adaptations seek to approximate and appropriate earlier forms, borrowing their ancestor's ethos in order to gain legitimacy among the consuming public, so criticism related to adaptation has been consumed, not by the mechanisms of the adaptive process, but by adaptive legitimacy. Early theorists staked out radical positions: those whose affinity ran to the literary decried the relative poverty of film (and later, the same complaints would be, and are leveled, at newer media adaptations such as video games), while other critics, more amenable to newer forms of art, naively proclaimed film's powers of artistic and cultural transformation. These unfortunate battles, which still rage at the level of consumer preference, distract from the more interesting work of identifying how adaptation works. Later critics, primarily auteurists, rhetoricians, and semioticians, have largely set aside discussions of fidelity, recognizing that such arguments can be reduced to preference and are, more often than not, intractably partisan. What we glean from these latter scholars is that we have the resources to investigate adaptation as a valuable and inevitable part of artistic expression. We recognize that within rhetoric and semiotics are the tools with which we can decode how adaptations relate to their sources, relate to texts within their modes of expression (a video game adaptation may establish more associative links to other video games than to a filmic source), configure authorship, garner the cache that is their life's blood, and create meaning from multi-media elements.

Chapter 2

Adaptive Accrual: How Hyper- and Hypotexts become Megatexts

By and large, the study of adaptations is based upon direct textual correspondences; one-to-one links create the binary relationships that characterize most adaptation scholarship. It is not surprising, then, that when a film takes the name, characters, and rough plot of a novel, that audiences and critics would presume a connection. The problem with this model is that in concentrating upon the most overt connections between textual relationships critics tend to overlook more subtle, yet still meaningful ones. If we concentrate solely on narrative transference and formal verisimilitude other semiotic factors escape notice. The more unsatisfying adaptation scholarship tends to limit the scope of discussions to those elements of text which cross over directly in the presumed source/adaptation, or heteromodal associations, choosing to ignore equally meaningful connections between like-texts (such as film-to-film), or homomodal associations. Such scholarship almost always ignores even more significant movements which occur across several textual modes simultaneously (such as casting choices or promotional enterprises), or multimodal associations. Nor does such criticism illuminate how the whole range of texts are altered when such meaning is produced; we cannot presume the hermetic purity of a text once these associations are created. When texts are connected (titularly or through other strategies of association) to create an adaptive matrix, those bonds are meaningful and alter the *total* work – the *megatext*, composed of model, adaptation, *and* each of their associated linkages. We can no longer look at a model the same way we did before the linkages were created. Rather, as long as

those associations (that connect adaptation to source, source to source, and adaptation to adaptation) continue to emit a cultural resonance – as long as the bonds continue to be meaningful – the texts must always be approached and analyzed in terms of each other.

An anecdote may serve to briefly illustrate my point. In my Science Fiction Literature class I assign many texts for which there are adaptations; one of those is Alan Moore's *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (see figure 2.1).

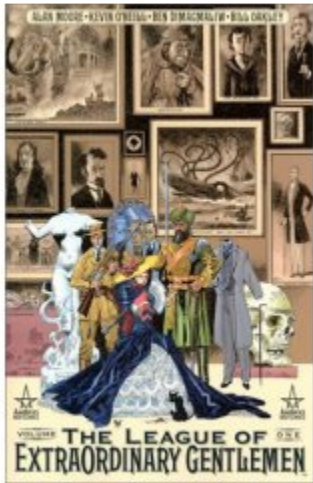


Figure 2.1 The Durable Peritext of Alan Moore's Graphic Novel *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*



Figure 2.2 The Durable Peritext of Stephen Norrington's Film *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*

Without hyperbole, the film version (see figure 2.2) of Moore's text is one of the worst crossovers ever. Mired in a plodding story, devoid of anything akin to Moore's stylistic flourishes, the film lacks the ribald and searing social commentary of Moore's overt textual poachings that hang like strange fruit from every page. Such an egregious catastrophe renders a fresh approach to Moore's text nearly impossible for any student with a memory past last week. But any attempt to compartmentalize the graphic novel, to set it off from its adaptation, is pointless. The more I try to banish Sean Connery's cavalier confidence from students' minds and replace it with the self doubt and paranoia

manifestly present in Moore's opiate-fogged Quatermain, the more the dissonant bonds are solidified. And speaking of bonds, the casting of Connery draws other, perhaps less-intended associations, blurring the characters of Quatermain with James Bond (whose precursor, Champion Bond aids the evil Moriarty in Moore's text). While such associations produce a moral ambiguity akin to Moore's characterizations (in which all the most reprobate freaks of British literature unite against the threat of an elitist, anti-populist government), such ambiguity comes at a price: Champion Bond and Quatermain are too disparate, too divided, and Connery's performance so flat that again, a dissonance is created in the transtextual associations. In short, these associations – associations outside the scope of more traditional narrativist analysis – are meaningful insofar as they alter the texts. I may say to my class "the film adaptation is a wretched thing. Let us never speak of it again," but the repressed has a way of returning; any attempt to secure the supposed purity of the model is corrupted by the associations created in the adaptation and its ancillary ones.

In order to begin to describe this power of adaptations to alter audiences' perceptions of models and to begin to suggest a rhetorical response to such a phenomenon, this chapter takes up the work of George Bluestone and identifies the limitations of his approach. I will note his attempt to hive off modes from one another, ostensibly to protect newer forms of media from unfair prejudice, which in fact, characterizes new media as simplistic in comparison to older forms. Rather, we will turn to rhetoric to discover examples of the historical use of adaptations to produce new texts. Second, we'll see how adaptations may form the cornerstone of narrative study, demonstrating that human interaction naturally produces a narrative accrual of meaning –

establishing that adaptive accrual is the glue which holds cultural identities together. Finally, manuscript and rabbinical cultures will provide models and metaphors for the process of adaptive accrual and suggest a strategy of reading *through* texts, fully accounting for their audience, purpose and context, rather than emphasizing the merits and shortcomings of each expressive mode.

Hermetic Narrativism (or “what film does...”)

Bluestone, the critical prime mover for adaptation theory, presents us with a contradiction: on the one hand, he generously affords that an adaptation must, by definition alter the text it claims as source as each is a “different artistic entity” (1957, 2), but on the other hand, he solidifies the anchor between the two aspects of the source/adaptation binary. While the former allows for differences, those differences create a gulf of quality and value, an unbridgeable gap against which the newer medium cannot measure – simply, the incommensurability of source and adaptation reduces the theoretical discussion to a matter of taste. At the same time, the maintenance of the binary system perpetuates the myth of fidelity by presuming a purity of source. By defaulting to a source-as-plenitude model, Bluestone renders a similarly pure imitation impossible.

In the years following Bluestone, adaptation scholarship has struggled with this dualism and fixated on the model he established. Most adaptation scholars begin by decrying the adherence to the binary and then blithely embracing it in their analysis, quietly perpetuating the common literary sins of logophilia or iconophobia (Stam 2000,

58). Slowly, over time, theoreticians who followed Bluestone began to chip away at the edifice of textual purity that underlies the force of the binary. In particular, the theories of Genette and his transtextual system of relationships began to reveal that adaptive analysis was far more complex than simply a matter of comparing a television series “by” Joan Craft to a novel by Jane Austen. Rather, suggest transtextualists, the analytical process begins by first identifying the textual elements, the inter-, para-, meta-, archi-, and hypertextual constituents, and then from this mass of textual interlinkings, positing the cultural, historical and discursive significance of those associations.

While not the first to establish the binary of source/adaptation or privilege the linguistic over the multimodal, Bluestone becomes the touchstone for criticism that follows. His relationship to textual dualism is conflicted about such a limited scope of analysis yet at a loss as to how to avoid it. On the one hand, Bluestone acknowledges a range of textual interactions, but only as those interactions apply to the adaptations themselves. Such textual complexity is never pointed to in the models. On the other hand, in the analysis of his various object texts, he forgets any idea of textual complexity, choosing to address only the hermetically sealed films and novels, each devoid of con-, para-, or hypertexts.

As a way of understanding this fundamental contradiction and moving towards a more representative interpretive framework, we must address the core of Bluestonian thought. Essentially, *Novels into Film* attempts to draw upon the ideas of Gotthold Lessing, who in his text *Laocoön, An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*, applied the Enlightenment sensibilities of Newton and Descartes to poetics and fine art. For Lessing, pictorial representation should strive for spatial purity and conversely, poetry

must represent time, or the changing moment. Bluestone draws upon these absolutes of Enlightenment presumption to create a distinction between media as privileged representations of either space or time. Of course, Newtonian mechanics gave way to Einsteinian relativity in the twentieth century, reformulating time and space as not discrete but amalgamated. But while science turned its back on the artificial gulf between the two, Bluestone did not. Parroting Lessing almost perfectly, he claims that “Both novel and film are time arts, but whereas the formative principle in the novel is time, the formative principle in film is space” (1957, 62). What, of course follows from this logic is the immutable gulf between the two; save at the moment of the script - the one point where the two overlap – the visual and the linguistic are incommensurate. But it is this moment of overlap that provides a doorway to understanding Bluestone’s internal conflict: how does one analyze the connection between two incommensurate semiotic forms? Bluestone’s answer is telling: films are only successful when they adapt particularly filmic texts; they are unable to express the complex internal states which are the mainstay of the modernist novel.¹ Thus, after his initial moves towards the multiplicity of textual instance via the script/novel/film connection, all suggestions of integration are abandoned, particularly in the interpretive passages; when it comes to analysis, Bluestone’s scope is reductive.

While beginning with the premise that the destruction of sources by adaptations is inevitable (1957, 62), Bluestone grants a measure of complexity to the economy of adaptive textual associations by noting the transitional role the script plays between novel and film:

Like two intersecting lines, novel and film meet at a point, then diverge.

At the intersection the book and shooting script are almost indistinguishable. But where the lines diverge, they not only resist conversion; they also lose all resemblance to each other...At this remove, what is particularly filmic and what is particularly novelistic cannot be converted without destroying an integral part of each. (1957, 63)

Yet this modicum of associative complexity is quickly overwhelmed by the idol of artistic “essence” which seeks to distil texts to their irreducible essences – a reductionist enterprise to say the least. What is significant in the above passage is the move from acknowledgment to deflection: he grants that behind and around these core texts lie a dizzying array of semiotic forms, but those texts distract from the essence of the source. We are witness to an all-too-common bait and switch from textual archeology to aesthetic metaphysics.

Consequently, when it comes to his analysis of Robert Z. Leonard’s 1940 version of *Pride and Prejudice*, Bluestone’s project becomes to isolate the essence of Austen’s text and show how it cannot possibly be represented by film. Of course, it goes without saying that when one presumes an essence as having linguistic properties, all other semiotic expressions will be correspondingly insufficient. Curiously, the way he distills Austen’s text is not through divination but by a reliance on literary criticism. He notes at great length that the post-World War Two criticism of Austen’s novel identified as its core a moral and psychic contradiction insofar as the moral contradiction produces irony while the psychic contradiction produces anxiety, etc. The 1940 film adaptation (with a writing credit to Aldous Huxley)

faithfully embodies the dialectics of Jane Austen's central ironies. What will concern us here, therefore, is how these contradictions, manifested in Jane Austen's structure and stylistics, were transferred to a cinematic version of the novel. (1957, 117)

Thus, the fundamental contradiction of Bluestone's method is revealed: on the one hand he historically contextualizes Austen criticism, while on the other hand, he uses that historicized material to identify an ahistorical centre in Austen's text. What this method suggests is that criticism must be contextualized, but not the novels on which it comments; art has an essence, but not its criticism. Without blushing, Bluestone identifies the essence of *Pride and Prejudice* by looking through a contextually specific critical lens. By the logic of his own system of analysis, he should have forgone the invocation of critical response and proceeded directly to Austen's text. By looking to Austen *through* the critics, Bluestone reveals the ruminative nature of the adaptive process without realizing it: culturally resonant texts are mulled over, commented upon, re-presented in new and temporally significant forms, and then reassessed. This adaptive process continues as long as the text is valued by a given culture. In short, Bluestone creates an artificial distinction between Leonard's interpretation of Austen and the critics', which in turn produces a theoretical dissonance, a contradiction that unravels his whole process.

The contradiction reveals the logophilic and ideological filter through which most translationalist and even narrativist adaptation scholars view the process, whereby adaptations, criticism and other sundry lesser art forms must be historicized and contextualized. Conversely, great texts are immutable, their cores unique. But of course,

no text has a single centre or core to which an adaptation must be faithful. Such limited reading strategies diminish both the adaptation and its model as

the notion of fidelity is essentialist in relation to both media involved. ...

it assumes that a novel “contains” an extractable “essence,” a kind of

“heart of the artichoke” hidden “underneath” the surface details of style.

(Stam 2000, 57)

In the end, claims Bluestone, Leonard’s text succeeds not on its own merits, but because of the novel’s. Austen’s text lends itself to cinematic adaptation particularly because of its script-like construction: “- a lack of particularity, an absence of metaphorical language, an omniscient point of view, a dependency on dialogue to reveal character, an insistence on absolute [moral] clarity” (1957, 118). Leonard’s film works because Austen was a prescient writer – the core of *Pride and Prejudice* is portable, its meanings universal, and its focus, material. Gone is the broad sense of text hinted at in Bluestone’s theoretical musings. In practice, translational adaptation scholarship presumes and perpetuates a binary system of source/adaptation while perhaps, but rarely, capitalizing on the liminal space of the script or material exigencies which surround them.

Thus, narrativists and translationalists beginning with Bluestone pay lip service to the diversity of textual association while in practice presuming a two-text correspondence. Conversely, the transtextualists, beginning with Gerard Genette and taken up by Robert Stam, Linda Hutcheon, and others, see adaptation as a multiplicity of textual instances with connections that transcend the basic connection Bluestone draws between script and novel, novel and film. Cedric Watts challenges the notion of textual isolation, suggesting that if it is

argued that to evaluate a work we have to regard it as a single entity, isolated from its fellows, the answer is that in deciding on the content and meaning of that work we naturally and properly take account of those parts of its context which seem to enrich it...and there are grounds for considering as one entity a narrative which extends across two or more tales... (1982, 63)

From a transtextual perspective, these connections are not simply a matter of narrative association but rather a much broader conception of textuality, one that includes elements of text commonly perceived to be ancillary or supplemental. In the transtextual model, the most direct term for the adaptive relationship is *hypertext*. The hypertext (say, Robert Z. Leonard's *Pride and Prejudice* or Simon Langton's *Pride and Prejudice*) is connected to an anterior hypotext (Jane Austen's novel, *Pride and Prejudice*) by means of transformation, elaboration, extension, or modification. A series of hypertexts may in turn create an accumulated megatext, in this case a cinematic tradition upon which later hypertexts (say, *Bridget Jones's Diary*) might draw. These structural relationships break through the privileged positions of great works and contextualize them as culturally significant utterances in a long series of related utterances. As Stam points out, adaptation is

a matter of a source novel hypotexts's being transformed by a complex series of operations: selection, amplification, concretization, actualization, critique, extrapolation, analogization, popularization, and reculturalization. The source material...can be seen as a situated utterance produced in one medium and in one historical context, then transformed into another

equally situated utterance that is produced in a different context and in a different medium. The source texts forms a dense informational network, a series of verbal cues that the adapting film text can then take up, amplify, ignore, subvert, or transform. (2000, 69)

Stam is suggesting here that within the transtextual perspective, value-laden distinctions between critical and aesthetic, core and ancillary break down upon examination of their situated-ness. Through this lens, all adaptation becomes comment. The notion of the source begins to disintegrate as associative linkages are joined; its valorized position is buried under the weight of its own discursive context and its own intertextual, metatextual, and hypertextual references. The adaptation becomes yet another form of discourse circulating around a text – an aesthetic critique, a modification which borrows (perhaps from a broad constellation of hypotexts, as with *Bridget Jones's Diary*, or more limitedly, as Langton's *Pride and Prejudice*) and re-mediate previous, culturally resonant forms.

Thus, while Bluestone's approach introduces material elements of production into the discussion of adaptation analysis, it simultaneously reduces the scope of adaptation analysis to modal strengths and weaknesses, hiving off cross-modal adaptations and models from one another. This hermetic approach belies the profound relationships that occur between adaptations and models, and completely ignores the homomodal associations that contribute to their creation. In contrast, we will now turn to the ways that adaptations, particularly iterations of texts, produce a growth, rather than a narrowing

of meaning. Again, this process involves several steps which each correspond to levels of analysis. At the broadest level, accrual suggests a process by which textual clusters are developed – an effect of the addition of adaptations to a larger textual rubric, the megatext. A rhetorical, specifically an eurhythmic analysis offers a lens through which those relationships can be critiqued, and social semiotics provides a tactic of close-level analysis for individual texts.

Adaptive Accrual

In Vivian Jones' 1996 Penguin edition of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Claire Lamont notes that the (re)construction of such an authoritative text was a result of careful scrutiny of the first, second, and R.W. Chapman editions, which not only assisted the editors in making decisions about which editions should achieve primacy in final release, "but in making decisions about obscurities and cruxes they have borne in mind the work of previous commentators on the Austen texts" (xxix). While this admission of submission to the will of critical marginalia should not surprise us, we should take careful note of its implications: that the critical scholarship of the intervening century and a half has served not only to shape public perceptions of the meaning and interpretation of a beloved text but perceptions of the primary text itself. Again, such an admission seems natural, expected even, given the task of assembling an authoritative text, but rarely do we consider the larger implications of such a strategy. We tend to think, unless pressed by convention or context, of texts as hermetic, discrete – criticism is criticism; novels are novels; films are films.

Ian Angus suggests that such texts are not hermetic, nor are they completely porous, rather, what occurs is a kind of “discourse spanning, or translating” wherein “different discourses cannot be given an independent legitimation – that no one discourse can monopolize the locus of translation” (1993, 197). This discursive movement from critic to text, from mode to mode is always modulated by the cultural context: the texts that circulate are those with resonance, that through repetitious cultural acknowledgement become a pseudepigraphal canon – simultaneously in and out of acceptance.

Thus, this new perspective of adaptation as a growing series of textual linkages, an *adaptive accrual*, arises out of three significant perspectives: rhetoric, cognitive science, and strategies of reading drawn from manuscript and rabbinical traditions. Rhetoric provides us with an historical precedent and template for understanding the rich aesthetic place borrowing and textual transfusion takes in the creation of new art forms. Cognitive science demonstrates that culturally resonant narratives grow and accumulate as a process of perception: human beings literally order experience in terms of narrative – a narrative that grows and changes as elements are added, fundamentally altering the whole as it is written. Finally, the Talmud and manuscript culture act as tangible representations of adaptive accrual: texts simultaneously critical and aesthetic; central in significance yet marginal by its definition; dialogically trans-temporal; and perpetually growing as each culture digests its existing textual forms, adapts to its own cultural contexts, and carefully adds to the totality. The process of reading these textual clusters is not one of critical valuation of one text over another – where readers evaluate which variation of a particular story or criticism is “good” or appropriately venerates its source, or even if identifying such a source is valuable. Rather, textual analysis, from the

perspective of manuscript culture or rabbinical scholarship, is a process of reading *through* texts to note variations within their historical and material contexts, of positing interpretations based not on binary models of fidelity but rather textual circulation and cross-permutation.

Inventio via Imitatio

Rhetoric not only provides us with a vocabulary to articulate many of the distinctive occurrences in adaptation, but also establishes clear precedent for our developing perspective of textual accrual. Of course for the ancient rhetoricians, the process of composition moved through several stages, the first of which was *inventio*. The ancient notion of invention was not a romantic presumption of divine inspiration but rather a keen awareness of the cyclicity of text. As James Jensen points out, “invention can mean using older artistic works or parts of them as models or rules for composition. The imitation or use of models is a traditional way of making art” (1997, 119). Simply, the culturally resonant text was a persuasive text, so rhetors were encouraged to draw upon previous forms a) so that audiences would be comforted by recognition of those expected elements, and b) to adapt those forms to new settings, thereby shaping something new out of the old. In such a view, the practice of borrowing becomes an exchange, a return on investment whereby the sin is not plagiarism or an intrusion into the proprietary uniqueness of a given text but when nothing is contributed in return to the canon of revered textual forms.² This repetition, or borrowing was, prior to the 19th century, a reputable, even integral part of artistic convention. As Gerli notes, Cervantes

used earlier texts in order to cultivate the ethos of education and learning, comment on earlier texts and forms, but primarily to demonstrate his aesthetic virtuosity by improving on them:

Intuitively aware of the role of custom, precedent, and convention in formulating literary discourse, Cervantes and his contemporaries ceaselessly imitated one another, reading and glossing one another's works, dismembering and reconstructing them... The result is that literature in late Renaissance Spain is often, rather than a simple matter of source and imitation, of *Quellen und Nachahmen*, a palimpsest-like process of appropriation, inscription, erasure, and transformation that forges endless series of texts from other texts, thus linking closely the practices of reading, writing and rewriting. (Gerli 1995, 3)

The resulting collage of overt textual linkages is like "peeling an onion," as associations draw out new meaning, exposing "multiple translucent layers of rich discourse built one upon another – all of them genetically connected, yet all separate, all distinct, and all with their own bite and texture" (1995, 4). Thus, *inventio*, or the rhetorical process of the creation of new art was *assumed* to be an adaptive one. There was no distinction between those texts which overtly re-mediated older cultural forms and those which did not because all texts were adaptations of the *imitatio* – variations on classical models and forms.

According to Muckelbauer (2003), the ancients had three types of imitation: imitation-as-replication, imitation-as-variation, and imitation-as-inspiration. While replication was used primarily as a teaching method, imitation-as-variation was widely

advocated as a means of achieving a greater aesthetic perfection. By altering great texts imitators interact directly with the greatness of their models and the immediacy of their own imitative acts to produce an after-life, something distinct to themselves, yet emergent from this interface of old and new. So, not only does this perspective “accept the fact that variation is necessarily an internal principle of imitative repetition, it even champions this necessity. The very ‘failures’ of the [imitation-as-replication mode] become the enabling engines for the [imitation-as-variation]” (Muckelbauer, 2003, 77). These acts were not considered plagiarism, in the sense that Vitruvius condemns borrowers in Book VII of *de Architectura*. Rather, they were considered transfusions of the old and venerated with new audiences and contexts: “as invention is the lesson of learning, so improvement becomes the motive of imitation” (Bruns, 1980, pg. 115).

But what, then, becomes the obligation of the imitator to the model in this system of adaptation? Seeming to anticipate the cross-modal remediation that so characterizes the postmodern adaptation, the ancients demanded only that the adaptation replicate the effects of model, rather than any particular element of its construction. In this sense, the imitation-as-variation model of adaptation shares motive with Benjamin’s task of the translator which “consists in finding that intended effect [*Intention*] upon the language into which he is translating which produces in it the echo of the original” (Benjamin 1968, 76). Thus, rhetoric’s emphasis is audience/reception oriented. Successful adaptations may play fast and loose with their models’ structure, plot, and characters as long as they inspire in their audiences similar effects as did their models. The imitation-with-variation conception of adaptation emphasizes context specificity; it implicitly understands that what is new and powerful one day is tired and flaccid the next. Rather

than fussing about textual fidelity, the adapter “encounters the model less as a determinate content than as an indeterminate one, a constellation of possible effects upon a future audience” (Muckelbauer, 2003, 79). The imitation-with-variation, then, provides a whole field of possibilities for artists to either update and revivify the effects of revered texts or boldly challenge the classics in combat, for “in a pedagogical milieu, this internal variation reveals itself through an emphasis on agonistic imitation” (Muckelbauer, 2003, 82). Such aesthetic rivalry was seen by the Greeks as essential to the budding artist, equivalent to the exercise of martial combat by their Spartan brothers.

In *Adaptations as Imitations* James Griffith takes up this connection between *inventio* and *imitatio*. Griffith’s suggests that rather than arguing over whether or not a text is faithful to its model, we must presume textual *infidelity*. The adaptation, he proposes, cannot help but be unfaithful as it is an imitation of an original. Griffith distinguishes the classical strategy of adaptation as imitation from the romantic one: while the classical *imitatio* allows that the mode of address is less important than the effects of the final product, the romantic view demands a hermetic purity of mode that always privileges a model and diminishes its imitation. The romantic view vests modes with unique and expressive plenitudes. It errs by metaphorically mapping the source onto nature (as the source of all inspired art; presumably, as distinct from adaptations which by this system must be categorized as secondary arts). From this metaphorical imposition we must infer that the model, like nature, is complete, unadulterated and completely external to and abstracted from ourselves – it is, in essence, a Platonic Form. In Romantic terms, the model becomes the signified: perfect in its abstraction; unapproachable in its complexity. Griffith points to the *Biographia Literaria* where

Coleridge suggests that “an imitation tries to capture some qualities of the object without perversely trying to capture them all” (Griffith 1997, 41). That is, an adaptation may suggest or gesture at the techniques of a source in its own structure, but to mistake those significations for the thing itself is a misapprehension. Griffith calls this a “deductively abstract” strategy wherein medium is emphasized over the separate units of story (*fabula*) or their effects. From such a perspective, “the written work need not taste like an apple, but they insist that the film adaptation taste like ink” (Griffith 1997, 41). In the source-as-plenitude perspective, the gulf between the adaptation and its model is too vast to allow anything approximating a successful adaptation as

the highest kind of art imitates the highest form of nature, a divinely inspired vision of transcendent or divine reality or truth, invented in artists’ minds through the use of a high kind of imagination. The work of art that results will, strictly speaking, always be a failure because it is limited to the materiality of the media. (Jensen 1997, 134)

The romantic prohibition against an attempt at fully representing nature was an act of veneration and inoculation against idolatry as much as it was a stylistic convention. Hence, the romantic conception of imitation places the adaptive process into a master/slave relationship, with the original exerting godlike influence over the imitation, and the imitation struggling to emulate, imitate, or live up to the wellspring of inspiration from which it comes.

Relatedly, the romantic conception of *imitatio*, a source-as-plenitude model belies the complexity of adaptive relationships, ignoring the difference made by an adaptation’s possible levels of claimed association with that source (or architextual

relationships). We must distinguish between an adaptation titled *Jane Austen's Emma*, and one titled *Clueless*, particularly when we note that the former is a carefully dated period-piece while the latter is a story of well-intentioned match-making in a 1990's Los Angeles high-school. Both of these texts are adaptations of *Emma*, by Jane Austen, but the signified relationship they have with their source is vastly divergent, and must be accounted for.

Thus, as Griffith points out, we must distinguish romantic conceptions of imitation that posit adaptations as parasitic emanations, from a rhetorical *imitatio* that presents adaptations as legitimate imitations-with-variations. While the former – just as Bluestone does – limits the study of adaptations, the latter broadens our understanding and interpretive possibilities of adaptations and prepares us to begin looking at clusters of associations in the form of megatexts.

Cognitive Narrativism

The principle of the adaptive megatext arises partly from the cognitive science investigations of perception. Mental representations, according to Walter Kintsch, are constructed along a hierarchy, beginning with those perceptions most directly hinged on tangible environmental factors and running in a spectrum toward narrative and abstraction. The hierarchy represents a movement from representation that is, on the one hand, static and direct (direct perceptual representations), and on the other, a network of “flexible [representations] that permit more and more arbitrary, unconstrained computations.... Thus, the picture is one of gradual unfolding of the full capacity of the

human mind” (1998, 16). In other words, when we perceive the world we do so along simultaneous metafunctions of cognition: we sense direct environmental stimuli that we construct into mimetic episodes. But those episodes are, in turn, ordered and interpreted through the lens of narrative. In this sense, the distinction between episode and narrative is the element of social cohesion. While the episode represents an ordering of individual perception, narrative is the ideological legitimation of collective perception. As events become episodes and are added to the larger social narrative, the growing text acts as an ideological episteme, inculcating cultural agents and binding them together:

Much of what we learn is in the form of stories – for example, our cultural and historical knowledge. Stories are narrative mental models that allow us to learn about the world....Socially elaborated and sanctioned stories are the cognitive structures that hold a culture together. (Kintsch 1998, 18)

Groups of individuals explain shared experiences and values through the free interplay of stories or narratives which establish social bonds and prescriptive collective cohesion. These socially cohesive bonds in turn shape all subsequent perception. That is, collective narratives grow and accumulate as a natural part of the glue that holds communities together, and this accrual represents “a creative interaction with the past, an adaptation of existing narrative structures to new situations. One could say that without old stories there could be no new ones” (Zeitler 2000, 141).

Thus, as noted by psychologist Jerome Bruner, narrative is not merely a means of representation but of complete reality constitution. Psychologists slowly discovered this narrative basis of reality almost by accident, from a more limited analysis of equating

representations with images, with propositions, with lexical networks, or even with more temporally extended vehicles such as sentences. It was perhaps a decade ago that psychologists became alive to the possibility of narrative as a form not only of representing, but of constituting reality...

(Bruner 1991, 5)

This reality is both diachronic and synchronic. It is diachronic insofar as it fills in the gaps of history; it “cobble” stories together into a holistic account, or cultural tradition. Yet it is synchronic in the way that story-tellers perform their social roles, or “how the narratives are given specific, localized definitions as communal memories” (Zeitler 2000, 139). Thus, when stories are layered atop one another they create a single unit of culture, explaining the past while constraining the future. Bruner suggests that all cultures share an impetus toward these very same narrative accruals. All cultures display

a “local” capacity for accruing stories of happenings of the past into some sort of diachronic structure that permits a continuity into the present – in short, to construct a history, a tradition, a legal system, instruments assuring historical continuity if not legitimacy. (1991, 20)

The present reflects upon the past, rearticulating it, reformulating it into a cultural narrative that guides the future. Those elements which achieve cultural resonance and are inducted into the cultural canon alter the overall shape of the narrative.

This perspective of cultural narrative accrual has obvious applications in adaptation, as adaptation is a tangible manifestation of these cultural narratives: previous forms, synchronous in their contextualized applications, are rearticulated into a newer media for the purposes of legitimacy. These stories, repeated over and over, present

“ways of interpreting and filling in the narrative gaps inherent to storytelling by layering stories and tales on top of one another to create a total picture – a composite, by embedding narrative into the social dynamic” (Zeitler 2000, 142). They represent a direct interaction between the past and present: the past legitimating the present in a way that a) explains the cultural lineage of the story and sets it into a context, and b) transfuses the story and provides an immediate relevance to something situated in the past.

When these adaptive installments grow and cluster around certain texts, or textual constellations, the process of accrual becomes apparent – we can see the megatext as the variations create a dialogic process of call and response, a conversation that persists with the cultural efficacy of the changing idea of the story (i.e., what *Pride and Prejudice* is “about,” its distinctive features, shift with the culture reading it). We begin to see that these textual relationships create networks of associations which “behind the individual works [point to] a meta-narrative, one large imaginative territory closely related to actuality and from which all the individual existent fictions can be seen as selections” (Watts 1982, 63). This larger text that accrues out of an associative network is, we could say, extrapolating from transtextual terms, the adaptive *megatext*. But how can we disentangle the clusters of the megatext without privileging one expressive mode over the other? How do we suspend those clusters in a way that preserves their contextual integrity but facilitates close analysis? Open-text practices of medieval manuscript culture as well as the tangible example of the rabbinical Talmud may offer models for how megatexts operate and move us closer to understanding how *eurhythmic* approaches to adaptations may form the basis of a generative interpretive strategy.

Open-Text and Rabbinical Accrual

In his exploration of Cicero's trial of Verres, Shane Butler calls our attention to a significant moment in the history of the palimpsest. In his prosecution of Verres on charges of altering public records, Cicero defies the traditions of ancient jurisprudence and pins his attack, not on the more common testimony of witnesses, but on a vast accrual of forensic, textual evidence. Butler contends that this moment marks a watershed, "a startling – and probably unprecedented – domination by the written word," whereby the great orator concedes "absolute authority" to the assembled texts (2002, 65). But this incident's importance to our discussion of adaptive accrual is not only in the forensic use of textual evidence, but in how Cicero deploys that evidence. Rather than concentrating on the direct statements contained in the texts themselves, Cicero emphasized what they did *not* say:

 this is the way [Verres] learned to look after himself and his welfare: by setting down in private and public records what had never been done, by removing what had been done, and always by subtracting, altering, or inserting something. (66)

The crux of Cicero's innovative prosecutorial strategy is that an understanding of the events in question would be impossible without an examination of the collection of various texts: adaptations, alterations, and significantly, erasures alter the meaning of the whole of Verres actions. Cicero's appeal to the jury is precisely the one given to the

audience of the adaptation: to examine the totality of the megatext (as they have experienced it) and glean meaning from the relationships between those connections.

A later example of the importance of the palimpsest is found in the rise of medieval manuscript and rabbinical texts. Gerald Bruns (1980) describes manuscript culture as having an “open text form” in contrast to modern print culture, where the distributed text has reached a “final form” in order to protect its proprietary originality. Open texts are precisely as one would expect: open to revision, comment, a whole range of responses, both critical and aesthetic that add to, change, even augment earlier texts. In this palimpsestic mode, the authority of authorship becomes a spectrum of proficiency rather than ownership, beginning with plagiarism (imitation-as-replication), and moving through the ascending complexities of translation, to imitation (imitation-with-variation, or adaptation), finally arriving at the master level of originality (Bruns 1980, 114). Thus, an “open text” is one of constantly unfolding and reformulated palimpsests which emerge from earlier incarnations, slowly and in stages as a lepidopterous movement from one form to another. But unlike the butterfly, the open text has no final form, but a series of after-lives.

Perhaps the most generative carryover from pre-modern conceptions of open-text forms is the Hebrew Talmud: its complex design presents a near-perfect diagram of the process of adaptive accrual. The texts that constitute the Talmud span centuries and a geography throughout Europe and Asia (and with newer editions, the Americas, as well), and represent the conversation that defines Rabbinical scholarship. Ancient Rabbis comment on Torah (or the law), and subsequent Rabbis comment on the commentary in addition to the Torah, and so on. Because of the nature of Jewish Diaspora, various

anthologies of the Talmud co-existed independently of one another. Occasionally, cultures met, mixed and exchanged scholarship which created a cross-pollination of rabbinical ideas. This process of traditional anthologizing continued relatively uninterrupted until the creation of the printing press.

The most common manifestation of Talmud is the Babylonian Talmud, whose basic structure has remained nearly unchanged since it was first anthologized in Italy between 1484 and 1519. The Bomberg edition (figure 3.3), produced between 1520 and 1530, is the culmination of this work. This unique, simultaneous-representation

method of anthology was a breakthrough for a field of study which, until the invention of the printing press and methods of mass production, depended largely upon memorization and an intimate knowledge of the complex textual relationships that defined the commentary and elaboration process which makes up the Talmud. Such a structure places the Talmud more in line with medieval manuscript culture than mass printing-based closed forms insofar as Talmud was defined by “adaptation or *translatio*, the continual rewriting of past works in a variety of versions, a practice



Figure 2.3 A Page of the Talmud (Segal
<http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~elsegal/TalmudPage.html>)

which made even the copying of medieval works an adventure in supplementation rather than faithful imitation” (Nichols, 1990, 3). This model placed the texts into direct proximity to one another so that readers could identify the threads of comment by their topographical proximity to each other on the page and typographical distinction from one another:

these editions established the familiar format of placing the original text in square formal letters in the centre of the page, surrounded by the commentaries of *Rashi* and *Tosafot*, which are printed in a semi-cursive typeface. The page divisions used in the Bomberg edition have been used by all subsequent editions of the Talmud until the present day. (Segal, <http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~elsegal/TalmudPage.html>)

The eighteenth century saw the completion of the layout and design of the Talmud, facilitated by new printing strategies used by the Widow and the Brothers Romm press under the direction of Samuel Shraga Feigensohn.

Numerous commentaries were added for each treatise, among them *Rav Alfasi*, which had previously been printed as a large separate work, and the margins of the page were filled with important glosses. A complete Talmud here consists of twenty oversized volumes, in contrast to the Bomberg and most subsequent Talmud editions, which were bound in twelve volumes (Heller 1995, 49)

This initial design allowed the addition of more and more marginalia into the twentieth century. Additions to the progressive marginal system continue to this day.

The main quality that we should take from the history and design of the Talmud is adaptive intertextuality by means of the growth of marginalia. The Talmud acts as a Renaissance metaphor for the ways linked texts interact with each other across time and space. The growth of this complex network of associated works occurs around a central node; in the case of the Talmud that node is the Torah, or The Law. Adaptations and their accoutrements (promotional material, associated objects such as clothing, dolls, and other products) begin to cluster around texts to which they are associated, pulled together by a gravitational force of association, but each weighted differently according to their cultural resonance and relevance. As each adaptation is presented to the public, so the megatextual constellation grows, just as the Talmud does. Like the Talmud, the megatext's growth is regulated on the one hand by anthologizing impulses that bring texts together by means of their overt and subtle associations, and on the other, by the cultural marketplace that provides the means by which anthologists (the public) evaluate texts in order to accept or discard them.

Another insight allowed by this metaphorical association of the adaptive megatext with Talmudic architecture is that the texts which constitute the Talmud are relational and dialogic, not mere parasites. Adaptive texts interact not only with the central text around which they cluster but with each other, as the addition of elements alters the whole. The accruing marginalia of the Talmud discuss, translate, reference, argue, and adapt, not only the text around which they orbit, but each other. What emerges is a far more complex network of adaptive associations than a one-dimensional representation can hope to represent.

In a twenty-first century development in Talmud design, new media developer David Small uses the architecture of the Talmud in order to place texts in proximity to one another in a three-dimensional virtual space (see figure 2.4).



Figure 2.4 The Talmud Project Allows Users to Manipulate Multiple Texts in Virtual Space
(www.davidsmall.com/talmud.html)

The Talmud Project explores the simultaneous display of multiply-related texts by means of several dials which allow the reader to trace ideas from one text to another, examine translations, and find it in the larger context of the full corpus. Thus in “combining passages from the Torah and the Talmud, in English and French translations, the software enables viewers to manipulate blocks of text into the walls, streets and windows in an imaginary city of words...” (Muschamp 2000).

His representations attempt to preserve the context and methods of transmission, down to the types of fonts and surrounding material used. Small notes that “the context within which we find information often tells us as much as the information itself” (1999, 47). Readers use the same methods of textual layering and association as the Talmud to discover otherwise hidden forms of interconnectedness.



Figure 2.5 The Physical Interface for the Talmud Project (www.davidsmall.com/talmud.html)

Therefore, the digital Talmud Project invokes the strategy of textual simultaneity in order to demonstrate that texts can be read through time and space in dense clusters of associations. Adaptive accrual posits a similar process of clustering whereby cross-media adaptations can be revealed and evaluated in their larger megatext. Such revelation is possible because, as Cutter notes, sustaining texts in Talmudic arrangements produces polyvocality and a plethora of new

interpretive possibilities: “Everywhere we look [in the Rabbinical tradition] ... we come upon new allusions and, therefore, new meanings” (Cutter 1990, 108).

But the Talmud is both anthologizing and open-ended. It is not, as I have identified, by any means complete. Rather, the marginalia expand as the anthological process continues to compress temporally separated authors of every type into running debates, narratives, and commentaries. We can speak of the anthologizing impulse of the Talmud because, as Michael Chernick notes, the Talmud is less a single text than a multiplicity of texts which “are compendia of ... legal dicta and lore” (2000, 64) which circle each other through time. The boundaries between commentary and narrative begin to blur, to create a gyre whereby texts are recycled and regurgitated over and over so that narratives, in fact, will comment, while legal and commentary tracts will weave stories,

drawn from both the social context in which they were written and forms of earlier Talmudic text. In short, Talmudic design is distinguished by

the tendency of gathering together discrete, sometimes conflicting retellings of stories or traditions (e.g. the two versions of the creations of woman...), and preserving them side by side as though there were no difference, conflict, or ambiguity between them. (Stern 1997, 1)

In fact, the very notion of the Talmud is as a series of examples, illustrations, glosses strung loosely together. These lessons, examples or dogma layer atop one another, adapting each other and creating new textual relationships over and over, becoming a fusion of aesthetics and commentary. In it we witness the effortless suspension of multiple semiotic devices within a single text moving back and forth through history, commenting and illuminating. Therefore, the very structure of the Talmud “plays with this polysemy deliberately, creating examples within examples, each of a slightly different type” (Boyarin 1995, 31).

So at least in an open-text sense, when an adaptation is added to the cultural anthology it does not exist in a one-to-one relationship with the text upon which it seeks to model itself; but neither does it exist independently of its network of associations. Rather, the adaptation acts as an engine of cultural transfusion: circulating elements of previous forms into newly relevant and realized modes of expression. Stern identifies this inspirational quality as a basic element of the anthologizing function of the Talmud, noting that its form of associated texts, all interlinked and interconnected becomes

an agent in the creation, or re-creation of Jewish culture and community.

No only has the anthology functioned as a medium for retrieving and re-

creating tradition...but it has also served as a figurative, idealized space for imagining new communities of readers and audiences, for transforming the past into a new entity through conscious fragmentation, literary montage and collage. (1997, 6)

The adaptation, rather than being measured “against” previous instantiations, should be examined not only in its material context, but in its anthological context. That is, adaptations point to elements of culture in a multiplicity of forms (narrative, comment, didact, etc.) that resonate through time, and through the constantly renewing structure of association, inspire further comment and rearticulation. As Stern puts it: “the very act of selection can be a powerful instrument for innovation; juxtaposition and recombination of discrete passages in new contexts and combinations can radically alter their original meaning. This is certainly the case with implicit anthologies – the Talmud is easily the best example...” (6). In other words, when adaptations occur, they are culturally summoned (there is something powerful about the source that demands a rearticulation), debated (the relationship between narrative and comment is a porous one in the Talmud), and added to the larger associative architecture of adaptive accrual. In transtextual terms, this growing text must be considered a *megatext*, or a grouping of instantiations under an overarching rubric. These additions to the greater architecture alter our perceptions of the totality – we see *through* the adaptations and their hypertextual progeny as a kind of lens or rhetorical, terministic screen.

In order to critically examine the megatext we must adopt a method of textual suspension and contextualization. When we identify an adaptive megatext, a group of texts associated with one another that we care to infer as adaptations, we take careful note

of the associations and connections that construe them *as* adaptations and begin the process of *reading through* them. This strategy is exemplified by Michael Chernick as he reads through the successive forms of the Rashbi narratives (a cautionary tale where a commoner makes light of a seer's advice and is punished by God), by first contextualizing each variation culturally and historically, and tracing it through its Palestinian Talmud, Babylonian Talmud, and Medieval incarnations. The tale is re-invented, or "turned" over and over in order to discover "new insights and contributions to the ever growing body" (2000, 63) of the Talmud. The process consists of several distinct acts, essential to adaptive analysis: first, Chernick identifies the set of adaptations. In the case of the Rashbi stories, he incorporates three narrative versions of the text, as well as a host of critical commentaries on it. Second, he proceeds to delineate each version of the story, noting the differences, historicizing each variation. Underlying this impulse to contextualize rather than evaluate each variation or adaptive alteration is a presumption that adaptations arise to meet specific temporal and geographic cultural variables unforeseen by the original authors: "vastly different Jewish communities expected the Talmud's dicta to be applied in places and times very distant from Sassanian Persia where it was born. To do so, it had to respond to the specific religious, cultural, social, economic, and political needs of varied Jewish Communities unknown to the Talmud's creators" (Chernick 2000, 64). Consequently, in order to appreciate each distinct adaptation, it must be placed within the context of the motives for its creation. It is therefore incumbent upon adaptation scholars to carefully consider why the newest variation exists. What cultural resonances, both temporal and geographical have summoned this text into being? Third, after unpacking each variation he identifies the

major critical readings of each, noting particularly the moments when the Talmudic critics elaborate on each of the variations. Thus criticism *adds* to the overall semiosis of adaptation because the commentary changes the way the text is read, and then, re-read, over and over. Each critical addition is in turn placed in context, demonstrating that just as the narrative process arises from a material context, so also does the critical process. Finally, Chernick puts the elements back together and suggests what these alterations, variations, and permutations suggest, not only about the Rashbi story's reconstitution through history, what it suggests but the process of critically reading adaptations through time.

Conclusion

We find, then, that binary approaches to adaptation – approaches that focus on adaptations and models to the exclusion of other relevant associations – all too frequently limit useful interpretive strategies. Hiving off texts from their audiences, purposes, and contexts tends to lead to modal evaluations rather than an analysis of adaptations *as* adaptations. Rather, when we approach adaptations, we should focus on the relationships between texts. On a structural level, these relationships grow and accrue as culturally resonant associations are formed and reinforced to weave a dense network of dependent texts under a titular tapestry: a megatext. Alterations, additions, erasure all produce modifications in the megatext, and therefore, alter its meaning, its overall semiosis. The critical approach we must take, as modeled by rabbinical reading practices, involves

reading through those associative connections. The approach posited in the next chapter, *adaptive eurhythmia*, involves accounting for and interpreting the adaptive relationships. If the megatext is the field of familial flowers, eurhythmia examines the associations between those blooms as well as the material context from which they spring – the *gout de terroir* that plays such a significant role in the development of their character.

Chapter 3

Eurhythmia: Reading “Adaptations as Adaptations”

As we have seen, adaptations are a ubiquitous part of artistic expression but they cannot be isolated from their larger cultural associations into simple, binary equations. Rather, adaptations form textual clusters that grow as each successful text is added; adaptive accrual, then, describes the transformation of those successive adaptations into megatexts. But accrual is an effect, rather than an interpretive strategy. The fact remains, we must have a way of talking about texts in adaptive relationships, or, as Linda Hutcheon says, we must “deal with adaptations *as adaptations*” (2006, 6), or as texts haunted by their shadowy models. When we examine adaptations as adaptations, we must emphasize the relationships between them, as well as the host of associations within each of their textual clusters. In emphasizing these connections, adaptive analysis becomes an accounting for and expressing of the nature of those relationships that constitute the megatext. As Hutcheon presents in her *Theory of Adaptation*, adaptation analysis must consider formal relationships (adaptations that occur within modes must be considered differently than those that occur across modes), issues of authorship, the audience of the adaptation, and the social and material context out of which adaptations emerge.

One of the perennial problems of adaptation is how to talk about the inevitable changes that occur in the movement between modes of expression. More traditional scholarship, from Bluestone, and even the translationalist movements, tends to itemize the things that each medium “does well,” and then proclaim axioms, such as: “cinematic

expression has difficulty conveying internal states.” What this strategy tends to accomplish, however, is a rather patchwork series of rules for scholarship, rather than a sustained and productive strategy for identifying what happens when an artist or scholar selects a text that they want to import into another medium of expression and then adapts it to a new time and mode. How do we talk about the changes which naturally occur in modal shifts without falling into predetermined value judgments that seem so much a part of adaptation theory and criticism? Ancient rhetoric put less stock in the hermetic disciplinary categories we tend to see today. Consequently, many rhetorical terms found themselves circulating through various aesthetic applications: from oratory, to architecture; from music, to dance; and so on. Some terms even began to suggest quite precisely the very adaptive process we are seeking to define here. One term in particular, *eurhythmia*, when traced through its ancient uses and modern applications, may hold particular use for articulating the radical shifts of expression that occur in adaptation, but without judgment or valuation. The eurhythmic approach may provide us with precisely the principles and tools we need to examine adaptations and their sources without losing sight of the larger principles of adaptive accrual.

The Right Fit for the Right Purpose

In Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*, Socrates speaks to the blacksmith Pistias about what distinguishes his armor from others. It is the proper fit, Pistias replies, the perfection of shape, or *eurhythmia* which brings together two distinct parts (in this case the armor and the body) into a unified whole. In this sense, *eurhythmia* is like *kairos*: the proper use for

the proper moment, for as Socrates points out, not all bodies are the same. Pistias replies that whether or not the wearer's body is "ill-proportioned," the breastplate he makes will be well-proportioned because it is made to fit the exigencies of the body: *eurhythmia* transforms the ill-proportioned into well-proportioned "by making it fit; for if it is a good fit it is well-proportioned." (3.10.10-12). Here we see *eurhythmia*'s relationship between art and inspiration: the armor is not the body, it is designed to fit the body. Neither is it a replication of the body to which it conforms. The two are distinct; the armor cannot be conflated with or mistaken for the body. The integrity of each is maintained, but the trace of the form is in the armor, which is literally an adaptation of the body, pointing to its inspiration, yet distinct from it in form, function, and material.

In this sense, *eurhythmia* establishes a relationship between the two elements: the armor is obviously made in reference to the body, but exists and operates independently from it. When we appropriate the terms of ancient *eurhythmia* to that of adaptive *eurhythmia*, we find that the same is the case. The principles of adaptive accrual identify that inter- and hypertextual associations between adaptations and their sources, as well as the myriad paratextual (critical, promotional, commentary, documentary) materials, all create a dense network of associations which are constantly in flux as each new adaptive element is added to the larger megatext. This network creates a screen through which we view the model, only to discover that the text we hoped to find is in fact the totality of textual association – a megatext. We can no longer "see" the model text without looking through the adaptations. In an *eurhythmic* sense, then, the adaptation is the armor, while the model is the body. The adaptation does not seek to replicate the model, merely to find the proper fit. The issue of an *eurhythmic* approach then, becomes, what do we

mean when we say “fit?” The fit is that element of adaptation which is most rhetorical: the appropriate response to a changing audience, purpose, and context. The armor fits for war, the toga, for peace. Each garment requires the appropriate design, given the exigence. So too, is the adaptation “fitting” when it literally adapts, not only to its model, but to its environment; the key element of the eurhythmic fit is the relationships created between texts and contexts.

The ancient Roman architect Vitruvius uses the term in his treatise *De Architectura* to establish the relationship between the architectural structure and the outside world in the unified aesthetic of “the view.” He gestures to this connection between internal and external elements by suggesting that eurhythmia is distinct from mathematical symmetry in its adaptation of other forms, what Rowland and Howe refer to as a “softening of that appearance by intuitive, non-mathematical modifications” (1999,150), for example, by the relationship of movement to music in dance. Both the dance itself and the music will have their own distinct form, structure and symmetry, but it is the relationship between them that is eurhythmic. In Thomas Noble Howe’s illustrations accompanying Vitruvius’s *Ten Books*, he glosses eurhythmia by placing a sketch of the human form next to that of a Doric column in order to illustrate this transition (1999, 147), this exchange of gain and loss in the “rounding of the edges” that take place in the interpretation of one form in the terms of another.

Additionally, Vitruvius’s eurhythmia is well-translated as “shapeliness” by Rowland: “eurhythmia is an attractive appearance and a coherent aspect in the composition of the elements. It is achieved when the elements of the project are proportionate in height to width, length to breadth, and every element corresponds in its

dimensions to the total measure of the whole” (Vitruvius 1999, 25). According to Lise Bek, the principle refers to “the beauty of sight and a well-balanced appearance based on the calculated distribution of all parts” (1999, 142)

Now we have, in addition to the eurhythmic fit, the notion of shapeliness. Here, particularly when we return to the metaphor of the armor, we can start to identify that the term seeks not a one-to-one correspondence between elements but rather a relational correspondence. The key to the decoding is not “the calculated distribution of all parts” (1999, 142) but the contextual notion of “beauty” upon which it is based – an understanding of the effect the text had on its own audience. Thus the continued emphasis of the eurhythmic level of analysis is attention to emergent context. How does the adaptation arise? Whom does it hail? What social and political contexts resonate in the adaptation? From what aesthetic resources does it draw? Do those aesthetic resources fit the new form?

Adaptive Movement

Eurhythmia presents us with a superb starting point for discussing rhetorical approaches to adaptation, because it is a truly cross-modal term. The term was used initially to express the relationship between a dance and the music it adapts, signifying a beauty in movement. Like all rhetorical terms, it expresses a relationship between participants, rather than quantification (“there are to be X number of movements per beat”), abstraction (“this movement means X”), or value statements (“the dance is a travesty because a. its creation is against the wishes of the musical composer; or b. it does

not emphasize the same themes as the music”). It is inextricably linked with *rhythmos* in its fusion of order, structure, and aesthetics. In other words, *eurhythmia* points to precisely the potential and problems which occur in any adaptive situation. And while its initial uses in relation to dance suggest immediacy or proximity of the adaptation to the model, any serious consideration of the term must emphasize the *nature of the relationship* expressed, rather than any temporal simultaneity. That is, when one dances to music, one is not replicating the music, the dance elaborates on it. The two modes are expressly different; they have points of intersection, of course, most notably *rhythmos* (hence the titular association between the terms), but one would be hard pressed to speak of a dance as being unfaithful to its corresponding music. Rather, once the dance begins, the two are fused – a single, larger unit of expression in spite of their temporal divergence (music may be composed separately from the choreography of the dance) or modal distinction, yet at the same time they are distinct enough to be detangled (one can imagine many possible dances to the same music depending upon the *eurhythmic* exigence). Thus, *eurhythmia* suggests precisely the kind of semiotic accrual required for a serious discussion of adaptations. It forgoes the privileging of one form over another – music over dance – as such arguments about parasitic art forms are laughable when one presumes an *eurhythmic* analysis.

It is a relational concept. That is, it considers the relationship between elements within the composition as well as the relationship between the art and its human referent. It is this principle of the dynamic aesthetic that occurs between *inventio* and use, as well as the structural relationship between elements within a single work that concern adaptation.

While the ancient Rhetoricians did not dwell excessively on this association between music and the body's expressive rhythm, the early 20th century musicologist, Emile Jaques-Dalcroze began to resurrect the original Greek, rhetorical meaning by creating a theory of music and body that placed rhythmic patterns at the centre of individual expression. The crux of the Jaques-Dalcroze method is a principle and method of eurhythmics which posits that rhythm is the primary element of music, and that the source for all rhythm may be found in the natural rhythms of the body (Choksy 2000, 97). Jaques-Dalcrozian eurhythmics integrates three approaches: 1) solfège, or the study of theory, harmony, and scales, 2) improvisation, or the development of a unified internal ear and body, and 3) rhythmic, or the exploration of inner and outer effects of rhythm in relation to the above two elements.

In other words, Jaques-Dalcroze provides a way by which two texts that have a practical associative relationship can be examined, while sustaining both their traditions and individual associations (i.e., Jaques-Dalcrozeian eurhythmics sustains both musical and dance traditions as simultaneously relevant to the critical and practical approach of the integrated dance/music text). This approach has profound implications for adaptation studies, as it provides us with a possible framework for narrowing the focus in our approach to adaptive accrual; while accrual describes megatextual relationships, eurhythmia may provide the groundwork for an analysis of texts in direct, adaptive relationships. Thus, for the sake of adaptive eurhythmia, we could say that the three approaches would involve three parallel steps: 1) Solfège, or an accounting of the model and its myriad homo-modal textual associations. That is, an outline of the range of associations within the model's own mode of expression – in the same way the “Do-Re-

Mi” pattern accounts for the scale of possible notes, 2) improvisation, or the examination of the adaptation’s homo-modal textual associations, and 3) rhythmicity, or a discussion of the relationship between the adaptation and its model, accounting for and situating the two in the network of accrued and accruing associations.

While these three principles provide the general approach, Jaques-Dalcroze also developed a formula to identify the individual constituents that made up eurhythmia, or rather, the specific details of the eurhythmic process: Space + Time + Energy + Weight + Balance + Plasticity = Eurhythmia. We can begin to decipher many of the pressing issues which concern serious scholars of adaptation if we unpack this equation. The principles behind each term may suggest a way into the adaptive analysis or an examination of the space between two related texts.

The relationship between space and time and the adaptation obviously moves us to consider the cultural and temporal divergences that account for the gain and loss of adaptation. Many design choices are shaped by shifts in the time and place between an adaptation and its sources. *Ran*, Akira Kurosawa’s 1985 adaptation of *King Lear*, owes an accounting of its difference to place, more than time (as its events take place in relative temporal simultaneity to *Lear*); but obviously, the changes commensurate with the passage of time creates cultural shifts as well. Texts with progressive and multiple adaptations, such as those of *Lear*, serve as a profound statement of the power of time to create a freshly turned cultural soil into which new readings might be planted. Thus, the time and space aspects of the eurhythmic equation demand a cultural account of the relationship between the cultural aspects of both adaptation and model.

Energy suggests the material aspects of production. As Linda Hutcheon points out, adaptations are products shaped by material exigencies; the means of the text's conveyance shape the reception of that text. Thus, changes in the "the materiality involved in the adaptation's medium and mode of engagement – the kind of print in a book, the size of the television screen, the particular platform upon which a game is played – is part of the context of reception and often of creation as well" (2006, 143). An examination of the energy category would involve elements traditionally seen as outside the scope of aesthetic study such as production costs, production politics and events, the relationship between the text and the marketplace into which it is introduced, etc. Paratextual elements, such as marketing campaigns, advertisements, critical responses, cross-promotion selections, etc., would also be included in this category – in short, all the aspects of text that contribute to the "making of" a successful and well-received (or poorly-received) cultural artifact.

We might say that the notion of eurhythmic weight stands beside space and time. We may even go so far as to re-identify it as a question of genre or the transtextual architext. The size and body type of the dancer suggest the affordances and constraints of possible movement styles. Similarly, the generic considerations of a text play a large part in how one approaches that text. Of particular note for adaptation studies is the tension frequently developing between the generic category of a model and that of the adaptation. These tensions arise, again as a result of cultural and temporal separation between them, as genres tend to be in a state of constant flux. Genette points out that new architextual systems come "to replace the old through a subtle interplay of unconscious or unacknowledged shifts, substitutions, and reinterpretations that allow the new to be

presented, not without error but without scandal as ‘in keeping’ with classical theory” (1992, 36). Architexts too are eurhythmic insofar as they shift to fit the contexts in which they find themselves; they accommodate new forms and revise old models while retaining the traditional form’s ethos. Both architext and weight lead us to a set of constantly changing expectations as to the nature of the work in question: the possibilities for expression and the tensions created by dissonance.

A study of balance demands that when we approach two texts determined to have an adaptive relationship that we account for the full range of their inter- and hypertextual relationships. That is, we must recognize that adaptations do not enter into exclusive relationships with their claimed (and at times unclaimed) sources. They also establish intertextual associations with like-texts. That is, a video game adaptation such as EA’s *Lord of the Rings: The Battle for Middle Earth* will obviously draw its major plot and character development from the novels of Tolkien, and perhaps to a greater extent, the Peter Jackson films, but we would be remiss if, in our analysis, we did not discuss the profound relationship this game shares with *Warcraft*, or even *EverQuest*. In other words, balance forces the critic to acknowledge the larger set of connections that create adaptive texts. Balance forces us to look at both overt and covert hyper- and intertextual associations in both hetero- and homomodal sides of the adaptive relationship to decode what makes the most recent adaptive equation.

Plasticity is flexibility, or that measure of, what bibliophilic adaptation scholars would consider “deviation from the source,” or a more even-handed scholar would suggest, the ways adapted texts alter to fit their medium. How pliable is the story? As Bluestone points out, *Pride and Prejudice* is a text that requires little in the way of

plasticity, as it is a text based on primarily cinematic action. Consequently, most adaptations of Austen's flagship novel (and, they are ever increasing in number) keep rather close to the text, in terms of plotting. Most of the plasticity comes in the uniquely visual aspects of the film. Other texts, Terry Gilliam's adaptation of Hunter S. Thompson's essay *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, for example, require extensive plasticity in order to be made into cogent adaptations. What becomes particularly interesting in matters of plasticity is at what point hypertextual (or the relationship between one text – the hypertext – and its anterior, reference text – the hypotext) relationships strain upon the titular paratextual and the architextual (or the relationship between the text and its title and their further relation to generic categories). That is, the title of a text is a matter of selection and design. For example, *Clueless*, an adaptation which places significant emphasis on the weight, space, and time elements of eurhythmia, nonetheless runs close to its hypotextual association in Austen's *Emma*. It certainly runs closer in design than say Cuarón's *Great Expectations* (1998) does to its titularly identical hypotext. What we find is that when we mark this tension between hypertext, paratext, and architext, we must critically account for it. We may conclude that the para-/architextual association may be entirely a marketing ploy (which, in the case of Cuarón's adaptation of Dickens, may not be far from the truth) to situate a film about a painter's unrequited love to capitalize on a blossoming renaissance of British film adaptations, known as the heritage movement. Some models require substantially more plasticity in the adaptive process than others and adaptors who account for plasticity are more likely to create better adaptations as the notion of plasticity, like the entirety of eurhythmic analysis, emphasizes the relational quality between texts.

I will also note in detail in chapter five how plasticity interacts with energy to demand changes in plotting and detail in video game adaptations. The addition of interactivity transforms the material form of the text to such a degree that designers must eurhythmically deviate from the model in order to maintain the integrity of the new architext. Gaming conventions force the adaptation to accommodate the salient elements of the model (its theme, imagery, fabula, etc) to a new material context.

Thus, by mining the ancient implications as well as the later uses of the term *eurhythmia*, we are able to analyze specific texts within a larger megatext and use a set of general principles for detailed textual analysis because eurhythmia delineates the appropriate topics of adaptive analysis.

The Making of a Cinematic Arwen

In order to see how *eurhythmia* might work we need only look at the way Peter Jackson has altered the character of Arwen from Tolkien's text. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* is a distinctly masculine text: a story of the lives of men in war. With minor exceptions, there are few women, and very little in the way of love plots. This state of affairs is absolutely consistent with the Norse epics upon which Tolkien based *The Lord of the Rings*, but in cinematic terms, a lack of female characters and the absence of a fulfilling romance is a recipe for disaster. Architextual convention and popular expectation demand that a movie, particularly one of such epic scope, contain both strong women and dynamic love plots that run parallel to and augment the more heterosocial bonds and actions that make up the action genre.

The Fellowship of the Ring, Special Extended DVD Edition includes two disks, labeled “appendices,” which contain, among other things, a series of documentaries chronicling the creation of the films from book to screen. In his discussion of the process of adaptation, Peter Jackson comes to the rather obvious conclusion that while “the book is a great book, the stories are great stories, the characters are great, but [*The Lord of the Rings* is] unfilmable. And it *is* unfilmable. If you were to just shoot the book page by page, scene by scene, it would just be a mess” (2002 “From Book to Vision” The Appendices Part 1). Such a suggestion is so obvious that it is easy to skip over its importance. Most of us recognize this fact yet whenever we encounter an adaptation we tend to compare it to our experience of the model. We witness the inevitable changes which occur as the narrative is fit into a new order. But when we consider the relationship eurhythmatically we find that rather than being disappointed at such statements, we should recognize them as a matter of course. The question becomes not, as Bluestone suggests, *if* a source text is replicatable, but rather, is the adaptation the proper fit? In the case of *The Lord of the Rings*, one of the most telling eurhythmic elements is that of Arwen, a minor character in Tolkien’s novel – mentioned twice in the course of the main text, yet a prominent figure in the Appendices – who Jackson transforms into a pivotal figure in the film, even going so far as to cast one of the most well-known actors of the entire ensemble to play her. The questions arising from an eurhythmic view are not valuative (“is it wrong to alter her role?” “Does it spoil Tolkien’s intent to include her as a motivating force in Aragorn’s decisions?” “Do the cultural associations which surround the actor Liv Tyler trivialize the characterization of Arwen?”), but rather analytical: What happens to the larger work by this divergence from

Tolkien? What adaptive connections can be drawn by such a significant choice? From what conventions do eurhythmic choices spring?

Let us begin with the plasticity between Tolkien's presentation of events and that of Jackson's. In both Tolkien's novel and Jackson's film, the four hobbits and Aragorn flee from Weathertop following the fight with the black riders. In Tolkien's text, Frodo is wounded but coherent – weak but aware:

There stood the trolls: three large trolls. One was stooping, and the other two stood staring at him. Strider walked forward unconcernedly. "Get up, old stone!" He said, and broke his stick upon the stooping troll. Nothing happened. There was a gasp of astonishment from the hobbits, and then even Frodo laughed. "Well!" he said. "We are forgetting our family history" (Tolkien 1990, 222).

While the plot is roughly similar to that of the film, the stylistic elements differ significantly: Jackson's text emphasizes the peril in which the party finds itself. This plasticity may be explained by the energy aspect of the eurhythmic equation: the material form of each will determine the strategy of affecting the same response in the consumer. That is, Tolkien's process of eucatastrophe (the building of tension in mini-narrative climaxes with a miraculous moment of salvation, a "turn" that changes the fortunes of the characters) luxuriously plays out over literally hundreds of pages in his expansive text, through several minor episodes and characters. While Jackson's film is equivalent in scope, it is still a film and as such, narrative time must be compressed. Therefore, because of the shift in the material form, the proper fit must also shift to account for the ways that Jackson might evoke *the same effect* as Tolkien in a different

medium. Thus, by the time they reach Bilbo's trolls in Jackson's film, Frodo has already begun to waste away, lying on the ground, incoherently rasping as Sam tries to communicate with him: "Look Mr. Frodo! It's Mr. Bilbo's trolls!" In Tolkien's text, by contrast, the party continues on a while, merrily telling stories until it is stopped by an elf from Rivendell:

Suddenly into view below came a white horse, gleaming in the shadows, running swiftly. In the dusk its headstall flickered and flashed as if it were studded with gems like living stars. The rider's cloak streamed behind him, and his hood was thrown back; his golden hair flowed shimmering in the wind of his speed. To Frodo it appeared that a white light was shining through the form and raiment of the rider, as if through a thin veil. (1990, 225)

This is the arrival of Glorfindel who ushers the company to the Ford of Bruinin where the black riders are consumed by the power of the elves.

Again, what is important here is the plasticity between Tolkien's text and Jackson's. Tolkien's text is picaresque in its introduction of characters like Glorfindel, who serve a basic function (in this case, an exotic guide to a new setting) and then disappear entirely from the story. But, as Phillipa Boyens points out, "One of the keys to adapting something with such wealth of detail [as *Lord of the Rings*] into film is that everything needs to do more than one thing... you want everything you do to hopefully do three or four things in terms of turning that piece of prose into a filmic moment" (2002 "From Book to Vision" Appendices disk 1) The luxury in the written text of introducing characters and leisurely returning to them or abandoning them is not possible in the

compressed art forms of film and new media. Jackson and company cleverly transform the relatively insignificant character of Glorfindel into the previously marginalized character of Arwen. But why is she marginalized in Tolkien and expanded in Jackson? The answer is one of one of weight and balance; simply, Tolkien relegates Arwen to a footnote in his tale because the homomodal associations between his hypertext (*The Lord of the Rings*) and the hypotexts from which it was drawn (Norse folk-tales) demand a certain type of text and mode of expression. Jackson must express a similar tension, for while he draws his overt architext from Tolkien the full range of the eurhythmic weight must account for cinematic conventions as well as literary ones.

In order to begin to understand why Arwen would be marginalized in Tolkien's text, we must turn just a few pages before the party is attacked on Whethertop. We find that in an attempt to architextually conform to his model, Tolkien uses narrative strategies that tell tales within tales which form a narrative displacement whereby we learn of Aragorn's relationship with Arwen, not by seeing it directly, but through another, similar story: that of Baren and Luthien. When Aragorn sings to his furry-footed audience, he tells the tale of Baren and Luthien, the human man and elf maiden. While Tolkien makes little of this episode, beyond mentioning in passing that Strider's face is "strange" and "eager," if one investigates beyond the margins of the text itself, into the paratextual Appendix A part v of the novel, one discovers that Aragorn's strange eagerness arises from his parallel life to that of Baren. As a 20 year old youth, Aragorn wanders the grounds of his patron Elrond's home, singing this same song of Baren and Luthien where he chances upon "a maiden walking on a greensward among the white stems of the birches; and he halted amazed, thinking that he had strayed into a dream" (1990, 1095).

This maiden, of course, is Arwen, lately returned from staying with her aunt Galadriel in Lothlorien. Aragorn, of course, falls immediately in love with her and begins to try to court her, against her father's wishes. While Aragorn is heir to the kingship of men and Isildur's direct descendent, "Arwen the Fair, Lady of Imladris and of Lorien, Evenstar of her people" says Elrond, "is of a lineage greater than [Aragorn's]...She is too far above" him (1990, 1096). Aragorn, points out Elrond, has a darker destiny than that of Arwen.

Tolkien's work, when taken in its totality encompassing *The Silmarillion*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Hobbit*, and the *Unfinished Tales*, tends to create a sense of repetition; events which happen in *The Silmarillion* replay again in *The Lord of the Rings*, and so on. His usual strategy is one of eucatastrophe or redemption from the ruins of disaster (Evans 1987, 5). Thus, his Christian mythological underpinnings drive him to tell the "Adam" story, just as the bible does: Adam leads humanity to ruin, while Christ, the second Adam, redeems it in a parallel tale. Therefore, the tale of Baren and Luthien is a tragic one where the immortal elf maiden sacrifices her immortality for her human lover, only to be robbed of him shortly thereafter. The story of Aragorn and Arwen, by contrast, is intended to redeem the previous ballad, yet mirror its progress. Therefore, in good form, Arwen, against her father's wishes, pledges herself to Aragorn and sends her poor father into fits of grief. Elrond, unwilling to have his daughter betrothed to just anybody, demands that Aragorn take up his post as king of men. The important issue here is that in Tolkien's text Arwen is completely removed from the conflict of the Ring. She is essentially cloistered away from harm, awaiting the outcome of Aragorn's activities: "Arwen remained in Rivendell, and when Aragorn was abroad, from afar she watched over him in thought; and in hope made for him a great and kingly standard, such

as only one might display who claimed the lordship of the Numenoreans and the inheritance of Elendil.” (Tolkien 1990, 1098). While Aragorn fights, she waits and essentially knits.

But this impression belies the various textual strategies Tolkien uses to convey the depth of Arwen’s character. While Aragorn is developed in terms of direct action, Arwen’s nature is plumbed indirectly, through intertextual reference and hypertextual association. The primary form of Arwen’s development is through the references to the parallel lives of many of her ancient relatives, including Lorien, Idril Celebrindal, and even Galadriel. We can see Tolkien’s expression of weight and balance in his development character through non-modernist strategies, largely dependent upon Norse and Anglo-Saxon storytelling techniques, which frequently established character based first, on cyclical patterns of repeated behavior, and second, by a consubstantial association with ancestors – primarily by the method of genealogical naming. This storytelling technique represents a pre-scientific genetic profile – developing character by means of family name. When we begin to investigate the balance of the *Lord of the Rings* homomodal associations we discover then that Tolkien has used expressive conventions, architextual modes of address from his models, to augment and guide his adaptation.

The point of this prolonged discussion of Tolkien’s story of Aragorn and Arwen is to demonstrate clearly what a surprising moment it is when Arwen appears in Peter Jackson’s film. Most casual readers of *Lord of the Rings* will likely have never heard of the elf maiden destined to be the queen of Gondor, so slight and marginalized is her place in Tolkien’s story. Even Jackson admits that

she has a very small part to play in the books....And in order to make her into a character with some weight we have had to create more material for Arwen. So we have gone into that appendix for more ideas and material which we can actually incorporate into the plot of the movies. (2002

Fellowship "From Novel into Vision," The Appendices Part 1)

While the act of combining characters – cutting some, adding others, emphasizing still others – is part and parcel of eurhythmic plasticity,¹ an equal, if not more important element is the streamlining of source material – the cutting away of unessential elements (recall Quintillian's exhortation to successful adaptors in *Institutio Oratoria*, X.ii.28, that they "retrench what is redundant"). Thus, as Jackson identifies,

the plot of *Lord of The Rings*... is Frodo, carrying the ring. Eventually he has to go to Mordor and destroy the ring. So, what does Old Man Willow contribute to the story of Frodo carrying the ring? What does Tom Bombadil ultimately, really, have to do with the ring? I know there's ring stuff in the Bombadil episode, but it's not really advancing our story, it's not really telling us things that we need to know. (2002 *Fellowship*, "From Novel into Vision," The Appendices Part 1)

While Old Man Willow makes an appearance in Fangorn Forest in *The Two Towers Special Extended DVD Edition*, Tom Bombadil is gone because according to the guiding principles of eurhythmic plasticity, give and take will naturally occur as a result of differences in energy and balance. Yet, rather than clarifying the expansion of Arwen's role in the films, it only complicates her presence. It appears that even Tolkien considered Arwen's contribution to the destruction of the ring less important than even

Glorfindel. So why did Jackson, Walsh, and Boyens elect, not only to include her, but to radically alter her role from an idle woman of privilege to what amounts to a warrior princess?

As we have just seen, the short answer is it is *eurhythmic* to do so. Just as Micheal Chernick demonstrates in his reading of the Rashbi stories through its various Talmudic incarnations, so Arwen's significance grows when we read *through* the texts, taking a measure of balance between them: the full range of their heteromodal associations. Chernick notes that the alterations and modifications to the Rashbi stories that occur between its various telling in the Babylonian, Palestinian, and Medieval Talmud additions, as well as the varying critical responses, bear testament to cultural evolutions, rather than any deviation from a revered source. In other words when we examine the relationship created by the texts, we are better able to see significance and as Kenneth Burke suggests, identify motive.

So, in order to further explore that relationship in the case of Arwen, let us briefly return to the central metaphors that constitute how ancient rhetoricians illustrated *eurhythmia*. When we look at the column and see that it is modeled on the body we must then ask, why is the column *not* a body?³ Why does the armor not *replicate* the body? The answer is obvious: each thing, the column and the armor, are not, themselves bodies. Rather they use principles of shapeliness and metaphor to do what it is they do – columns support roofs, armor protects the wearer. The fit of the adaptation and the model is governed by the appropriateness of the model's invocation in the adaptation. In the case of dance, the relationship created between the music and the movement is not transcendent, but intentionally material. The physical response to the music, regardless

of how choreographed, will change with the participants based on matters of rhetorical exigence. In other words, while the 1913, *Les Ballets Russes* performance of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* caused riots, the same movements would cause yawns just a few years later. The way the dance interacted with the music and interfaced with audience expectation produced a cultural dissonance that, while profound, was situated in the moment and place in which it occurred.

What we find when we approach a popular re-articulation of a 50-year old text (modeled on medieval and Anglo-Saxon epic forms) is that a literal adaptation of Tolkien's work would not fit, particularly in the case (or lack thereof) with Arwen. While Tolkien's text is homage to the battlefield horrors he experienced in World War One, infused with elements of masculinist, Norse and Anglo-Saxon tales of heroism, a film, particularly a film interested in making money in the western world in the twenty-first century, cannot afford to limit its associations to such texts. Such an act would constitute commercial suicide. In order to understand the development of Arwen's character in Jackson's film we must turn to *its* homomodal associations, specifically the conventions of epic filmmaking developed over the last three-quarters of a century in such films as *Spartacus*, *Gone With the Wind*, and *From Here to Eternity*. In these filmic texts, the relationships between strong men and women are the catalysts to heroism. The American epic-cinematic tradition construes romantic plot development as inextricably linked to that of heroic, and in particular, war narratives. We could, in turn, trace these conventions back through modernist and particularly Victorian novelistic conventions, even returning to the pre-nineteenth century Romances which began to place female characters in leading roles. All these conventions and expectations weigh on design

choices within the filmic mode – all *outside* the conventional dichotomy suggested in the adaptation/source relationship. From this perspective, Jackson’s films, because of the nature of their eurhythmic energy, could not support the ancient strategies of character development deployed by Tolkien. Rather, the primary motive of Arwen’s expansion beyond the role allotted her in the book is one of providing a romantic counterpart to the character of the future king, in Aragorn. This sexual tension, completely absent from the book, is injected into the film because the energy and balance make it the proper fit for the exigence.

But beyond this contextual, eurhythmic perspective, there may be direct textual justification for using the character of Arwen to catalyze and even perform dynamic and noble acts. In ascribing the acts and words of other characters (Elrond, Gandalf, and Glorfindel) to Arwen, Jackson “makes the logical assumption that she is just as brave, wise and capable in battle as a male elf” (Akers-Jordan 2004, 198). In her essay “Fairy Princess of Tragic Heroine? The Metamorphosis of Arwen Undomiel in Peter Jackson’s *Lord of the Rings* Films,” Cathy Akers-Jordon details the connections between the active, Jacksonian Arwen and her great-great Grandmother Luthien, noting that it was Luthien who stands up to both Morgoth and Sauron in “The Tale of Baren and Luthien” in *The Silmarillion* (2004, 162-187); such valor is demonstrated by the way that Arwen eludes and then taunts the Black riders at the Ford of Bruinin in a bid to save Frodo’s life. This active portrayal, while not directly drawn from the text of *The Fellowship of the Ring*, “is a logical extrapolation based on the actions of the other Elven characters, a reflection of the past power of the Eldar in Middle-Earth” (Akers-Jordan 2004, 199). In other words,

in plasticly diverging from *The Lord of the Rings*, Jackson has brought his text in closer alignment to *The Silmarillion*.

Closely aligned to the concept of symmetry, eurhythmia contains in itself an almost intangible quality – an excess of the symmetrical (as a mathematical structure) that moves cold order to the level of warm and living art. This notion of symmetry plays well into Jackson’s use of the theme of choice in the lives of both Aragorn and Arwen. While in Tolkien’s text, Aragorn’s eventual kingship is hardly in doubt, having settled the issue with Elrond long before the events of *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Jackson compresses the two “noble” choices (Aragorn’s choice to take up the mantle of kingship, and Arwen’s choice to sacrifice her immortality for Aragorn) into a tight, cinematic package. This cinematic choice also creates symmetry between the “noble plot line” (the sacrifices made by the king and queen in their return to Middle Earth) and the “common plot line” (Frodo’s choice to sacrifice himself for the quest, and Sam’s loving choice to risk his life enabling his master). Jackson creates a representation of Aragorn and Arwen’s parallel choices through the central image of the reforging of Narsil, which in turn continues the active role of Arwen in shaping Aragorn’s kingship. It “becomes the symbol of Arwen’s love and Aragorn’s acceptance of his role as King” (Akers-Jordon 2004, 208). Arwen returns from her trip to the Grey Havens in hopes of a future with Aragorn and urges her father to reforge Narsil. Only after her choice and Elrond’s acceptance of his daughter’s mortality does Aragorn take up his mantle and become the king he must be in order to make Middle Earth safe for his betrothed. As I have already noted, this parallel structure cannot be directly traced to Tolkien’s text, but it *is* a convention of film.

Conclusion

Once we have seen the ways that adaptations cluster together into associative megatexts we require an interpretive framework with which we can critique those relationships. Eurhythmia, or the analysis of the proper fit, provides just such a model; it allows us to read through the palimpsest while accounting for the constituent and formative elements that create the relationships that make up the megatext. The eurhythmic equation forces us to account for time, place, material context, generic conventions, the hetero- and homomodal associations, and finally the gain and loss inevitable in the transcoding process.

When we apply the eurhythmic approach to *The Lord of the Rings*, what we find is that Jackson has combined the actions and words of certain characters into Arwen's role in the film in order to emphasize the overall theme of personal sacrifice and choice. But in order to flesh out her character, he strengthens and augments the symmetrical bonds Tolkien hints at in his text which links her to her noble and more overtly active forbearers (Luthien and Idril Celebrindal). From the perspective of eurhythmia, for Jackson to have imported the text-based strategies deployed in Tolkien in a blind act of faith in "textual fidelity" would have been a poor fit. Rather, eurhythmia suggests that adaptation designers and critics consider the whole range of its constituent elements: space and time's shifting of sensibility and value (the aesthetic distance between a mid-twentieth century British novel, and an early twenty-first century film from New Zealand), weight's architextual impetus (the long cinematic tradition of including strong,

romantic plotlines to augment and support otherwise exclusively masculinist war stories), energy's material context and an accounting of balance in each text's homomodal associations. All these factors must be considered in addition to an adaptation's identified model.

Chapter 4

Ethos, Authorship and the New Media Adaptation

As we demonstrated in chapter two, adaptations mirror scribal or manuscript culture in their tendency towards growth in marginalia and accrual in semiosis. Yet, as we will see, in placing the adaptive accrual process in a manuscript culture perspective we raise profound issues of authorship. Linda Hutcheon points out that the adaptive process disrupts our understandings of priority and authority, given the likelihood of our encountering an adaptation before its model (2006, 174), but it also begs the question: who is the author of the adaptation (80-84)? There is no simple answer as several forces of authority pull at us as we question authorship. Hutcheon delineates the fragmentation that accompanies collaborative authorship in theatrical adaptations, as well as cinematic ones, but we must also factor in the specter of the model's authority as it lurks behind the adaptive text. Our individual experience of particular adaptations notwithstanding, a model's priority will tend to garner ethos, or rhetorical credibility. This ethos, always hovering behind the adaptation's author (whoever she may be) further fragments an already crowded field, yet it must be accounted for.

Conceptually straddling oral tradition and a print culture, adaptive accrual challenges the fixed dominion of the authorial hand that we have come to associate with the modern text. At the same time, adaptation depends upon previous textual models and the inherent authority brought by association with giants of the past. In his examination of open-text forms in manuscript culture, Gerald Bruns suggests that their constituent elements, plagiarism, translation, imitation, and originality, represent an accepted and

expected “gradual loss of authority” (1980, 114). Yet since the eighteenth century, western culture has slowly disassociated originality from its siblings and has posited it as the only true expression of authorship. The intervening years have brought with them a social and legal edifice protecting authorial originality from its estranged kin, despite a philosophical awareness of the artificiality of such a construction. From the banalities of the technical writing or advertising team, to the big-budget, big-return world of film and video-game adaptations, the practical intricacies of the individual author-as-genius are long dead. But the public desire for the mythology of the author, the absent hero, persists in its absence. We are surrounded by the trappings of the rugged individualist that belie the realities of collaboration – auteurism has become the latest corporate marketing strategy. Given these multifarious manifestations of authorship, in what sense is Peter Jackson the author of *The Lord of The Rings*, or Sid Meier the creator of the *Civilization* game series? These multiple manifestations, each titularly identical but functionally distinct, are not hermetic, but exist in systems of relationships, each author figure depending upon the other to fulfill their larger rhetorical purpose: to imbue the text with ethos, or the legitimacy of authority. This symbolic authority is not associated with individuals, but rather with symbolic phantasms or even venerated texts themselves, given life by the projected desire of an audience hungry for the mirage of direct, heroic authorship.

Authorship and Art

Many in the philosophical and aesthetic movements of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries attempted to conjoin the familial terms *authority* and *authorship*, vesting in individuals the responsibility and power of aesthetic creation. Philosophers and poets such as Kant, Goethe, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and many others sought to move conceptions of the artist away from those epithets they saw as more closely associated with medieval manuscript cultures: transcribers, archivists, or even, as I noted in chapter two, transfusers. They sought to move towards a vesting in the artist of the power of genius and spontaneous creation. By privileging newness, solitary genius and aesthetic independence, Romantic theorists made the formerly straightforward act of borrowing and adapting earlier texts a perilous puzzle of competing authority. And the key to unlocking the riddles of authority and adaptation is the elusive figure of the author; in order to address the persistent issues of fidelity and its handmaiden, the authorized adaptation, we must address to whom the adaptation appeals for its authority. In his essay “On the Wrongfulness of Unauthorized Publication of Books,” Immanuel Kant asserts that the content of a work and its creator are conjoined eternally by the immutable, private ownership of ideas. While Kant interestingly disassociated the ideas represented by the text (which are proprietary) and the text itself (which is material, and therefore subject to the whims of its owner), he nonetheless began the process to unify a model of intellectual and legal ownership. Throughout much of the 19th and 20th centuries a comfortable harmony existed between the intellectualization of authorship and its legal application – the author owned the essence, the publisher exploited the capital rewards of

the material text, and the reader, while participating vicariously with the intellectual work of the author, could not breach the membrane of materiality without the act being considered transgressive. Readers could not own the author's art – only witness it.

Yet against this popular, legal, and aesthetic movement, New Critical theorists such as William Wimsatt, Monroe C Beardsley, Cleanth Brooks, and Robert Penn Warren began to march, insisting that an analysis of the text should be independent of the author, contingent as she is in her historical and biographical contexts. Wimsatt and Beardsley's seminal essay "The Intentional Fallacy" sought to sever author and text, arguing with Kant that at the level of ownership, "the poem belongs to the public" (1954). They contended that texts, not contexts, were the appropriate subjects of literary and critical study.

In *Rhetoric of Fiction* Booth attempted to reintroduce a more nuanced perspective of authorship by clearly demonstrating that a text has not one author, but five: the "flesh and blood" author (or the writer), the implied author, the teller of the tale, the career author and the public myth. Booth's strategy was to fragment authorship, to unmask the authority of textual production as a complex system of material and symbolic figures; some of these figures (such as the writer) actively produce texts, some will be inferred from authority within (implied authors and tellers of tales) and *behind* a text (the career author), and some are direct projections of audience's desire (the public myth).

Concluding the project begun by the New Critics, Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault fired shots across the bow of Kantian harmony, the significance of which the popular and legal vanguard of the author's armies of have yet to fully realize. Barthes's "Death of the Author" (1988) and Foucault's response, "What is an Author?" (1994),

cleanly dismantle this cornerstone of classical humanism and disrupt the fixed ontology of assured authorship. The audience's knowledge of the speaker of a text is always in doubt, Foucault claims, and therefore the text cannot be limited to authorial intention or even identity. The forces of radical intertextuality, working on authors and texts from every side, make the identification of authority and the vesting of legitimacy an ideological exercise rather than an empirical certitude. Hence, absence becomes "the first premise of discourse" (1994, 343); the traditional powers of the author vanish in the oblique maelstrom of uncertain origins – its presence obliterated by the absence of the text.

But, as Nehamas points out while expanding on Foucault, the physical person of the author is not obliterated, only the flesh and blood author's influence over discursive interaction with audiences. Hence, Nehamas bolsters Booth's distinction between the author and writer. Writers are the actual flesh figures who exist in time and space, while authors "are not individuals but characters manifested or exemplified, though not depicted or described, in texts" (1986, 686). Simply, authors are projections of the reading, *not* the compositional practice. The implications for matters of aesthetic authority could not be more serious: the New Critical and postmodern assault renders notions of authorship moot – at least powerless to conjure a stable identity upon which a text's authority can hinge. The fragmentation of the figure of the author is begun in earnest; postmodernism splits the corporeal agent of composition from its image and places that image directly in the desires and wills of the audience for which texts are composed.

From a legal standpoint, though, the author is still alive and well. Without so much as a nod to the philosophical dismantling of the authorial power, the law contends that individuals still strive and compose and suffer over their texts and in turn deserve to be rewarded for their toils. But Mark Rose, through his extensive experience as a legal witness,

became conscious of the contradiction between the romantic conception of authorship – the notion of the creative individual – that underlies copyright and the fact that most work in the entertainment industry is corporate rather than individual. Furthermore, many of the characteristic products of the industry – game shows, soap operas, situation comedies, police stories, spy stories, and the like – tend to be formulaic. Romantic conceptions of authorship seem as inappropriate in discussing these cultural productions as in discussing the equally formulaic productions of some older periods, ballads, say, or chivalric romances. (1993, viii)

Our romantic visions of the struggling author, then, are at odds with the transformation of aesthetic arts as an individual enterprise to the presentation of entertainment products by means of a compositional industry, created and perpetuated by a system of corporate ownership. But still, apologists for the notion of intellectual property rather erroneously suggest that modern copyright institutions are an “ancient and eternal idea” (Prager 1952, 106) or “a natural need of the human mind” (Streibich 1975, 2). Such conservative perspectives ignore the history of intellectual property, enforced through the legal principle of copyright – “the practice of securing marketable rights in texts that are treated as commodities – is a specifically modern institution, the creature of the printing

press...and the development of the advanced marketplace society in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries” (Rose 1993, 3). Not only is copyright premised on erroneous assumptions of the individuality of authorship, but also it is a historically anomalous creation, arising out of both dubious philosophical understandings of identity and urgent historical needs to accommodate new technologies, specifically, the emergence of mass media through the vehicle of the printing press.

But what, asks Gilbert Larochelle, can philosophically and legally harmonize the romantic model of authorship after Barthes, Foucault, Lyotard, and other postmoderns have had their way with it? By separating the ontological and the legal, the intellectual and the practical, deconstruction “disarticulates the moralism found in the connection between philosophy (what can one know), and politics (what one can do)” (1999, 128), and leaves a gaping hole in the conceptual relationship between authors and works. He suggests that deconstruction has perilously neglected to provide a new model to recognize writers, and further questions the form a new legal conception will take, as “it is difficult to see how the law can function concretely from the principles of postmodern philosophy” (1999, 129). But a careful examination of the current state of art/business/entertainment composition reveals that legal authorship has become a mirror of the ancient past: we have begun to see a resurgence of pre-Kantian models of authorship, based on “the ancient system of privilege, as upheld by Diderot and Voltaire” wherein

the transfer of the manuscript to the publisher stripped the writer of all rights. It was treated on the same level as any other goods for sale, and its origin was in no way proof of its inalienable character. On the contrary,

the author's freedom included the right to *give herself or himself away as a person* through the materiality of the work. (1999, 124)

This systematic process of authorial self-objectification describes with surprising accuracy the present state of corporate composition. Simply, filling the vacuum created by the schism between philosophy and the law, the corporation has reinstated the “ancient system of privilege,” so that once again, writers, engaged by corporate businesses, toil in collaborative enterprises for wage labor, sacrificing authorship for gainful employment, while corporations, shrouding themselves in the cloak of authorship, claim rights traditionally reserved for individuals:

Corporate entities assuming the mantle of the author now lead the way in a kind of gold rush attempt to extend copyright in all directions.... In spite of their wide public use and the fact that they are the products of a highly collaborative process, computer programs...are increasingly defined in the law and in the economy as works of originality and creative genius....In short, the old cloak of the originary author-genius has been spruced up and donned first by the law and then by corporate entrepreneurial interests – and the bigger and more global, the better. (Ede and Lunsford 2001, 359)

So in this reality of collaborative production, who, then, is the *author* of the text? Despite the deconstruction of the author by philosophy, in the terms of both the law and the perception of the larger society, the author is a single individual to whom the text “belongs.” Any conception of the reinstatement of pre-Kantian authorship is glaringly at odds with the courts. Quite simply, from the point of view of the law and the public, the notion of the collaborative design team does not exist: “in the body of law governing

copyright, for example, the solitary and sovereign ‘author’ holds clear sway: copyright cannot exist in a work produced as a true collective enterprise....What copyright law does protect is ‘authors’ rights’...” (2001, 359). So, on the one side, philosophy denies authorship its efficacy; on the other, the law recognizes antiquated models of ownership. The task becomes to identify who is the author of the post-modern, collaborative text. Predictably, true legal authors are those who hold the purse strings: the corporation. The ubiquitous force of capital has colonized the breach to its advantage: where once corporations argued to be seen by the American courts as legal persons in order to secure the rights of property and liberty intended for emancipated slaves, they now logically argue that as persons they have rights of authorship.

Model of New Media Authorship

When we presume a pre-Kantian view of authorial rights, certain patterns of force emerge that explain how texts are produced and distributed. Kress and van Leeuwen suggest in *Multimodal Discourse* that all text is hinged on a series of four metaterms, a strata of practice which operate simultaneously. These terms can be roughly diagrammed into two axes: a production one (which would include aspects of both design and production), and a distribution one. For Kress and Van Leeuwen, design “stands midway between content and expression. It is the conceptual side of expression, and the expressive side of conception. Designs are uses of semiotic resources...,” while production is the “organization of the expression ... the actual material articulation of the semiotic event or the actual material production of the semiotic artifact” (2001, 2).

Production requires skill in particular media and therefore requires labor suited to work traditionally associated with authorship: invention, composition, etc. Distribution, on the other hand constitutes a re-coding of semiotic events for a range of purposes from recording to transmission. In other words, while design and production are text oriented, distribution's orientation is entirely toward the consumer/listener/reader. Its force moves produced texts toward dissemination.

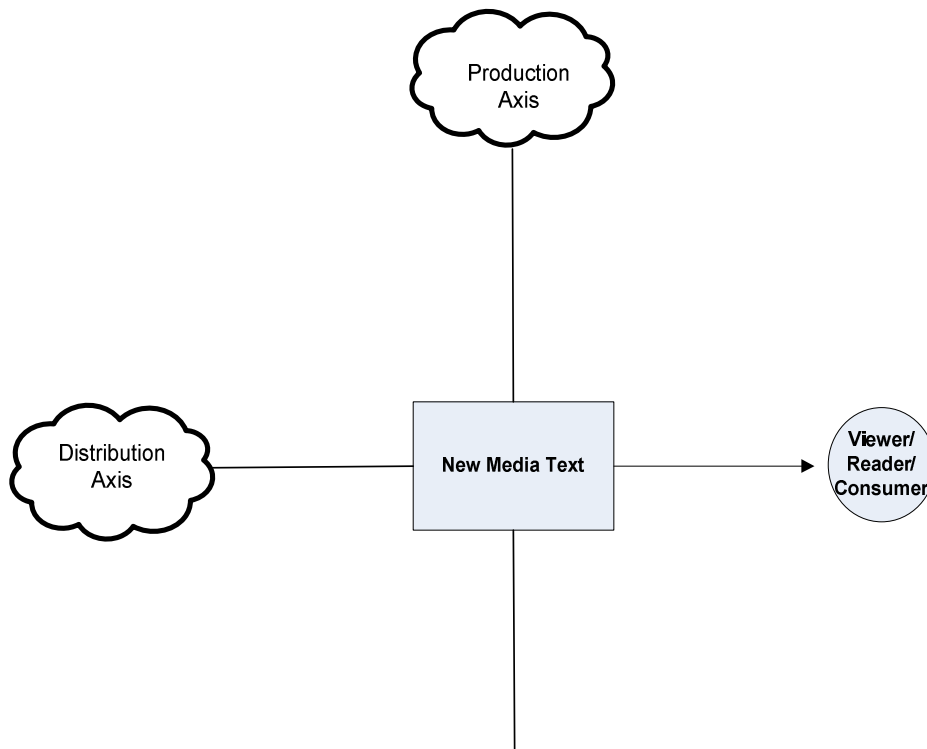


Figure 4.1 The Field of New Media Text Production and Distribution

While this representation gives us a field in which to place the production-side life of a new media text, it is vague as to agency. We see that there are forces exerted to produce a text, and that text is molded and recoded for distribution, but who is exerting that force? What is the nature of those forces at play in text production? We can begin to fill in our model of new media authorship by identifying key agents and their respective

roles. Yet while we identify agents and participants in textual production we must reconcile the legal and public perception of author/text relationship as a one-to-one correspondence, with the theoretical absence of the author; in other words, we must accurately represent the fragmentation in real-world text production. Therefore, we must turn to a representation of authorship that might accommodate such a multiplicity of agents.

As I noted earlier in this chapter, Wayne Booth presents authorship as a fragmented body that spreads across elements of flesh and blood, imagination, text, and projections of readership. Booth's model goes some way towards a reunification of our practical and philosophical systems of authorial analysis. But more is at work than a shattered author-figure. Systems of force operate in new media design settings, foreseen by neither modern rhetoricians, nor postmodern critics. By corporatizing authorship, twenty-first century business has created a new system of textual production that redistributes the traditional roles of author and publisher into a consolidation of capital and power in the hands of an elite.

Booth proposes five distinct levels of authorship, two of which are relevant for our terms here. First, in a position that we might situate at the bottom of the production axis are the labor authors. These are the "real people" who compose and produce texts: "There is first a postulated flesh-and-blood person, a man or woman who writes only sometimes and who otherwise lives a more or less troubled or happy life. I shall call this 'real' person *the writer*" (Booth 1979, 268). Note the distinction Booth draws between authors (characterizations wielding rhetorical authority) and writers; as the nuts and bolts of the creative act are now vested largely in collaborative enterprises, groups of artists,

from graphic designers to programmers, music directors to scriptwriters, all work in a coordinated effort under the watchful and responsible gaze of the producer/director/creator. In Boothian terms, these are called “flesh-and-blood” authors. In *Rhetoric of Fiction*, the flesh and blood author fits three criteria: 1) they are “immeasurably complex and largely unknown, even to those who are most intimate;” 2) they write for, or “postulate” possible readers; and 3) they choose “(consciously or unconsciously) to create an improved version, a second self (the implied author)” (1983, 428). These three criteria, when applied to the corporate system, generate certain lines of force that act on the textual production: specifically, labor authors are given the responsibility of design, and in turn, to fulfill this responsibility, must coordinate with each other to implement the process of production. These lines of force that find their loci around the labor author must have origins (someone who has the authority to delegate this responsibility), and in turn, must move towards effect. That the responsibility is delegated and a finished product handed over points to other agents in the system who obscure the public’s clear perception of the labor authors. That is, these groups of writers who operate behind the scenes, unseen by the public, are given significant quantities of data and demographic studies upon which they base their designs. Finally, their work contributes to the sustenance of the two other significant author/agents in the system.

At the top of the production axis sits the legal author. Authorship in a corporate environment (both in the sense of collaborative creation and multinational economic organization) is divorced and far removed from the actual creative act; legal authorship is defined in terms of the proprietary ownership of intellectual property. Legal authorship,

or what Ede and Lunsford have identified as “corporate authorship,” exploits conventional perceptions of authorial genius and symbolically vests an employee with the public perception of authorship while institutionally retaining the legal and economic benefits of the product. While Booth has a great deal to say about labor and, as we will see, symbolic authors, he is unconcerned with the legal ramifications of authorship. But as Rose, Ede and Lunsford all noted, we would be remiss if we were to dismiss the importance of corporate, legal authorship as a factor in the textual life-cycle. In Foucault’s “What is an Author?” he posits that when we speak of authors, we are not speaking of the people, as such, but rather four distinct “author functions”. Author functions are, he contends, “objects of appropriation,” (1994, 344) suggesting that they are the property of figures external to the function itself. While Foucault’s conceptualization of the proprietary nature of the author function is primarily concerned with the discipline exercised over writers near the end of the eighteenth century onward, his notion of the power and control the valuation of property gives over products and even author functions is generative. His suggestion that both the text and the author function are legally codified and configured as property may lead us to conclude that corporations function, more often than not, as the legal author which exerts control (and discipline) over the creation, dissemination, and reception of the new media text.

But the public has a fondness for heroes, and corporations don’t meet the public standards of what an author looks like. Obviously, the final goal of the entertainment industry is to produce a commodity that will sell. This is the essence of the distribution axis: companies create means and modes through which they deliver the produced text to the paying public. The issue becomes the various means by which credence is bestowed

upon the title. Products need an image upon which they can be hung in order to complete the movement from the labor authors, to the corporate legal author, and finally to consumer, and neither design teams nor corporations retain enough rhetorical power to persuade based on *character*. Therefore, the desire of the audience and the willful actions of the legal authors manufacture the figure of the symbolic author as the repository of all the romantic ideals associated with the figure of the author. Hence, the distribution axis serves to provide a face of authority to the public: a type of branding by proxied authorship. Booth calls this figure, “The Public Myth,” or

a kind of super-author, a fictitious hero created and played with, by author and public, independently of an author’s actual works. Our only current word for this is ‘image,’ but I resist contributing to the corruption of this good old word; it still has so many other duties to perform. ‘Character,’ in the old sense of ‘reputation,’ comes close to what I have in mind. (Booth 1979, 271)

What is significant here is Booth’s use of the associated terms “image,” “character,” and “reputation.” He is speaking overtly of the classical presentation of ethos. In other words, the symbolic author is the repository of ethos generated by the labor authors in their composition, the legal authors, in their ownership, and just as significantly, the desire of the audience. Mark Rose points to such an authorial phantasm as being vested in “the name.” He suggests that the “the name of the author – or artist, conductor, or, sometimes, star, for in mass culture the authorial function is often filled by the star – becomes a kind of brand name, a recognizable sign that the cultural commodity will be of a certain kind and quality” (1993, 1). Thus, in place of (or in concert with) the corporate

brand, the carefully crafted image of the author becomes a reservoir filled at both ends, by both corporation and buying public.

This contribution by the public cannot be understated – the creation of the reservoir of power that is the symbolic author is not simply a matter of image manipulation by cynical PR people, but a direct result of an audience’s desire for a figure upon which their veneration can rest. Alan Wexelblat refers to this as a dual/symbiotic principle, heightened by new media technology. Even traditional, non-interactive texts produce symbolic authors where the figure of “the author is constructed by fans through the text created by the writer, where the primary interaction medium between author and fan is the text” (2002, 209). But with new media and the possibilities of perpetual interaction between author-figures and the public, the relationship becomes even more powerful and personal “as writer and the fan jointly construct an author by means of dialog in the new media. ...The dialogue participants work from partially shared models of what the author should be and relate their interpretations to this model, which they co-construct” (2002, 209). The new media model of symbolic authorship then offers considerable new power to the system of authorship, vesting it not only with an absent presence, in the Derridian sense, but with a very personal relationship. This connection between the constructed image and the desirous consumer produces the fanatical devotion to the romantic vision of authorship we see in the public.

But significantly, this widely embraced romantic vision is at odds with the truth that texts in an age of new media are produced by collaboration, owned by corporations, and promoted by manipulated images. This unwillingness to recognize what is known

points to Pierre Bourdieu's representation of the power of the symbolic order. Symbolic power is one of displacement and misrecognition: it has

a power of constituting the given through utterances, of making people see and believe, of confirming or transforming the vision of the world and, thereby, action on the world and thus the world itself, an almost magical power which enables one to obtain the equivalent of what is obtained through force. (1991, 170)

Symbolic power, or in this case, the power of the symbolic author, is created by a relationship between those with legitimate power (legal authors, with the authority of the state supporting their claim to authorship) and those without (the audience's desire for a homogeneous author-figure). Simply, the power of the symbol is achieved through a belief in a misrecognition.

Thus, the symbolic author, publicly referred to as the producer (in gaming circles) or director (in film), stands between the composition/production team and legal status of diffuse corporate ownership. This inheritor of the romantic, "auteurist" movement of the mid-20th century has become a hybrid of middle management and marketing insofar as the director/designer has direct, public responsibility for the success of the product and stands in as a single, symbolic reservoir for the authority of the legal authors in consumer-perception. It is this position which is of the most interest for us, because it is this position that retains the rhetorical power of authorship, yet is the most ephemeral in real world terms. Simply, the symbolic author is a semiotic abstraction with a physical form.

Perhaps the best way to present this rather conflicted form of authorship, the one often mistaken for the true, legal author, is by a more careful examination of the function of rhetorical ethos. Ethos, quite unlike its frequent compositional invocation as character, is not an attribute vested in authorship, but a constantly fluctuating relationship between text, audience, and perceived authority: “ethos is not an attribute but an interpretation based on the way a rhetor behaves in presenting an appeal and the manifold of reactions an audience has to these behaviors” (Hauser 2002, 94). In other words, rhetors not only demonstrate their character through their texts, but also through a repeated sequence of texts – the process is forward looking and “concerned with the interpretation of character formed through the patterns of interaction that occur in the actual rhetorical event” (Hauser 2002, 94).

This repeated exposure that constitutes ethos is called *hexis*, or disposition. In ancient Greek rhetoric, one’s *hexis*, or patterns of behavior, created a character for the public to observe and a means by which new addresses could be interpreted. “As we observe [the rhetor’s] public behavior, we see their habits revealed in the choices they make. From observing their habits, we draw inferences about their character, or ethos” (Hauser 2002, 97). The *hexis* is constantly produced by action; it is simply synonymous with being – “a permanent condition as produced by practice” (Miller 1974, 311). But character, sometimes portrayed almost as an ontological certainty – an authored identity – is not fixed. Rather, “the nouns habit and character are not static – are not states or conditions of existence, but rather they can be only dynamic states, that is, states involving action” (1974, 315). These dynamic states are created deliberately and emerge from a desire, or goal. Presuming that the individual desires the public good and chooses

to act from that desire, they will, in turn become a vessel for the attributes of public virtue.

Similarly, the auteurist sensibility depends upon this process of character creation in order to perpetuate itself: “creators” who produce successful games are more likely to make future quality games. The habitual production of particular kinds of games induces an expectation in the audience – an expectation of a general hexis, manifested by individual instances of ethos. When Micropose announces the impending release of the latest edition of *Sid Meier’s Civilization*, strategy game junkies everywhere take notice because the first three *Civilization* products and their accompanying press releases produced an impression of who Sid Meier was, and perpetuated a mythology as to his abilities and control over product development. Simply, as a *Civ* fan, I will buy anything to which Sid Meier attaches his name because I have played all the games he has designed (*Railroad Tycoon*, *Civilizations 1,2, and 3*, and *Alpha Centauri*), read interviews with him and reviews of the games, and I am persuaded by my repeated experiences with his work that he can be trusted to produce games with elements that I have come to expect. In our model of new media authorship, Sid Meier would obviously be considered the symbolic author whose name is associated with a series of titles, around whom a mythos has been created, whose very titular association with a product is enough to ensure success, whose repeated successes have generated a “virtuous” ethos, and over time produced a positive hexis. Micropose, the corporation to whom *Sid Meier’s Civilization* belongs, would have us see Sid Meier as the wiz-kid creator, or even to the most knowing of new media users, as the inspired product manager whose leadership translates into gold. But, as we’ve seen, the success or failure of a product is far less

dependent upon the single manager of the team than the process as a whole. So what is the “creator” doing?

The simple answer is that they function as a single, fixed point upon which the public can focus. While the corporation is legally treated as an individual author, the public perception is otherwise (plus, ethos depends upon a perception of virtue, and even the crassest capitalist grants the corporation, at best, amoral status). The design team, unlike a sports team, has no direct marketability, as corporate design has no sense of fixedness – sports teams draw their audiences from a form of tribalism, a unity surrounding a location, or set of core principles. The gaming auteur is necessary as a type of brand that transforms a hexis into dollar signs. The “creator,” quite literally, becomes a symbol, a brand name that inspires trust and projects a set of core virtues.

This process of branding is one whereby ethos is carefully cultivated and funneled through a single, symbolic unit, or the brand. David Machin and Joanna Thornborrow describe it as a set of discursive forms, a “contextually specific knowledge about a social practice” (2003, 454). Invoking the social semiotic principles of Kress and van Leeuwen, they point out that each brand has a set of values and legitimations to which it ultimately appeals. They produce clusters of associations: lifestyle, ideological, and actual satellite product associations that all create an impression of both the brand and the linked terms – selling the network by means of overarching concepts. In the case of gaming auteurs, each of these great names is associated with an array of values, usually specifically associated with the games to which they are attached. Sid Meier, as identified earlier, co founder of Micropose, whose series *Civilization* has been hailed as the greatest single game series of all time by *Computer Gaming World* (the first magazine devoted

exclusively to computer games) and many others, is renowned for his detailed and complex simulations. In fact, his name has become so synonymous with *Civilization* that after the success of the first installment his name was added to the official title of the series: thus, *Civilization* became *Sid Meier's Civilization*. Additionally, in the third installment, the symbolic author-image of Sid Meier becomes the most significant character in the game as well. One of the appeals of the series is that players can seek the assistance of advisors to guide their nation building. In the first version, the advisors took the form of traditional help-style hyperlinks – primarily text/icon based interactions. The second game added the feature of quick video clips of stylized advisors in various forms of costume befitting the state of technological advancement of the player (i.e. civilizations with roughly enlightenment level technology would have advisors in Elizabethan costume). But in *Civilization 3*, Sid Meier himself becomes the animated advisor to the players. The symbol of the author, vested with the trust of the audience and authority of the “creator” is iconically represented in his own creation. This direct interaction of course highlights Wexelblat’s observation about the power of intimate contact between symbolic authors and their audiences. The creator symbolically interacts with his audience, thus reinforcing his own, albeit abstract, power while at the same time obscuring the precise nature of the game’s creation and ownership. Thus gaming auteurs, like brands, become specific discourses of cultural associations that allow the legal authors to divest themselves of public authority, yet gain capital return. Simply, game “creators” become yet another marketing weapon in the corporate arsenal.

So our fully illuminated system of new media authorship would look something like this:

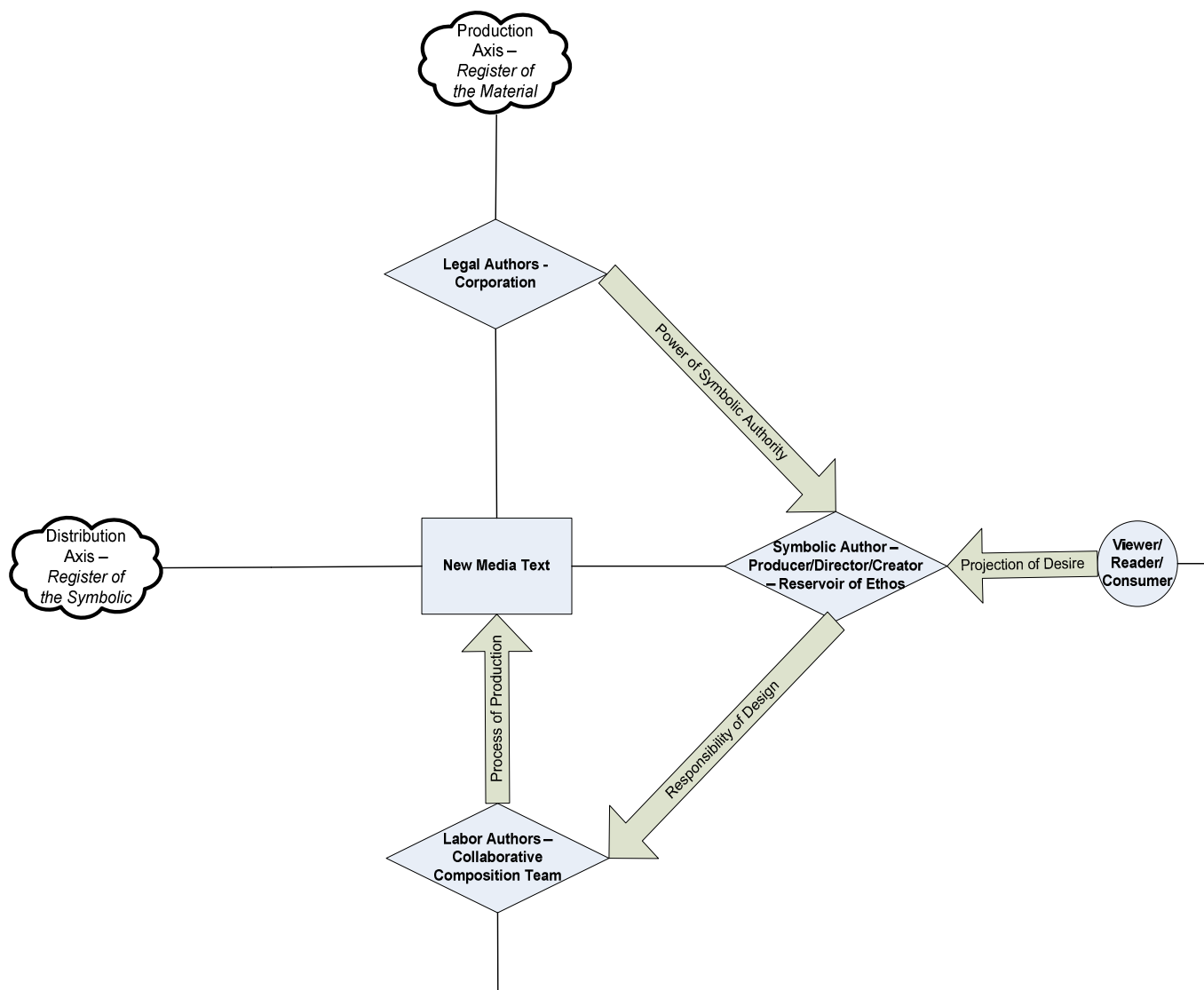


Figure 4.2 The Fragmentation of Authorship of the New Media Product

Authorship in an Age of New Media

Increasingly, with the rise in popularity and consumption of video games, the myth of the author has been reborn in the form of the game creator. Names like Chris Trottier & Will Wright who developed *The Sims*; John Carmack, founder/owner/lead programmer, of id Software, whose credits include blockbuster hits *Doom*, *Quake* and

Wolfenstein; David Perry, the gaming mind behind the Wachowski's *Enter the Matrix* installment of the renowned Matrix series; Rand Miller, director of the classic *Myst* series; the enigmatic Toby Gard, the programmer who brought us Lara Croft, the main character of *Tomb Raider* fame,² Shinji Mikami who spawned *Resident Evil*, which inspired two film adaptations; and Hironobu Sakaguchi, the mind behind the long-running and wildly successful *Final Fantasy* platform: all are held in reverence throughout the gaming world. And before we dismiss the significance of the gaming world, we should note that for the last four years, video game revenues have significantly outstripped those of the film industry: in 2002, global game sales were a brisk 30 billion dollars, to film's 20.4 billion (Gaudiosi 2003). In the same way film lovers wait with bated breath for the latest release by David Fincher, Michael Mann, or Ridley Scott, so many more fans await the latest offering by Hironobu Sakaguchi, and gossip about the latest development problems for Toby Gard.

Of course like film, the gaming industry has long ceased to be an individualist enterprise. According to Trip Hawkins, Electronic Arts entrepreneur and the architect of the renaissance in game production in the early 80's, the move was made to model software companies on the collaborative design of the Hollywood factory system, "a production process methodology that more consistently, like a cookie cutter, cranked out good titles and products" (Trip Hawkins interview – Jager and Ortiz 1997, 177). The significant change, from an authorship standpoint, was the creation of the design team: in tandem with programmers, Hawkins added a "creative team [that] included video layout artists, sound and music directors and script editors" (Campbell – Kelly 2004, 283). In fact, the marriage of Hollywood and the gaming industry has been consummated by the

increasing exchange of capital by means of the “licensing [of] a hit game franchise like *Tomb Raider* for a big-screen adaptation, or incorporating Hollywood talent (writers, directors, actors) within a licensed game like *Enter the Matrix* or an original game property like Activision's *True Crime: Streets of L.A.*” (Gaudiosi 2003).

Over the years game designers have become particularly adept at creating detailed secondary worlds in which to set their action. *Doom* and many of the *Tomb Raider* installments use as their tableau a labyrinth of detailed tunnels and traps, populated by an endless array of monsters, machines, and menace. Other, more topical games such as Toby Gard's *Galeon* or the tropical combat adventure *Far Cry* have such detailed settings that data storage requirements have moved from CD formats to DVD. Regardless of the complexity, gamers and hackers, ever enticed by the challenge of wresting control of information, long ago began to modify award winning games, adapting and changing them. The most famous example of this “mod” (modification) or adaptation is *Counterstrike*, created from the *HalfLife* platform. Essentially a “shoot-em-up” game akin to *Doom*, gamers took the basic code of *HalfLife* and slowly began to make adjustments, adding the opportunity for more players, changing the context slightly, until the game became a group-based platform where teams of linked players (connected by LAN, or Local Area Networks of linked computers) competed online or on location with another team of role-playing shooters. One team is labeled the insurgent terrorists whose task is to lay a series of explosive devices, while the counterstrike team must identify and disarm the explosives, and “take out” the terrorists. The *Counterstrike* movement,³ a mod process that went through a series of versions, or Betas, finally ended when the Valve Corporation, original legal authors of *HalfLife*, retook control of the code and

began to sell it as part of its product line alongside the very games from which it so illegitimately sprung.

Out of this hacker urge to crack the code and manipulate data come a growing practice know as *machinima*. An offshoot of the same mod movement that spawned *Counterstrike*, legions of stay-at-home machinima “directors” use the technology borrowed from popular game platforms (character designs, settings, and movement algorithms) to make films. “Around the world, increasing numbers of would-be movie moguls are utilizing the 3-D graphics engines of games like *Quake* or *Unreal* to produce animated movies -- at a fraction of the money spent by studios like Pixar” (Kahney 2003). Democratizing the position of the director, machinima allows would-be filmmakers to choose, as the Olmec Soft promotional literature suggests, “camera angles, adjust the lighting and record the action. This is animation as improvised performance, and some of the best machinima films have the feel of live theatre as enacted by cartoon puppets.”⁴

This connection here between machinima and puppet theatre is significant. As Steve Tillis contends in his essay “The Art of Puppetry in the Age of Media Production,” the computer graphic *is* a puppet: “if the signification of life can be created by people, then the site of that signification is to be considered a puppet” (1999, 188). The digital character’s controller, programmer, director, is also its puppeteer. What the configuration of machinima as puppetry does for our discussion of authorship is to mirror what occurs in the “presence” of puppetry. That is, the puppet is an alienating device that signifies its own dependence: the puppet points to its puppeteer, either explicitly or implicitly. The puppeteer, in turn, is a puppet of the script, and so on and so on.

Similarly, machinima signifies the dense layering of authorship that contributes to the creation of the new media artifact: when we watch the machinima text the “cinematic” attributes, such as shot construction, plotting, dialogue, may or may not be authored in a traditionally cinematic way, but the elements of its construction, namely its coding base, are a kind of text of which the graphic is merely a translation. This complex reality is another level of authorship that must be accounted. When we watch *Finding Nemo*, we think of the author-function of the film as being the creation of plot and dialogue, and to a lesser degree, the animation process. Since in this particular case, the animation is a computer-based one, composed not of hand-drawn cell animation but coded algorithms that signify pixels and effects, those machine code languages become another level of authorship – *someone composed those codes with an artistic intent*. In the case of Pixar, the composition of both machine and linguistic codes that constitute their film is encompassed under their corporate umbrella,⁵ but in the case of machinima, the authorship of the base, computer code predates the “film.” The coded base is a copyrighted text – an aesthetic work in and of itself with a designer and team of labor authors. Given this pre-existing author (of the platforms on which all machinima is based), to what degree is the “director” the author of the text? Thus, the machinima movement begins to place in sharp relief, not only the connections between the traditional cinema and newer media forms, but also the labyrinth of text production, and in turn, authorship. Simply, what machinima demonstrates in an age of the proliferation of new media aesthetic creation, is that the simple notion of “the author” has been not merely theoretically deconstructed, but materially so.

Ethos and Adaptation

Thus, we have addressed the spectrum of authorship in the new media environment, noting its complexity and how symbolic and material forces interact to create and maintain a romantic understanding of authorship that plays upon our humanistic adoration for individual accomplishment, private property, and the hope of genius. We have seen how the principle of ethos vests power in the symbolic author and is rhetorically charged by an interaction between the audience and the elements of the production axis. The symbolic author, then, is a hybrid of production and promotion, created by audience desire and corporate material forces.

We've also considered the relationship of traditional collaborative media such as film to new media forms such as video games, noting the proximity of the industries, not only at the level of production, but also in their reliance on the figure of the symbolic author to brand their product and obfuscate the unpleasant realities of corporate control. We saw that the systems of production have interfaced to the point where the video game crossover is an expected, and integral part of the film process. And we've also seen that the technology that separates the two media is quickly collapsing, erasing any distinction between film and game.

But the purpose of these two significant steps is to understand how adaptation in general, and gaming adaptation in particular, function semiotically and rhetorically. How does adaptation – the literal addition of authors to an accruing text – alter the model of new media authorship? What rhetorical terms can we use to describe the power generated by the creation of an adaptation? What will become apparent is that the

adaptation produces an analogue to the symbolic author along the distribution axis. That is, while most texts have only their symbolic author (along with the machine of corporate promotion) to produce ethotic power, the adaptation draws upon the legitimating power of its model. Thus, just as the adaptation produces a textual accrual, irrevocably altering the concept of the model and producing a network of associations that contribute to our interpretation of both, so the principle of authorship is similarly expanded and networked. This networking of associative links between adaptation to adaptation, and adaptation to model seeks to capitalize on cultural capital, based on the value of the linkage. Simply, the overt connection an adaptation signals through its association attempts to garner an added dimension of legitimacy, analogous to the symbolic author. Depending on the hexis of the source, the adaptation's cultural capital and its ethos are improved – the audience's desire for the source is channeled through the adaptation. But the process of accrual is not a simple matter of addition – any number of texts have attempted to capitalize on the ethos of culturally resonant tales such as *Lord of the Rings*, but do not live up to the dual pressure from both the audience's desire and the standard of the model. Thus, while accrual allows culturally resonant texts to grow, adding to the totality of a larger work, those works are vetted by means of agonism. Longinus suggests that Plato could not have achieved his brilliance

if he had not, like a young antagonist breaking the lance with an established champion, eagerly contended with Homer for the first place, over ambitiously perhaps, but certainly not without profit. In the words of Hesiod, this kind of strife is a blessing to men. And in truth this is a

beautiful and worthy contest in which even defeat by one's predecessors is not without glory. (1991, 13)

The relationship between adaptation and model, then, is a battle fought for the acceptance into a canon, adjudicated by the audiences who are both drawn by an adaptation's association with a revered model, or drawn to a model by the excellence achieved by the adaptation itself.

In order to best address how adaptation operates in an interactive new media context we can simply look to *The Lord of the Rings'* sustained influence and adaptive power. As mentioned previously, the film and game industries are now so closely linked that it is unusual to witness the release of a blockbuster film without a corresponding adaptation for PC, Xbox, Playstation, and/or Nintendo game systems. Consequently, when Peter Jackson's long awaited version of Tolkien's classic work was released it was no surprise to find that video games soon followed. What makes this instance unique is several factors: first, rarely have film/game crossovers had such a rich backstory – not only of three, three-hour films on which to draw, but countless stories, drawings, paintings, books, and a vast body of criticism. Second, two competing versions of *The Lord of the Rings* were released to video game to capitalize on the success of the films – one, associated with Peter Jackson and New Line Cinema, the other with the estate of J.R.R. Tolkien and the classic novels. And third, the direct and financially successful connections between the game and the film (as opposed to the game and the novels) highlight the distinction between the principle of an adaptive model (as a point of reference with significant cultural capital) and the fruitless notion of an origin. The audience of the video game culture has a long established connection with film, and

filmic conventions, but comparatively less with the linguistic textual tradition. So while Tolkien's ethos is still present and powerful enough to merit notice (as we will see in our discussion of the Vivendi/Tolkien Estates video game versions of *Lord of the Rings* in the next chapter), the relative proximity of the media give Jackson's ethos more cultural resonance with gamers than does Tolkien's.

Of concern for our model of new media adaptation is the association of ethos, not only with authorship in the figure of the symbolic author, but also with textuality in the symbolic source. Common use of the term *ethos*, particularly in composition, inextricably links it with identity, personhood, ontology; authors have ethoi through texts – the texts point to and reflect their author(s). But of course, this presentation of the author/text relationship is extremely problematic. So, when we recognize the reality of the absent author, or at best the symbolic author, we realize that the text produces ethos for itself. It is the texts in which we have faith: we project authorship as a result of that faith. This presentation of ethos as a location, a vessel, rather than an identity is in keeping with a classical understanding of the term. Arthur Miller points out, “the basic denotation [of ethos] is not character, but ‘an accustomed place’ and in the plural may refer to the ‘haunts or abodes of animals.’” (1974, 310) Thus, ethos is not limited to human agency, but rather to the larger rubric of habituation. Audiences imbue authority to a model, be it a text or a projected agent, and that model then carries with it authority – the source itself becomes a symbol. Bourdieu calls these symbols “objectified symbolic capital” (1991, 277), or objects that resonate with and stand for the relationship between powerful and powerless. The model becomes a physical manifestation of projected and misapprehended power of authorship – a tactile analogue to the author-figure itself. So

when we turn our perspective to the *Lord of the Rings* series and all its complementary emanations, we begin to see that the cultural power and authority of the adaptations is gleaned, in part, from the authority - the ethos - vested in the model. This condition does not eliminate the independence of the adaptive text. Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* success is not enslaved to the model, for if the adaptive relationship were that simple, the rather unwatchable Rankin/Bass adaptation of *The Return of the King* would have enjoyed some measure of success. No, the source/adaptation ethotic structure is not fixed, but rather dynamic and relational. In the same way authors may grant new texts a measure of notoriety on the basis of their branding, so the model adds credibility to the adaptation. We would, by and large, be more likely to grant an unseen version of *Lord of the Rings* a viewing/playing/listening than *Kull the Conqueror*, simply because of the authority of the model.

Hence, our complete model of adaptive ethos creates a visual representation of the flow of ethotic power (represented by the direction arrows in figure 3.3) in the production of the new media texts and looks like this:

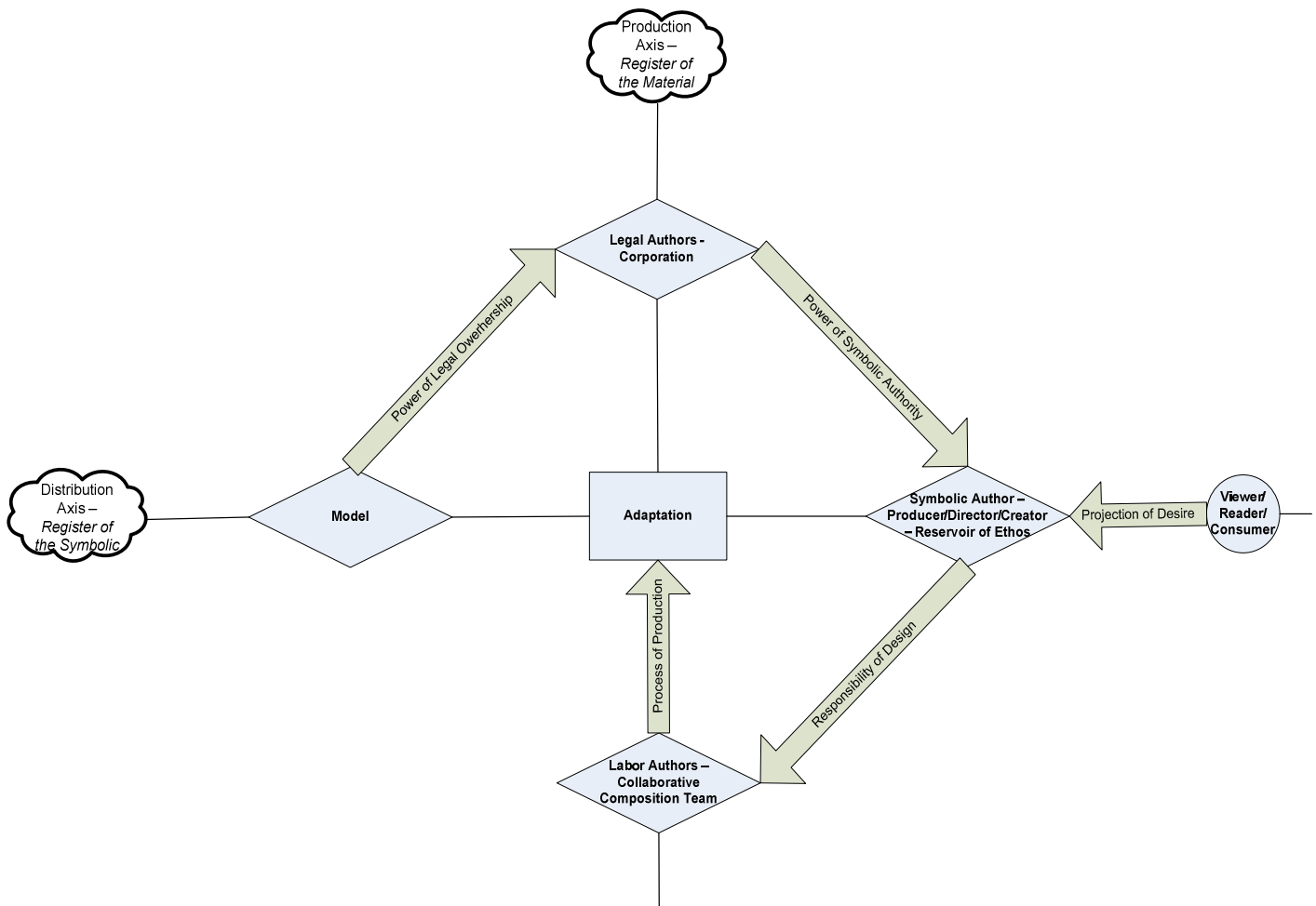


Figure 4.3 The Cycle of Adaptation Ethos

Thus, the singular, ontologically harmonious concept of authorship has begun to erode in a pragmatic sense, whereas in the mid 20th century we had only a vague inkling of its theoretical demise. The cycles of capitalism cannot operate without owners, authors who lend public legitimacy to products, regardless of how diffuse their actual creators may be. Hence, whenever we see a product produced by a new media, entertainment conglomerate, or video game company, we witness a complex game of bait and switch: we are sold on the ethos of serial authors/directors/producers, but the actual composition system is far more complex, involving coordinated force by at least three distinct types of authors in order to harness consumer desire. Nowhere is this phenomenon more apparent than with adaptation, whose very lifeblood is the concept of

legitimacy. Agents, acting upon textual manifestations, produce traces of power toward the single goal, like that of a scarecrow. The scarecrow is the farmer by proxy: the farmer projects his presence and across time and space into a vessel designed to represent the idea of the farmer, to do his work and keep the attention of the crows on the bloated, but ultimately empty, corpse.

Ethos by Identification and Division

Adaptation's power, then, is generated primarily from association: we approach the new interpretation in the terms of its model. That is, we are asked to, to one degree or another, think of these two separate texts as simultaneously different (insofar as each text contains its own aesthetic values and media-specific features) and the same (similitude ranging from vague association to the overt sameness of title, form, and content). In the same way, authors are evoked in order to create distinction or identification, as well as to demonstrate similitude, or consubstantiality. This paradoxical relationship is perhaps the most difficult one to handle for adaptation studies. The most common solution is to simply pick which method of analysis best suit the texts in question and slavishly adhere to that model, but Kenneth Burke provides an explanation that accommodates both these textual demands and recognizes them as both necessary elements of the same process.

Identification and consubstantiation are two Burkean terms for the goal of rhetoric and are particularly suited to the paradoxes of association and distancing we see occurring in adaptation. In the complex system of identification, the persuasive element that exists in language works by means of symbolic action to create connections between

agents. But when we use the term persuasion, we mean that rhetoric “considers the ways in which individuals [or groups] are at odds with one another” (1989, 181) and how these constituent parties become connected through symbols. These connections are created by identification. Constituent elements must be first distinguished from each other, or separated, before the processes of identification and consubstantiation can begin. At the most basic level of identification one individual speaks and another begins to associate with the ideas conveyed and consequently, subjects will be persuaded or changed through this process. It is this process of change that Burke refers to when he describes “killing” as the quintessential act of identification. Identification symbolically changes its subjects insofar as subjects are distinguished (Subject A is distinct from subject B), then changed (subject A kills subject B), and thereby identified in terms of each other (Subject A is the one who killed Subject B). In this manner the two subjects become, in essence, one.

While Burke identifies various techniques by which fictional characters may be analyzed for rhetorical qualities, we must reconcile these traditionally linguistic systems of symbolic analysis to a new media environment. It is one thing to “identify” two characters in literature, as language is the medium of their development, it is less clear how visual and auditory signs create the three Burkean features of rhetoric: distinction, identification and consubstantiation. The key to unlocking rhetoric’s application to new media authorship is through the figure of the symbol. As the basic unit of communication, the symbol provides a connection between organisms and their environments:

The symbol might be called a word invented by the artist to specify a particular grouping or pattern or emphasizing of experiences – and the

work of art in which the symbol figures might be called a definition of this word. (1989, 110)

Symbols then “might” be called words. The use of this modal is significant because Burke is allowing that symbols take many forms depending upon their context. Such flexibility allows the critic to analyze texts based upon their position with the larger body of work, as each symbolic figuration depends upon the surrounding text to provide meaning. Furthermore, the use of the modal “might” allows us to consider that other units of analysis may be considered under the heading “symbol” and thereby may be considered within the purview of rhetorical systems.

But whether or not the term “symbol” may be used for representational systems other than language depends upon the *function* of that term and how closely it relates to the broader categories of “new media” and “authorship.” The symbol distils experience into a code that, by uniform social consent, stands in the place of those experiences, without the chaotic confusion that accompanies such occurrences:

[The symbol] can, by its function as name and definition, give simplicity and order to an otherwise unclarified complexity. It provides a terminology of thoughts, actions, emotions, attitudes, for codifying a pattern of experience...the idealization is the elimination of irrelevancies. (1989, 111)

Taken in this context, the symbol would seem to be a multifarious term, overarching various media and their respective interaction. Visual and auditory representation, as well as the larger symbol of authorship that overarches the individual works, each distils experience, eliminating irrelevancies in order to represent patterns of experience so that

meaning may be conveyed and identification engaged – the visual and auditory expressions of new media constitute “symbols,” in the Burkean sense, so we may infer that they are, in their turn, rhetorical. Thus, when we approach a film, video game, painting or a piece of music, we are able to engage with these works in terms of symbolic action and by extension in the terms of the rhetorical systems that they will naturally develop.

Conclusion

Thus, we began by noting the conflict between modern and manuscript cultural perspectives of authorship and proceeded to interrogate Linda Hutcheon’s question: “who adapts” the new media text? We found that there is no single answer to this seemingly obvious question; rather, the new media author is fragmented into three distinct components: the legal author, the labor author, and the symbolic author. So if the author of the collaborative new media adaptation is fragmented, how is the authority vested in authorship distributed amongst these parties? Ethos, or the negotiated credibility between authors and audiences, becomes a complex system, but most of the credibility for the new media text is housed in the symbolic author. Furthermore, when we add the specter of the adapted text into our matrix, we find that we have competing author-figures in that each new instantiation must, at a certain level, agonistically compete with the model it adapts – each symbolic author must, to one degree or another, supplant the preceding author figure and claim some measure of credibility.

In the following chapter, we will see how our system of adaptive ethos is further complicated by two adaptations competing with each other in order to lay claim to a common, heteromodal model. We will find that even within a single megatext and between contemporaneous texts, conflict arises as to the nature of the model and how best to adapt it. We find, in terms of video game adaptations of *Lord of the Rings*, that the two competitors attempt to draw credibility from divergent audiences: on the one hand, Peter Jackson's Electronic Arts versions of *The Lord of the Rings* emphasizes the game platform's connection to cinematic modes of narrative expression, whereas Vivendi's Tolkien Estates versions overlay nearly direct literary correspondences overtop well-known and venerated gameplay platforms.

Chapter 5

Eurhythmic Analysis of the Video Game Adaptations of *Lord of the Rings*

So, armed with an understanding of adaptive megatexts as accruing in semiosis, eurhythmia as an interpretive strategy, and adaptive authorship as a complex system of ethos, we are now able to begin examining new media adaptations. As we have seen, all adaptations are profoundly concerned with legitimacy, but none more so than new media adaptations. Their relative youth makes them targets of critical scorn; new media must endure the contempt and even moral condemnation of both technophobes and traditionalists, just as their older siblings (film and television) once did. Video game adaptations embody this conflict between the commercial success of new media and the suspicion and contempt of its critics. Thus, in an exploding market, where it has long surpassed its siblings in terms of profits, the only world left for the video game to conquer is the one of critical acceptance and aesthetic legitimacy. So how do video games garner ethos in a contentious marketplace? As we have just seen in the previous chapter, identification is the process by which agents establish themselves within a community by adopting its terms and expressive strategies to the point where those agents identify with and are identified as part of the community. From this perspective, adaptations create identification with earlier titles, authors, and techniques in order to gain acceptance and distinguish themselves from others with which they compete. In the case of *The Lord of the Rings* series of video game adaptations, we find that adaptive legitimation is sought not only at the titular level but also at the level of form and content.

Each competing company seeks to appeal to a culturally perceived authority in order to improve its chances of being seen as “the real” *The Lord of the Rings* adaptation.

Of course, such rhetorical concern with authority and identification cannot help but trespass on the ground of ethos. But while much critical invocation of ethos addresses matters of an author’s “character,” in this case, the author is a shadowy figure. To which author does EA’s series of *Lord of the Rings* games appeal for its authority? J.R.R. Tolkien, or Peter Jackson? What we find is that video games, currently lacking their own canon of authorship, use the process of identification with both cinematic and literary elements to create a sense of “origin” that would otherwise be provided by an author-figure. Each corporate line must strike an associative balance between populism (say, in the form of Jackson’s hit films) and purity (in the form of Tolkien’s revered classic). While EA attempts to link itself directly to Peter Jackson’s cinematic texts, it retains a structural association with Tolkien’s work. Conversely, the Vivendi/Tolkien Estates line of adaptations, designed by Sierra Entertainment, Black Label Games and Liquid Entertainment, overtly eschews Jackson’s blockbuster series for a direct, familial consubstantiality with Tolkien’s oeuvre – they chose to enter *The Lord of the Rings* canon by means of direct association with the books, rather than the films. But because EA has the association with the sexy, prominent media juggernaut of Jackson’s films, Vivendi turns to structure to provide its populist appeal; Vivendi adapts the *Lord of the Rings* settings to classic gaming platforms to provide continuity.

The EA/Peter Jackson *Lord of the Rings* Games

The video (or computer) game medium provides a unique opportunity to realize events portrayed in other media forms. By adding various levels of interaction between players and the environment, the legitimated narrative is enriched. But as interactivity and narrative are frequently at odds (narrative is an imposed order, while interactivity presumes a measure of indeterminacy), when one adapts a model to the game a range of constraints naturally follows. The adapted text is characterized by a hybridization of, on the one hand, interactive elements (at the level of spatial task), and on the other, narrative (in the larger presumptions of character movement and total game trajectory). Simply, plot is transformed into geography insofar as “when you adapt a film into a game, the process typically involves translating events in the film into environments within the game” (Jenkins 2004). Henry Jenkins describes this process as the creation of “spatial stories” which share with the science fiction and fantasy genres a preoccupation with world creation at the expense of plot and character. In fact, when it comes to the realization of a secondary world, the video game may have an edge on its aesthetic siblings:

When game designers draw story elements from existing film or literary genres, they are most apt to tap those genres — fantasy, adventure, science fiction, horror, war — which are most invested in world-making and spatial storytelling. Games, in turn, may more fully realize the spatiality of these stories, giving a much more immersive and compelling representation of their narrative worlds. (2004)

From this standpoint, the function of the game, regardless of the level of narrative overlay, or correspondence with the model is not “so much [to] reproduce the story of a literary work... as [to evoke] its atmosphere” (2004). The video game may produce narrative on at least one of four levels: it may evoke a pre-existing narrative association, it may provide a staging ground upon which narratives may be created, it may imbed narrative elements in its *mise en scène*, and it may provide resources for emergent narratives. Significantly, when we examine the EA and Vivendi lines of *The Lord of the Rings* games we find that all four levels of adaptive narration are being exploited. But most obviously, we find that EA exploits the advantage of a cinematic, as opposed to a literary model, evoking a pre-existing narrative through its title, character associations, and setting designs, as well as embedding narrative elements in its *mise en scène*, at both the gameplay (or, the primary narrative text of the game) and skill-advancement levels (or, the paratextual intratitles that mark the progression through the game-narrative).

Since the mass appeal of adaptations often relies on the overt association of adaptation to its model, the most obvious point of overlap is that of the title. If one can garner rights, not only of content, but title, one can easily carry the symbolic capital of the source in a shorthand form. Burke points out that titles play a significant role in shaping discourse.

Since no two things or acts or situations are exactly alike, you cannot apply the same term to both of them without thereby introducing a certain margin of ambiguity, an ambiguity as great as the difference between the two subjects that are given the identical title. (Burke 1989, 142)

A title is a unit that significantly divides and unifies ideas towards the goal of identification, yet Burke demonstrates that in signification ambiguity produces a rhetorical tension, that is, a conflation of identification. Thus, by presenting the titles of his body of work as *The Lord of the Rings*, and then by identifying game characters specifically with film-based actors and reproducing specific cinematic interpretations, Peter Jackson seeks to foster ambiguity between himself and Tolkien, while at the same time agonistically distinguishing his texts from other, titularly identical texts. This ambiguity/distinction binary is constantly in flux as rhetorical persuasion “hinges on acts of identity as they move through a series of dialectics: communion and war, of course, but also similarity and difference” (Baumlin 1999, 187). Thus, an associative identity (the adaptation) is a form of consubstantiality identical to conflict: while Peter Jackson attempts to associate himself with Tolkien, he distinguishes himself agonistically *from* Tolkien. While Jackson struggles with the parent (in the figure of Tolkien), he also battles his siblings (Bakshi, Rankin/Bass, Sierra, etc.) for the position of privileged child – the inheritor of the Tolkien birthright. He becomes like Jacob against Esau: he must use his wits to steal a blessing. Jackson figures Tolkien as a legitimating force, a “collaborator” in authorship, but at the same time he takes great pains to place himself as the author in direct contradistinction to any others who would presume to preside over the honor – the two authors – the two worlds are literally at odds with one another.

Why “at odds,” you may ask, when the titular term is “identification?” because, to begin with “identification” is, by the same token though roundabout, to confront the implication of division. And so, in the end, men are brought into that most tragically ironic of all divisions, or

conflicts, wherein millions of cooperative acts go into the preparation of one single destructive act. We refer to that ultimate disease of cooperation: war. (Burke 1969, 22)

Thus at every level of these *Lord of the Rings* products we see this tension between identification and division in the same way as we see a tension between narrative and indeterminacy in the gameplay – while the global project of the corporate franchise of Peter Jackson’s *Lord of the Rings* publicly seeks to identify itself with Tolkien and even other incarnations of Middle Earth, in its particular manifestations (the films, the games, the toys) it attempts to distinguish itself, to hermetically present itself as *the authentic Lord of the Rings*.

Characters and Skills

The first things we notice in addressing either *The Two Towers* or *The Return of the King* video games are obviously their packaging, or in transtextual terms, their durable peritext. On each cover, the main characters figure prominently, but their figuration is significant on several levels. The characters are not abstractions of possible Gandalfs, Aragorns, Legolass or Gimlis, but direct, photographic images of Ian McKellen, Viggo Mortensen, Orlando Bloom, and John Rhys-Davies, which directly link these particular products with the particular Jackson film instantiations. There is little room for confusion as to the claimed source of this adaptation; simply by displaying particular actors as the protagonists, the games identify not Tolkien, but Peter Jackson as author. At this point in the expanding network of associative linkages, these particular adaptations of *The Two*

Towers and *The Return of the King* can be only obliquely associated with Tolkien's vision. We also note prominent figuring of scenes from the films, arranged into montages. This montage effect, rather than drawing attention to particular narrative aspects of the story, creates a field of possible connections between the game and the film – the adaptive association is anchored, but not hinged on narrative. The titles of each are presented in a hypernym/hyponym arrangement, as the salient element of both titles is not the individual game names (*The Two Towers* and *The Return of the King*), but the franchise title: *The Lord of the Rings*. The font of each title piece is presented as cracked and weathered stone in order to convey its antiquity, its sense of a mythic plot, as well as simultaneously to reference and draw upon the priority of Tolkien's works.

On the first of the two to be released, *The Two Towers* game (figure 5.1), the packaging design places the title/franchise mark at the centre of its design,



Figure 5.1 The Durable Peritext of *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* Video Game

with relevant characters and plot-shots arranged around the margin in order to emphasize the connection with the total accrued works of the Wingnut enterprise. Conversely, *The Return of the King* title (figure 5.2) employs a more traditional arrangement,¹ placed along the bottom in order to define and frame the salient, visual image: Viggo Mortensen and Ian McKellen fighting a throng of shadowy orcs.



Figure 5.2 The Durable Peritext of *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* Video Game

What we see happening between these two packages is a process of adaptive distinction and branding: first, in order to distinguish itself from its competitors (Sierra released its *Fellowship of the Ring* game before EA could launch its *Two Towers*), *The Two Towers* peritext places head shots of the actors in the upper third of the space – an “ideal” position, according to Kress and Van Leeuwen’s visual semiotics (1996, 193) – they are the idealized versions of these characters.

By occupying the ideal space they become the blessed versions of the heroes, as distinct from other competing representations; though younger, they have struggled with their siblings and been victorious. At the same time, EA places the franchise as the central, unifying unit of the text. Second, once the franchise has been established and clear distinctions have been made between EA and Sierra, Jackson and Tolkien, the star power of character association is enough to sell the game – Mortensen and McKellen are so inextricably linked with the franchise that their images become an elaboration, or brand of Peter Jackson’s *Lord of the Rings*.

Additionally, even within the game itself, the connection between the actors and the characters is intentionally blurred. The completion of the entire game of *The Return of the King* unlocks a series of secret video features that amount to the actors talking

about their lives as film and game characters. Each interview sequence consists of a pitch as to why their character is the best one with which to play (as the gamers, once they complete all the levels, may go back and play with any character in any scene), and which actor is the better gamer. This design construes a dual-pairing between actors and their characters (the character/actor) and the celebrity image and the gamer (the celebrity/gamer). In transtextual terms, the character/actor is a paratextual relationship emerging from the material reality of the actor, Viggo Mortensen, personifying a character, Aragorn, represented in the game. Alternately, the celebrity/gamer relationship is intertextual: gamers identify with the *person* of Viggo as a succession of cumulative associations from his many roles and his personal ethos (one of the recurring themes of the *Lord of the Rings Special Extended DVD Edition Appendices* is Viggo's dedication to his craft: how he *lives* as his character, how he is a rough-and-ready cowboy gentleman and consummate professional, in short, how Aragorn *is* Viggo). Thus, when gamers select the character of Aragorn they identify with the straightforward actor/character pairing, seeking to mimic and adapt the role conveyed in the films, but at the same time, the gamer identifies with the celebrity insofar as they strive for a consubstantiality with the celebrity myth: they are invited to embody the virtues that Viggo's ethos suggests in its intertext.²

The "point" of the EA series is twofold: as an adaptation, the task is to complete the narrative cycle and, in a way, participate in and enact the war of the ring. As a conventional role-playing game, the goal is to increase the characters' experience/power/wealth in order to prepare for a final battle. The power of one's opponent and the complexity of the attacks a player makes against them provides that

character with “experience points” which can then be used to purchase skills to use in battle against minions and bosses. What is significant about these skills is the way in which EA uses them in order to enhance the adaptive experience by associating particular character moves or actions with terms drawn from the larger Middle-Earth lexicon – a lexicon that extends far beyond both Jackson’s and Tolkien’s presentation of the *Lord of the Rings* texts into peripheral mythology. The paratextual features hover at the margin of the text, creating the sense of a vast world just beyond the game, and so lending the weight of authority/symbolic authorship to the whole process. So, while Tolkien (and to a lesser degree, Jackson) takes great pains to name weapons in his works,³ the EA designers have replaced actual weapons’ names with skill names, each befitting the stated tradition and geography of its particular, associated race. For example in *The Return of the King*, Aragorn’s fourth “Devastating” skill is called “Wrath of the Numenor,” while Gandalf’s is “Flame of Udun.”

The Numenorian, of course, are the “High, or men of the West” who built huge civilizations of splendor dedicated to the rediscovery of immortality, and who were at one point so powerful as to capture and imprison Sauron, but craven enough to be seduced and finally destroyed by him. The Numenor line and its presence in this gaming context suggests the immense power of Aragorn’s final skill as well as his lineage as a Dunedain (a splinter race of the Numenor civil war, and also the name of the first “ranged weapon’s” skill in the *Return* game). But the title also identifies a familial connection between Aragorn and the ancient, powerful Numenor insofar as Elendil and Isildur, the last kings of Gondor (Isildur being the one who cut the ring from Sauron’s hand) were the leaders of “The Faithful”, the exiles of Numenor (Tolkien 2004, 279-281).

The flame of Udun is similarly rich in meaning, both filmicly, and textually. Gandalf calls the Balrog of Moria, “flame of Udun.” The name *Udun*, we come to realize, is a synonym for Hell – or the smoldering lava pits at the foot of Mount Doom. This association is particularly, rhetorically significant – it is perhaps one of EA’s most clear examples of *mise en scène*, narrative consubstantiation insofar as we identify Gandalf, because of this game skill, in terms of the Balrog; Gandalf’s new powers reflect the fact that he is the one who killed the Balrog. The encounter in Moria (which leads significantly to Gandalf’s death and resurrection⁴) transforms Gandalf from “the grey pilgrim” to the “Gandalf the white.” This shift in title supplants Saruman and allows Gandalf to directly challenge the darkness of Sauron. Thus, by simply strategically naming a skillset, by demarking a paratextual intratitle, the creators draw upon dense and rich back-stories of both the film and the novel to legitimate itself and to draw the player into the mythic experience.

Plot Overlapping

Both *The Two Towers* (2002) and *The Return of the King* (2003) divide the narrative into three parts that coalesce and diverge. The first line is that of the Frodo and Sam, the second, that of Gandalf, and the third, of Aragorn. This branching of narrative is reflected directly in *The Return of the King* video game (2004). Rather than forcing the gamer to move through a strict and linear narrative trajectory, as in *The Two Towers* (2002) [as well as Vivendi’s *Hobbit* (2003) and *Fellowship of the Ring* (2002)], EA’s *Return* attempts to replicate Jackson’s (as well as Tolkien’s) strategies of representing

temporal simultaneity. This simultaneity occurs primarily by the overall game sequence screen, but also by the occasional interactions between characters that separate and then come together to further the overall plot. Thus, as Jenkins predicts, narrative plot is transformed, at least partially, into geographical space. But the most apparent moments of identification between the video game and film occur at the level of direct exposition.

The Return of the King game, more than any other *Lord of the Rings* adaptation, is wholly dependent on the narrative form of its model. Because of vast stretches of direct film insertion used to link the various action episodes, it represents a relatively rare example of adapted gameplay: an interactive medium that borders on being controlled by plot. These prolonged passages from the film are coupled with new voice-over tracks, primarily from Ian Mckellen, which provide motive and direction for the gameplay sequences, but more importantly, drive the sequences toward a narrative conclusion. This direct relationship between the film clips, actors' voices, and gameplay sequences rigidly control the adaptive process. There can be no confusion as to the model of these games: they are directly connected to the film at every level; and the direct imposition of the cinematic plot through cut scenes and added elements, onto an otherwise fragmented gameplay, demonstrates this nicely.

The game plot attempts to structurally mimic that of its cinematic model by creating three parallel timelines. These are presented in a map that begins the game.



Figure 5.3: Approaching the Story Map of EA's *Return of the King* (www.ea.com)

The map in figure 5.3 is a replica of a tree carved into the stone walls of Minas Tirith, an association drawn, not from the film, but from Tolkien's description of the imposing hall of the Kings of Gondor (1991, 784).

Tolkien's uses the tree of Gondor as a symbol of the health of the line of Kings: the tree itself stands atop Minas Tirith before the hall of kings, but the symbol of the tree is carved into the armor of Gondorian soldiers and on the wall behind the king's throne. The tree represents both the family lineage of the Gondorian kings and the kingdom itself; when Aragorn is

crowned and reunited with Arwen, the tree begins to flower anew (presumably in anticipation of Aragorn's heir, Eldarion) after generations of sterility. Therefore, the use of the King's family tree as navigation screen accomplishes four things in the game: first, it links the game to the minutiae of Tolkien lore (Jackson and Weta have commented on the pains they took to use the smallest details of set and costume to flesh out Tolkien's secondary world). Second, the tree establishes a direct familial consubstantiality between the three diverse narratives of the game – we understand that they are of the same substance and operate toward the same goal.

Third, the tree system allows the gamer to understand relative time by transforming time into space: the game has a beginning (Helm's Deep) and an end (The Crack of Doom), which are connected by direct lines of narrative plotting that converge at these two moments. What we see here is a clear example of the transformation of plot into space – not only do the episodes unfold in terms of moving the character from one point to another, but the entire plot movement of the game is spatially represented in shorthand. After the Helm's Deep episode, the timeline branches and gamers must choose between the Gandalf plot which takes them from Helm's Deep to Isengard and finally to the battle for Minas Tirith; the Hobbit plot which follows Sam, Frodo, and Gollum from Osgiliath through Shelob's lair and Cirith Ungol, to Mount Doom; and the central (both spatially and narratively) "Path of the King" plot which moves Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli through the Paths of the Dead, to a battle with the king of the dead, the arrival at the southern gates of Osgiliath, to the battle of the Pelinnor Fields, and finally to the black gate. Thus, the map places the episodes in a relative chronology. The position of each episode along the timeline, in relation to the other episodes attempts to do something that can only be achieved in traditional narrative forms (such as the film and the novel) through exposition: showing us exactly what happens when. We can see that while Gandalf defends the walls of Minas Tirith, Sam battles with Shelob. We can also see, significantly, that Frodo loses his mithril shirt in Cirith Ungol just before it is presented to Aragorn at the black gate as a ruse to break his will. In other words, the conventions of the gaming medium seem to provide certain advantages to conceiving of the overall plotting of *The Lord of the Rings*, thereby establishing a clear connection with the claimed model as well as providing an expanded experience of it. But the narrative

plotting also seeks to identify with the conventions of the medium by emphasizing Aragorn's action-figure characteristics and minimizing the other characters' importance. Finally, the centrality of the path of the king in the map identifies the gamer with both the title of the piece and the prominent placing of Aragorn on both packages. He is the most action-heroesque of the characters, and so demands a central role in a medium that values such action. The other two storylines are marginalized but are still present to retain the narrative cohesion of the adaptation's model, and thus maintain the ethotic connection. The notion of ethos here indicates an authority garnered by association. In the case of *The Return of the King's* plotlines, its structural similarity – its construction of itself *in the terms* of its adaptive model – produces a credibility or legitimacy. When we play the game we say, “Oh. This is just like that other *Return of the King*.” Given this association, the game becomes more “a part of the club” of texts that we deem *Lord of the Rings*. Generating ethotic credibility by identification is a process of standing out in a group: the text adopts enough of the structural elements of its model to be able to claim itself as genuine, but retains its distinctiveness enough to stand out of the crowd of other competing texts within the group. Bolter and Grusin touch on this struggle for credibility when they note that media “must enter into relationships of respect and rivalry with other media” (1999, 98). In the case of the parallel plotlines in EA's *Return*, the marginalization to which I refer begins to strain the ethotic connection between the model and adaptation, as the major plotline and thematics of both the film and the novel reside with the Hobbits' trek toward Mount Doom, whereas the primary narrative thrust of the game is through Aragorn's kingly battles. The centrality of the “Crack of Doom” episode on the map may be an attempt to restore this thematic connection. But it is obvious that

the thematic conventions of the gaming medium are, to a certain degree, at odds with that of its cinematic model. It is clear, by the number of episodes given to Aragorn, and the centrality of his plot line (both literally – as the centre line of the tree, and figuratively), that his is the focal point of the game.

But we must also account for divergences, supplements, or excesses in the game plot. Rarely do any games have one-for-one correspondence with the plot of the film to which they are attached. We should not expect any adaptation to achieve such correspondence, as the very notion of adaptation demands change – of mode, of message, of address, etc. Thus, as the medium shifts, so we must expect the constraints to alter the plot. In rhetorical terms, these changes and divergences adaptations make from the model are *eurhythmic*, or the proper fit. The fitting adaptation is one that is modeled on a previous form, but conforms to the exigencies of its immediate audience, purpose and context. The *eurhythmic* response to the problems presented by adapting a video game from a cinematic model is to diverge from the episodic elements of that model in order to maintain the model's effects rather than its narrative strategies. In the case of the EA video games, the supplemental aspects of the game are ancillary to the “boss” stages. In the typical design of adventure gaming play, the games are divided into episodic units. There is usually an overarching game plot, or quest that breaks down into any number of episodes. These episodes usually have a super/subordinate organization where players move through various tasks, puzzles, or conflicts with lower minions until they reach a “boss” or ruler of that particular level, against whom players must test their skills before being allowed to proceed into the next episode. In *The Two Towers* and *Return of the King*, even when the ancillary gameplay diverges from the film, it logically sets up boss

levels, drawn directly from the source, and which mirror it on the levels of both form and content. For example, in *The Two Towers* game, before gamers can confront the “watcher in the water” at the gates of Moria (a rather lengthy action sequence from *The Fellowship of the Ring* film), they must proceed through a swampy region where orcs, goblins and Uruk-Hai spring from the muck or leap out from behind rocks to challenge them. While these subordinate tasks do not appear in the films, they create a narrative cohesion to the conventions of the gaming medium. In fact, were the game-tasks in the film, they would cause significant plot problems for the cinematic narrative, as the tranquility of both the approach to Moria and the mountainous trek towards Helm’s Deep provide both the watcher’s and warg’s appearance with the power to terrify. Presuming the convention and audience expectation of the minion/boss episode in game design, the monsters that gamers would rightly expect to fight in an adaptation of Peter Jackson’s *Lord of the Rings* must have minions to precede them. For the battle with the cave troll in Dwalin’s tomb, the film provides adequate fodder for such a game scenario – orcs and goblins battle the heroes before the troll’s arrival, so this sequence in the game mirrors the film. But in the film version of *The Two Towers*, no minion encounter precedes either the watcher or the warg attacks. *The game retains its own internal coherence by adding plot elements to the story.* Quite simply, given the conventions of the medium, a faithful or moment-by-moment accounting of the film plot would have rendered the game adaptation *less viable* as an adaptation. The game diverges from its model’s plot, not because it is unfaithful, but because it is *eurhythmic* to do so.

Additionally, the supplemental elements may also act as a kind of promotion for the “Special Extended DVD Editions” of the series. “The Mouth of Sauron” sequence

occurs in both the book and the game but not in the theatrical release of Jackson's *The Return of the King*. As the armies of Gondor and Rohan approach the black gate, the ambassadors of Sauron approach Aragorn to "negotiate:"

At its head there rode a tall and evil shape, mounted upon a black horse, if horse it was; for it was huge and hideous...The rider was robed all in black, and black was his lofty helm; yet this was no Ringwraith, but a living man. The Lieutenant of the Tower of Baradur he was and his name is remembered in no tale; for he himself had forgotten it, and he said: "I am the mouth of Sauron. (Tolkien, 1990, 922)

The Mouth shows Aragorn and Gandalf Frodo's mithril shirt, stolen in the tower of Cirith Ungul, in order to break their spirits before Sauron's final assault. In the novel, words are exchanged between king and messenger, but Aragorn refuses to be cowed and therefore drums the envoy out as the black gates open. In the video game Aragorn must fight Mouth, a truly difficult boss, in order to confront the hordes of Mordor.⁵

What this act of distinction does is call attention to its absence in the cinematic production. A cleverly crafted promotional machine, Jackson's Wingnut productions in association with Alliance/Atlantis made the delaying of "Special Extended Editions" of the films a part of their promotional strategy – the video games were released (in early December) before the theatrical versions of the film (just before Christmas), then a few months later, the video/DVD versions of the theatrical films were released (in the summer), and then, in November, just in time for Christmas, the Special Edition Boxed Sets were released. The first two sets acted as promotion for the upcoming films, but the last boxed set required a certain consumer tension to keep audiences interested into

November 2004. The hint of restored sequences in the video game serves this function of consumer appetite-whetting well. Players go to see the film expecting to see the sequences presented in the game in some form on the screen. When they are absent gamers begin to speculate as to whether the scene will be in the Special Edition and are consequently more likely to buy it in hopes of seeing this sequence realized cinematically, not just in a game environment. The inclusion of this promotional sequence acts as a challenge to the simple adaptation/source binary by adding yet another linkage of identification towards a familial relation. While the game overtly establishes the (theatrical) film as its authoritative model, at the same time it gestures to *another* version of the model text, hinting at the Special Edition's possible figuration as the authoritative version – the Peter Jackson “authorized,” “true” version of the model. The game, in other words, works to expand the symbolic system of *The Lord of the Rings* title to include a wide cluster of texts.

Perspective as Associative Link

We tend not to think of the computer game as having a camera to angle, position, or otherwise shape images. But in *The Fellowship of the Ring* film (2002), Jackson begins with a prologue where he shows the first battle for Middle Earth: the armies of men, elves, and dwarves fought hordes of orcs and goblins under the control of Sauron. The majority of this sequence is computer generated – seemingly realistic characters battle, many in extremely close proximity to the “camera.” Yet, they are computer generated and controlled by a complex algorithm designed to simulate battle sequences, much like the algorithms that control video game NPC's (non-playing characters).

Similarly, the camera that “films” actors in video games is a virtual one. So, when we speak of the camera across media, we do not necessarily speak of the physical mechanisms that capture images, but rather of the perspective of the image on the screen. We see the images and presume a physical device capturing them, but that device’s reality is by no means assured. While many video game adaptations wish to cultivate this association between the director’s camera and what gamers see on their screens, the term “camera” suggests an illusory objectivity, whereas the terms “point of view” or “perspective” appropriately illustrates that relationships on our screen are actively created, that associations are made, that ethos is cultivated and that identification is solicited by agents with purpose (both aesthetic and financial). Point of view, then, is an instrument of these profoundly rhetorical operations. So, while there is a cultivated resemblance between the cinematography of the film and that of the game-scene, the stylistics and strategies of representation should be considered as “perspective.”

So, when we address the particularities of perspective in video games, we must recognize that it can be, just as in film, a hallmark of a directorial style. As Andrew Sarris claims in his defense of Auteurism, “a director must exhibit certain recurring characteristics of style which serve as his signature. The way a film looks and moves should have some relationship to the way a director thinks and feels” (1962, 7). It would seem to follow as well, that one of the ways a video game could connect itself cinematically to its source would be to, at every turn, mimic and replicate those “characteristics of style” that designate, in this case “Peter Jackson-ness.” This, cleverly, is what EA has done throughout both games.

What is especially notable is that these moments containing the “authorial signature” occur often at moments when the model/adaptation connections are the most strained. For example, as we noted earlier, there are moments when, for *eurhythmic* reasons, the game diverges from the plot and narrative of the film, and must incorporate ancillary stages to justify the cinematic boss stages. In the battle in the mountains preceding the warg attack in *The Two Towers* game, players’ interactive control of the character is broken by a cinematic moment where their arrow speeds across a gorge into the head of an orc. In placing a non-interactive, cinematic moment at this point in the game and by making it an integral part of every character’s movement through the pass, the game mimics the famous animistic moment in *The Fellowship of the Ring* film where the viewer sees the world from the perspective of Legolas’s arrow as the characters escape down the crumbling steps of Moria toward the fateful bridge of Khazad-dum. Jackson, in order to demonstrate Legolas’s preternatural accuracy with a bow, follows the long path of his arrow into the head of an orc high above the fleeing fellowship. What is significant to note here, is that the Khazad-dum sequence, and therefore, the battle in the pass from the game are distinct creations – hallmarks of Jackson’s unique style. The flight down the steps to the bridge, the arrow, the throwing of the hobbits and Gimli, the falling of the steps are not in the novel, nor are they, according to Phillipa Boyens, even in the script, rather, they are directorial embellishments. The arrow perspective, transplanted into the game serves the function of stamping it as “of” Peter Jackson. So, what we see in the use of perspective in the video game is a keen attempt to provide the game with familial substance – a part of the *real* family of Tolkien texts, if you will – by replicating elements unique to the cinematic model.

Episodic Structure

For J.R.R. Tolkien, the model of his narrative structure was that of myth. His entire secondary world, explored primarily in *The Simarillion* (1977) and *The Lord of the Rings*, hinges on a series of episodic myths that create a pantheon and overarching ur-text. These episodes produce patterns of repetition and resolution through Tolkien's principle of eucatastrophe, or "the good catastrophe, the sudden joyous 'turn'" (1983, 153), which grounds all Tolkienian principles of "sub-creation." The eucatastrophic event is the moment where the tide turns for the better. Therefore, the internal structure of mythic episodes can be easily marked by the narrative punctuation of the eucatastrophe. The structure of the EA games models this principle by using eucatastrophic moments to guide the larger work; players must experience a sense of hopelessness and despair that precedes the eucatastrophe so that they can feel the release and euphoria of both facilitating and then being agents of the eucatastrophe when it arrives.

Lisa Anne Mende points to three eucatastrophic moments in the battle of Minas Tirith: the arrival of the Rohirrim, the slaying "of the High Nazgul and the coming of Aragorn in the ships of Umbar" (1986, 39). Each of the moments is signified by a turn from despair to joy:

Suddenly their hearts were lifted up in such hope as they had not known since the darkness came out of the East; and it seemed to them that the light grew clear and the sun broke through the clouds... 'beyond all hope the Captain of our foes has been destroyed... (Tolkien, 1990, 890)

And then wonder took him and a great joy...upon the foremost ship a great standard broke...there flowered a white tree, and that was for Gondor; but the Seven Stars were about it, and a high crown above it, the signs of Elendil...Thus came Aragorn (881)

As Gandalf, the *Return of the King* gamer must endure the seemingly hopeless task of defending Minas Tirith, awaiting the arrival of Rohan (as in figure 5.4). In this case, the action is a process of progressive retreat – Gandalf must successfully defend the walls by fending off enough orcs, and defeat a Nazgul, in order to “succeed.”



Figure 5.4: Gandalf's Battle for the Walls of Minas Tirith

(<http://screenshots.teamxbox.com/gallery/633/LotR-The-Return-of-the-King/p1/>)

But success, in the terms of this game sequence, is in real terms a defeat. While the usual gaming scenario conflates task success with victory, the measure of success here is extremely limited – the gamers may succeed in their task as Gandalf, but the net result is

the loss of the wall. Similarly, as Gandalf moves into the courtyard, the task becomes to ensure the safe retreat of civilians (at least 200) as he battles orcs and finally trolls. The only plausible explanation for this inversion is the intentional subsuming of gaming conventions to that of adaptive narration. In his essay “Imitation and Invention in Antiquity: An Historical-Theoretical Revision” (2003), John Muckelbauer examines the ancient philosophy and practice of mimesis, noting that in one form (imitation-as variation), the adaptation is obliged to “reproduce the effect of the model” (79) as opposed to its constituent elements. Thus, the plot of the game, tied as it is to that of the film, must effectively reflect the Tolkienian principles of eucatastrophe, and therefore, gamers must have a sense of relief at the arrival of Rohan through cinematic interlude, or more significantly, through the gameplay sequences of Aragorn’s arrival in the black ships and Eowyn’s slaying of the Witch King.

Through these two instances, the battle at the southern gate of Osgiliath, and the battle of Pelennor Fields, the game inverts the narrative sequence⁶ in order to retain the sense of game-agency, while at the same time, providing the relief of eucatastrophe. EA displaces some of the supernatural power of Aragorn’s arrival as represented in the film and novel in order to make it more agent-oriented in gameplay – Aragorn does not herald the routing of Mordor at the hands of the dead or the men of the north, but becomes simply a means by which Eowyn can safely slay the enemy captain. The moment of eucatastrophe, then, is shifted away from the king’s arrival to the defeat of the enemy through the symbolic figure of its leader. This pattern is, of course, in keeping with the video game conventions discussed earlier: the gaming goal is not the restitution of the line of Isildur as the name suggests, but the more direct matter of the defeat of the enemy.

Additionally, the patterns of gameplay suggest a progressive movement through smaller tasks to the larger resolution – in this case, the resolution of gameplay is not direct, but intermediary – the final victory of the Pelennor Fields comes not at the hands of Aragorn (or in this case, the gamer) as is credited in both the novel and film. Rather, the player, through Aragorn allows Eowyn (an automated character) to defeat the Witch King in an interlude in which the gamer cannot participate.

The point here is not to diminish the role of Aragorn; in fact, the structure of the game only augments the Aragorn role by keeping his final, kingly victory until the black gates. In the novel and film, Aragorn's victory at Minas Tirith is a prelude to the seemingly hopeless struggle at the Black Gate. Aragorn is the "hero" of the day both times, but while he is the *vehicle* of eucatastrophe at Minas Tirith, it is the Eagles and Frodo who are the eucatastrophic elements in the episode at the Black Gate. Again, this will not do for the conventions of gameplay. Aragorn, as the central character of the series (both the EA *Two Towers* and *Return of the King* games), must be at his most heroic at the gate – the final place where we see him as a game-character. Therefore, his final success is deferred from the Pelennor Fields to the Black Gate in order to produce a maximum gaming eucatastrophe – the victory of The King on the field of battle. Again, the *eurhythmic* response is to alter the narrative emphasis of the game in order to maintain the model's eucatastrophic effects rather than its exact narrative strategies.

Thus, the Electronic Arts *Lord of the Rings* games perform three significant actions simultaneously in order to garner credibility: 1) it uses strategies of consubstantiality through naming to draw itself into the accrued text of *Lord of the Rings*, 2) it clearly claims the Peter Jackson films as its primary model, primarily by means of

plot overlapping and the rhetorically consubstantial use of “Jackson-esque” visual perspective, and 3) it allows for *eurhythmic* flexibility between the video game and its source in order to replicate the narrative effects of the film, rather than the narrative itself.

The Vivendi/Tolkien Estates Games

Even before Electronic Arts began to release the Official Film versions of *Lord of the Rings*, the Tolkien estate licensed Vivendi Universal Games to develop a line of games in order to compete with Jackson’s, based directly and wholly on the literary texts of *The Hobbit*, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, and *The Return of the King* (but changing the game title to *The War of the Ring*). Each of the texts, just as the EA *Lord of The Rings* series, achieves its official status by a medallion and stamp of approval. In this case, the approval is not from Jackson and New Line, but from the Tolkien estate, thus lending a sense of the authority of the “original,” reflected in the design of the seal. Furthermore, the packaging and gameplay design of each of these texts, rather than drawing upon the ready-made ethos of the film genre and adapting to it, draws upon the traditions and designs of some of the most successful titles in the gaming world in an attempt to adapt the subject matter of each classic novel to a corresponding classic game style. In fact, Vivendi has specifically tapped three leaders in the game design world to adapt each of their best-selling products to the Tolkien universe, thereby creating stronger connections to gaming conventions than to the overtly stated source: Sierra, Black Label Games, and Liquid Entertainment.

Each of the Vivendi and EA series seeks to distinguish itself from the other and stake claim to authenticity – to the authority of an original model. The function of the term “official” on each of the Vivendi and EA packages (as well as the gratuitous visual portrayals of all the action figures of the New Line films on the EA boxes – Legolas, Gimli, Gandalf, and Aragorn as the central figure on both) serves this purpose. So, while each is attempting to identify itself in the terms of Tolkien’s masterwork, it is also attempting to distinguish itself from the others – the authority of the Vivendi games’ association with the person of Tolkien is at the expense of the more “low” and populist association of EA with the films. The authority of a Tolkien-estates license association is no small matter. Such a model-claim places its texts ahead of a significant body of similar (if not superior) products; as one game review directly states: “Put simply, if it wasn't for the attractive license, we'd have probably filed this game under ‘don't bother even looking at’” (Reed 2002). Thus we see demonstrated by the Vivendi line, an attempt to privilege one video game series based on its direct, familial relation with a classic, literary text, and against a different media form – the film. This familial distinction can be seen through the rhetorical lens of the scapegoat.

Burke points out that scapegoating is a logical process of identification in that every construction of community (an “us”), as a process of consubstantiation among individuals with commonalties, requires a division (a “them”). The scapegoat functions as the ritualistic vessel for the collective guilt: the minority pays for the unfulfilled hopes and dreams of the majority. This association of victim to victimizer is often symbolically familial. Furthermore, the process of purification is a matter of obliterating the past in an act of incestuous (again, in the sense of familistic) violence:

We should also note that a change of identity, *to be complete from the familistic point of view*, would require nothing less drastic than the *obliteration of one's whole past lineage*. A total rebirth would require a change of *substance*. (Burke 295)

In the terms of *The Lord of the Rings* games, in order to establish its uniqueness, the process of branding must either repudiate its past (in an act of patricidal revision) or its future (in sacrificial infanticide).



Figure 5.5 The Vivendi Universal Games/Tolkien Estates Official Seal (www.sierra.com)

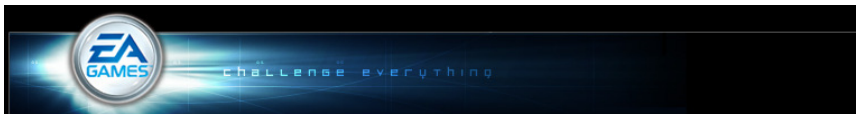


Figure 5.6 Electronic Arts Official Seal (www.ea.com)

The medallion which graces the bottom centre of each of the Vivendi games (figure 5.5) distinguishes itself from the holographic sticker on the EA products (figure 5.6). Its archaic and ornate script, and the appearance of age make an obvious distinction between it and its competitor, as the EA design is unique in its holographic presentation of a three-dimensional ring set into the round marker. The two, the archaic Vivendi and the technologically secure EA, are as distinct as they can be in order to mark their authority. Because EA draws from its cinematic model, its “official marker” is expected

to be a part of the technological apparatus it claims. But the ornate and archaic Vivendi draws visually upon the mythic through its script, oblong shape and elfin design; it demands the authority of the “original source” of Tolkien, the linguistic, the mythic, in direct contrast with Jackson, the cinematic, the technological. As Burke points out, this vilification of the adaptive emanation creates a certain irony of obliteration – in generating its power in the position of text against film it undercuts the familial relationship between the film and the game. Just as siblings fight bitterly for the approval of their parent, Vivendi seeks to symbolically erase Jackson’s textual presence in the *Lord of the Rings* family by questioning his devotion to Tolkien. The Vivendi games, then attempt to obliterate their indebtedness and relationship to film (specifically, the films that constitute *The Lord of the Rings* adaptations, not just Jackson’s, but that of the animated renderings of *The Hobbit* - by Rankin/Bass’ in 1977 - and *Lord of the Rings* – by Ralph Bakshi in 1978) for the sake of a direct consubstantiality with Tolkien. The association, then, calls out to discriminating gamers, declaring that if they care about legitimacy, then the Vivendi games are the only ones recognized by the God term “Tolkien.” This ironic assault on the legitimacy of the competing game attempts to obliterate the very factor that allowed it to succeed in the first place. It is no coincidence that Vivendi’s *Fellowship of the Ring* was released right before the Jackson film version of the same text. The quest for legitimacy by means of audience-recognition creates fascinating paradoxes such as this one: using the release of a text from which they chose to distinguish themselves, Vivendi attempts to supplant the film’s ethotic power for the pedigree of the book.

Each game in the Vivendi series is cleverly linked to a style of play that corresponds to the thematic structure and interpretive consensus about the literary text. Sierra's *The Hobbit* links its game to both the novel and the style of play associated with the *Zelda* series.

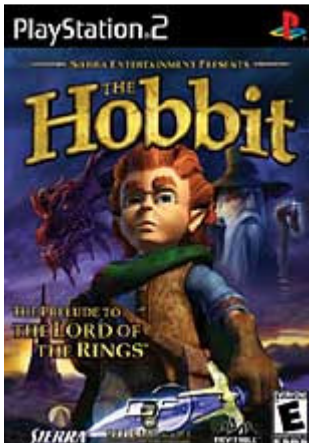


Figure 5.7 The Durable Peritext of *The Hobbit*

We can identify this from the outset as the image of Frodo on the packaging (figure 5.7) and within the game itself bears a curious resemblance to Link, the child-like, elfin main character of the *Zelda* series: “Bilbo is depicted with the gigantic eyes and the physical proportions of a child. He looks and moves like a four-year-old

human, not a 50-year-old hobbit” (Bennett, 2003). The universal critical consensus was twofold: first, that *The Hobbit* was wholly rigorous to the plot of the text, careful to hit every narrative point: “players [follow] the events from Tolkien’s book, chapter by chapter. Except for a few minor twists in the plot here and there, nothing was put in to alter the main story” (Paul, 2003). Second, that the platform was deeply dependent upon the conventions of the medium – specifically the youthful adventure set, typified by *Zelda* and *Sonic the Hedgehog*: “in terms of its action, *The Hobbit* seems more inspired by the *Sonic Adventure Series* games than the novel it's named for -- unless I missed the part where Bilbo runs around the Shire collecting coins and colorful jewels that magically jump into his pockets” (Bennett, 2003). Thus, just as the original *Hobbit* was intended for children, so the video game draws upon the conventions of the scrolling, youth adventure

games as a base. This process of dual connection achieves goals already attained at the outset by the EA franchise: on the one hand, its overt, legal association with the name Tolkien gives it an authority it would otherwise lack. This coupled with the narrative emphasis of the gameplay give us a sense of its adaptive “authorship” – i.e. if Tolkien had made games himself, these would have been the ones he would make. On the other hand, the game draws on the conventions of its own medium by layering the narrative over an easily recognizable – even expected – style of gameplay, thereby modeling an age set for which the original story was designed.

Similarly, Black Label Games’ *The Fellowship of the Ring* replaces a dependence upon film convention with both a relentless episodic rigor and gameplay design that draws upon significant video game platforms, specifically, the traditional RPG. The role-playing game model is a third person one where the game-player moves a character, controlling them from a vantage (usually from behind, but with the advent of the complete 3-D environment, multiple vantages are possible). Based on a “Dungeons and Dragons” type system, the character is usually allotted various “points” for health (which deplete when the character is attacked, poisoned, or otherwise incapacitated), magic, etc., and a means by which some form of monetary exchange is calculated (gold, usually). The inspirations for this model are the *Final Fantasy* or *Baldur’s Gate* series, or more specifically, Black Label Game’s own *Enclave*. The game is designed as a rigorous attempt at textual fidelity, even going so far as to force changes of main character on the gamer to accommodate for Tolkien’s episodic foci. Depending upon the narrative focus of each of Tolkien’s episodes in the novel, the game automatically changes the main character.⁷

We note here how rigorous adherences to a model can, contrary to many assumptions, produce an *eurhythmic* defect: the adaptation does not account for its new audience, purpose and context. In this case, “the biggest problem with *Fellowship*, though, is that it follows the book too closely. ...for the most part, anyone who knows the story knows what's coming up next. It would be like basing a game on The Bible” (Steinberg, 2002). Whereas EA adapts its overall plot to better suit the conventions of its medium, Vivendi elects to “take the high road” of fidelity. This choice is in keeping with the cultivation of authority from Tolkien, as distinct from Jackson. The very adaptation of the film was and is fraught with controversy over what plot elements, characters, lines, etc. were selected to represent. Jackson very overtly and publicly made choices based on the medium in which he works: the film and book are related but distinct works. Conversely, Vivendi attempts to produce authority by a wholesale veneration of its model at the expense of gaming conventions.

The War of the Ring, by Liquid Entertainment continues this dual dependency of convention and model – if anything the dependence on the gaming conventions is more pronounced. The textual association drifts into the background, if only because of the radical divergence of the narrative form of the novel versus the “real time strategy” style of game play. The previous incarnations of the Vivendi series feature, by all accounts, an overt connection with the literary works of *Lord of the Rings*, in direct opposition to the films:

If there's any other game that *War of the Ring* would thank on Oscar Night, it would undoubtedly be *Warcraft III*. The palpable influence of Blizzard's RTS tour-de-force is felt throughout the *War of the Ring's*

experience, and from the menu interface to the bright colorful world it assists you in interacting with, it's clear to whom *War of the Rings* owes its debt of inspiration. (Cervantes 2003)

This particular adaptation takes the significant battles of the second half of *Lord of The Rings* as its inspiration, so rather than directing individual characters, gamers direct armies in strategic maneuvers that pit them against their opposite in the story. So, if a gamer chooses to battle with the forces of good, then Rohan and Gondor, accompanied by Gandalf and Aragorn, move against Mordor and the Easterlings. The forces of good lay siege to the Black Gate, and gamers can use magic to summon some of the background races from the series, such as Ents or Eagles. Mordor, similarly, can summon Balrogs and Trolls. The focus then, for this game, is not the text, as such, but transplanting the associations of character and monster to a preset system. The text, in this case, is little more than an overlay expansion kit to *Warcraft*. The way the narrative model is replaced by a environmental suggestion corresponds to Henry Jenkins' presentation of the "evocative space," where elements of the game point to or gesture at the model, rather than providing any fixed narrative frame, the way say EA's *Return of the King*, does: "Such works do not so much tell self-contained stories as draw upon our previously existing narrative competencies. They can paint their worlds in fairly broad outlines and count on the visitor/player to do the rest" (Jenkins 2004).

As loose as this textual connection is, the success of this game adaptation genre cannot be understated; EA's version of the same real-time strategy platform titles *The Battle for Middle Earth I & II* (2004 and 2006 respectively) and *The Third Age* (2004) have been modestly successful even though they have been handicapped by release dates

years after their direct cinematic models. The Tolkien Estates, following the franchise lead of *Star War Galaxies*, has recently licensed the rights to a MMOG (Massively Multiplayer Online Game) entitled *Lord of the Rings: Shadows of Angmar* (2007) to compete with highly successful platforms like *Everquest* and *World of Warcraft*. So even though the ethotic connection is tenuous – character and plot are reduced to mask, title and/or single episode – the hailing power of the platform type and gameplay style, coupled with the most slight of connections to a model can produce an adaptation that can succeed; what is more important than the fidelity of the association is the use of the conventions of the new media form, again, *eurhythmically*. Thus ethos is produced by a ratio of elements produced by both the model and adaptive media.

Thus, while EA draws its primary ethos from a source already replete with credibility by virtue of its popular appeal (Jackson's films), the Vivendi/Tolkien Estates games must generate their credibility by a process of identification and division by means of scapegoating. They divide or distinguish themselves from the EA/Jackson texts by appealing directly to the Tolkien texts for authority, thereby scapegoating Jackson's work as secondary, or diminished. Vivendi then strives to claim identification with Tolkien's oeuvre by means of their iconic representation and rigorous plotting over highly recognizable gaming styles and conventions.

Conclusion

Because of the unique nature of their overt associations, adaptations are profoundly concerned with establishing their own legitimacy. This legitimating process

may take several different forms. Critical and historical forces operate to legitimate the process by which texts are adapted for new and different media. But just as ethos is the dynamic force that conjoins authors and texts, so it creates relationships between models and new textual instantiations. These ethotic connections can be described in terms of identification and division, or the process by which agents produce associations and establish distinctions. *The Lord of the Rings* video game incarnations use form, content, and their transtextual material to establish credibility with their audiences. They do so by clearly identifying their models and hailing audiences who value these associations; drawing upon the conventions of the adaptive medium to ease the transition between media as well as to fulfill audience expectation, thereby establishing a fusion of narrative and interactive forms; and by creating distinctions between their text and the other texts available. These overt connections with their sources achieve the effect of providing authorship to an otherwise unauthored text. That is, the audience's desire for an author-figure – a symbolic author as a reservoir of ethotic power – must be fulfilled, and so instead of producing a faceless programmer, or even a subculture media figure, Electronic Arts and Vivendi have both chosen to have their models act as the authors of the text. In the case of the *Lord of the Rings* video game adaptations, we are invited to presume that these adaptations naturally spring forth from their models, created from very essences of Peter Jackson's (in the case of EA) and J.R.R. Tolkien's (in the case of Vivendi) minds. We are, in other words given authors by proxy in the form of texts.

When we clearly identify that ethos is generated through a complex process of identification and division, certain interpretive strategies begin to emerge. What is obvious is that the EA game line draws upon Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* as its

direct model, rather than Tolkien's texts. The proximity of the gaming and film cultures makes the marketing choice an easy one. But what is not so readily apparent is the complex network of relationships these games create in spite of their overt connection: by directly identifying with and referencing the film, EA must simultaneously distinguish themselves from all other instantiations. These adaptations create subtle identifications between themselves and films, directors, other game designs, and even the complex mythological systems of Middle Earth that exist independently of any overt association with either the novel or film versions of *The Lord of the Rings*. This is the paradox of adaptation: on the one hand, it seems a simple matter of identifying a model and analyzing the connections between it and its adaptation. But what the rhetorical principle of identification teaches us is that the authority an adaptation seeks to produce, particularly a culturally marginalized new media adaptation, is not a straightforward matter of one-to-one correspondence, but rather a complex of attempted (and sometimes failed) consubstantiations and scapegoatings of symbolic authors, models, and textual conventions. What we find in the end is that the notion of adaptive authority is vested firmly in the rubric of the symbolic order – that agents weave complex networks of association which work at the symbolic level to produce creditability and authority for their texts in order to simultaneously associate their texts with earlier media forms that emit a cultural resonance (or inspiration), while at the same time distinguishing their text from competitors who seek to capitalize on the same rhetorical moves.

Chapter 6

From Narrative to Stasis: Paratextually Decoding the New Media Adaptation

In our last chapter we began to examine the possibilities posed by new media in a rhetorical conceptualization of adaptation. We found that while the terms of rhetoric are useful in discussing texts in broad strokes and the relationship between context and content, they have difficulty describing the details of visual arrangement. That is, while we may be able use rhetorical terms to enunciate the effects of texts on readers, there is no stated, rhetorical vocabulary to correspond to the individual, visual elements. For example, we may easily discuss how the narrative tree in *The Return of the King* video game constructs readership, shapes the narrative experience, and establishes an ethotic connection between game creators and gamers. Yet we lack the vocabulary to talk about the effects of the particular design choices, ranging from font, to color choice, to background arrangement, and even how interaction is designed. All these elements, admittedly, must be accounted for in order to fully flesh out our understanding of what happens when texts move from one mode to another. How does the alteration of a relatively interactively static, narratively dynamic text (such as the book, or the film) into an interactively dynamic and narratively static text, such as a videogame map screen, or, as we will examine in this chapter, a DVD interface, occur? What vocabularies can we use to describe these movements in ways that correspond to the larger systems of rhetoric and the speaker/text/audience relationships they posit?

But such a move poses a problem of definition: how far can we stretch the definition of adaptation before it becomes something else? Are the opening credits of a

film – a markedly different text from the film itself and created independently from the film, while still in relation to it – an adaptation of the film they precede? Hutcheon defines adaptations as “extended, deliberate, announced revisitations” (2006, 170) in an attempt to pin down what could arguably be a ubiquitous field. Yet, as we will see, transtextual relationships, particularly those between the paratext and the hypertext are porous, particularly given the development of the DVD medium. The DVD format, in many cases, has become more of an anthological artifact than a straightforward and singular text. DVD films are almost always marketed as distinct from the theatrical versions (“extended editions” or “added scenes” are the marketing norm) and the supplemental features frequently contain adaptations of the film that forms the architext: every conceivable variation of a film, from comedy parodies to documentaries can form the paratextual skin over a single film. Are these texts not adaptations? To return to my initial example, is the title sequence of a film, arguably its paratextual title page, an adaptation of the work it overlays? It has its own conventions, its own, distinct mode of expression, and most often, completely separate design teams from the film. Thus, the implications of a transtextual approach will call into question Hutcheon’s understandable, if perhaps overly exclusionary criteria, and suggest that certain forms of new media paratext may be, in fact, hypertextual hybrids: simultaneously of the adaptation, and outside it. These new media forms may flicker, in Genette’s terms, on the thresholds of interpretation.

Increasingly, the DVD market, which once felt like an amateur film critic’s dream, has become a consumer hell. Rather than raising the expectations put upon studios for the quality of product it produces, it has become a means by which shoddy

films are sanitized by packaging and bonus features. The relative efficiency of the DVD medium has resulted in Rogers and Blockbuster becoming bulk-pop-culture peddlers of the most recent titles, regardless of their quality or success in theatres. “It is, of course, in the nature of globalization that volume should win out over choice. It's more efficient for the cinemas--and for the DVD sellers too. The apparent plethora that confronts you in a big DVD store soon assumes its proper proportions when you begin to look for a specific title, however classic, that's more than five years old” (Roddick 2006, 12). If anything, DVD has exacerbated the phenomena of the “only new releases” video store, as films with limited theatrical appeal have managed to garner significant financial rewards for distributors on the DVD circuit.¹ Even if a film does poorly in theatres, distributors build DVD rentals and sales into production projections. In the face of critical condemnation and public indifference distributors can still secure a profit by filling a whole wall of rental copies when a film is released for the small screen.

The common assumption, that the DVD format has provided access to films otherwise unattainable through older media forms, on closer analysis, is flatly false: “At best it gives you the chance to see the films that stayed too short a time in your local cinema or never made it on to a screen near you because you don't live in London or near a regional arthouse” (Roddick 2006, 12). So, given the fact that DVD permutation of the entertainment industry has resulted in a limiting of consumer choice, rather than an expansion, that Blockbuster will offer 100 copies of the latest Michael Bay disaster rather than provide one of *Battleship Potemkin*, what can legal and symbolic authors do to distinguish their DVD texts from other, more pedestrian fare – despite the fact that their product descends from the same mass-market machine as all the others? The answer

seems to occur at the level of the “special edition” DVD, with markedly different packaging, expanded features, even different versions of the film itself. Current strategies of rhetorical distinction include varying degrees of appropriation of bibliographic terminology to describe the new content added to DVD’s,

which present themselves as “special editions” or “anthologies” and divide the film not into “scenes” but into “chapters.” Films, even as they have increasingly taken the place of books in culture, have routinely adopted, somewhat anxiously, the trappings of literature and the book and the application of this vocabulary into DVD’s extends this familiar practice.

(Parker and Parker 2004, 14)

Thus, in the same way that early films compulsively adapted plays and novels in order to create rhetorical associations between new texts and older, more culturally venerable ones, the latest media advancements have gone back to the same bibliophilic impulses, incorporating the vocabulary, even the appearance of the book.

After an extremely successful theatrical run, New Line Cinema released two versions of each of Peter Jackson’s *Lord of the Rings* trilogy: a “theatrical version” that contained the same version of the film shown in theatres; and a subsequent, “special extended DVD edition” which included, in each case, over thirty minutes of deleted scenes and alternate takes, seamlessly re-inserted into text. In addition, the special editions each included two disks of features including interviews, production stills, sketches from such notable fantasy artists as Alan Lee and John Howe, Jackson’s notes, and even technical diagrams of set pieces. These two disks were labeled “The Appendices” after Tolkien’s famed appendices of *The Lord of the Rings* novels. The

theatrical version, in contrast, contained few special features, all of which were geared towards casual viewers: a fox TV special, a sci-fi channel documentary, and a merchandizing pitch aimed as an “Introduction to Middle Earth.”

What appears to happen in the *Special Extended DVD Editions* of each of the *Lord of the Rings* installments is a self-reflexivity that Linda and Michael Hutcheon identify in their essay “The ‘Phenomenal Image’ in Opera.” They point to the various ways that operas which adapt written texts find themselves in a metadiscourse on art – an unconscious justification of the adaptive impulse. By means of an ornate metaphorical system and concurrent interface structure, the *Special Extended DVD Editions* ruminate on the privileging of the written text over the digital. At the same time, they deploy ethos appeals to Tolkien’s more bibliophilic fans. Such self-reflexivity works simultaneously to appease the most defensive of Tolkien’s devotees by literally providing them with an artifact from the secondary world of Middle Earth, while at the same time forcing them to expand their field of acceptance to include the digital, interactive medium by means of overtly “new media” strategies of interaction. In other words, *The Lord of the Rings Special Extended DVD Editions* perform a fascinating adaptive work in that they are adaptations of adaptations. They are variations on the cinematic hypertext of *The Lord of the Rings* by Peter Jackson and New Line, but designed to be wholly distinct from their theatrical sibling (as we will see when we compare the paratexts of each). Furthermore, we will discover that the paratextual material itself may adapt the text it overlays. Thus, the paratexts of *The Lord of the Rings Special Extended DVD Editions* may function as adaptations of adaptations of adaptations which metatextually ruminate on the process of

adaptation.

Broadening the Definition of “Text”

Perhaps the easiest way to work with these types of textual relationships is by means of Genette’s transtextual system. In *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, he builds on the theories of Bakhtin and Kristeva, suggesting that transtextuality is “all that which puts one text in relation, whether manifest or secret, with other texts” (1997, 1). Let’s briefly review the five transtextual relationships as posited by Genette: 1) Intertextual – the “effective co-presence of two texts” in the form of quotation, plagiarism, and allusion. 2) Paratextual – the relation, within the totality of a literary work, between the text proper and its “paratext” – titles, prefaces, postfaces, epigraphs, dedications, illustrations, and even book-jackets and signed autographs – in short, all the accessory messages and commentaries that come to surround the text and at times become virtually indistinguishable from it. 3) Metatextual – the critical relation between one text and another, whether the commented text is explicitly cited or only silently evoked. 4) Architextual – the generic taxonomies suggested or refused by the titles or infratitles of a text. 5) Hypertextuality – the relation between one text (hypertext) to an anterior text (hypotext).

This system allows us to put together various types of textual representations that have been traditionally distinct. Literary criticism (certainly New Criticism) tends to extract the idea of “the text” without discussing the surrounding material. But by limiting the idea of the text to those words expressed between the table of contents and the last

sentence of prose glosses over a world of semiotic relationships. A thorough accounting of the whole spectrum of transtextual relationships becomes imperative as we move outside the cloistered confines of “the book,” and into the new media world.

But what relationship does a DVD have with adaptation? According to more traditional adaptation analysis, adaptations seek to retain the narrative form and structure of a “source.” But as we have seen from our look at video game adaptations as well as eurhythmic reading strategies, narrative is in the first case a plastic category, and in the second case, a secondary effect to the ways texts are adapted and circulated in cultures. We may make a certain amount of headway on this issue if we pull apart these elements transtextually in order to see how they work. New media forms, the DVD medium in particular, profoundly blur transtextual categories. The anthological process by which DVDs are assembled draws together all manner of transtextual forms including hyper-, meta-, and intertexts all within a single architext, in order to form a paratextual growth around a core, cinematic text. The question becomes, does this anthological impulse absorb the textual forms into the new paratext, erasing their distinctiveness, or is there a hybridization at work? What we find is that these new textual elements flicker at the threshold of the text. In the same way that the paratext of the book uses aspects of metatext (critical reviews which adorn the jacket to promote the book) in service of the text it overlays, or the way film title credits are both of the text, yet architextually distinct from it, so the DVD interface works as an inside/outside textual function. In order to account for this we must draw further distinctions in new media paratexts between internal and external textual material. The documentary that is included in the special features is a metatext, but it is not external to the paratext. Rather, it is inside the titular

category of that DVD, an internal metatext of the DVD paratext. The DVD archiving of promotional spots and posters which were, at one point external hypertexts, creates an internal hypertext within the DVD paratext. So by distinguishing between internal and external hyper- and metatexts we recognize that these aspects of text are part of the DVD paratext, but at the same time, we acknowledge that many elements of new media texts blur distinctions between transtextual categories.

As we approach the special extended DVD edition of *The Lord of the Rings* in particular, we may then focus the appropriate transtextual lens through which we might critically gaze. As we have seen, the category of the paratext seems to be most appropriate. Addressing the liminality of textual existence, the paratext is the location where “the literary and the printerly conventions ...mediate between the world of publishing and the world of the text” (Macksey 1997, xvii). Yet, while the paratext is associated with the more material aspects of production (the binding, title, prefaces, etcetera) it also embraces the larger, critical context. The paratext is composed of all the surrounding, “non literary” structures, systems, and messages that allow the illusion of a “pure” and unadulterated literature to proceed unhindered. Surrounding such a myth (close cousin of the aforementioned mythical author-as-singular-genius) is the material that provides “the text with a (variable) setting and sometimes a commentary, official or not, which even the purists among readers, those least inclined to external erudition, cannot always disregard as easily as they would like and as they claim to do” (Genette *Palimpsests* 1997, 3). This growth that surrounds the “core” material is that which allows the core to exist: without all these trappings, from the selection and preparation of the binding, the strategies of typesetting, the procurement of forwards, re-examination of

prefaces, the publisher's promotions, the critical comments stamped onto the back jacket, the illustrations, the text, in all likelihood, would not be engaged by anyone but a select few around the original author. To illustrate the text's dependence on the paratext, Genette plays on the word "present," suggesting that the paratext is that which presents the "unadorned" text, literally making it "present, to ensure the text's presence in the world, its 'reception' and consumption" (Genette *Paratexts* 1997, 1).

Genette posits a primarily pragmatic analysis of the paratext, putting forward that any analysis of it consider 1) location (the paratextual element's place in the overall textual topography); 2) temporality ("the date of its appearance and, if need be, its disappearance"); 3) its mode of expression: its "pragmatic" or declarative matrix ("its sender and addressee," or the nature of the relationships established by inferred and/or claimed authorship, readership and, as Genette aptly describes "illocutionary force," or the code by which the utterances in the text are to be interpreted by the reader); and 4) its functional goal, or, motive, in the Burkian sense. What follows in his expression of the process of paratextual analysis is a delicate balancing act between means and methods of material production (cultural studies); their temporal, interpretive relevance (new historicism), and the rhetorical resources deployed and their effects, all pooled together into a structuralist paradigm.

Yet, given the nature of the paratext – it is the quintessence of meaning-making overtly calling attention to its own materiality – I would like to add another resource to this method of analysis: visual semiotics. In many ways, Genette constantly invokes it when he talks about elements of design, yet while he is careful to delineate the structural permutations and possibilities afforded the various paratextual elements, he seems

reluctant to offer interpretive tactics for those elements. For example, his discussion of titles identifies four possible locations of titles in textual production, even going so far as to discuss the affordances and constraints offered with leather bindings, yet never moves past the level of category formulation. In contrast, the coupling of rhetoric and visual semiotics with structuralism has been generative in the creation of such theoretical lenses as discourse analysis, and I propose that a similar triangulation be invoked when studying paratextual material – particularly those paratexts associated with new media. Given that paratextual material surrounds the core text, embellishing on it, contributing to its overall meaning-making at a multi-modal level, it seems appropriate that strategies associated with multi-modal analysis be imported to the transtextual model to augment it.

Hence, given the definitional power offered by Genette’s model of the paratext, coupled with rhetoric and social semiotics, we are confronted by an exploding of interpretive possibilities, composed of “a heterogeneous group of practices and discourse of all kinds and dating from all periods” (Genette *Paratexts* 1997, 2). Given the polysemic nature of the paratext – that it signifies on multiple modes simultaneously, and exists to adapt and promote elements of the text it glosses – we would be remiss to ignore the interpretive frame of multi-modal analysis and social semiotics. The paratext can be critiqued at the level of “design” as expressed by social semioticians² where all considerations of resource selection and deployment are brought to bear on the text.

Analyzing the Static Text

The Lord of the Rings Special Extended DVD Edition includes a complex paratext invoking several levels of dense semiotics, specifically, an adaptive, internal hypertextual semiotic system. That is, the paratext acts like an adaptation of the text it overlays, blurring the distinction between hypertext and paratext. This structuring of paratextual material in an adaptive manner is relatively new (with the obvious exception of the intratextual illustration), but afforded by technological advances in digital design and mass-production. The scope of analysis of this study will move from the material elements to the digital: the material aspects will engage the durable peritext (the exterior casing and packaging of the product), and the intratitles insert (specifically, the appendices maps). My analysis of the digital interface will involve the title sequences (consisting of layout semiotics, background, and typography) and interactive elements.

While the packaging of the DVD has an obvious analytical precedent in the book (quite literally, in the case of the special extended DVD editions of *The Lord of the Rings*), the DVD interface is a rather trickier matter. Interfaces, like many of the elements delineated in Genette's *Paratexts*, range widely in form, from the Spartan and merely functional, generic interfaces that are the operating systems (OS) for "burnt" or homemade DVD artifacts, to the densely designed, richly animated interfaces that accompany high-end distribution company releases such as *Fight Club*, *Lord of the Rings*, or any of the titles released in the Criterion Collection. These interfaces, particularly ones that demonstrate thoughtful and strategic design, combine elements of book-culture – in particular, the title and intratitle models – but fuse those functions with

motivated animation and interactive functions. The larger purpose of these interfaces is to move beyond straightforward “navigation” to a kind of pre-title sequence that prepares audiences for the soon-to-be-accessed accessed text it overlays. For a confirmation of the profound effects of the DVD interface, simply compare any wide-distribution-release film (even those with the most simplistic, “screen-capture” background and interactive overlay) to a homemade DVD OS. The difference is striking, even at a cursory level.³ Given the function and form of the kind of animated interface we find in *The Lord of the Rings* special extended DVD edition, the closest analytical model may be the film title sequence, with its fusion of static, linguistic, aural, and animated multi-modal elements.

One cannot approach the subject of the film title/credit sequence without passing through Saul Bass, creator of some of the most groundbreaking opening moments in film history.⁴ Bass was well-versed in the pictographic origins of Asian scripts and began to incorporate this fusion of iconic and indexical functions of meaning-making into the condensed semiosis of the first few minutes of a film, often creating unique and powerful symbols to represent entire thematic movements within the larger work. Consequently, “this process of distillation and synthesis is clearly what is powerful in his static images, whether they be film posters or corporate logotypes” (Supanick 1997, 75). This condensation – the layered, semiotic internal hypertext – is essential in order to move audiences from a place external to the film, into the secondary world that constitutes the cinematic experience. The title sequence must hint, tantalize, inform, summarize without interrupting. It is a separate work from the film – a hypertext all of its own – yet contributing to the total piece as a paratext. As Robert Altman puts it, the title sequence

is “about giving hard information...without interrupting the narrative that has already started, which has a certain force.” (Qtd in Abrams 1994, 25).

While the filmic text is, by its nature, multimodal, and polysemiotic, the title sequence adds a layer of immediacy and temporal urgency to those expressions. Given the genre, the credit-director must draw upon “the possibilities of combining photography, typography, and graphic elements to form a single entity,” while also appreciating “a letter form’s range of expressive possibilities; the credits as graffiti of *West Side Story* and the epistolary script in the title sequence of *Age of Innocence* are proof of this” (Supanick 1997, 73). This adaptive condensation, or framing a perspective of the film and codifying it, can be associated directly with the world of graphic advertising. For example, Maurice Binder, the creator of the title sequences for the Bond films, got his start at Macy’s, “he rose from teaboy to art director: he designed their catalogues and eventually oversaw all their publicity” (Kirkham 1995, 10). The association of advertising and the adaptive condensation of credits continues in the form of the DVD packaging and interface, which represent a digital and material gateway between art and persuasion, seamlessly combining both elements towards the purpose of inducing consumers to first commit to the product (buying the ticket or DVD), and then immersing them in the secondary, aesthetic world of the text.

No only do credit sequences and DVD interfaces approximate and appropriate static advertising imagery, but also the familiarly consubstantial genre of film trailers. Binder, transferring his skills in publicity to filmmaking began to recognize the imperative of conciseness: “the skills gained producing titles helped when making trailers. They complemented each other: he had to know the films intimately to cut the

trailers and this produced good credits” (Kirkham 1995, 10). The editorial process inherent to one genre allowed success in another.

Yet this does not demonstrate that the film credit, and by extension the DVD interface, has overt aspects of an internal hypertext. The adaptation, as we have seen, is the process of fundamentally altering material to fit a new context. But so too is the film credit distinct from the film itself: “An unwritten rule governing film titles ... is that they be of a material different from the rest of the film” (Supanick 1997, 74). According to Jim Supanick, the title sequence is marked by the very peculiar condition of being of the film, but not exactly *the film*. Simply, he suggests, the title sequence is a condensed version of the film composed of a grab-bag of techniques that distinguish it from the narrative constrictions of the film itself. The materials that constitute the title sequence distinguish themselves through their “difference in image type, without showing characters or settings from the film, but rather through an establishment of an overriding theme with suggestiveness as its primary aim” (Supanick 1997, 74).

Thus, we begin to see that film blur the boundaries between para- and hypertexts in the sense that they architextually challenge the films they attempt to represent. Yet, as Genette points out, such paratexts (for what can title sequence be but akin to the kinds of paratextual features listed above: the title, intratitles, illustrations, dust jacket, etc.?) have a functional dynamic and engage rhetorically with their audiences to augment and “present” the text to which they are attached. Supanick, working with Saul Bass, concludes that

Title sequences, free from the burden of selling, [serve] a number of functions: establishing a setting...; summarizing major themes...; setting

up a dominant tone... These functions, in turn, can work together to perform a fourth, more elusive task. Our minds, as well as our bodies, require some sort of intermediate zone through which we must pass to effectively enter that state of immersion so the film can do whatever it is that it does. (Supanick 1997, 75)

This fourth aspect allows audiences to, as Bass says “hit the ground running” so that by the time they proceed into the cinematic text, they have already entered the conceptual frame needed to engage with it. Mimi Edwards, who has worked with such directors as Spike Lee and David Cronenberg, notes that the effect of titles has “to do with where you want the audience’s heads to be at the start of the film. We can deliver them to that place so they will be most receptive to what they’re about to see” (qtd. in Abrams 1994, 23); it is a transitional process coupled with a dynamic of persuasion. Genette refers to this gateway effect as an engagement with the “threshold of interpretation...an undefined zone without any hard and fast boundary on either the inward side (turned toward the text) or the outward side (turned toward the world’s discourse about the text), an edge, or, as Philippe Lejeune put it, ‘a fringe of the printed text which in reality controls one’s whole reading of the text’” (*Paratexts* 1997, 2). The paratext that is the theatrical film credit, as well as the DVD interface, opens the doorway between worlds, “between lived experience and that subset of it spent in a darkened theatre. Here, lived experience is effaced and a whole other logic takes over” (Supanick 1997, 75). It is a liminal space, akin to the one between waking and dreaming. Daniel Kleinman’s title sequence for *Goldeneye* proceeds from this premise, acting like a “mini-dream...somewhere between a cigar advert and a Cold War collage, [assuming] (as commercials do) an awareness of

contemporary culture. It stays true to the spirit of the well-loved Bond-and-Binder duo, but takes old images and tries to make of them something new” (Allen 1995, 12). Note here the terms Vicky Allen uses to describe Kleinman’s work. She speaks of “staying true to the spirit of” and “making...something new,” phrases which suggest that like hypertexts, credits and DVD interfaces must condense and evoke the same effects as the texts to which they are paratextually shackled. Thus, the title credit and the DVD interface are of a kind: an internal, hypertextual paratext, both designed to provide a controlled, transitional space between the external world and the text.

This type of adaptation, though, is different from the narratively driven ones we have examined in previous chapters. We still see many of the processes that are the hallmark of adaptation, such as condensation and modal shifts, but the setting is fundamentally altered by the temporal realities inherent to the architext: in both the title sequence and the DVD interface, the viewer’s interaction with the text is fleeting, therefore, the interpretive lens of narrative distillation is augmented. Nick Pileggi, author of *Casino* comments on Saul and Elaine Bass’ condensation of his book into film titles: ““You write a book – all 360 pages. Then you boil it down to a 130-page script. Eventually, you see that the Basses have knocked you right out of the ballpark. They have it down to three minutes flat.” (Kirkham 1996, 12). “Overture” is one of the terms one reads frequently when studying title sequences. This analogy may not be so far off, given the almost ubiquitous simultaneity of the title sequence/DVD interface and the thematic overture of the soundtrack. As Kirkham points out, Saul Bass

pioneered a new type of title sequence, a mood-setting opening that acts much as a musical overture might. But in *Vertigo*, Bass’ overture begins

after Herman's, which crashes in over the studio logo. By the start of the Bass sequence, the music has turned to quiet menace, and soon we hear a haunting melody signaling Madeline's obsession with her dead grandmother. (Kirkham 1997, 14)

Abrams notes that the title sequence is "like the overture to an opera, setting the overall tone of a film" and David Cronenberg posits that the coupling of images and music has the effect of "setting the film up, taking people from the street into the movie. It's like the Lamaze birthing technique: you want to get the audience gently floating in warm water" (quoted in Abrams 1994, 23). Hence, as we approach the DVD interface we must recognize that its creators have densely layered images and sounds, adapted from the film they represent, in order to condense otherwise narratively driven information into a comparatively static medium, all in order to act as a transitional buffer.

The DVD Interface

While, there are significant points of intersection between the film title sequence and DVD, Brookey and Westerfelhaus posit that DVD adds a new textual element to the mix. They look to the work of John Fiske, whose 1997 book *Television Culture* distinguishes between "primary texts," constituted by actual television programs, and "secondary texts" – the criticism interviews, promotional articles and other materials that surround those primary texts. These secondary texts function intertextually to "favor selected readings of primary texts" (22). DVD secondary texts cobble together transtextual material such as metatexts (critical responses to the primary text) and

hypertexts (such as promotional material, TV spots, documentaries, etc.) into a single unit, yet all within the larger paratext of a unifying title. Like Robert Ray, John Fiske, and others,⁵ Brookey and Westerfelhaus suggest that the conjoining of the primary and secondary texts into a single, DVD unit “blurs the distinction between primary and secondary texts” and they therefore propose to redefine secondary texts included in DVD bundles as “extra-text.” These extra-texts work to shape, mold and define textual interpretation as well as promote the brand. In short, “by including such distinct but interrelated texts in a self-contained package, the DVD turns this intertextual relationship into an intratextual relationship” (2002, 23) by collapsing the distinctions between transtextual relationships into an anthological paratext. In the same way that adaptive accrual finds associated adaptations clustering together to create megatexts, so distribution companies gather associated texts under the same paratext in the form of the DVD; the text signified by the title’s illocutionary force grows substantially from its initial presentation in the theatre. So the DVD format not only alters textual relationships (in that many and varied transtexts are gathered and ideally contained within a single title) but relationships that develop between audiences and films. Parker and Parker posit that the supplemental materials in the DVD format represent a reconstitution, or “reorientation of the film, often carried out by a variety of agents, and subject to a wide variety of choices made by the eventual viewers” (2004, 14), and that such a reorientation should mark the DVD as wholly distinct from its presumed theatrical associations.

What these DVD extras promote is an authorized view of the entire text while tacitly re-introducing an auteurist sensibility upon which the entire edifice (the process of text, and anthologized extra-text as synergized art and promotion) depends. The unity of

the DVD depends upon convincing audiences that they are privy to a unique artistic vision of a single genius. Were this not the case, the entire enterprise would be revealed for what it is: on the one hand, crass promotionalism run amok (as corporations, not artists are the revealed authors of texts – true, legal ownership is revealed, and the mask of romantic artistry is dropped), and on the other, a measured and calculated attempt to produce a legitimate reading of the authorized and anthologized megatext. In the case of the *Fight Club* DVD, Brookey and Westerfelhaus demonstrate that “the supplemental material included on the DVD is used to make the product more marketable to mainstream audiences by framing the homoerotic elements of the film as homosocial behavior” (2002, 22). In other words, while the “primary” text of the film contains any number of possible readings, many of them culturally divergent, the extratextual materials attempt to limit, even sanitize these possible readings, primarily by using the blunt instrument of “clarifying the filmmaker’s intention” (Crowdus 2000, 47) by means of commentary tracks, interview footage, and documentary shorts.

Thus, as we begin to look at the *Lord of the Rings* DVDs in detail we must keep several things in mind about their nature: first, that we approach a new form of paratext: a conflation of older types of book-culture with newer, cinematic, animated conventions of textual presentation. Second, that these paratextual forms flicker between transtextual relations, between hyper-, meta-, inter-, archi-, and paratextual forms. Finally, the rhetorical goal of these paratextual adaptations consists of an ethotic appeal to the legitimacy of the whole, coupled with a clear defining of the acceptable frame of interpretation for what follows. That is, while the new media paratext allows us to “hit the ground running” when we finally engage with the “primary” text, it attempts to direct

us as to what direction in which to run – to limit the possible interpretations by providing us with a pre-packaged terministic screen.⁶

Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* DVDs

In Gunther Kress's 1998 essay, "Visual and Verbal Modes of Representation in Electronically Mediated Communication: The Potentials of New Forms of Text," he tracks the movement from "writing dominant" modes of expression to "a new code of writing *and* image" (65) where imagistic systems begin to take on much of the semiotic responsibility once reserved for linguistic forms. Similarly, hypertext forms of computer-mediated communication, such as the ones which represent the interfaces of nearly every interactive digital technology today, represent a "non-linear, rhizomatic organization [which] supersedes older textual organizations such as that of narrative" (66). This shift is largely the product of the differences between linguistic and imagistic semiotic systems: while linguistic systems represent events and ideas sequentially and cumulatively, imagistic systems arrange their semiotic events "spatially and simultaneously" (69). This notion challenges Bluestone's initial presumption that imagistic systems represented by film are, by their very nature narrative and sequential. Kress argues that they are, in fact, the opposite. Consequently, when we approach a densely designed text such as the DVD interface for *Lord of the Rings*, we must unpack the layers of semiosis, much the same way we would detangle the narrative threads of a novel. Yet, as is the case with new media, these threads are presented, by and large, simultaneously for the user to absorb in a single, powerful moment, rather than digesting

over a prolonged period of time, as one does with the linguistic text. Thus, in my analysis, I will proceed to identify and isolate various elements of the packaging and interface and to decode them using rhetorical and social semiotic strategies of analysis.

Packaging

In her essay “Narrative Structures for New Media: Towards a New Definition” Pamela Jennings ruminates on the differences between the book and the digital medium. How can one adapt the “bookness” valued by the literary into a digital form? “How to translate the concept of the book into a medium that has no paper and no pages remains a challenge for the artist. Is not a book first of all an object one holds in one’s hands – the cover affected over time by acids and oils from the user’s skin, and the pages turned down and yellowed, torn or marked up?” (1996, 345) Yet this is exactly what New Line and Peter Jackson have done: created a tangible object from a digital text. Not only does the packaging of the special extended DVD editions provide a tangible text, but one that overtly signals and draws its authority from the bibliophilic. In transtextual terms, New Line has emulated the durable peritext or leather binding of a very old book (figure 6.4), replete with the illusion of leather worn by the handling of fingers, aged by acids and oils.

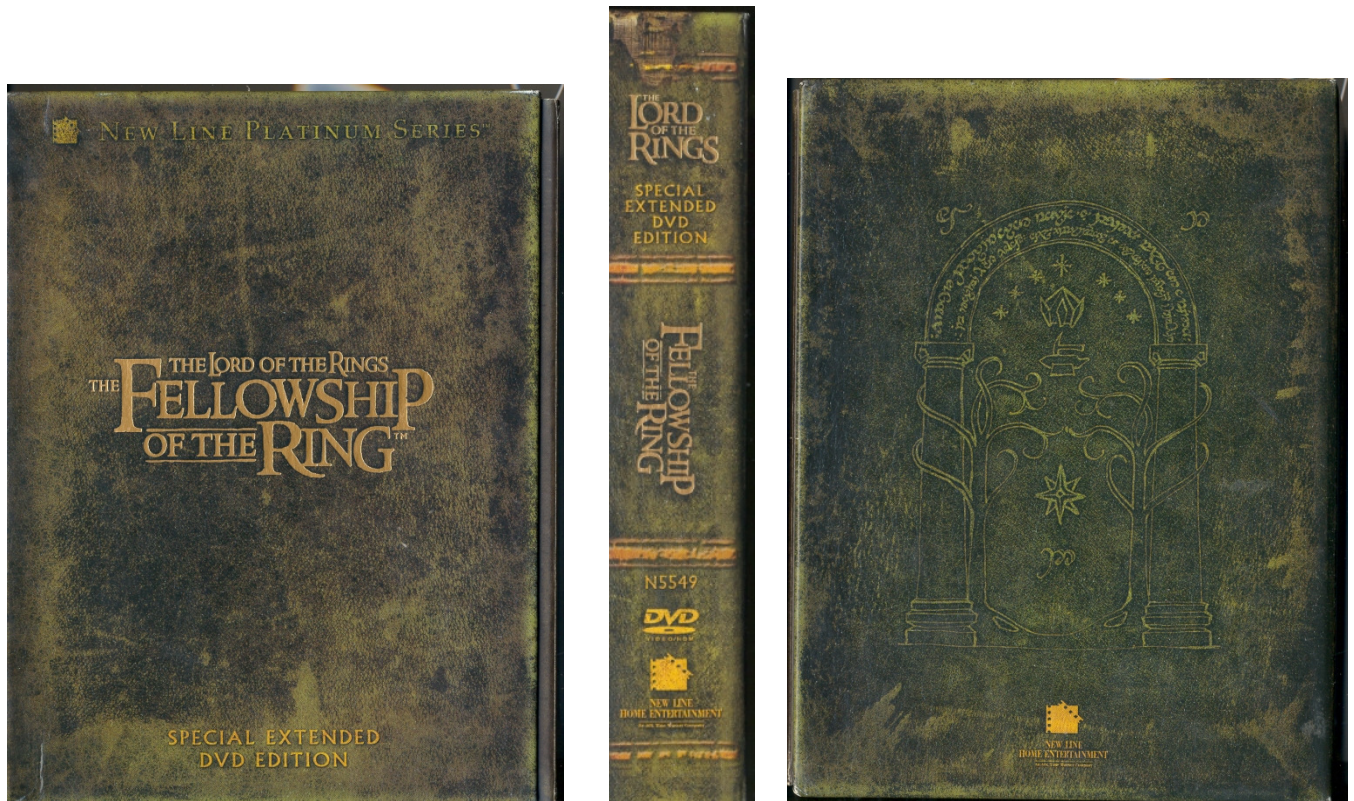


Figure 6.1 The Durable Peritext of *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Rings Special Extended DVD Edition*

What becomes significant is not necessarily that the special editions use the trappings of the well-used book, but rather, the relationship it creates with the complete unit (packaging, interface, film, and extra text) when set against the standard, theatrical release, as seen in figure 5.2:

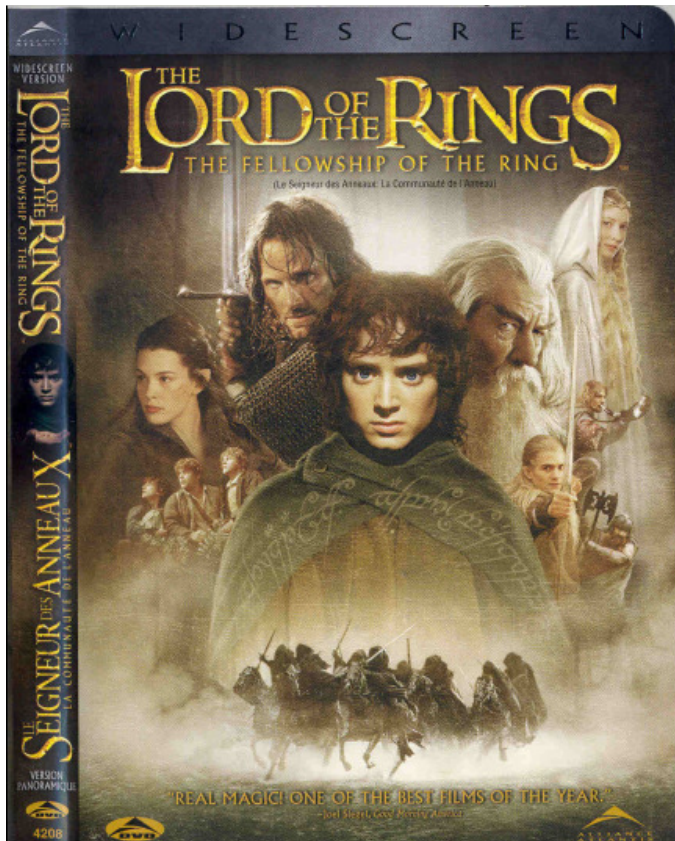


Figure 6.2 The Durable Peritext of *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Rings Theatrical Edition*

The theatrical edition uses the movie poster that promoted the films in theatres as its cover-art. We immediately identify the distinctions between the two versions' packaging: while the special edition deploys a deeply metaphorical paratext, representing older forms of communication, the theatrical version is glossy, vibrant and dynamic in its presentation. The

images of the characters (with only a few exceptions) directly

address the viewer. When the audience is directly engaged in eye-to-eye contact with image-subjects, two things happen:


[The image] acknowledges the viewers explicitly, addressing them with a visual “you.” In the second place it constitutes an “image act.” The producer uses the image to *do* something to the viewer. It is for this reason that we have called this kind of image a “demand:” the participant’s gaze (and the gesture, if present) demands something from the viewer, demands that the viewer enter into some kind of imaginary relations with him or her. (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 122)


The foremost figure of demand in the theatrical edition is, of course, Frodo. His pleading look begs for attention and signifies drama, particularly as his demand is joined with those of Aragorn's aggressive and active stance, Gandalf's knowing stare, and Galadriel's mysterious smile. The viewer is, in short, directly engaged by the heroes of the story. But to what end? The answer seems to be overlaid on top of the image of Frodo: to align with them against the menace of The Ring and its agents. The demand is one of participation insofar as viewers are asked to help the heroes in their quest by consuming the product, by participating in the act, just as the children clap at the end of *Peter Pan* to resurrect Tinkerbell. None of this reading is surprising. In fact, the image is quite typical of the direct address of the classic movie poster. Heroes and heroines are always questing to engage directly with audiences for attention. What makes this instance remarkable is its association with the *un-engaging* and *anti-dynamic* *Special Extended DVD Edition*.

Where the theatrical version art is active, the special edition art is passive. Where the theatrical version directly engages with audiences with pictorial representations of the characters, the special edition transforms *itself* into an antiquated artifact of a by-gone age. What is interesting though is that by that very straightforward transformation, the special edition makes the same demand of "participation" from its intended audience. By constituting itself as a book – a worn, handwritten, leather-bound book, at that – it demands to be "read." Or, as we will come to see as we approach the DVD interface, to be "written in." Therefore, the notion that participation is exclusive to the pictorial, direct address is a bit misleading. In fact, the special edition's sustained conceit is even

more demanding in that it construes its owner as a participant in the creation of myth, the writing and reading of history; in this case, the history of the One Ring.

As Genette points out, the title placement of the book, and the ancillary discussion of authorial prominence, is key to understanding the paratext. Let us take a look, first at the two distinct modes of expressing the same title, and what they indicate. First, we should note that while the title fonts are consistent, the theatrical version differs from the special edition in that its font is designed to mimic the monumental, rather than the gold

embossing of the leather-bound book. On the theatrical release,  is seemingly written in chipped and weathered stone, in a vibrant and bold coloring, consistent with the narrative dynamic created by the image on the front piece. More importantly, the theatrical release makes the series title (*The Lord of the Rings*) the more salient over the film title (*The Fellowship of the Ring*). The phrase “The Lord of the Rings” has been a fixture in western culture for nearly 50 years, with a film adaptation by that name, released in 1978, a whole host of cultural references, and a consistent presence on bestseller lists for years. Considerably less known are the individual book-titles. Hence, the theatrical version plays upon pre-existing cultural associations and percolations to attract otherwise literarily indifferent viewers. The special edition, as its

metaphoric system suggests, appeals to lovers of the book: 

Bibliophiles will be well aware of the titles of each and are therefore more receptive to clear individuation. Thus, those consumers who have treasured the books, value them as cultural artifacts unto themselves, are more likely to be hailed by a version of the film that values those pre-existing titles, rather than one that reconfigures and devalues them.

Genette makes much of the issue of the name of the author, suggesting three possibilities: onymity, or the public claiming of authorial ownership using a true name; anonymity; or pseudonymity. Film convention demands that all films be publicly anonymous, appropriately creating an ambiguity between the legal and symbolic authors. Yet adaptations of well known texts contain, if you will a certain architextual tension between their title's claim of consubstantiation with their presumed "source." There emerges, therefore, a spectrum of architextual associations, between adaptive anonymity (adaptations which claim no kinship through either title or authorship, such as *Clueless*), to adaptive pseudonymity (adaptations that use misdirection to obscure association to a source, such as the filmic adaptation of *Bridget Jones's Diary*), and finally adaptive onymity. This last category requires a certain measure of clarification, though, as there is a spectrum of titular and authorial associations possible. Complete adaptive onymity suggests that the model is fully acknowledged, including its author, as the case with *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. Titular adaptive onymity uses, as is the case with Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings*, the title of a famous work in order to draw upon the legitimating power of those cultural associations, but at the same time, suspend multiple authors. That is, by denying Tolkien authorship over the *film*, Jackson leaves open the possibility of multiple versions of the same text. While filmic convention may deny Jackson a titular presence, the lack of claimed authorship of the text demands filling, particularly because there is no anonymity in film: all participants are overtly named in the credits. Hence, we find that popular auteurism arises out of the entertainment industry's capitalizing on audience impulses to apply book-culture conventions to cinematic ones. By creating this conceit of the DVD-as-book, New Line encourages precisely such an application. Audiences

look for the author's name on the *Special Extended DVD Edition*, as they would when approaching any book. Not finding it, they actively infer one, drawing upon the publicly provided symbolic author – the face of the product. Yet, we should note the placement of the production credit on the special edition cover. High above the title, sits the inscription “New Line Platinum Series.” Whether consumers realize it or not, this, and the New Line logo at the base of the spine, represents a direct attribution of corporate authorship.

The DVD Interface

For Roland Barthes and André Bazin, the photographic process is one of eulogy: it is a signification of death and resistance against time. “Whether or not the subject (of a photographic picture) is already dead, every photograph is this catastrophe”: death has “already occurred” (Barthes 1988, 96). Bazin likens the photograph to mummification, suggesting that the represented image is the “death mask” of the cinematic age (1960). The photographic image then, places us in, as Anselm Haverkamp (1993) puts it “an uncanny relationship with the past;” one best described by tragedy and loss, likening it to looking home but seeing catastrophe. Haverkamp's invocation of the uncanny here can hardly be accidental. Freud's notion of the uncanny (*unheimlich* or “un-home-like”) as those things which are both terrifying yet emergent from the everyday suggests this very same condition: looking to home with terror and grief. Given such a description, the cinematic in general – and the imagistic in particular – are particularly deft at or even inextricably bound to portray loss. It is precisely this sense of loss that we see in the

overall thematic structure of *The Lord of the Rings*. If Tolkien's trilogy is "about" anything, it is the loss of the pastoral, the comfortable, the homey (as represented by the Shire of the Third Age), at the hands of the industrial, the militaristic, and the rapacious consumption of the rural (as represented by "The Scourging of the Shire" which is the first marked act of the Fourth Age, or the Age of Men).

New Line attempts to encapsulate this epic move by conveying two significant elements through its interface: on the one hand, each interface marks the successive movement away from the earthy and agrarian life of the shire towards the irrevocable loss suggested by *The Return of the King*. On the other hand, each special extended DVD edition interface sustains and promotes the "film-as-book" metaphor, reinforcing it not only by placing the navigational markers as page-script, but also, surrounding the image of the "book" with all of the distinct, bibliophilic trappings of each major, "western" culture depicted in each film. The filmmakers' emphasis on "the book" is similar in its deathly suggestion to that of the photographer: both seek to hold, or stop in time the lost past.

The Fellowship of the Ring's entry-page moves viewers in a pan-right across a cluttered desk where we see scattered bits of value to a hobbit: nibs, quills, ink, autumnal leaves, and ripe fruit, to finally focus on a book. The book opens to reveal the title page which flips over to the navigational screen, where viewers are given options to play the film, engage with the special features, peruse the audio-setup options or select an individual scene. Similarly, the appendices for *The Fellowship* (as seen in figure 6.3) shows the same desk, but inscribed on the book is a full-page illustration of Rivendell, before the elves abandon it at the end of *The Return of the King*.

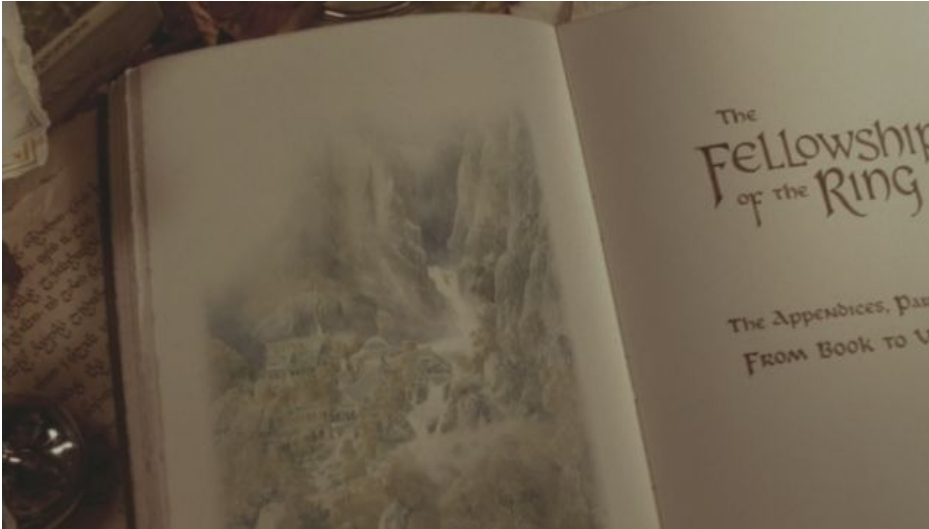


Figure 6.3 Approaching the Navigational Menu for The Appendices Part One from *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Rings Special Extended DVD Edition*

Thus, even as the represented book (which stands in for the cinematic tale as a tangible representation of its antiquity), presumably written after the events portrayed in the story have taken place, longs for a pure and lost Rivendell, so the trappings which surround the book hail an audience which similarly longs for a simpler time, a “bookish” time when Tolkien’s Shire could have existed: a place of comfort, beauty and leisure.

We should take a moment to return to the metaphor of the film-as-book. Many DVD interfaces feature static pages over which are placed the navigational tools themselves. But some texts, like *Lord of the Rings*, go to great lengths to establish the tone and tenor of the larger work by means of users’ first interaction with it. The association New Line creates between the filmic text and the written text is by no means static, or simply symbolic. The filmmakers work to promote the idea that the film that users are about to enjoy is, in fact a book. One of the ways this effect is achieved is by means of, as I have mentioned, the symbolic use of the book-image. But this interface

has a narrative process all its own, just as an opening credit sequence does. Viewers approach the text from the side, panning over various desks, depending upon the narrative point in the story. For example, the first disk for the *Fellowship of the Ring* contains markers only found on the desk of a hobbit, while the second disk interface passes over an elf's desk. These deductions can be drawn from the various items strewn about in each case. In the case of the hobbit-desk, we see a pipe, some tobacco, fruit, maps, as though we were looking at Bilbo's desk as he was preparing to leave Hobbiton. In contrast, the second disk contains delicate, silver-worked items associated with Elfkind, along with several pages written in Elfish script, as seen in figure 6.4:



Figure 6.4 Approaching the Navigational Menu for Part Two of *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Rings Special Extended DVD Edition*

Thus, in the same way that an opening credit sequence can adapt the narrative movement, as well as the thematic movement of the film it introduces, so the DVD interface, at least in the case of the *Lord of the Rings*, moves audiences along with its characters by means of the traveling book and the context in which that book finds itself.

We must also consider the actual movement of the interface image. Rather than engaging with a book that is simply represented statically— an object to which we are forced to infer quality, texture and meaning – the filmmakers of *The Lord of the Rings* have offered up a metaphor that is dynamic, moving as a book should move. In figure 6.5, the intro screen to the second disk of the special extended edition DVD, we note that as we approach the book, the text actually opens for us, inviting the user to engage with it as they would an actual book:

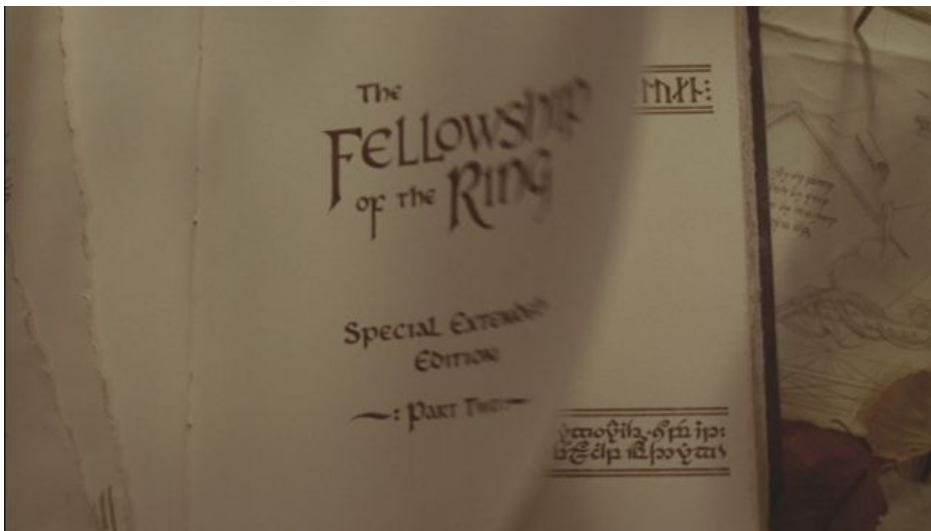


Figure 6.5 “Turning the Page” to the Navigational Menu for Part Two of *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Rings Special Extended DVD Edition*

This movement, captured in this static screen shot, suggests the subtle engagement New Line attempts with its audience. On the one hand, this direct address invites users, beckoning them to either start, or continue their journey with the text, but on the other, the fleshing out of the film-as-book metaphor guides users, subtly suggesting a termisitic screen through which they are to interpret the filmic text.

As Brookey and Westerfelhaus rightly note, such an interpretive frame is not in the “original,” theatrical text. Yet, in its addition, the guiding metaphor alters the whole, just as the New Line Cinema adaptation of *Lord of the Rings* alters the total work that constitutes the megatext of *Lord of the Rings*. What we are seeing in the creation of this “extra text” is not a supplement to, but an accrual of meaning and semiosis. Thus, when users of the special extended edition DVD engage with this adaptation of the adaptation of Peter Jackson’s film, it will be a significantly different experience than their theatrical one. Yes, this experience is shaped and controlled by the guiding interface metaphor, as well as the supplementary material, but that experience is a wholly new one, yet another adaptation of an adaptation, and it should be treated as such.

In order to clarify this point let us take a brief look at the metaphors which guide the “theatrical version” of *Fellowship of the Rings*. This version of the film was released at the beginning of August, 2002, over three months before the special extended edition, which was released in late December – far closer in time to the theatrical release than that of the special extended edition.⁷ If texts hail audiences the audience hailed by this version is one less interested in Tolkien and his cultural legacy than in the immediate filmic experience offered by New Line. We note in figure 6.6 that, quite distinct from its familial *Special Extended DVD Edition*, the theatrical edition eschews the film-as-book metaphor and moves its audience directly into the most straightforward theme of Jackson’s film: the life and death of the One Ring:

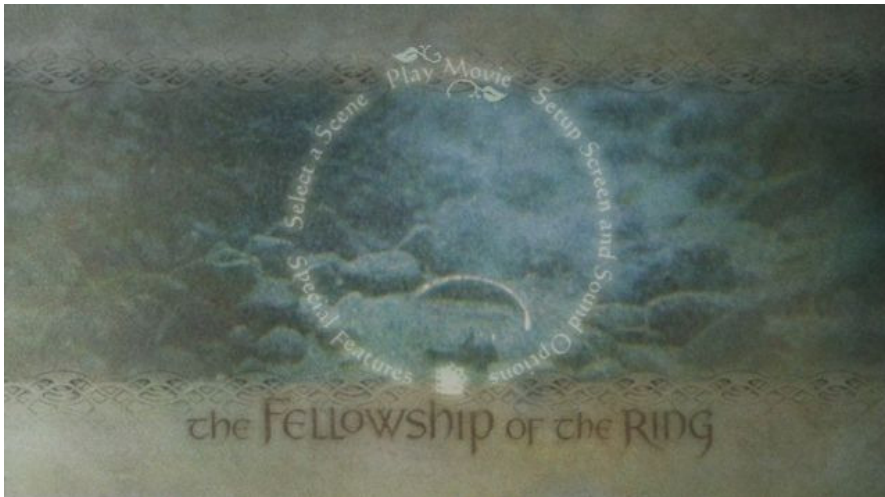


Figure 6.6 The Main Menu Interface of *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Rings Theatrical Edition DVD*

Its entire construction highlights the image of the ring, and then reinforces its significance by encircling it with the navigational tools. This is a two-layered metaphor which forges an interpretation of the text. Whereas the adaptation of *Lord of the Rings* suggested by the *Special Extended DVD Edition* engages its audience with a metadiscourse in the meaning of “the text” by placing emphasis on the making of legend and myth, in turn, drawing on the cultural association with the artifact of the book, the theatrical release posits a narrativistic approach. It seems to be leading viewers who need assistance identifying the subject of the film. As Fran Walsh points out in the commentary track, “The Ring is, in fact the protagonist of the story.” Yet film watchers, accustomed to their protagonists being less inanimate have a difficult time with this concept, despite its titular indications. Viewers, particularly of the first film alone, would be excused for confusing Frodo as the main character of the story. Hence, Jackson, Walsh, and Boyens chose to include a prologue which focuses viewers’ attention as squarely on the ring as Sauron’s is. They also found various strategies of breathing life into the character of the ring; it

alters Frodo's perception and whispers to him throughout the film. Yet, New Line assists viewers in focusing their attention on the ring by means of the DVD interface.



Figure 6.7 The Special Features Interface of *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Rings Theatrical Edition DVD*

Note that even the special features disk (figure 6.7) places the ring squarely at the centre and focus of its signifying system.

We must also note that the overall metaphor is not bibliophilic as much as cinemaphilic. Whereas the *Special Extended DVD Edition* contains dynamic interfaces, those interfaces correspond to a rather static referent: the book. Books, particularly the kinds of books the interface harkens to can hardly be described as multi-media. The special extended edition points us to either illustrations within books, or brick-a-brack on desks in order to represent the various cinematic elements contained within the film. The theatrical edition is not nearly so oblique: all the images of the ring are in motion with cinematic realism.

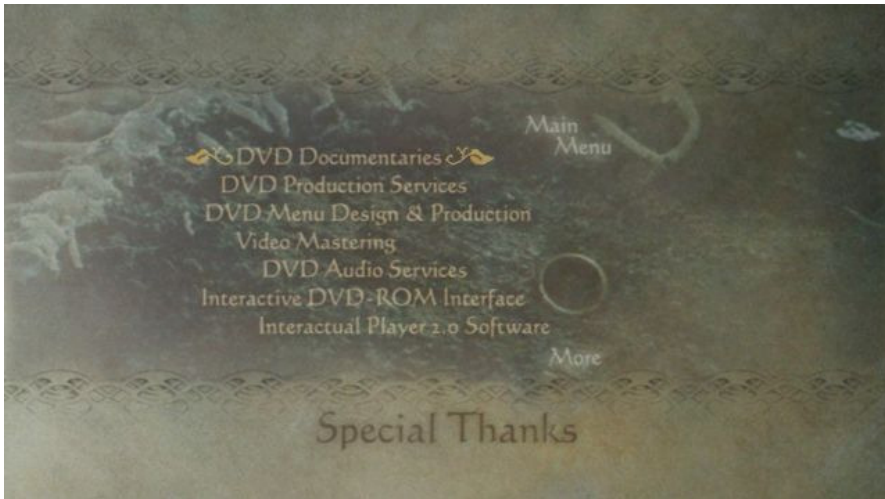


Figure 6.8 The “Special Thanks” Interface of *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Rings Theatrical Edition DVD*

In the same way that the packaging of the theatrical edition orients consumers directly toward the “film as film,” presenting specific headshots of actors in dynamic, and active poses, so the interface shows us dynamic and cinematic instances of the ring: its revelation in Bilbo’s fireplace (figure 6.7), its hiding place at the bottom of river before being discovered by Deagol (figure 6.6), and finally, as it abandons Gollum in the caves of the Misty Mountains (6.8).

We should take note of the only exception to these rules: the scene selection screens of both interfaces. In both cases the filmmakers introduce moving images that correspond to the scene-selection options. Obviously, this effect is far more marked in the case of the *Special Extended DVD Edition*. In that case, the scene selection screen is the *only* moment in all four disks of DVD interfaces that references the film directly *as* a film, as in figure 6.9:



Figure 6.9 The “Select a Scene” Menu Interface of *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Rings* *Theatrical Edition DVD*

All other associations created by the interface present cinematic elements as symbolic (in the form of significant artifacts from the realm of middle earth spread over desks), or textual (as in written script or illustration of buildings and/or characters which/who appear in the film).

Thus, having looked at the overall composition of the DVD interfaces of both the theatrical and special extended editions, we can begin to come to some conclusions that will be borne out by the more detailed analysis of the background and font design in each. First, that there is a significant difference in the audiences hailed by each of these two interfaces. The audience for the *Special Extended DVD Edition* values “the book” that signifies Tolkien’s work. We could construe the interface, then, as hailing “fans” or “Tolkien purists” who claim a kinship with the written form. New Line also seems to have designed the interface of the *Special Extended DVD Edition* to specifically appeal to the bibliophilic instincts one confers on adaptation purists who believe quite strongly in an adaptation’s “faithful” rendering of a model’s (often linguistic) material. In other

words, it is an ethotic appeal to lend credibility to the DVD text: to suggest that the makers of this interface, like the purists viewing it, care deeply about Tolkien's work and treasure its significance as much as his fans. They are not, as has been claimed, crass money-grubbing entertainment pimps, but rather serious scholars of the mythic, printed word. Furthermore, the special edition interface introduces users to the cinematic and extratextual material in the same way a credit sequence can: by adapting elements, both narrative and symbolic, from the film and presenting them in a new way so that audiences can "hit the ground running." Finally, the *Special Extended DVD Edition* uses this liminal transtext to engage in a metadiscourse on the nature of the mythic within a cultured and cultural frame. That is, through its narrative movement and metaphoric referent, the book-focus of the interface begins to interrogate the relationship between myth, book, and film in our culture. Why, it seems to ask, do we presume that significant stories of epic and mythic weight be confined and relegated to antiquity? In short, the interface asks us to question the very necessity of its existence.

Background

I briefly refer, in the introduction to this section, to the care with which the filmmakers of *The Lord of the Rings* have crafted the backgrounds for their DVD interfaces. While I note that each text contains elements important to the thematic structure of the film they represent, I will now discuss in more detail, exactly what is happening in these backgrounds. What we note is that there are two significant elements at work in the interface backgrounds. The first is the modulation of color saturation and

hue to both establish mood and to suggest visual modality, or rather, markers of what level of reality we are to expect. The second is the way that the filmmakers use the symbolically rich artifacts from each film to signify, even adapt the narrative structure of the film they introduce.

While discussing the post-production process for *Fellowship of the Ring*, Peter Jackson delineates the process by which he digitally controlled the hue of the entire film, a process called “digital grading,” using low-level color saturation to augment and reinforce thematic structure, whether it is the themes of character, scene, or the entire film. For example, as the characters enter the Mines of Moria the filmmakers wanted to represent the fact that, as Boromir points out, Moria has become a tomb. Thus to reinforce this narrative and thematic drive, the filmmakers drained all the Moria shots of any color, leaving characters and sets nearly monochromatic, draped in blues and whites (“Digital Grading,” The Appendices Part 2).

This notion, that background and overall hue can be used thematically, as one would musical scoring, echoes Kress and van Leeuwen’s comments on the importance of color to creating meaning in design. They note that socially accepted definitions of “reality” are constituted by a culture’s technological capability of representation. Currently, they claim, our notion of realism is the equivalent of 35mm photographic imagery – that is, when we close our eyes and imagine “the real” it is invariably in the photographic sense (as opposed to the representational schema of painting, hieroglyphics, or mosaic) (1996). Jackson’s motive for using digital grading is to “nudge [the films] sideways from reality” (“Digital Grading” The Appendices Part 2 - 2:1:00:12), to suggest, by use of color modulation and saturation, that the events portrayed were a

visual representation of the ancient past – a time of legend. In the case of the DVD interface background for *The Fellowship of the Ring* (see figure 6.10) we begin to note what Kress and van Leuween call a “sensory coding orientation,” that is, the creation of a hyperreality by means of an overwhelming descriptive power through visual representation; “the more a picture can create an illusion of touch and taste and smell, the higher its modality” (1996, 169).



Figure 6.10 Approaching the Navigational Menu for Part One of *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Rings Special Extended DVD Edition*

In the case of the background, the various elements are so saturated with color and detail that we cannot possibly mistake it for reality. It becomes more real than real.

We must also account for the particular color scheme represented in this background. *The Fellowship of the Ring* thematically begins to move the fellowship from a place of comfort and security down the path of loss (*The Two Towers*) and into death and finally, myth (*The Return of the King*). Consequently, the beginning must appear vivid, tangible, naturalistic, as represented by the setting of the Shire, from which the hobbits all come. Jackson says of his color grading of the shire that, “in Hobbiton we

wanted to feel warmth and green. We wanted it to look like, you know, the perfect picture postcard.” (“Digital Grading” The Appendices Part 2 - 2:1:03:45). Similarly, the DVD interface background in figure 6.10 appears to be the cluttered desk of Bilbo Baggins, with his maps, pipes and elfin texts; we know this though its schematic association with earth tones and the homey feelings such brown, green, and gold color tones elicit.

As we move from part to part and film to film we note that there is a parallel progression in the color schemes from interface to interface. *The Fellowship* interface is obviously brown and green, to match its packaging and thematic movement. *The Two Towers*, by contrast, has a burnt red package while the interface begins to move us from the lush greenery of healthy Shire-life, to the dying flame of Rhohan and the world of men, as in figure 6.11:

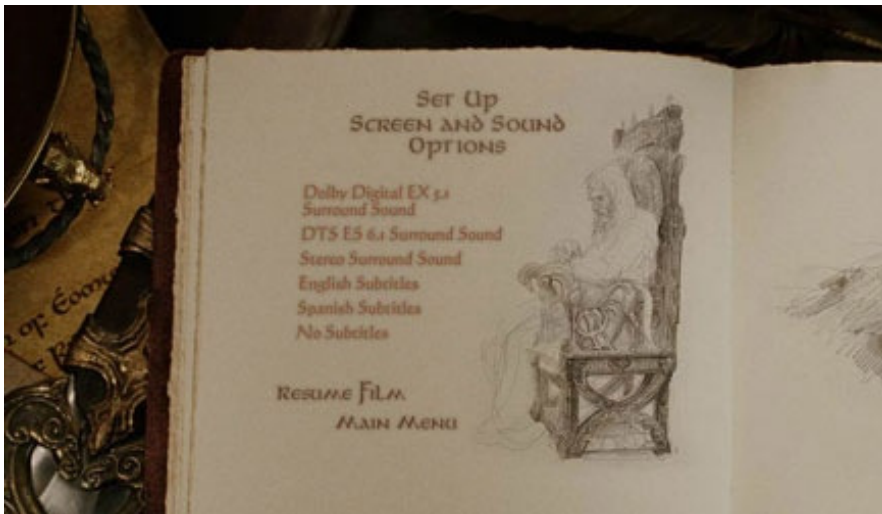


Figure 6.11 “Set Up Screen and Sound Options” Menu for Part One of *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers Special Extended DVD Edition*

While, at first, we can associate the golden background with Théoden's Golden Hall, along with the trappings from the Rohanic culture (the distinctive, Romanesque handle of a sword, the horse-head foot on a candle-holder), only the burning of the Westfall, the impending fall of Théoden, and the loss of the king of Rohan can account for the burnt tones of the font and the overall burning quality of the color palate. As we continue, our anxieties are confirmed as the interface takes on the cold, ghostly blue hues of a culture in winter – or the dead marshes as Frodo, Sam and Gollum approach Mordor (see figure 6.12).

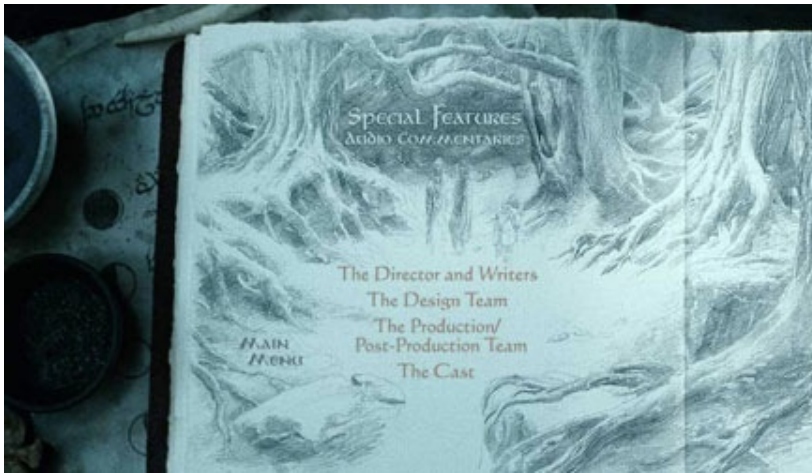


Figure 6.12 “Special Features: Audio Commentaries” Menu for Part One of *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers Special Extended DVD Edition*

Finally, in *The Return of the King*, the color scheme takes on the black-and-white hues of stone (see figure 6.13). This gesture corresponds with the shift in narrative focus away from the wood-culture of Rohan and to monumentalism of Gondor, but more importantly to the thematic trajectory of the story, the characters moving from the tangible and vital to the abstracted and mythic.

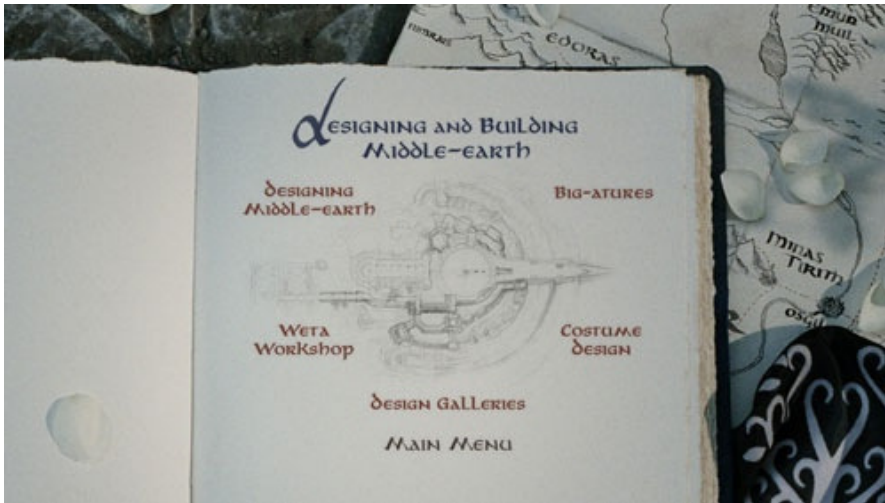


Figure 6.13 “Designing and Building Middle Earth” Navigational Menu for the The Appendices Part Five from *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King Special Extended DVD Edition*

The tonal shift represented, at first in the packaging, but primarily in the DVD interfaces, is one from the naturalistic hues of life, through the gold and red colors of battle, to ghostly apparitions of death, and finally, the stark, monumentalizing impulse of myth. It is not accidental that Minas Tirith, the home of the king and color tonal palate for the last DVD interface, is a monument to the past. Neither is it an accident that Jackson chooses to represent the Grey Havens with a similar, cryptic air. The DVD interfaces, when examined in sequence, adapt the thematic moves of the films and special features they introduce. The care with which New Line modulates the color of each and every scene in its films to further the thematic inertia of the story is the same impulse it brings to the DVD interface.

Returning to the *Fellowship* DVD interface in figure 6.13, we note that the creators have established an excess of context – a contextual clutter, if you will. While, as we will later discuss, this strategy obviously affords the opportunity to prepare the audience for the cinematic material it introduces, such “full contextualization” modulates

our conception of the represented reality. That is, we know from the background that this is not our culturally-constituted reality: “when the background is sharper and more defined than [the limitations imposed by the resolution of standard 35mm photographic emulsions], a somewhat artificial, ‘more than real’ impression will result” (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 166). The extraordinary detail and the sheer amount of visual information are overwhelming for a viewer attempting an accurate catalogue of the exhibitions. One quickly realizes that the motive is not to encourage or elicit a detailed examination of the symbolic and narrative trappings on the desk, rather, the motive is to create an overall effect – a sensation of detail washing over the user in a way that cannot be processed but experienced. As Richard Taylor, director and effects supervisor for Weta Workshop, notes, much of the care and detail put into the creation of the effects and props for the *Lord of the Rings* films remain unseen by the casual viewer, yet they coalesce into an overall immersive effect. It is precisely this immersive effect New Line seeks to reproduce with the *Fellowship of the Ring* DVD interface. Thus, while Bilbo’s desk is itself contextualized in the narrative movement of the film and interface arrangement (i.e. the book moves from Bilbo’s desk, to Elrond’s desk, to that of Theoden, to that of Saruman, and finally to that of Denethor) as Bilbo’s mess is replaced by the relative minimalism of Elrond, it is important that this cornucopia of clutter is our first interface with Jackson’s middle earth. Before the opening credits, we have already been prepared for hyperreality of myth, the sideways shifting of story that has occurred in the creation of the filmic text.

Typography

Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* posits a tale of the conflict between the premodern and the modern – between the local, cultural, and aesthetic distinctions that marked premodern, agrarian life from the national/global, homogenizing impulses of mechanization and industry that mark the modern. Peter Jackson's DVD, in contrast, is a nostalgic ode for the loss of the premodern, yet in a postmodern form. The inherent aesthetic tension of the text arises from the discordance between the premodern aesthetics of the filmic and promotional texts and the postmodern strategy of delivery format. As we have seen, the extensive book-as-film metaphor conveyed in the interface for the *Special Extended DVD Edition* is a carefully planned ethotic appeal, but given the nature of the technology inherent to the medium, the appeal may be undercut. One of the ways that New Line attempts to mediate this irony in privileging the book by means of new media is through the use of nostalgic and Luddite typography in both the menu markers and the interactive linkages.

The Lord of the Rings is often read as an analogue of the rise and defeat of fascism in the early part of the 20th century; in particular, as a lament for the loss of clear cultural and local identities at the hands of the relentless march of industrialism, as well as industrialism's connection to the rise of ethnic nationalism across Europe. One cannot help but be struck by the way the echoes of these profound historical conflicts play out in the promotional and supplemental material for Peter Jackson's DVDs. Jackson makes extensive use of the detailed languages and typographic styles unique to each race of

middle earth both within the film (to lend verisimilitude and flesh out his secondary world) as well as the DVD packaging and navigational tools.

As Paul Gutjar and Megan Benton note, traditional views of typography were marked by an “ethic of invisibility” which suggests that “type should be self-effacing and supremely humble” (2001, 2). But twentieth century typographical movements have highlighted what effects font has in guiding interpretation, re-enforcing document thematics, or even producing compositional dissonance within the text. Consequently, many students of typography, both its technical and aesthetic aspects, rightly call attention to its presence in the design spectrum. The fact that computer word processing software programs come with extensive font selections with various permutations of each typographical style speaks to the significance of typography to the interpretation of a text.

Hence we come to the font of the *Fellowship of the Ring Special Extended DVD Edition*. It strikes the viewer as archaic, reminiscent of hand-written script with its clear indications of a slanted nib in the thick vertical strokes and thin diagonal and horizontal ones.

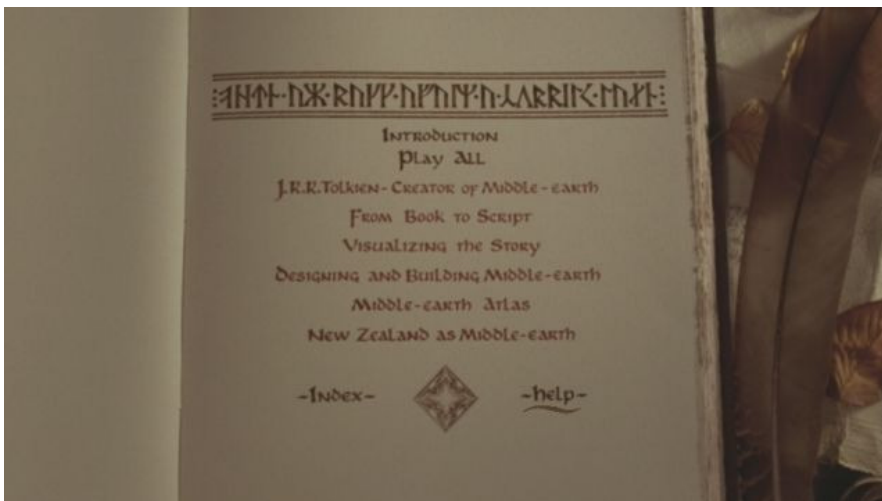
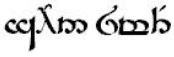



Figure 6.14 “Introduction” Navigational Menu for The Appendices Part One from *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring Special Extended DVD Edition*

The frequent deployment of Tolkien’s own runic alphabet (seen above the navigation tools here in figure 6.14) and the elfish alphabet, seen below in this expanded section of figure 6.4, contribute to the tale by creating setting that is simultaneously exotic and familiar:



The runic alphabet or *Futhork* is ancient European in origin, most likely a Gaulish variation on Roman and Etruscan letterforms. It was taken north and widely used in Norse culture who in, turn, brought it to the eastern shores of England in the fifth century by the Angles, Saxons, Jutes, and Frisians [and looked like this: \mathfrak{F} \mathfrak{H} \mathfrak{T} \mathfrak{M} \mathfrak{R} (Alger “Runic Alphabets” 1998-2006)] where it was used widely until around the eleventh century and played no small part in the formulation of Anglo-Saxon script, which uses many of the same characters:⁸ \mathfrak{O} \mathfrak{F} \mathfrak{T} \mathfrak{S} \mathfrak{c} \mathfrak{y} \mathfrak{l} \mathfrak{d} \mathfrak{s} \mathfrak{c} \mathfrak{e} \mathfrak{f} \mathfrak{i} \mathfrak{n} \mathfrak{g} (Alger “Old English/Anglo Saxon” 1998-2006). The Anglo-Saxon can also be associated with Tolkien’s elvish fonts

which look like this:  (Paralla 2003), which, in turn, resemble early forms of Semitic and Arabic writing [like this example:  (“Hassan Lite” 2006)]. What we might conclude from this association is that on the one hand, given the font’s resemblance to Anglo-Saxon systems of lettering that it is meant to resemble an ancient, yet familiarly consubstantial culture to our own. English systems of syntax and structure emerge, primarily, from Anglo-Saxon origins, so neither a claim of kinship with the typography nor the suggestion that we are meant to recognize their association given their constant proximity on the interface can be effectively argued. The typographical associations with Elvish writing, and by extension, Arabic and Semitic forms of script, suggest that while we are to recognize kinship in the interface font, it is also exotic and arcane. If users have a cursory knowledge of history, they may be aware of our global debt to Arabic culture for western numerical systems, and may even be aware of Arabic and Alexandrian histories of scientific advancements and famed libraries of world renown. All these connotations and more are carried along with such typographical associations.

So where does this all get us? Why would New Line intentionally confound clear reading by creating a script that, rather than striving for efficiency and transparency, conveys a sense of the archaic? In her essay on Thomas Dunham Whitaker’s printing of *Peirs Plowman*, Sarah Kelen notes that Whitaker intentionally printed the poem in an almost unreadable typographic style and a syntax unaltered from its medieval period. Whitaker created a bit of a scandal by placing the poem into blackletter typefaces, yet such a choice arose out of “a concern for maintaining the poem’s identity as an antique” (2001, 59). Similarly, when we look at the interface for *Special Extended DVD Editions*

of *The Fellowship of the Ring* we can see an attempt to preserve the antiquated and profoundly nostalgic feel of the *Lord of the Rings*. Of course, this feeling is entirely a product of a carefully crafted illusion. Although drawn largely from ancient mythic forms, Tolkien's text is barely a half-century old. The trappings of antiquity built into every level of the design of the *Special Extended DVD Editions* are a Potemkin Village. By suggesting an archaic and mediaeval textual origin through the semiotic devices of the interface – an origin that belies the obvious technological tools at the users' disposal – New Line attempts to ethotically participate in the fiction of the antiquity of *The Lord of the Rings*. The rhetorical motive of such a “deception,” if you will, is directly linked to the process of legitimation that occurs in all adaptations: New Line seeks to neutralize the complexity and post-modern aspects of the DVD interface by overlaying it in a metaphoric system more palatable to the bibliophilic inclinations of the intended audience for the *Special Extended DVD Editions*. If the text “feels” and appears more like the kind of book that Tolkien fans would associate with his work, they are more likely to think of the New Line *Lord of the Rings* in terms of Tolkien's work and to fully engage with the guiding interpretive frame the DVD format offers.

Architecture

The mapping of the navigational architecture of the supplementary DVD interface is unsurprisingly tree-like (see figure 6.15). This tree-branching style of architecture combines both nodal systems (where major pages, or sequences are linked to related or satellite pages or sequences, typical of the hypertext linkages that constitute most

computer mediated communication) with the narrative flow of the cinematic. The overarching move is to present a relatively chronological accounting, or documenting, of the process of making each of *The Lord of the Rings* films, but to do so in a way that affords digression and investigation of the details that titularly link Jackson's "Appendices" to material that would be consider appendix-worthy.

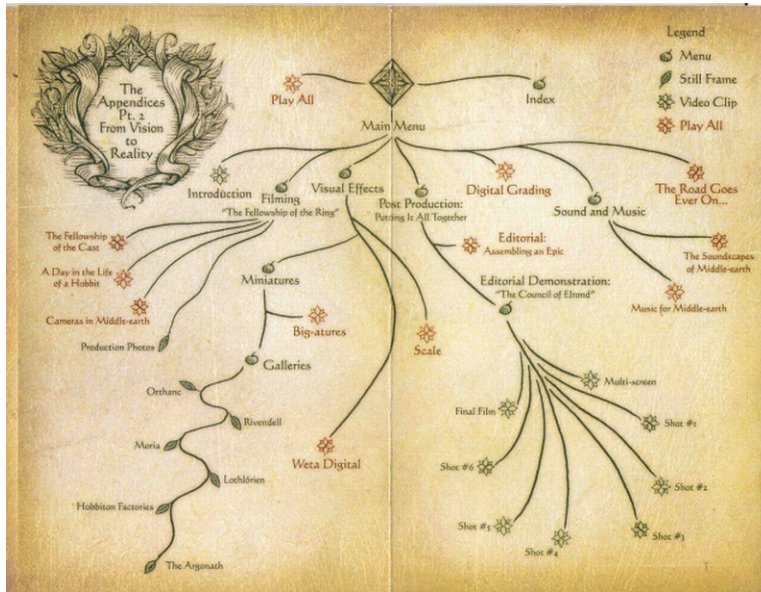
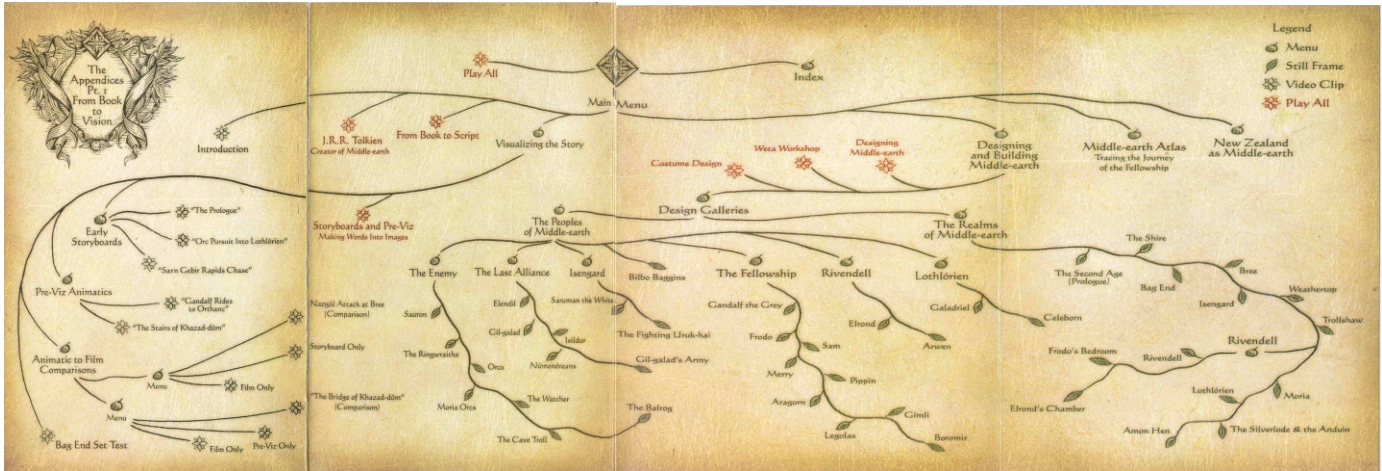


Figure 6.15 The Navigational Maps for The Appendices Part One and Two from *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring Special Extended DVD Edition*

We note that the linkages in the branching tree structure are both oblique and curved. These linkages are, of course metaphorical representations of the hypertext links between navigational screens. These oblique and curved lines “abstract somewhat less from the shape of the tree than the [more common] parallel branches, so that more of the symbolic meaning of the tree can be preserved. Hence, they are common in contexts where a sense of ‘generation’ and ‘growth’ is connoted as for instance in genealogies...” (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 84). Given this association with the organic and the titular identification of the material contained therein as “appendices,” we are invited to associate this particular hypertext with the hypotextual material in Tolkien’s own appendices, where he delineates the genealogical heritages of the Baggins family as well as Gimli’s ancestors.

We also witness a curious mixing of metaphors in the architectural design. Obviously, the images in figure 6.15 suggest the tree, in both a literal and figurative (genealogical) sense, with its organic and natural structures, yet the font variation, ornate title shield, and “legend” at the top right of each map suggest a blending of the genealogical and the topographical. The appendices maps in figure 6.15 are attached to the back of the Middle Earth map (figure 6.16) in the foldout arrangement for the special extended DVD editions for each film. Note the similarity in the coloring of the pages in each. This coloring, in its attempt to represent antiquity, becomes anachronistic in its proximity with cutting-edge technology it actually represents, just as we found in the font design of the interface. The map in figure 6.15 is not a geographical or historical one, but a technological one, draped in the trappings of older forms. I noted at the outset of this project that new technological media forms appropriate the design and nomenclature of

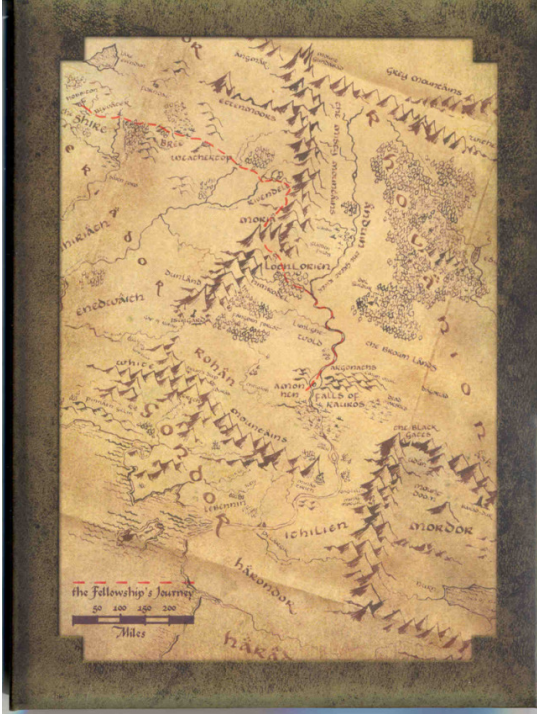


Figure 6.16 The Inside Flap of the Packaging for *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* Special Extended DVD Edition

the forms from which they sprung in order to legitimate their existence. The same thing is happening here: both in design and proximity, we are invited to associate the appendices navigational map with Tolkien's own genealogical and topographical ones. Thus New Line seamlessly blends their new contribution to the larger *Lord of the Rings* text by means of mimesis – the emulation of print medium in digital forms.

If we examine the legend on the upper right of each map, we note that the designers of this document further the tree metaphor by directly associating the symbolic word with an indexical symbol. Thus the iconic leaf of the tree is associated with the linguistic symbol “still frame,” whereas the fruit of the tree is associated with the symbol “menu.” Colored flowers, red and black, correspond to “play all” and “video clips” respectively, while the title-shield in the top left contains all the floral icons represented below. These iconic and symbolic metaphors continue the cultural associations begun in the interface, particularly with hobbit and elfin cultures. Both Halflings and Elves revere, as Bilbo says in the filmic prologue, “things that grow” and given the typological connections noted above we could be excused for mistaking this modern, technological map for an elfish one.

At the same time, the tree metaphor neatly corresponds to the larger project of New Line's entire *Lord of the Rings* franchise: to grow the legend. In the same way as we have noted all along that texts accrue meaning and signification with each adaptive addition, so New Line adds to the lexicon of Tolkien scholarship with each artifact it produces. Thus, the tree metaphor represented on all the special extended DVD editions contains a multi-layered metaphor: first, it ironically represents a tree/hierarchy classification system by means of tree images; second, it associates the artifact of the map with the larger packaging and navigational metaphors of the antiquated tome; and third, it suggests, by use of the tree metaphor, the continued growth of the larger *Lord of the Rings* text through various technological instantiations.

Interactivity

Domenic Stansberry puts forward a three-leveled approach to interactivity: 1) access control, whereby users control access to content (TV provides interactive strategies by means of on/off switch and channel changers), 2) navigational choice, whereby users are able to access information when and how they see fit (the computer or DVD interface is an example of this), finally, 3) an interactivity where the system learns from interactive experience and is altered by each interactive session. The third type of interactivity is largely theoretical, while the first, not really applicable or theoretically interesting in the context of DVD interfaces.

What concerns us the most is the second, navigational mode of interaction. Stansberry points out that the very notion of interactivity has a deeply psychological dynamic to it “because it calls for users to take action. If users’ actions are meaningful and produce meaningful responses, interactivity can be a very powerful tool. It offers the opportunity to engage the audience by bringing them into the program and making them responsible for its outcome” (1998, 54). Interactivity is a means by which users can seemingly take ownership of their experience through action.⁹ Yet while Stansberry’s approach to interactivity, primarily through the lens of usability and functionality for hands-on designers, clearly identifies the strategies available for interactivity, he leaves his theoretical approach at the straightforward observation of interactivity’s psychological power to make users feel responsible for outcomes.

For Brookey and Westerfelhaus, the interactive elements of the DVD interface serve a single purpose: to implicate and inculcate users/viewers in the preferred interpretive frame set forward by the distributing corporate, legal authors.

The extra text...and the preferred interpretation that it seeks to promote are not forced upon the viewer. Instead, the viewer must actively explore the DVD in order to discern how the film’s makers believe it should be interpreted. In this way, viewers are positioned as active agents who do not passively subject themselves to the privileged opinion of the film’s auteurs, but instead uncover them through acts of digital discovery – or so it would seem. (2002, 25)

The synonymous relationship between choice and freedom is illusory. Authors such as Gregg Smith, and even Kress and van Leeuwen have identified the regimented constraints that occur in the creation of the nodal, hypertext-style interfaces:

The network [or hypertext method of textual organization] is modeled on a form of social organization which is a vast labyrinthine network of intersecting local relations in which each node is related in many different ways to other nodes in its immediate environment, but in which it is difficult, if not impossible, to form a coherent view of the whole...the network model may obscure the globalizing tendencies which are...simultaneously at work in contemporary society (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 87)

In other words, the interactive system of the DVD interface guides users through a carefully selected labyrinth of “options;” these options are not limitless, but pre-selected and designed. The very nature of the network information structure obfuscates the globalizing intentions of the legal authors to dominate and control interpretation of the whole text by means of the paratext (in its attempt to subsume meta- and hypertextual material under the titular umbrella of film). The primary function and result, then of the interactive elements in the DVD interface is of an Althusserian, ideological induction of passive viewers, into active participants in the corporation’s self-conception.

But how do we interpret interactivity? At what level is it semiotic? Jeff White, in his hypertext essay “Hypersuasion and the new Ethos: Toward a Theory of Ethical Linking” suggests that the interpretive potential for interactive linkages is partly ethotic; an author’s motives and identities are constructed in hypertext settings based on how they

deploy their resources. The main resource for any interactive navigation device is the linkages which move users from one location or node to another. The degree to which a destination is signaled, and the strategies used to signal that destination are inherently ethotic:

In hypertext, the possibility [sic] for informed "pre-knowing" is possible in various ways. Links can function iconically, indexically, and symbolically--all at the discretion of the author--to inform the reader of his or her next destination. In choosing to use or not use these functions, the author exercises his or her ethical power. He or she is choosing to mask or to exhibit the destination nodes, the context into which the reader is moving, the nature of the association he or she sees between the current and subsequent nodes, which nodes have been visited previously and which have not, and, in fact, the awareness that the reader is present at all.

(White 2000)

What this approach to interactive semiotics suggests is that, in part, the semiotics of the DVD interface navigational tools arise from the relationship created between link, destination, and the degree to which the destination location is signaled by the link, both subtly – in say an indexical relationship that gestures at the interactive capabilities of the user (by means of appearing address boxes, pop-up screens that contextualize links, or even unique font shifts of highlighted links) – or more overtly – as in iconic and symbolic relationships, (where, say the link pictorially signifies the linking location, or more conventionally, a linguistic description of the linked location *as* the link). The creation of these relationships, as White points out, is the major contribution of the interface

“author” and signals the overall credibility of that author – credibility defined in terms of the web-hypertext ideals: informational transparency and navigational efficiency.

Yet White is concerned primarily with hypertext settings that interface with the world-wide-web. To what degree is a DVD interface, a seemingly discrete and hermetically sealed new media unit, related to this type of semiosis? On the one hand, most DVD interfaces provide links out to the world-wide-web, to various media resources. These sources are, by and large, within the strictly controlled environment of the distribution company’s web site or authorized fan sites. The most obvious motives for this out-linking are to take advantage of the fact that most computers currently come equipped with some form of DVD player/burner from which users can play and/or make DVD artifacts, but also act as gateways to specific, web-based information sources. The second motive is to induce more merchandise sales; in order to promote more products from New Line it must entice viewers to visit its site. Hence, the promise of “more bonus features that we couldn’t fit onto your DVD” makes a certain amount of sense, if it can provide an opportunity to add another layer of cross-promotion. Thus, a direct and real connection exists between the interactive nature of the DVD interface and that of the world-wide-web.

So, an interface that operates with relative similarity to internet hypertext models should not surprise us. On the other hand, the interactive interface that constitutes the world-wide-web is conventionally associated with the democratic access of vast stores of information – the interface itself conveys connotations of user-based access and control. By using a similar hypertext model to the one used by most internet users, distribution companies draw upon this overall connotation of “web-ness.” Hence, users of DVD

interfaces feel empowered because, unlike film-goers who passively receive (apologies to Metz and Brecht) products from a silent and absent source (projectionists are figures of mystery in their almost Quasimodo-esque relegation to the high part of the cinema, called upon to rain down beauty on blithely unaware audiences), DVD users *are users*. The subtle shift from *consumers* to *users* infuses the DVD with a measure of control absent in the cinematic experience. Additionally, as I have mentioned previously, the sense (or illusion) of control is the primary tool by which users become participants, and by extension, become complicit in the interpretive frame the distribution company sets forward for their product. So, while the DVD interface is a profoundly controlled hypertext environment, we may still approach it with the same interpretive lens we do other web-based hypertext models, such as the web.

The *Lord of the Rings Special Extended DVD Edition's* interface invokes all three semiotic modes simultaneously. The symbolic and indexical strategies of semiotic hypertext are fairly overt. In the case of the symbolic, users are given a series of options on every screen. These options consist of titles such as “play all,” “select a scene,” or even “a day in the life of a hobbit.”¹⁰ Indexically, each “cursor choice” is set off by a series of markers which change from screen to screen. The front pages are navigated by means of a highlighting icon made of curved lines and colons. These two features of script writing work on either side of the centered navigational option to create a kind of banner effect, as seen in figure 6.17:

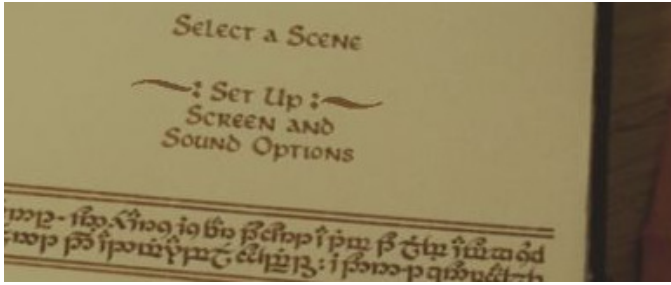


Figure 6.17 A Close-up of the Main Navigational Menu for Part Two of *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Rings Special Extended DVD Edition*

When selected, the option as a whole (i.e. both option and banner) flashes a lighter shade of color and is bolded, making it distinct from all the other options. White suggests that “the link can indicate the clicking of the mouse in two

ways: it changes colors, and it calls a new node onto the screen” (White 2000), in order to signify indexically.

What is less obvious is how these links signify iconically. In order to see how all these three elements further the ethotic goal we identified early on in this chapter, we should look at how the navigational tools represent *writing* as cursor tools. I have already noted how the main screen uses the scripted dash and colon notation in order to generate a kind of indexical cursor, and if this were the only strategy of noting the interactive mode, it would be difficult to make the case that the interface actually indexically represents additions to the book in the form of the script notations, but given the alterations to the cursor device from screen to screen we must conclude that it is so (see figure 6.18).

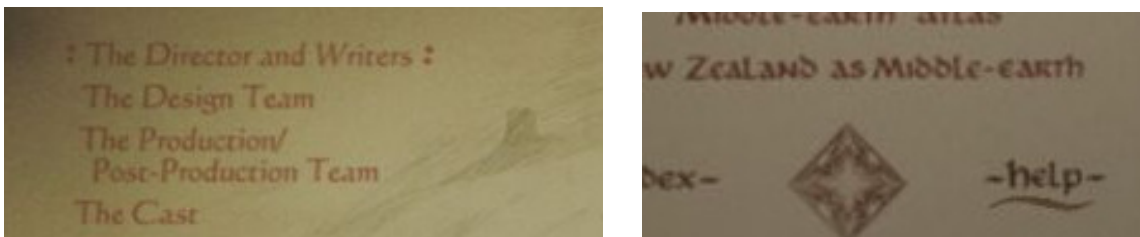


Figure 6.18 The Navigational Cursors for Commentary Track Menu on Part One and The Appendices Part Two of *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Rings Special Extended DVD Edition*

We note that in the left screenshot that colons are used to highlight “The Director and Writers” option “special features” menu of the film disk, while on the right, the “help” function is underlined with the same rolling line used to create the main menu cursor. Thus, the interface invokes an iconic use of the kinds of punctuation marks one would find in a manuscript, such as the one we find as the guiding metaphor for the DVD.

So, when we put forward the idea that the interface signifies at three semiotic levels, what then is the result of such a complex signification? What is the ethos that White suggests occurs with any creation of hypertext? What kind of author do we infer? In the same way that the interface signifies on several levels, we can begin to discern several levels of ethotic significance here. First, and foremost, the overall ethos appeal for legitimacy is at work in its sustenance of the guiding metaphor, linking the Jackson/New Line *Lord of the Rings* to the bibliophilic connotations of Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* by use of the punctuation-based interactive tools. Secondly, if, as White suggests, we infer authorship whenever we use the links, we must conclude that the author of the hypertext platforms for the *Lord of the Rings* interface have created an efficient and “user-friendly” one that uses multiple strategies to provide users with information about links and destinations, efficiently moves users from screen to screen, as well as offers adequate support by the inclusion of indexes, maps, and help-pages. This overall efficacy of design suggests an intended audience familiar with, but not necessarily expert in, the hypertext navigational strategies of internet use. The designers clearly recognize that DVD technology is distinct from internet technology, yet invoke its overall navigational strategies to conform to the architext of the DVD medium, but also

so as to not insult expert technology users. Finally, the fact that the punctuation provides the primary navigational icon set we can return to our understanding of interactivity as a means of implicating and inculcating users to the theoretical intent and termistic screen of the designers. We can infer that the interface offers the promise that when users click on the navigational options, written on pages in an ornate script associated with both elvish and runic design, that they themselves are symbolically adding to the text. That is, when users select a choice by using cursors composed of punctuation, that they are metaphorically punctuating, or highlighting a written text, and by extension, participating in the creation of the book. It makes users part of the mythology by “recording” their choices in the books of Bilbo, Elrond, Théoden, etc. In other words, by allowing users to participate, they are subtly persuaded by their own actions, and the complex signifying systems that form the backdrop to their choices.

Conclusion

This chapter, perhaps more than any of the others, takes up a vast array of theoretical and interpretive strategies. So perhaps it would be advisable to step back and re-examine exactly how we came to the conclusions we did so that a possible model for examining static adaptive new media texts can be gleaned. We began by, as all adaptations should, identifying our text, transtextually, noting that the DVD packaging and interface should be considered a paratext. We then saw that the best way to conceptualize a DVD interface was by means of another type of paratext, the film credits.

We suggested that these paratexts adapted elements of the film, reformulating them for a new generic setting, in order to allow audiences to access important information (such as the title, credits, navigation, etc.) but at the same time incorporating images, symbols and effects of the film in order to allow audiences to “hit the ground running” by the time they made it to the text, proper. In other words, this type of paratext is both a part of the titular text and outside it: these types of paratexts blur the distinction between hypertext and paratext. The inside/outside nature of the interior, hypertextual paratext invokes an overarching metaphoric system in conjunction with the interface and extratext to subtly guide users’ interpretation of the *Lord of the Rings*, offering an official and sanitized perspective of the work, while tacitly closing off and limiting non-canonical interpretations. Finally, that same metaphoric system continued the process of adaptive legitimation and ethotic appeal that has been the consistent feature of all the adaptive forms we have encountered in this project. The film-as-book metaphor subtly inquires as to the nature of adaptive art, and the supposed debt owed to onymous sources while positing its veneration for Tolkien as a shared, pathotic value with its users.

Conclusion: A Rhetorical Approach to Adaptation

The adaptive accrual perspective and the process of eurhythmic analysis offer a means by which adaptations and their models can be analyzed in their textual and material contexts. Rhetoric, eurhythmic analysis in particular, offers the language by which we can describe the *relationships* created among texts, and between texts and their audiences. Transtextualism allows us a vocabulary by which we can articulate an understanding of the acceptable objects of analysis distinct from New Critical conceptualizations of an abstracted idea of a text without context or material influence. Furthermore, transtextualism's terms move us toward a complete picture of textual instantiations as arising from and participating in the shaping of the material and historical context which surrounds them. We can use this vocabulary to speak about the details of textual form, even going so far as to distinguish among types of adaptations, using a transtextual vocabulary. Finally, social and visual semiotics allows us to interpret the meanings which emerge from these relationships and taxonomies. Its terms allow us to closely analyze compositional structures of new media texts, and its close proximity to both structuralist and rhetorical traditions facilitates complimentary readings.

Let's review a few of the specific details that we've explored over the course of the project. First, we placed the quest for both architextual and specific textual legitimacy at the heart of the adaptive process. We traced its scholarship to find that much of the resistance against adaptations, particularly as they occur in new and emerging media forms, represents 1) an understandable, yet unsustainable skepticism of the new media's expressive possibilities; and 2) misapprehension of the nature of authorship and adaptive

textuality. We discovered that ethos was not only a matter of authors generating credibility from elements of their texts, but rather a whole field of relationships wherein the very notion of authorship was fragmented into collaborative, legal, and symbolic personae and then used against consumers to promote products. Similarly, the valorization of “source” material is invoked by corporate legal authors in order to generate credibility for their texts.

Rather than isolating adaptations and sources, adaptive accrual sustains texts in associated clusters, recognizing that the adaptive process adds to the overall meaning of megatexts: the more adaptations that are added, the subtly different the meaning of any one element within it. The appropriate interpretive tactic then, is to eurhythmatically read “through” those textual clusters. We noted that these textual clusters included a vast spectrum of modes and types of textual form, from architextual variations, to metatextual commentary, to material context, and so on. Because adaptations do not emerge out of a vacuum, but are hailed by cultural resonances which make the larger text apt and relevant, all of these semiotic forms must be examined in order to fully account for the changes which occur when adaptations are added.

We noted the particular importance that rhetoric plays in this process. While adaptive accrual describes the way megatexts grow and develop, rhetoric provides the primary interpretive lens. Concerned as it is with the relationships created between symbols and symbol-users, rhetoric finds itself uniquely positioned to discuss relationships that occur between authors and adaptations, models and audiences and all the cross-pollinations that are husbanded by a bevy of textual associations. Eurhythmia provides our primary analytical tool with its direct invocation of adaptive potentials, as

well as interpreting the loss and gain in cross-media shifts. We were also able to use rhetoric to speak about the importance of ethos to the adaptive process and how identification and division are used in order to produce ethotic resonances. We also noted that many ancient rhetorical terms associated with aesthetics could be used to unpack the adaptive process and isolate specific effects.

Finally, we saw that transtextualism, combined with strategies of social and visual semiotics, allowed us to address the details of adaptive structure; we used them to isolate and categorize particular elements of adaptive design. In particular, we examined the design of a DVD interface, looking at it as a type of adaptation: an internal, hypotextual paratext. We began with a transtextual categorization, identifying it as a paratext, or part of the material substance which surrounds, supports, and promotes the text. We then broke the paratext down into its constituent elements and began a largely social/visual semiotic reading of its design. We also saw how its design elements worked with its extra-textual material to shape a specific reading authorized by the legal authors. Its user-interface was also designed toward the goal of enticing users to directly engage with the options presented, as well as to participate, by means of the interactive nature of the navigational tools, in the guiding of the possible interpretations of the text by forcing them to take responsibility for their choices.

Axioms of a Rhetorically-Based Analysis of Adaptation

Beyond an overview of what we've covered, we can look back at this wide-ranging discussion and begin to extrapolate certain persistent adaptation issues and how to address them from an accrual and eurhythmic perspective.

Adaptations are not Beholden to their Models

The metaphors that surround the fidelity dogma serve a high-minded goal: to reward individual genius and protect it from exploitation by rapacious thieves who would seek to steal ideas and pass them off as their own. This is the level at which the ideology of the metaphor becomes dogmatic self-perpetuation. "We serve a noble purpose larger than our selves" is the power of religious expression contained in such well-intentioned articulations. Unfortunately, those who benefit from the recitation of the dogma are rarely (if ever) symbolic authors, but corporate, legal authors. This understanding fails on two levels: 1) it ignores the obvious systems of intertextual dialogism and radical intertextuality posited by Bakhtin and Barthes, and taken up by Stam, which posit that *all* texts are arrangements of older textual elements; 2) it presumes that the legal and cultural valuations of authorship accurately reflect hyper- and hypotextual relationships. Just because the existing laws treat authors as proprietary owners of the texts ascribed to them does not mean that texts do not circulate freely and cluster into associated megatexts. That is, artists who borrow ideas or even whole sections from other texts can only be considered thieves within a system that configures art as property. Those thieves could

only pass ideas off as their own in a system that placed such extraordinary value on an artist's name, rather than the movement of themes, styles and fibula through media. Simply, this argument amounts to "well, that's the way it is." Yes. That is the way things currently stand. But what this project seeks to continue is the process, as Bourdieu says, of questioning whether the candle is worth the cake.

Adaptations Emerge from and Influence their Material Contexts

When one considers the vast influence of context on textual production, it is difficult to maintain an exclusively formalist position – one which extracts "the text" from its context. Brecht, Ray, and even Bluestone all emphasize different material forces which shape both the creation and reception of these texts, ranging from the influence of capital and ideology in Brecht, or the promotional power of cultural intertextuality in Ray, to the power of the censor and semiotic potential of casting decisions in Bluestone. For all these reasons and more, an appreciation of the broad range of social influences that come to bear on textual production must be considered in any serious analysis of adaptive association. A transtextual approach is efficacious in categorizing the nature of the material relationship to the text, while rhetoric and social semiotics work in concert to analyze those categorizations.

Adaptation Studies Must Let Go of “New” and “Old” Media

Adaptive accrual must interrogate the frequently invoked distinction between film and so-called new media. In the same way that theorists over the course of the last century have worked to reveal the core commonalities between film and literature, so the process of understanding the relationship between film and new media is also beginning to unfold. Lev Manovich’s historicizing of the myths of new media begins to break down the prejudices that lead us to perceive computer mediated texts as less aesthetic (and somehow more pragmatic) than cinematic ones. He demonstrates that the features of new media (ranging from the computer’s digital uniqueness, to its innovative interactivity) are in fact refinements of technology already imbedded into so called “old” media. Chapter six of this project works to demonstrate this familial consubstantiality between new and old media and by extension (and elaboration) between new and linguistic media. Consequently, I urge a broad range of scholarship to begin to reconfigure the old/new media dichotomy into a spectrum, or range of media types, such as Jenkins’s articulations of narrative schema including both temporal and geographical forms, and my own characterizations of dynamic narrative systems from static ones.

Eurhythmic Analysis Demands an Accounting of the Hypotext’s Associations, as well as those of the Hypertext

Adaptation studies tend to place an undue emphasis on creating linkages beginning with adaptations and ending with models. Unfortunately, much of the scholarship stops at this point. This limitation of the scope of analysis contributes to the privileging of the

source by ignoring its own intertextual associations. The study of adaptation should not be an exercise in historical valuation, but become part and parcel with intertextual analysis of all kinds. Eurhythmia moves synchronically through myriad textual associations that include both source and adaptation's hetero- and homomodal linkages. The kinds of associative analysis that have been reserved for adaptations should be applied through both adaptations and sources to identify the wide range of interpretive possibilities.

Adaptation Analysis Should Exploit the Range of Transtextual Possibilities.

As we expand our valuation of textuality to include both mono and multimodal instantiations, so we must expand our understanding of how texts are perceived in order to better accommodate this new perspective. As we have seen, Genette's principles of transtextuality provide a means by which the interpretive focus can be narrowed, and an effective analysis of the text/context relationship gleaned. These five functions operate simultaneously not only to identify what has been traditionally demarcated as the text but also serve to designate the porous boundaries between textuality and broader, social context. Thus, while intertextual dialogism circulates figures throughout a given culture, transtextuality creates an insulating substance (at points physically) inside, and outside the margins of the traditional text to allow a more flexible field of discussion. So, on the one hand we may be able to invoke the principle of architextuality to examine the generic tension created between the title of text and those of the cinematic "chapters" only observable in DVD formats. On the other hand we have seen how paratextuality can be

invoked to discuss the relationship between DVD supplemental material to its model text(s) in order to examine the curious boundary issues that develop in new media manifestations, as well as how those materials construe new adaptive relationships on levels as divergent as their content – from authorized documentaries to production notes to specially designed games – and form – or the navigational system thematics and hierarchies created to guide the DVD experience.

Eurhythmic Analysis is a Dialogic Study

We have seen from this study that adaptive accrual treats clusters of textual groupings as kinds of larger texts, or megatexts. In the same way a novel is composed of many chapters and many voices contributing to a large text, so adaptations cluster and grow the meaning and semiosis of the megatext. When a new adaptation is added, the meaning of the whole-text is altered, sometimes subtly (as is often the case with most forms of criticism, as limited in their audience as they tend to be), sometimes dramatically (as the megatext of *Pride and Prejudice* was with Simon Langton's mini-series). When one engages the megatext, the adaptation/source relationship that has defined adaptation scholarship for the last half-century begins to recede and is replaced by a dialogic conversation that develops between various interpretive adaptations, each operating according to their temporal arrangement.

As an example of this temporal, dialogic conversation between texts, we may look to the common practice of competing release, or when two adaptations of the same culturally “bankable” source are released very close together by competing production

companies. Adaptations of *Dangerous Liaisons*, and *Valmont* ostensibly share the same model, yet were successfully released almost simultaneously. What becomes apparent is that 1) the model was able to support two divergent, yet temporally connected texts without egregious redundancy and 2) examining the two as complete units, each makes a distinct comment on the model, its immediate cultural relevance, and by familial relation (over the body of the parent, as it were), to one another. Thus, with one eye at the source and another on the culture to which they bring it, the two enter into a kind of aesthetic debate, literally “over” the source. The cumulative effect is that these “conversations” continue and grow so that the model is seen always already in relation to its adaptations. These adaptations, representing relational processes to one another are, quite literally, popular forms of criticism and commentary that surround the model to create an accrual of discourse, a fibrous tissue of text. This tight interlinking of discourse from adaptation to adaptation, and adaptation to model makes any attempt to disentangle and segregate a single text from the megatext an act of unhinging criticism from the grounding of its object. It would be the metaphorical equivalent of expurgating Derrida of Rousseau, Watt of Fielding, or Bloom of Milton.

Chapter One Notes

1) According to Timothy Corrigan, the main reason for the quick conjoining of film and literature was that the practice and “realistic” aspects of film (and its familial substance with photography) aligned it with the social and aesthetic sensibilities of the nineteenth century, particularly “the demands for realism and a class-oriented fascination with spectacle” (1999, 17). Yet, the early film took its cue from the stage, rather than prosaic narrative traditions. Film’s wide swings between aesthetic realism and melodrama found an uneasy fusion in the early cinema and adaptations of traditional works provided the means.

2) Guerric DeBona points out that as late as 1935, David O. Selznick’s adaptation of *David Copperfield* was marketed directly to high schools in the United States supplemented with an illustrated apology for the literary adaptation and a pre-made quiz for students. (2000. Dickens, the depression, and MGM’s David Copperfield. In James Narremore (Ed.) *Film Adaptation*, 113. New York: Rutgers.)

3) We will see in chapter four how those medieval models of corporate and collective authorship have indeed been imposed. But in true postmodern form, capitalist, corporate forces have retained the figurehead of the individualist author with which to better promote their products.

4) In fact, Metz goes so far to suggest that the “cinematic apparatus,” or the social construction of the cinema as an institution, suggesting a “dual kinship” between the mental life of the spectator and economic/industrial model of cinema: “The cinematic institution is not just the cinema industry.... It is also the mental machinery – another industry – which spectators ‘accustomed to the cinema’ have internalized historically, and which has adapted them to the consumption of films” (Metz 1977, 18).

5) This “denseness” of meaning, on both a material and conceptual level is what motivates Deleuze’s conceptualization of cinema into two axes of semiosis, based on the Hjelmslevian semiotics which identifies a level of expression, (the movement-image – concerned with the materiality of cinematic luminescence), and the level of content (the time image – signs that emerge from the “points of the present” and “layers of the past.”).

6) On this score, no other director rivals the influence of Orson Welles, particularly his *Citizen Kane*, and the creation of the “long take.” Cook notes, “The primary concern of the long take aesthetic is not the sequencing of images, as in montage, but the disposition of space within the frame, or *mise-en-scène*” (1996, 410).

7) It is precisely this notion of motivation that led Metz to pursue the Psychoanalytic transformation of “motivation” to “analogy” in his later work, while at the same time (in deference to Eco’s criticisms), retaining the concept that the cinematic language was a form of code.

8) Of course this suggestion is itself full of problems. The novelist, like the scriptwriter, works to bring the written text to life. Bluestone himself notes that “at the intersection the book and shooting script are almost indistinguishable” (1957, 63). Yet in order for their work to be distributed and realized, they each must enter into financial dealings with distribution companies. As has become glaringly apparent in the years following Bluestone’s presentation of the myth of the solitary novelist, the publishing industry has established itself as crass in its slavery to the lowest common denominator as the film industry.

Chapter Two Notes

1) In this respect, Bluestone, Lukacs, and Brecht are expressly agreed (but unfortunately misguided). But, while Bluestone sees the “materialist” bent of film as a limitation, Lukacs and Brecht predictably see it as a liberatory medium for strategies of ideological estrangement. Both perspectives are similarly reductive. As many critics have pointed out (and the third Reich so effectively demonstrated) the veritas aspect of the visual image makes it particularly well-suited to the expression of, rather than the undermining, of the ideological currents of dominant capitalism. And Bluestone’s impressions of films limited expressive power are, of course challenged by the power of the symbolic layering that occurs not simply in the narrative movement (time), but also in the instantaneous expression of *mise-en-scène* (space).

2) As a possible response to Bluestone contention of the inherent limitations of adaptation, we look to John Olmixon's comment on a passage from Dryden where the poet borrows heavily from Francis Bacon's *An Essay on Criticism*: "Such borrowing as Dryden's," says Olmixon, "is highly commendable; he has paid back what he borrowed with interest, and it can by no means deserve the scandal of plagiarism" (Jensen 1997, 122). Such a liberal perspective of intertextuality invokes a view of *inventio* more in keeping with the unique constraints of adaptation. Adaptations major sin is its quality of borrowing – a trespass on the sacred property of the genius.

Chapter Three Notes

1) Jackson points out, quite rightly, that when you come to the conclusion that not all of a text is filmable, you must decide what to film and what not to film; i.e. what kind of film do you want to make? Consequently, once an element is designated as cinematically important, you will end up rearranging elements designed in a literary mode to better correspond to the conventions of film. So, as Jackson indicates, "Lines that Elrond would say in the book were given to Aragorn to say in the movie. You know, a line that might appear in Lothlorian was suddenly put into the Mines of Moria." (2002, *Fellowship* "From Novel into Vision" Appendices Part 1)

Chapter Four Notes

1. e.g. Nintendo is known as a maker of “cute” games – *Mario*, *Donkey Kong* and the like, while Playstation specializes in sports and early-adult/action games. From this vantage, Microsoft’s X-Box, as thematically similar to Playstation is not considered competition for Nintendo, as their “careers” have different trajectories

2. Toby Gard’s tale is a sad one that seems to bolster the credentials of the romantic author narrative: as an animator for the British company, Core Design, he “came up with the original idea” for the game *Tomb Raider*, and therefore (according to conventional wisdom), authored the success of the Laura Croft franchise. As the original *Tomb Raider* was in the final stages of production, the American firm, Eidos Interactive, bought Core and subsequently released the game, beginning the 700 million dollar phenomena it has become. Unfortunately, three months after the release of original *Tomb Raider*, Guard left Eidos (reportedly out of conflicts with the Eidos corporate system) to start Confounding Factor, a company riddled with development problems and delays. He therefore never saw any of the windfalls from the phenomena he is credited with creating. Much to the satisfaction of Guard’s defenders, Eidos has fallen on hard times and *Tomb Raider* development has been handed over to a U.S. firm, Crystal Dynamics. Gard finally released his first new title, *Galleon*, several years late and to very mixed reviews. (Reed, Kristan. 2004. Raiders of the lost core. *Games industry*, 13(22), January 16, http://www.gamesindustry.biz/content_page.php?section_name=dev&aid=2822 (Accessed March 2, 2004).)

3. The creation of *Counterstrike* was an extremely collaborative process of interaction between gamers, creators, and hackers. Its worldwide effects and localized phenomena are engagingly addressed in Kiyash Monsef's *G4M3RS: A Documentary. Clans, Mods and a Cultural Revolution*. and is available through "The Gaming Project" website: <http://www.thegamingproject.com/>

4. So in demand are machinima platforms that software companies now vie for business to create new platforms for the medium – pre-packaged environments, specifically designed with machinima directors in mind, thus transforming what was once an act of resistance into a legitimate product. See <http://www.olmecsoft.com/machinema/machinema.html>

5. In other words, the algorithms that govern the computer programs are just as much the property of the legal owners of the film as the plot and characters. John Lasseter, as symbolic author of *Finding Nemo*, is the symbolic author of the linguistic, semiotic, and machine codes of the Pixar creation.

Chapter Five Notes

1) "Traditional," meaning a 1/3 to 2/3 relationship between title and image. This arrangement is designed to place the interpretive power of the image in the terms of the title, as the image occupies the larger and upper portion of the total design. The complexity of the image is brought squarely onto the title it elaborates.

2) These connections are further reinforced, not just at the visual level but the aural one as well. Throughout the gameplay sequences, the actor's voices call out directions, encouragement, and narrative voice over to both guide and drive the game play, thereby solidifying the association of actor/character and celebrity/gamer multisemiotically.

3) Bilbo's Sting, Gandalf's Glamdring, Isildur's Narsil, Fingolfin's Ringil, etc.

4) Resurrection, of course is the essence of eucatastrophe (Tolkien 1983, 156), and both Aragorn and Gandalf are resurrected to become Christ figures – Aragorn in walking of the Paths of the Dead, Gandalf in his encounter with the Balrog.

5) The Mouth presents a variation on the usual game order of minion/boss, changing the climax of "The Path of the King" plot to a boss/minion/boss pattern for the EA *Return of the King* video game.

6) In both the novel and the film, the slaying of the Witch King precedes the arrival of Aragorn on the black ships. For Tolkien, the progression of joy culminates in the King's arrival, rather than the defeat of the captain of the enemy.

7) This of course, differs significantly from the EA version of *The Two Towers* and *Return of the King* where gamers are given a set of options for their main character

(Legolas, Aragorn, Gimli, etc.) so that they can play out the same narrative several times with different characters.

Chapter Six Notes

1) This phenomenon calls to mind such titles as Michael Moore's *Bowling For Columbine* which re-energized documentary filmmaking almost solely based on its DVD sales; also, the *Austin Powers* franchise was spawned essentially from a "second chance" on video and DVD; *The Family Guy*, which scored abysmally in television ratings during its 3-year run on Fox Television was so successful as a DVD set that the show was re-instated. *Firefly*, a Joss Whedon series, was cancelled after only a handful of episodes, but was reborn as an adequately grossing feature film (*Serenity*) based primarily on brisk DVD sales of the boxed set.

2) One must think of, first and foremost, Kress and van Leeuwen, but also the host of theorists of document design, ranging from those espousing European ergonomics, to promoters of "usability" such as Jakob Nielsen. From more traditionally based design advocates, such as Brenda Laurel to those advocates for the importance of various paratextual elements such as Joanna Drucker's work to raise awareness of the methods and meanings of typography.

3) While a detailed, analytical comparison of the two would be interesting, it is fodder for a separate analysis.

4) Including *Psycho*, *Vertigo*, *North by Northwest*, *West Side Story*, *Casino*, and many others.

5) See, for example, Bennett, T and J. Woollacott. 1987. *Bond and beyond: The political career of a popular hero*. London: Macmillan Education.

6) For example, everything about the special extended DVD edition of *Fellowship of the Ring* attempts to distract viewers from the rather obvious reading of the story of love between men. The very overt gestures of sentimentality which occur, primarily between Frodo and Sam are ignored, glossed over and distracted from by the presentation and interpretive model laid out by New Line.

7) It is worth noting that while *The Two Towers* theatrical version was also released in August, the theatrical version of *The Return of the King* was released in May. While this early release date may be accounted for by the fact that New Line had two previous templates to follow, it may also suggest a recognition on the part of the filmmakers that those people who were interested primarily in the filmic, rather than the cultural experience, would find their interest waning having already experienced the final installment of the work in late December or early January. The *Special Extended DVD Edition* was released the same time as all the others, from which we might conclude that the guiding metaphor of the series – the cultural artifact of the mythic tome – was appropriate to the intended audience. Those who were willing to wait for the extended

edition were forced to demonstrate a relationship with time more akin to bibliophilic individuals, that is, patience.

8) This is hardly surprising, given Tolkien's occupation as a professor of Anglo-Saxon literature at Oxford.

9) Many authors, particularly in the early days of the internet boom, advocated the liberatory potential of interactivity as a means of reality construction and control. Some postulated interaction as a democratizing force – a weapon for the general population against the tyranny of globalization and corporate dominance. Such significant scholars as Jean Baudrillard and Hakim Bey as well as more design oriented writers like Brenda Laurel emphasized interactive action as an almost utopian realization.

10) This last title, typical of the “documentary” style footage that constitutes much of the appendices section, could be considered simultaneously symbolic (in its linguistic construct), and indexical (as it suggests not what the thing is, as such, but rather “symptoms” of the thing).

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