

# Film Adaptation of the First Novel in the *Hunger Games* Trilogy

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## **ABSTRAKT**

Cílem této bakalářské práce je zanalyzovat filmovou adaptaci prvního dílu světově známé trilogie *Hunger Games* spisovatelky Suzanne Collins a pokusit se vysvětlit, proč k některým změnám oproti knize došlo. Teoretická část se zabývá úvodem do teorie filmové adaptace a jejích metod. Praktická část se pak věnuje představení spisovatelky a jejího díla a samotnou analýzou, která popisuje hlavní rozdíly mezi původní dystopickou fikcí a jejím filmovým zpracováním, jejímž režisérem je Gary Ross.

Klíčová slova: *Hunger Games*, filmová adaptace, dystopická fikce, překlad, věrnost

## **ABSTRACT**

This bachelor's thesis aims to analyze the film adaptation of the first novel of Suzanne Collins's world-famous trilogy, *The Hunger Games* and attempts to explain the choices made in the film adaptation compared to the information in the book. The theoretical part focuses on an introduction to the theory of film adaptation and its methods. The practical part then focuses on introducing the writer and her work and the analysis itself, which describes the main differences between the original dystopian fiction and its film adaptation directed by Gary Ross.

Keywords: *Hunger Games*, film adaptation, dystopian fiction, translation, fidelity

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I hereby declare that the print version of my bachelor's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

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## INTRODUCTION

*The Hunger Games*, both in written and filmed form, has become a phenomenon among fans of dystopian fiction. Suzanne Collins's 2008 novel *The Hunger Games* offers the story of a young girl living in poor District 12. After she volunteers as tribute to save her sister Prim from the reaping, her life completely changes, and the reader of the novel experiences this young girl's emotions and thoughts through her narration. This young girl is none other than Katniss Everdeen, the story's protagonist. The 2012 film version, directed by Gary Ross, stars Jennifer Lawrence as Katniss, Josh Hutcherson as Peeta, Liam Hemsworth as Gale, Woody Harrelson as Haymitch, Elizabeth Banks as Effie, and many other well-known actors. According to some, the film adaptation of *The Hunger Games* is even better than the original novel. This story about the fictional state of Panem reflects a scattered society that has to undergo the horror of the Hunger Games every year.

The theoretical part of this thesis focuses on the basis of film adaptation. The part mentions a few scholars interested in this topic and compares older and more recent theories. Many examples from different sources support the theory. This section also provides a few methods of adapting a novel into a film and explains why specific creative and technical changes must be made. To adapt a novel, a filmmaker must shift the story from a "language medium" to a "visual medium." This, for example, includes changes in narration; specifically, in *The Hunger Games* novel, the audience is reading a first-person narrative, whereas the audience of *The Hunger Games* movie – like any film without voice-over narration – is watching a third-person narrative.<sup>1</sup>

The practical part then analyzes the film adaptation of *The Hunger Games*. First, it introduces the brilliant author Suzanne Collins, who is known not only for this trilogy but also for her contributions to children's TV. The analysis is divided into four main sections: Descriptions vs. Visual Differences, Selection of Certain Criteria and Omitting Others, Reworking Dialogue, and lastly, Newly Created Elements. The analysis focuses on finding the main differences between the source text and the adaptation and tries to explain, based on the theoretical background, why these differences may have been decided on.

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<sup>1</sup> Anne Marie Kelly, "The Adaptation Games: 'The Hunger Games' As Book And Movie," We Recycle Movies, accessed March 28, 2012, <https://wecyclemovies.wordpress.com/2012/03/28/the-adaptation-games-the-hunger-games-as-book-and-movie/>.

# **I. FILM ADAPTATION THEORY AND METHODS**

## 1 FILM ADAPTATION – THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Film adaptation, in general, is a process of taking a story from a novel and transforming it into a digital cinematic piece of work. According to Linda Hutcheon, Professor Emeritus at the Department of English at the University of Toronto, adaptation can be described by these three main points: adaptation is “an acknowledged transposition of a recognizable other work or works, a creative *and* an interpretive act of appropriation/salvaging, an extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work,”<sup>2</sup> which, according to her, also means that an adaptation is “a work that is second without being secondary. It is its own palimpsestic thing.”<sup>3</sup> The Collins Dictionary defines palimpsest as “a manuscript on which two or more successive texts have been written.”<sup>4</sup> In Hutcheon’s theory, this would mean that the text of the book and the screenplay of the movie have the same foundation, that being the story, but are two separate works of art. Hutcheon also mentions that the word “adaptation” is quite confusing since it is the name for the final product and the process.<sup>5</sup>

Hutcheon shares this opinion with Patrick Cattrysse, Professor of Narrative, Screenwriting, and Adaptation Studies, who, in his 1992 article *Film (Adaptation) as Translation: Some Methodological Proposals* mentions that because adaptation is the name for the process and the product, studying adaptation also includes studying the social functions of that adaptation in its context, i.e., evaluating whether the adaptation presents itself as one of a source text, and if the adaptation is generally considered to be one by critics and the public, or if it is seen as its own work. Cattrysse gives an example from his research on *film noir*, a mode that was first popular in the mid-20th century in detective and crime drama but still influences many works today. According to Cattrysse, films indicate the sources they have used. However, most films mainly present themselves as the “autonomous work of a film studio, director, and producer” and only mention the literary author or source with greater prominence in the credits when the source is well-known.<sup>6</sup> Many other theorists have proposed different names for the process and the final product of adaptation.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Linda Hutcheon and Siobhan O’Flynn, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2013), 8.

<sup>3</sup> Hutcheon and O’Flynn, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 9.

<sup>4</sup> “Palimpsest,” Collins Dictionary, accessed April 11, 2024, [://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/palimpsest](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/palimpsest).

<sup>5</sup> Hutcheon and O’Flynn, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 15.

<sup>6</sup> Patrick Cattrysse, “Film (Adaptation) as Translation: Some Methodological Proposal,” *Target International Journal of Translation Studies*, no. 4 (January 1992): 58, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233576537\\_Film\\_Adaptation\\_as\\_Translation\\_Some\\_Methodological\\_Proposa](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233576537_Film_Adaptation_as_Translation_Some_Methodological_Proposa).

<sup>7</sup> Hutcheon and O’Flynn, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 15.

## 1.1 Adaptation as Translation

Kamilla Elliott, Professor of Literature and Media at Lancaster University, is another researcher interested in film adaptation. According to Elliott, one of the definitions is that the terms “adaptation” and “translation” can be used interchangeably. However, in the world of translations, adaptation is considered the worst possible translation. On the contrary, in the film adaptation world, translation is considered the worst adaptation. The difference between these concepts is that adaptation requires researchers and scholars to look beyond the linguistic sphere and gives them more creative freedom. At the same time, translation is somewhat restrained in keeping the linguistic features.<sup>8</sup> Elliott’s 2020 book *Theorizing Adaptation* discusses how the adaptation theory has changed over time. At the very end of the conclusion, Elliott admits that her work is a “never-ending book” and that it will stay that way forever because adaptation itself is always adapting.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, many theorists, including Linda Hutcheon and Kamilla Elliott, find it hard to come up with one single definition of adaptation, and so this thesis cannot give a simple explanation either.

Patrick Cattrysse proposes that the view of adaptations as translations is applicable because these studies are “both concerned with the transformation of source into target texts under some condition of ‘invariance’ or equivalence.”<sup>10</sup> Cattrysse has conducted research that focuses on applying polysystem translation theories to adaptation. Cattrysse claimed that these polysystem theories touch on issues that include a source-oriented approach, either when translating a source text from one language to another or when adapting a source novel into a movie. Next, these theories include an expectation of the adaptation to match the “original” in terms of quality and standards, thus setting an expectation of how adaptations should look rather than focusing on what the adaptations already looked like. And lastly, the theories include the comparison of the two texts – the source and the target, which leads to “very incomplete descriptions of the mechanisms that may have determined the transformation process as well as the way the target actually functions.”<sup>11</sup> In his research, Cattrysse chose *film noirs* made between 1940 and 1960, finally selecting about 600 films, of which 250 were studied. Cattrysse focused on the “selection policy,” “adaptation policy,” function, and relations.<sup>12</sup> The social function has been mentioned above in comparing

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<sup>8</sup> Kamilla Elliott, *Theorizing Adaptation* (New York: Oxford University, 2020), 185–86.

<sup>9</sup> Elliott, *Theorizing Adaptation*, 307–8.

<sup>10</sup> Cattrysse, “Film (Adaptation) as Translation,” 54.

<sup>11</sup> Cattrysse, “Film (Adaptation) as Translation,” 54.

<sup>12</sup> Cattrysse, “Film (Adaptation) as Translation,” 54–55.

Cattrysse with Hutcheon, and examples of selection and adaptation policy will be provided in later sections concerning narration and omission.

## 1.2 The Question of Fidelity

Jørgen Bruhn et al. describe adaptation as conventionally understood to be one-directional, which means that adaptation is a “transport of form and/or content *from* a source *to* a result,”<sup>13</sup> for example, from a novel to a movie. In this context, adaptation studies can, therefore, also be referred to as “‘text to cinema’ or ‘literature on screen.’”<sup>14</sup> *Adaptation Studies: New Challenges, New Directions* (2013) by Bruhn et al. focuses on five main themes: (1) the question of fidelity, (2) opening up the field to media other than only novels to films, (3) ways adaptation can be understood as a multilevel conversion rather than one medium to another, (4) understanding that adaptation might be a two-way process instead of a one-way transport from novel to film, and lastly, (5) that global theoretical frameworks can be used in adaptation studies.<sup>15</sup> The question of fidelity had once been regarded as *the* central question of adaptation studies, with fidelity often superficially meaning measured in terms of the degree to which the adaptation is faithful and loyal to the original work, for example, the movie being loyal to its source novel in supposed one-to-one correspondences.<sup>16</sup> In my analysis below, I attempt to move beyond this outdated, simplified view, just as contemporary adaptation theory does.

In his 2018 article *The Value of Fidelity in Adaptation*, James Harold, Professor of Philosophy at Mount Holyoke College, mainly distinguishes between story and thematic fidelity. Story fidelity means that the film tells the same story as the novel; for example, the film *Troy* (Petersen, 2004) seems to be a relatively faithful adaptation of Homer’s poem *Iliad* by keeping the principal events and following their sequence. Thematic fidelity concerns keeping the story’s overall theme the same as the source. A theme is abstract and should extend beyond the narrative; thanks to a theme, a story might appeal to a broader audience. For example, the theme of the novel *Atonement* (McEwan, 2001) is overcoming guilt. However, the adaptation by Joe Wright from 2007 changes this theme by remaining “faithful” to the source text, as the main character in the film also deals with her guilt by writing. Although this element of story fidelity is kept in the film, Harold argues that it would

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<sup>13</sup> Jørgen Bruhn et al., *Adaptation Studies: New Challenges, New Directions* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 9.

<sup>14</sup> Bruhn et al., *Adaptation Studies*, 6.

<sup>15</sup> Bruhn et al., *Adaptation Studies*, 4–5.

<sup>16</sup> Bruhn et al., *Adaptation Studies*, 5.

be a more faithful adaptation of the source text if the film's character were a filmmaker trying to deal with her guilt through film. Since adaptation represents a shift in media type from novel to film, it would make sense to shift from writing to filmmaking.<sup>17</sup>

Harold mentions some other types of fidelity, for example, fidelity to character, which concerns the character's personality or appearance, or fidelity to mood or affect, which focuses on the question of whether the film can be said to bring the same joy or anxiety, for example, as the source. Harold gives an example for the question of mood in *Clueless* (Heckerling, 1995), an adaptation of Jane Austen's *Emma* (1816) in a film that shares a similar sense of humor and irony with the source. Harold states that an adaptation might match the themes of the source because it captures the same mood. The adaptation might convey that mood because of the story's structure; for example, each of the protagonists overcoming their cynical or flighty "immunity" to love.<sup>18</sup>

Thomas Leitch, Professor of English at the University of Delaware, gives an example of two novels in his chapter "Exceptional Fidelity" from his 2007 book *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents: from Gone with the Wind to The Passion of the Christ*, the first is *Gone with the Wind* (published by Margaret Mitchell in 1936 and adapted by David O. Selznick in 1939) and the second *The Lord of the Rings* (published by J.R.R. Tolkien in 1954 and adapted by Peter Jackson in 2001). Selznick and Jackson both wanted to be as faithful to the source text as possible, and as a result, *Gone with the Wind* used to be the longest Hollywood feature film, and *The Lord of the Rings* was the longest trilogy. The novel *Gone with the Wind* was a best-seller, and *The Lord of the Rings* was not at the time the film was made. Instead, the film was what Leitch called a "cult favorite." Still, both adaptations became more famous and financially successful than the filmmakers predicted, which in turn caused a dramatic increase in sales of the original novels.<sup>19</sup> Even though the filmmakers sought to be as faithful to the source as possible, some alterations had to be made, for example in *The Lord of the Rings*, some scenes were moved to different storylines due to a lack of drama, and one of these scenes was when Faramir had no problem resisting the urge to take the Ring from Frodo in the novel to holding Frodo and his friends captive and freeing them later on in the film.<sup>20</sup> In the film *The Return of the King* (2003), the grand battle of Bywater, where

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<sup>17</sup> James Harold, "The Value of Fidelity in Adaptation," *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 58, no. 1 (January 2018): 89-93, <https://academic.oup.com/bjaesthetics/article/58/1/89/4838369>.

<sup>18</sup> Harold, "The Value of Fidelity in Adaptation," 94.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas Leitch, "Exceptional Fidelity," in *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents: from Gone with the Wind to The Passion of the Christ* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 128-131.

<sup>20</sup> Leitch, "Exceptional Fidelity," 136.

Saruman is killed, is also left out of the film, giving it a less majestic ending by having Saruman thrown off of a tower instead. This may reflect a choice by Jackson (and the other two screenwriters) of a more personal confrontation between Saruman and Gríma Wormtongue, or it may simply reflect budgetary concerns in a period before CGI film technology was as developed as it is today.

Scholars such as David L. Kranz and Nancy C. Mellerski, in their 2008 collection *In/Fidelity: Essays on Film Adaptation*, or Colin MacCabe, Kathleen Murray, and Rick Warner's 2011 volume *True to the Spirit: Film Adaptation and the Question of Fidelity*<sup>21</sup> argued that fidelity or faithfulness to the original is the most prominent and interesting way to think about adaptations. However, as time went on, these academics realized that it is difficult to determine how faithful the adaptation actually is and that fidelity can be quite problematic. Therefore, contemporary research generally no longer takes faithfulness into account, as researchers do not see the concept as useful.<sup>22</sup> Although the fidelity approach is no longer prominent, the search for similarities and differences is still apparent. According to Jørgen Bruhn et al., it is crucial to compare the original text with the adapted product when it comes to adaptation. The question of fidelity has been “translated” into a more neutral and practical measure to show how similar or different the texts are on different levels,<sup>23</sup> some of these are described later in section 2.

### 1.3 Film Adaptation as Inferior to Literature

In their introduction to the 2007 collection *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen*, Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan describe the struggles and misconceptions of film adaptation. The authors claim that film adaptation has always been a “hybrid” subject, meaning that “literature on screen was too literary for film studies and too film-based for Literary Studies,”<sup>24</sup> leaving this field somewhere in the middle. According to Cartmell and Whelehan, it is crucial to distinguish literature *and* film from literature *on* film. This book focuses on the literature *on* screen, as the title suggests, and admits that the literary side has always been given more importance rather than the cinematic side. The book expresses a wish to be free from the idea that film adaptations are always seen as imitations that are

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<sup>21</sup> Thomas Leitch, ed., “Adaptation and Fidelity,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Adaptation Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), chap. 5, page 2, <https://dokumen.pub/the-oxford-handbook-of-adaptation-studies-online-versionnbsped-0199331006-9780199331000.html>.

<sup>22</sup> Leitch, “Adaptation and Fidelity,” 2.

<sup>23</sup> Leitch, “Adaptation and Fidelity,” 2.

<sup>24</sup> Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1.

based on some other work and, therefore, inferior to their original. However, many filmmakers and writers still believe that for a film to be a good adaptation, it needs to be very similar to the original, and the best adaptations are the ones that try to keep and honor the original as much as possible.<sup>25</sup>

In his article, Patrick Cattrysse wrote that critics are more likely to give greater importance to writers with more literary prestige, in contrast to their importance to adaptation. Cattrysse gives an example from his research concerning two writers: Horace McCoy, an American writer of great literary fame, and Cornell Woolrich, a novelist and short story writer but a “literary non-identity.”<sup>26</sup> McCoy has been written about much more than Woolrich, even though he only had one of his novels turned into an adaptation, while Woolrich had several of his novels and short stories adapted.<sup>27</sup>

The collection *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen* goes on to feature various categories into which film adaptation can be organized to “show how many directions the field can take.”<sup>28</sup> And how concepts regarding adaptation can widen creative horizons and challenge established ideas. The authors also mention that the desire for films to stay “true” to or “match” their written original is a key aspect of the heritage genre, which has been described by Andrew Higson, who claims that adaptations that focus on faithfulness to the original are following what he calls the “discourse of authenticity.” This means that these adaptations try to be accurate to the literary text, the time period of the narrative, or even the specific historical event, or at least give that impression. Higson states that no matter how good of an imitation, film adaptations are always going to be considered inferior because they are essentially copies.<sup>29</sup> This has been noted as a problem by Robert Ray, who disagrees with the “not as good as the book” approach and says that the view of adaptations as only bad copies and believing they can never match the original is only an assumption.<sup>30</sup>

According to Cartmell and Whelehan, there are a few misconceptions about adaptations. First, it should not be necessary to insist that fidelity to the source is not useful for understanding adaptations because when a person who loves a certain novel has the chance to watch the cinematic version of it, they might wish that their personal interpretation and understanding of the novel has been sort of faithful to the movie. The authors emphasize the

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<sup>25</sup> Cartmell and Whelehan, *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen*, 1–2.

<sup>26</sup> Cattrysse, “Film (Adaptation) as Translation,” 56.

<sup>27</sup> Cattrysse, “Film (Adaptation) as Translation,” 55–6.

<sup>28</sup> Cartmell and Whelehan, *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen*, 2.

<sup>29</sup> Cartmell and Whelehan, *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen*, 2.

<sup>30</sup> Cartmell and Whelehan, *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen*, 3.



impossibility of such a task because every reader's interpretation and understanding are unique.<sup>31</sup>

The second misconception is that the cinematic version of a novel is less demanding on the imagination of the viewer than the imagination of the reader. Readers believe that there is much more space for their imagination because they cannot see the characters, the settings, and such, but the cinematic world uses different strategies to make the viewer pay attention and stimulate their imagination. These strategies involve paying attention to the complex connections of *mise-en-scène*, i.e., what the viewer can see at a certain moment in the frame, the editing, and lastly, the sound.<sup>32</sup>

The third misconception is that some kinds of literature works are less adaptable than others and that filmmakers may not be skilled or creative enough to execute a good adaptation in some cases. People with this opinion fail to realize that the film is not trying to do a voice-over of the novel but that it is actually trying to find its *own* voice using different methods. Lastly, there are other connections between literature and film other than adaptation, for example, intertextuality, the choice of cast actors, or inspirations from other works.<sup>33</sup>

Many methods and practices exist on how to make adaptations, some of which will be discussed in section 2, but they all have one thing in common. And that is changing a story that could have been only read into a story that can be seen and heard.

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<sup>31</sup> Cartmell and Whelehan, *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen*, 15.

<sup>32</sup> Cartmell and Whelehan, *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen*, 16.

<sup>33</sup> Cartmell and Whelehan, *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen*, 16–7.

## 2 FILM ADAPTATION METHODS

This section focuses on several methods of adaptation. Firstly, this section describes how the visuals in a movie are connected to the descriptions in the book. Then, the change of narration from the novel to the screen is discussed. Thirdly, there is the difference between the direct speech from the book and the screenplay. Lastly, the reason for omitting certain aspects from the book, for example, characters or scenes, is discussed.

Thomas Leitch has summarized the tactics of adaptation as: “selecting some obligatory speeches, characters, scenes, and plotlines and dropping others; compressing or combining several characters or scenes into one; streamlining the narrative by eliminating digressive episodes; reworking dialogue so that it is either more epigrammatic or more severely functional.”<sup>34</sup>

### 2.1 Visuals vs. Descriptions (Mise-En-Scène)

In his 2008 article *The Differences Between Novels and Films – Enhance Literature Teaching by Using Films*, Professor Bao Bo mentions the philosopher C.S. Peirce’s use of the terms “sign” and “icon,” which he used to be able to explain how a form of communication can represent another form and how these two are related. Bo explains that icons are much closer to the words they represent rather than signs. For example, when talking about a “flower,” a sign for this botanical masterpiece would be the word itself, but an icon of a flower could be a picture of it, which resembles the flower much more, and therefore, the icon is much closer to the item it represents. Taking this into account, it could be stated that movies are made up of icons while books are made up of signs. This means that movies should be much easier to understand, and there will not be any misconceptions about the imagination. But this does not apply when it comes to abstract ideas; these can be described in the simplest detail in the written word, but the movie does not have such a clear way of doing it. An example of this abstract idea might be one’s inner voice; in books, inner voices are part of the text, but in movies, they are usually not, so the viewer can see only the facial expressions and has to imagine what is going through the character’s head.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Leitch, “Exceptional Fidelity,” 129.

<sup>35</sup> Bao Bo, “The Differences Between Novels and Films – Enhance Literature Teaching by Using Films,” *US-China Education Review* 5, no. 7 (July 2008): 58-9, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED502579.pdf>.

## 2.2 Narration

Narrative films can be seen as stories without somebody being there to tell the story. This is one of the most typical and iconic features of films – films show the viewer the story through visuals, while the author of the book is telling the reader the story. Novels can be narrated in two different ways, either by one of the characters in the story or by an all-knowing narrator outside of the story. Films usually use the all-knowing narration perspective, and the viewer, therefore, sees and hears precisely what the director wants them to. The filmmaker does so by using visual images that directly display what is happening, which is a case that novels cannot achieve. Other than using pictures, however, those still do not show as much as a moving picture. Novels are told to have three tenses, while films only have one. The viewer of a film is much more likely to believe a situation they can see on the screen rather than what they read in a book.<sup>36</sup>

Returning to Cattrysse's adaptation policy, the theorist mentions that adaptations prefer a "straight narrative line," leaving flashbacks, multi-segment narratives, or episodic structures out. This is done to simplify the narrative. On the contrary, some adaptations do the exact opposite, adding some structures or making other modifications. Adding the view of multiple possibilities or substitutions may complicate the adaptation, for example, adding scenes from the point of view of a criminal in detective stories when these scenes do not exist in the source text. These scenes might then substitute other ones, for example, in which the police force is helping the detective to solve the crime. However, because the film wants the detective to be the hero and figure out the crime himself, the filmmaker may replace these police force scenes with ones from the point of view of the criminal, thus emphasizing the conflict between the protagonist and antagonist.<sup>37</sup>

## 2.3 Direct Speech in Novels vs. Screenplays

American writer and screenwriter James Bonnet explains the differences between a novelist and what he calls a "filmwright" and what these positions entail. The main difference between the two is that the novelist works alone, and the filmwright needs a team behind him. The novelist is the creative mind behind the whole story, including the characters from inside and out, the plot, the events, the costumes, etc., but the filmwright cannot do everything alone and needs people who specialize in certain aspects, for example, people

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<sup>36</sup> Bo, "The Difference Between Novels and Films," 58-59.

<sup>37</sup> Cattrysse, "Film (Adaptation) as Translation," 57.

who will build the set, sew the costumes, work with the cameras, he needs actors, directors, etc. A screenplay is one of the main elements of a filmmaking project, and it contains the dialogue, separate descriptions of actions in different scenes and shots, descriptions of emotions that the character feels, the location, the outer image of the character, the angle of the camera, etc., whereas a novel contains everything the novelist wants it to contain. The one thing that the screenplay and the novel share is the story structure, and Bonnet says that “the screenplay can be an excellent first draft for a novel” because it does not take as long as writing a novel, and it could help the writer describe the visual side better.<sup>38</sup>

Script consultant and actress Sara Anne Fox explains that in a novel, there is more space for dialogue, and it is theoretically imaginable for artistic reasons if one conversation takes twenty pages. With a screenplay and the resulting film, however, space is more limited, and the dialogue has to be economical and brief. Therefore, conversations in films can sometimes feel unnatural, even more so if the creative process of editing footage and rearranging sound and visual elements (or cutting elements out altogether, sometimes right in the middle of a conversation) is considered. Fox describes how “in a script, a minute of screen time is an eternity” and that the economical use of screen time is a craft that needs to be mastered. The dialogue mimics human conversation, but ultimately, it is not how people regularly talk. The end goal is generally for the dialogue to move the story forward, although other aesthetic factors such as humor or irony can be entertaining themselves, such as Quentin Tarantino’s use of clever dialogue and pop culture elements.<sup>39</sup>

## 2.4 Omission

Patrick Cattrysse explains that certain elements which are repeated many times in the source text are generally omitted in the film. These elements include actions or characters that have the same function; Cattrysse used an example from detective stories in which the actions and findings of the police tend to be deleted so that the story is really about the detective work without any further help. Characters that do not add to the story or do not influence the development of it are often omitted as well.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> James Bonnet, “The Novel vs. The Screenplay: A Practical Guide for Talented Writers,” Storymaking.com, accessed April 12, 2024, <https://storymaking.com/novel-versus-screenplay/>.

<sup>39</sup> Sara Anne Fox, “Writing Dialogue for a Novel vs a Screenplay,” Author Learning Center, accessed April 12, 2024, <https://www.authorlearningcenter.com/writing/fiction/w/character-development/7357/writing-dialogue-for-a-novel-vs-a-screenplay>.

<sup>40</sup> Cattrysse, “Film (Adaptation) as Translation,” 57.

In her 2017 article, *Why Are Film Adaptations Never Really Like the Books?* Audrey Soto, a producer and editor-in-chief of the *Spotlight* casting website, comments that if certain novels were to be adapted with precision, they would have to last much longer, but since the duration of films is limited, some aspects need to be omitted. For example, the *Harry Potter* films would be around 5 hours long each.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Audrey Soto, “Why Are Film Adaptations Never Really Like the Books?” *Spotlight*, last modified March 2, 2017, <https://spotlightonline.co/2017/03/02/why-are-movie-adaptations-different-from-the-books/>.

## **II. ANALYSIS OF THE FILM ADAPTATION *THE HUNGER GAMES* (2012)**

### 3 THE AUTHOR

The author of the *Hunger Games* trilogy is American writer Suzanne Collins. Born in 1962 in Connecticut, USA, Collins started writing professionally after she graduated from New York University with an M.F.A. in dramatic writing.<sup>42</sup> Collins was writing for children's television when she was noticed by James Proimos, who gave her the opportunity to become the head writer for the children's program *Generation O!* Later, Proimos begged Collins to start writing her own books, as he believed she was a good writer. Thanks to Proimos, Collins wrote the book *Gregor the Overlander* (2003), which soon became a *New York Times* best seller. However, the trilogy that brought Collins the most significant success and recognition was *The Hunger Games*, which will be described in more detail in the next section. After the first book's success, Collins wrote two sequels, *Catching Fire* (2009) and *Mockingjay* (2010).<sup>43</sup> In 2020, she released a prequel called *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes*.<sup>44</sup> Some of her other works include the children's books *When Charlie McButton Lost Power* (2007) and *The Year of the Jungle* (2013).<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> John M. Cunningham, "Suzanne Collins," Britannica, last modified March 1, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Suzanne-Collins>.

<sup>43</sup> Suzanne Collins, "Biography," accessed April 12, 2024, <https://www.suzannecollinsbooks.com/bio.htm>.

<sup>44</sup> Cunningham, "Suzanne Collins."

<sup>45</sup> Collins, "Biography."

#### 4 *THE HUNGER GAMES*

The first novel was released in 2008, and its sequels in 2009 and 2010. Collins said that she thought of the series while watching TV, switching between a reality show and news about the Iraq war.<sup>46</sup> This inspiration can be seen in the story when the characters are inserted into a battlefield and have to kill each other in a reality show for the people of Panem. The film adaptation of the first novel was released in 2012, thanks to the hard work of its director, Gary Ross, and Collins herself.<sup>47</sup> The production budget for this movie was \$80,000,000. During the opening weekend, the movie earned over \$152 million.<sup>48</sup> Worldwide, the movie made \$1.1 billion in its initial release.<sup>49</sup> By 2022, the book had sold over 100 million copies.<sup>50</sup> The book was named a *New York Times* bestseller and stayed on the list for over 100 weeks.<sup>51</sup> Both the book and the movie won many rewards; for example, the book won the Booklist Editor's Choice List, A *New York Times* Notable Book, and A Publisher's Weekly Best Book of the Year.<sup>52</sup> The movie won the BAFTA Children's Award for Best Feature Film, the Blimp Award for Favorite Movie, and the People's Choice Award for Favorite Movie and Favorite Action Movie.<sup>53</sup>

*The Hunger Games* is often recognized as dystopian fiction. Rena Nyman, a highly cited scholar for her 2015 essay *The Hunger Games as Dystopian Fiction*, defines dystopia as “an imagined world in which everything is bad.” Common themes of dystopia “include government surveillance, poor living standards, totalitarian regimes, brainwashing, concealing of information, class dichotomies [...], police brutality, and status crimes.” The well-known dystopia *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) involves government surveillance, propaganda, and seeing individual thinking as criminal. *Divergent* (2011) is another dystopia in which the government categorizes the citizens into fractions with the belief that the society will run smoothly, and if there is a complication to their perfect vision, it is very quickly

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<sup>46</sup> “Suzanne Collins Talks About ‘The Hunger Games,’ the Books and the Movies,” *The New York Times*, accessed April 12, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/18/books/suzanne-collins-talks-about-the-hunger-games-the-books-and-the-movies.html>.

<sup>47</sup> “Suzanne Collins: Biography,” *IMDb*, accessed April 12, 2024, <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm1056741/bio/>.

<sup>48</sup> “Box Office History for Hunger Games Movies,” *The Numbers*, accessed April 12, 2024, <https://www.the-numbers.com/movies/franchise/Hunger-Games#tab=summary>.

<sup>49</sup> Danny McLoughlin, “The Hunger Games (Novel Series) Statistics,” *WordsRated*, accessed April 12, 2024, <https://wordsrated.com/the-hunger-games-statistics/>.

<sup>50</sup> McLoughlin, “The Hunger Games (Novel Series) Statistics.”

<sup>51</sup> McLoughlin, “The Hunger Games (Novel Series) Statistics.”

<sup>52</sup> McLoughlin, “The Hunger Games (Novel Series) Statistics.”

<sup>53</sup> “The Hunger Games: Awards,” *IMDb*, accessed April 12, 2024, <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1392170/awards/>.



dealt with. This separation of the social classes is featured in *The Hunger Games* as well, between the Capitol and the districts.<sup>54</sup>

Other than dystopian, *The Hunger Games* has been classified as a young adult literature and a feminist novel. This analysis focuses on the first adaptation directed by Gary Ross released in 2012. The analysis is structured based on Leitch's tactics mentioned in section 2.

#### 4.1 The Plot

The story is set in the state of Panem, which is divided into twelve districts and is ruled by the Capitol. Each year, two tributes from each district, one boy and one girl, are chosen to play a part in the Hunger Games, a deadly game made up for the Capitol's entertainment and as a threat to the districts. The tributes have to fight to the death until there is only one remaining, who is then crowned the victor. The story revolves around the character Katniss Everdeen; on the day of the reaping, her sister Prim gets chosen as the tribute, but Katniss volunteers to protect her. Together with Peeta Mellark, he and Katniss make their way to the Capitol.

In the Capitol, the tributes are being trained for the Games and experience a luxurious life for the first time. Katniss becomes "The Girl on Fire" thanks to her stylist Cinna, and Katniss and Peeta are forced to create this illusion of a forming couple in love. In the Games, Katniss forms an alliance with Rue, a little girl who reminds Katniss of her sister, but Rue, unfortunately, suffers a tragic death. Katniss then faces many dangers and survives the challenges set up for her by the Gamemakers.

One of the most important turning points of the story is when Caesar Flickerman announces that there can be two victors of the Games. At that moment, Katniss starts searching for Peeta so that they can both win and return home. When Katniss finds Peeta, they manage to create a deep connection, or at least to the public, and they manage to be the last two standing alive. To their surprise, the Gamemakers abruptly changed the rules again, and now there can again be only one victor. Katniss and Peeta have a short discussion before coming up with a plan to make the Gamemakers change the rule back. Katniss hands Peeta deadly berries, which they have found earlier, and they plan to eat them at the same time so that the Capitol does not have a victor at all. As they are approaching their mouth with the handful of berries, the Gamemakers make them stop and announce them both victors.

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<sup>54</sup> Rena Nyman, "The Hunger Games as Dystopian Fiction," *NU Writing Journal*, no. 6 (April 2015): 1, <https://openjournals.neu.edu/nuwriting/home/article/view/127>.

Unfortunately, their lives are still in the hands of the Capitol, even after the end of the Games, since they will now have to be mentors for other tributes from their district in the upcoming years. The story ends with Katniss and Peeta being seen as heroes by the public, but in their hearts, they feel an unease with the Capitol and uncertainty about the upcoming days.

## 5 ANALYSIS OF *THE HUNGER GAMES*

*The Hunger Games* novel is narrated through Katniss, the main protagonist, meaning the reader knows only what Katniss does. On the other hand, in the movie, some of Katniss' thoughts are narrated through the Gamemakers and Interviewers by showing the viewer a scene in which the Gamemakers are adjusting the Games or making decisions on how to continue, giving the audience a chance to see everything since the Districts and Tributes are constantly being watched. And through the Interviews led by Caesar Flickerman, the viewer can understand certain concepts, for example, what the Hunger Games contain for the tributes or what the tracker jackers are. Katniss and her thoughts are narrated by an omniscient narrator in the film, for example, by showing certain flashbacks. However, the film audience does not experience the same train of thought that is inside Katniss's head as do the novel's readers since the book is full of Katniss's inner talk, which communicates her thoughts and commentary. More on narration is described in section 5.2.1.

In her chapter *Media and Hyperreality in the Film Adaptations of Suzanne Collins's Hunger Games Trilogy* from the 2015 book *The Fantastic Made Visible: Essays on the Adaptation of Science Fiction and Fantasy from Page to Screen*, Mollie Gagnon states that according to her review, "it may be possible that the films present equal, if not better, representation of the story."<sup>55</sup> This opinion does not really correspond with the attitude mentioned earlier in the thesis that the literary source is always superior to the adaptation.

The analysis focuses only on certain criteria divided into corresponding sections. The analysis does not comment on every single detail but rather on the most important ones.

### 5.1 Description vs. Visual Differences

One of the first visual differences in the film is when Katniss is getting ready to go hunting in the forest. In the book, she "tuck[s] [her] long dark braid up into a cap"<sup>56</sup> but in the film, she does not wear a hat at all. Instead, she lets the braid show since it is one of her significant visually identifying characteristics throughout the story. The braid is actually the only hairstyle Katniss wears because she chooses to. The only exceptions are when Cinna styles her for interviews and such and when her mother does her hair before the reaping.

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<sup>55</sup> Matthew Wilhelm Kapell and Ace G. Pilkington, *The Fantastic Made Visible: Essays on the Adaptation of Science Fiction and Fantasy from Page to Screen* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2015), 133.

<sup>56</sup> Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games* (New York: Scholastic Press, 2008), 4.

The next visual difference comes with the reaping, specifically with Effie Trinket. Effie is supposed to wear a spring green suit,<sup>57</sup> but the movie shows a full pink outfit.<sup>58</sup> The rest of the book's description fits the visual with Effie's white skin and pinkish hair. This change might have been caused by the environment District 12 portrays in the film. The district is muted in color, with many gray tones, and the people are wearing either white, blue, or gray clothing.

In her 2017 article *How Color Helps a Movie Tell Its Story*, writer Kate Torgovnick May explains that in some scenes, for example, in the scene from *The Incredibles*, directed by Brad Bird in 2004, "where Mr. Incredible works at his desk at Insuracare – the colors are dulled and gray to communicate a sense of depression."<sup>59</sup> This might also correspond with the color choices for *The Hunger Games* movie. The grey tones might reflect the poverty and the district's main course of action – coal mining. The clothes are worn in and visibly used even though the people try to dress up for the reapings. The film overall has a grainy filter over it in these scenes, and it washes out the color of everything visible. As for Effie's outfit, if the movie followed the book, Effie would stand out too much in her almost neon green suit. The film shot would look imbalanced, and Effie would be out of place for the district. Instead, the filmmakers decided to dress Effie in a pink dress. This dress is a darker shade of pink with deep undertones, almost a fuchsia shade of pink, and these tones go well with the grainy texture of the shot and the greyish filter. The color still enables Effie to stand out and show that she belongs to the Capitol people who can afford such clothing, but it does not make her look out of place in the scene.

The Cornucopia is described as "a giant golden horn shaped like a cone with a curved tail."<sup>60</sup> The golden color is changed in the film to a darker grey, almost black, color. Other than the color, the description matches the visual with more precious supplies closer to the opening of the horn and scattered less-valuable supplies further from the Cornucopia but closer to the tributes. This change of color might have been for similar reasons as the change of Effie's dress; the pure shiny gold might seem too shiny for the arena and, color-wise, not fit the aesthetic of a muted tone of the visual shot. On the other hand, the filmmakers might have chosen to switch the colors because gold is usually a symbol of wealth, but the Games

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<sup>57</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 18.

<sup>58</sup> *The Hunger Games*, directed by Gary Ross (Lions Gate Films, 2012), 00:12:21 to 00:12:45, <https://www.netflix.com/watch/70206672>.

<sup>59</sup> Kate Torgovnick May, "How Color Helps a Movie Tell Its Story," TED, accessed 22 April 2024, <https://ideas.ted.com/how-color-helps-a-movie-tell-its-story/>.

<sup>60</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 148.

are filled with brutality, which might be represented in the dark color, and it also adds to the dystopian industrial look.

The last visual difference is seen in the mutations that attack Katniss and Peeta at the near end of the Games. In the book, Katniss describes them as resembling the fallen tributes; she continues describing them as having human eyes, different-colored fur ranging from brown to blond, and collars with numbers on them. Katniss describes a specific mutant that is supposed to resemble Glimmer, the tribute from District 1, who has green eyes and blonde hair.<sup>61</sup> In the movie, all the mutants look the same; they have a dog/wolf look to them, and their fur is greyish brown. In the book, Katniss says, “It’s them. It’s all of them. The others. Rue and Foxface and ... all of the other tributes,”<sup>62</sup> showing the reader that she can see them clearly because the time in the book is early evening. In the film, the mutants attacked Katniss and Peeta at night,<sup>63</sup> so Katniss was unable to see all the details, and maybe because of that, the filmmakers decided not to follow the book in this case. One more case could be that the film was already two hours long at this point, and the filmmakers did not have enough time to incorporate this extra deviation from the main plot, which, in this case, was running toward the Cornucopia to save themselves. The filmmakers seem to have followed the “straight narrative line,” which, according to Cattrysse, is preferred.<sup>64</sup>

In conclusion, the visual details in the movie are quite spot-on, apart from these few minor details. Katniss’s descriptions in the book are thorough because the reader knows all of her thoughts since the book is narrated through her. The reader can easily imagine the space and characters; for example, when Katniss describes her sister Prim on her way to the stage on the day of the reaping: “And then I see her, the blood drained from her face, hands clenched in fists at her sides, walking stiff, small steps up toward the stage, passing me, and I see the back of her blouse has become untucked and hangs out over her skirt. It’s this detail, the untucked blouse forming a ducktail, that brings me back to myself.”<sup>65</sup> These images in the novel combine Katniss's inner monologue with cinematic imagery, i.e., each image could be a shot in a screenplay. As soon as Prim’s name is called in the movie, the viewer can see a close-up of Prim, which lasts for about five seconds and is followed by a short shot of Katniss in utter disbelief that her sister has been chosen. Then the camera returns to Prim with another close-up on her lasting about twenty seconds as she is walking. The shot ends

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<sup>61</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 332–33.

<sup>62</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 334.

<sup>63</sup> *The Hunger Games*, 02:02:40 to 02:06:30.

<sup>64</sup> Cattrysse, “Film (Adaptation) as Translation,” 57.

<sup>65</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 21–22.

with Prim tucking her “duck tail” in. In the movie, Prim does not pass Katniss because she is standing in line in front of her. Instead, the viewer can see a shot of Prim and Katniss’s mother. Then the camera returns to Prim as she walks towards the stage, and seconds later, Katniss begins her “I volunteer” speech.<sup>66</sup>

## 5.2 Selection of Certain Criteria and Omitting Others

As mentioned at the beginning of Chapter 2.2 of this thesis, the narration shifts from a first-person narrative in the book to an omniscient narration in the film. This causes many omissions of Katniss’s thoughts; as Professor Bo explained in his article, abstract ideas, just like an inner voice, are difficult to capture in the film if the medium is not using voice-overs, as is the case with *The Hunger Games* film. Because of that, additions of scenes are necessary to explain certain events, usually via an interview with Caesar Flickerman or a look behind the scenes into the Gamemaker’s quarters. In his 2013 article *Meta-Cinema and Meta-Marketing: Gary Ross’s The Hunger Games, an Allegory of Its Own Making*, Professor of English and Theatre James Keller argues that the introductory interview with Caesar Flickerman and Seneca Crane, the head Gamemaker, regarding the reaping “suggests a heavily meta-cinematic film adaptation that allegorizes the construction and manipulation of the narrative within the narrative itself.” This means that Seneca, the Gamemaker, could be considered the director of his own movie, just as the real filmmaker of *The Hunger Games* movie.<sup>67</sup>

Gagnon writes in her article that “it is not until the viewer learns from Haymitch how the protagonist’s true feelings might conflict with the outward behavior.”<sup>68</sup> This might refer to the lack of Katniss’s thoughts and commentary in the movie compared to the overwhelming amount of them in the book. For example, in the movie, the viewer sees the scene in which Haymitch talks to Katniss before her and Peeta’s interview after the Games, Haymitch tells Katniss: “When they ask, you say you couldn’t help yourself. You were so in love with this boy that the thought of not being with him was unthinkable. You’d rather die than not be with him.”<sup>69</sup> The facial expressions of Katniss in this scene, her mouth ever so slightly open and her eyes almost bulging, show that Katniss is nervous, and she does not

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<sup>66</sup> *The Hunger Games*, 00:14:45 to 00:15:35.

<sup>67</sup> James Keller, “Meta-Cinema and Meta-Marketing: Gary Ross’s *The Hunger Games*, an Allegory of Its Own Making,” *Studies in Popular Culture* 35, no. 2 (Spring 2013): 23, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23416334?read-now=1&seq=1>.

<sup>68</sup> Kapell and Pilkington, *The Fantastic Made Visible*, 136.

<sup>69</sup> *The Hunger Games*, 02:10:40 to 02:10:55.

answer Haymitch, but in the interview, her smile, sparkles in her eyes from tears and her blushing cheeks support her lie about how she feels about Peeta, and the audience is likely to trust her. In the book, Katniss explains her feelings in her inner talk, for example: “My whole body’s shaking like a leaf. Hopefully, it will be put down to excitement.”<sup>70</sup>

### 5.2.1 Narrative Differences

This chapter describes the differences in action in the book and the movie.

In the book, the concept of tesserae is introduced when Katniss’s mind explains to the reader what it is by saying: “You can opt to add your name more times in exchange for tesserae. Each tessera is worth a meager year’s supply of grain and oil for one person. You may do this for each of your family members as well.”<sup>71</sup> The concept is not fully explained in the movie; instead, Gale and Katniss talk about how many times their names are in the reaping while they are talking on the hill. Katniss asks: “How many times is your name in today?” and Gale answers: “Forty-two. Guess the odds aren’t exactly in my favor,”<sup>72</sup> mocking Effie’s line from the reaping, “Happy Hunger Games, and may the odds be ever in your favor.”<sup>73</sup> As Professor Bo explains in his article, this conversation is later supported by the visual “icon” of the glass bowls that hold the slips of paper with the names of potential tributes. This icon gives the viewer a physical explanation as these sorts of bowls are generally used in movies and in real life for randomized picks. The action of Effie actually picking a random slip of paper gives it the final point needed for the viewer to understand what it means to add your name in exchange for tesserae. This simply means that if a family in a district is struggling for food, a person who can be enrolled in the Games has the chance to get this food from the government, but with this, the person increases the risk of being picked out at the reaping because their name is entered more times. In the reaping, there is one slip of paper for each year the kids can participate, from age twelve to eighteen, and for each ration of the food, i.e., the tesserae.

The next narrative difference concerns the reaping. In the book, the mayor reads the story about Panem and why the Games came into place. “He tells of the history of Panem, the country that rose up out of the ashes of a place that was once called North America. [...] as our yearly reminder that the Dark Days must never be repeated, it gave us the Hunger

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<sup>70</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 357.

<sup>71</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 13.

<sup>72</sup> *The Hunger Games*, 00:07:40 to 00:07:48.

<sup>73</sup> *The Hunger Games*, 00:12:25 to 00:12:32.

Games.”<sup>74</sup> The mayor then presents the District 12 winners from earlier Games and introduces Effie Trinket to take over.<sup>75</sup> The movie changed this scene; it excluded the mayor, who can only be seen in the background, and Effie is the one managing the reaping. The story of Panem and the Games is not read but shown as a film on a big screen. This might be the same as Professor Harold’s example from the novel and its adaptation, *Atonement*, in which he mentions the possible shift in the way the main character deals with her problems by writing in the book and filming in the movie. The mode of the story of Panem moves from written and read out loud for the crowd in the book to a cinematic piece of work in the film, which, according to Harold, is the better option for the adaptation to be more faithful to the novel. The fact that this story, or rather speech, is the same every year is true in both the movie and the book; the viewer can tell that the people of the district know the story by seeing Gale mouthing the words “War, terrible war...”<sup>76</sup> to Katniss and making fun of it.

One of the characters that the film has changed is Cinna, Katniss’s stylist. In the book, he is portrayed as a more or less regular Capitol person, but Katniss is “taken aback by how normal he looks”<sup>77</sup> because he is not as extravagant as other Capitol people. Cinna has a team behind him consisting of three people in charge of getting Katniss ready before she sees Cinna for the first time. In the book, these helping stylists are much nicer to Katniss; for example, they encourage her by saying, “You’re doing very well,” or “By the time Cinna is done with you, you’re going to be absolutely gorgeous!”<sup>78</sup> Cinna, on the other hand, is more focused on the Games and Katniss’ looks: “So, Katniss, about your costume for the opening ceremonies. My partner, Portia, is the stylist for your fellow tribute, Peeta.”<sup>79</sup> In the movie, the three people helping Cinna are rude to Katniss; they talk behind her back and do not seem friendly to her. In the scene where they are getting her ready, Katniss asks them multiple times, “What’s that?” The stylists arrogantly answer her, “We were just saying we might need to hose you down again before we take you to Cinna.”<sup>80</sup> But Cinna is portrayed as Katniss’ friend and somebody she looks forward to seeing, which might be because of his first words: “That was one of the bravest things I’ve ever seen,” or “I’m sorry that this happened to you.”<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 18.

<sup>75</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 18–19.

<sup>76</sup> *The Hunger Games*, 00:12:44 to 00:12:52.

<sup>77</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 63.

<sup>78</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 62.

<sup>79</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 66.

<sup>80</sup> *The Hunger Games*, 00:29:30 to 00:29:40.

<sup>81</sup> *The Hunger Games*, 00:29:45 to 00:29:55.



The dialogue between Katniss and the stylists who are getting her ready is much longer in the book. Therefore, it might seem friendlier because, in the movie, Katniss gets only one single answer from the stylists. This might have been caused by the issue explained by Sara Anne Fox; simply, there is more space for dialogue in the book. Or it could be because the conversation between the stylists and Katniss is a deviation from the main plotline, or it could even be to highlight Cinna's difference from the other Capitol people. Perhaps in the film, it was more direct to focus on the fact that Katniss has one ally in a more important character than it was to diffuse the idea that some people supported her by spreading this idea among several nameless, unimportant characters.

Cinna also shows his kindness and empathy in the movie scene right before the Games begin. In this scene, Cinna waits for Katniss in the catacombs below the arena. She has her clothes ready, and the Mockingjay pin is attached to Katniss's jacket. Cinna supports Katniss by saying: "I am not allowed to bet. But if I could, I'd bet on you."<sup>82</sup> In the book, Cinna also says he would bet on Katniss if he could, but the scene is much longer; Katniss and Cinna have a meal together before Katniss enters the arena; he talks her through her outfit: "The material in the jacket's designed to reflect body heat. Expect some cool nights,"<sup>83</sup> and he surprises her with the pin, which Katniss has forgotten about, as she comments on her thought process: "I think I'm finished when Cinna pulls the gold Mockingjay pin from his pocket. I had completely forgotten about it."<sup>84</sup>

During the Games, Katniss encounters many challenges, including a fire attack prepared by the Gamemakers to draw her closer to the other tributes. This attack involved open fire in the forest and flying fireballs targeted at Katniss. This scene is both in the book and the film, but Katniss suffers a bad burn in two different places in each medium. In the book, Katniss gets hit by one of the fireballs flying into her right calf.<sup>85</sup> In the movie, the burn is placed on her right thigh.<sup>86</sup> This might seem like a small difference, but it would be much less visible for the viewer of the film to see her burn on the calf if the adaptation followed the book exactly. The visual of the burn on the thigh is easier for the viewer to notice since Katniss is filmed from the front in this scene. The filmmakers made use of *mise-en-scène* in this case and might have decided to change the placement of the burn so that it is more visible.

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<sup>82</sup> *The Hunger Games*, 01:05:55 to 01:06:00.

<sup>83</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 145.

<sup>84</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 145.

<sup>85</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 176.

<sup>86</sup> *The Hunger Games*, 01:17:50 to 01:18:10.

When Katniss collapses after the tracker jackers sting her a couple of times as she is cutting off their nest so that it falls onto Cato's pack, the action is quite different in each medium. In the book, Katniss wakes up in a ditch and has to pick herself up alone. She gets water, hunts a rabbit, treats her burns, and then reencounters Rue, a girl tribute from District 11. They then form an alliance, and Rue deals with Katniss's stings.<sup>87</sup> In the movie, Rue takes care of Katniss for the days she is unconscious and treats her stings before she wakes up.<sup>88</sup> This difference might have been decided on to save time because Rue was supposed to heal Katniss's stings anyway, and adding these extra scenes involving hunting and getting water would extend the movie's length. The focus in the film is on Katniss, not Rue. Nevertheless, scenes in which Katniss hunts or walks through the forest looking for water or other food are quite common in the book, but in the movie, these scenes would be way too repetitive.

Katniss and Peeta, the boy tribute from Katniss's District 12, have a more romantic relationship in the book than in the movie. In the novel, Peeta and Katniss joke around together, for example, when Katniss tries to heal Peeta's wounds but is disgusted by them: "Can you speed it up a little?" Peeta asks, "No. Shut up and eat your pears." says Katniss, "What next, Dr. Everdeen?" jokes Peeta.<sup>89</sup> Their relationship is also more affectionate when it comes to kissing; for example, "He's dozed off again, but I kiss him awake, which seems to startle him. Then he smiles as if he'd be happy to lie there gazing at me forever."<sup>90</sup> Compared to the movie, Katniss and Peeta still show each other affection but more in a caring way rather than a romantic one, although they kiss from time to time because, after all, they are supposed to since Haymitch almost ordered them to.

As Leitch explained in his example with *The Lord of the Rings*, some scenes are moved to different times or storylines due to lack of drama. This also happens in the film adaptation of *The Hunger Games*; for example, many scenes that happen at night in the book happen during the day in the movie, or the order in which scenes follow each other is different. One of these examples might be when Katniss rescues Rue from the net trap. Katniss does not get the chance to cut Rue out before another tribute kills her in the novel,<sup>91</sup> but in the movie, Rue gets killed after Katniss cuts her out of the net to add to the drama of the spear poking

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<sup>87</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 195–207.

<sup>88</sup> *The Hunger Games*, 01:30:05 to 01:33:30.

<sup>89</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 258.

<sup>90</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 261.

<sup>91</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 232–33.

out of her stomach.<sup>92</sup> Another example might be the timing of the mutant attack mentioned in section 5.1.

### 5.2.2 Omitted Elements

As mentioned in section 2.4, Cattrysse explained that the elements that are repeated in the book are omitted, or elements that do not help or influence the storyline are omitted as well.

One of the first omitted elements is a character called Madge, who is the mayor's daughter. In the novel, Madge is the one who gifts Katniss the iconic Mockingjay pin. According to Chrys Egan, Associate Dean of the Fulton School of Liberal Arts and Professor of Communications, without Madge, "there is no Mockingjay pin and no symbol of the revolution."<sup>93</sup> In the movie, Katniss is given the pin at the Hob, District 12's market, by an older lady whom she makes a deal with. Katniss then gifts the pin to Prim to protect her from the reaping, but after Prim comes to say goodbye to her, she gives Katniss the pin back to protect her instead. This omission of Madge might have been made by the filmmakers because it is a character with only one purpose, and that is to give Katniss the pin, and the movie is not as long to be able to implement her character. The fact that the pin is connected to Prim in the film deepens Katniss and Prim's loving relationship as sisters.

One of the bigger omissions is Haymitch's drunk characteristic. In the movie, he does enjoy a drink, but he isn't as drunk as the book portrays him to be. In the novel, at the reaping, Haymitch "appears hollering something unintelligible, staggers onto the stages, and falls into the third chair. He's drunk. Very."<sup>94</sup> He is also drunk in the scene on the train: "Haymitch staggers into the compartment. 'I miss supper?' he says in a slurred voice. Then he vomits all over the expensive carpet and falls in the mess."<sup>95</sup> Overall, in the book, Haymitch appears more displeasing to be around. In the movie, he still drinks but there are no visuals of vomiting or passing out. In the book, since Haymitch is drunk all the time, he appears to be aggressive as well, whereas in the film, he is quite relaxed and would not hurt the tributes.

The book offers an extensive monologue of Katniss's thoughts about how she met Peeta. Katniss describes it in detail and comes back to it multiple times throughout the novel. In the movie, there is no voice-over of Katniss's thoughts, so the scene is filmed as a flashback,

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<sup>92</sup> *The Hunger Games*, 01:39:00 to 01:39:35.

<sup>93</sup> Chrys Egan, "Hungry for Change: *Analysis and Application of The Hunger Games*," in *Heroes, Heroines, and Everything in Between: Challenging Gender and Sexuality Stereotypes in Children's Entertainment Media*, ed. Carrielynn D. Reinhard and Christopher J. Olson (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2017), 55.

<sup>94</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 19.

<sup>95</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 47.

and each time the flashback appears again, it shows either a continuation of it or a longer version. This translation of thoughts might be connected again to Harold's *Atonement* example.

During the goodbye sessions, before Katniss leaves on the train, she has a chance to see her loved ones for a limited amount of time. In the movie, she is visited by her sister Prim and her mother, and later by Gale, her friend.<sup>96</sup> In the novel, she has two more visitors: Madge, who gives her the pin, and Peeta's father, who she is surprised to see.<sup>97</sup>

Another omitted character is an Avox, the name for Capitol's prisoners who are forced to serve the Capitol people, and during the Hunger Games they take care of the tributes as well. Katniss realizes she recognizes her: "I know you!" says Katniss, "I can't place a name or time to the girl's face. But I'm certain of it."<sup>98</sup> This omission was probably caused by the lack of drama this character brings to the story. Avox's story, in general, is on a secondary plotline and does not help the main story to develop further.

During the presentation of skills for the potential sponsors, Katniss misses her first target and goes off to the side to practice on a bull's eye, which is not seen in the movie. After that, she pierces the dummy right in the middle of its chest, but not many sponsors pay attention to her anymore. So, she goes rogue and shoots everywhere, the string of the sandbag or the light fixtures, before she shoots the apple. Her leaving the training center is not visible in the movie, but in the book, she is trying to be brave and not burst into tears in front of them. She regrets what she has done, and Effie and Haymitch are not happy about it either.<sup>99</sup> The most important part of Katniss's presentation was the shot at the apple, so the shooting at a bull's eye or anywhere else is unimportant. That might be the reason why the filmmakers decided not to use this whole scene and instead stick to the most important aspect, which is actually moving the story forward.

After the scores, Katniss is lying in bed, thinking of home. She is thinking of Gale and remembers how she met him. In the morning, the District 12 team has breakfast. Haymitch informs Katniss that Peeta wants to be trained individually, which is known in the movie, but what isn't is Katniss's thoughts again. In the novel, she feels "[b]etrayal. That's the first thing I feel, which is ludicrous. For there to be betrayal, there would have to have been trust

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<sup>96</sup> *The Hunger Games*, 00:18:05 to 00:20:30.

<sup>97</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 37–38.

<sup>98</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 77.

<sup>99</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 101–7.

first. Between Peeta and me. And trust has not been part of the agreement.”<sup>100</sup> This is because the narration shifts from a first-person narrator to an omniscient one.

In the novel, on the hovercraft flight over to the arena, the tributes have breakfast together. And Katniss is explaining in her mind what the arena is like: “[t]he arenas are historic sites, preserved after the Games. Popular destinations for Capitol residents to visit, to vacation.”<sup>101</sup> The only thing new is the chambers, which are made for each tribute to get ready. In the movie, the viewer only gets a visual representation of the catacombs and the arena, which might be caused by the shift in media and the film not involving a voice-over of Katniss’s thoughts.

Katniss waits around a lot in the book, for example, after she explodes the Cato pack’s supplies, when she is waiting for Cato to come to her, or when she spends the night in a tree rather than start looking for Peeta when she learns from the announcement that there are two winners allowed. These scenes from the novel are omitted because they are repetitive, and for the viewer, the film might start to be boring.

Another omitted segment of the book is Katniss’s sickness, which she undergoes in the cave after getting medicine for Peeta. Peeta has to take care of her for a couple of days. “Possibly I have the flu, and this is why I’m allowed to stay in bed, even though I can tell I’ve been asleep for a long time.”<sup>102</sup> Peeta’s sickness is omitted as well because he has been sick in the cave a couple of times, and to avoid repetition in the film, the filmmakers possibly chose only some of the sickness scenes and left out the ones that would take a long time to film.

The whole of Chapter 22 and most of Chapter 23 of the novel are missing in the movie. The majority of the text that these chapters consist of is a dialogue between Katniss and Peeta, discussing the state of the Games, eating the rest of their food, and Peeta’s concerns for Katniss’s injury.<sup>103</sup> The entire Chapter 24 is missing in the movie as well. This chapter contains Katniss and Peeta hunting for more food, going back to the cave, and having a conversation about the upcoming days regarding how the Games will end. Katniss and Peeta then get up to hunt more, and when the night falls, they can hear unsettling sounds. Cato appears out of nowhere in the forest and is running from something. Katniss and Peeta follow him because they realize the mutants are hunting them.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 114.

<sup>101</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 144.

<sup>102</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 290.

<sup>103</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 290–314.

<sup>104</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 320–30.

In the movie, after the announcement that Katniss and Peeta are winners, the viewer of the film can see a hovercraft appear, and in the next scene, Katniss is talking to Haymitch on a balcony. But there is yet another big omission from the novel. Peeta is badly injured in the book, to the point where Katniss has to hold him to get him up into the hovercraft, and once they get on it, doctors immediately take Peeta away and start treating him. The hovercraft lands on the roof of the Training Center, and the Capitol people inject Katniss with some sort of sleeping medicine so that they can wash all the dirt off of her body. Katniss wakes up alone in a room. She eats some broth that an Avox brought to her, and then she gets dressed and leaves the room to look for Peeta. Instead of him, she finds Haymitch, Cinna, and Effie. They assure her that Peeta is doing well and that the Capitol wants her and Peeta to meet for the first time at the live reunion. Cinna gets Katniss ready for the interview, and Haymitch meets her before the start.<sup>105</sup> This omission was most likely necessary because the movie, at the point when Katniss and Peeta are pronounced victors, is already over two hours long. Since the time is limited, the filmmakers had to cut this scene out, along with the detail that Peeta loses his leg and ends up with a prosthetic.

In the movie, the ending goes as follows: during one interview with Katniss and Peeta, Katniss is crowned by President Snow, and after, Katniss and Peeta are on their way home on the train. Katniss tells Peeta that they should try to forget, but Peeta does not want to; they come home and are welcomed by the whole district and reunited with their families. In the novel, the ending is more extensive. During the interview, every member of the District 12 team, including Effie, the stylists, and Haymitch, is introduced. Katniss and Peeta cannot keep their hands from each other; Caesar Flickerman asks them a lot of questions, and after, President Snow joins them on the stage. Instead of giving the crown to Katniss, he splits it in half and gives each half to the two winners. After the interview, Katniss and Peeta join the Capitol people for a meal, and the people take pictures with the winners. The next day, there is another interview. After that, Katniss and Peeta finally get on the train home; during the ride, they share a long conversation about the danger they are in because of their stunt at the end of the Games. The book ends with Katniss holding Peeta's hand and waiting for the crowd of District 12 to welcome them home. This extension of the novel has probably been omitted for the same reason as the case before. That is because the film would most likely be at least three hours long by now, and that was not the goal.

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<sup>105</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 346–59.

### 5.3 Reworking Dialogue

As explained before in section 2.3, there is more space in a novel for dialogue than there is in a movie. A movie needs action, something for the viewer to look at, whereas a novel can go on and on, and the reader can enjoy the dialogue. The aspects of dialogue that are not verbalized in the movie are often clear from the character's expression, mimics, or the environment.

An example from *The Hunger Games* would be the long conversations Katniss and Rue have together before they blow up the supplies guarded by Cato's pack. Katniss and Rue talk about their districts and families in the book, but in the movie, they briefly talk only about what is happening in the Games and what their plans are to move forward in the storyline. For example, in the novel, Rue talks about her district and what happens during their harvest season: "Oh no, we're not allowed to eat the crops." "They whip you and make everyone else watch." "The mayor's very strict about it."<sup>106</sup>

The same goes for long conversations Katniss and Peeta have. Either during the train ride, in their quarters before the Games even begin, or in the cave where they hide from the Careers. Their conversations are quite extensive in the book, deepening their connection as human beings and friends, even possible lovers, but in the movie, these emotions are shown through action, for example, how Katniss reacted with her body language when she found out there can be two winners and started to look for Peeta.

### 5.4 Newly Created Elements

The very first scene of the movie is an interview with Caesar Flickerman as the interviewer and Seneca Crane, the head Gamemaker. They discuss the Games and what they represent for the community of Panem. Katniss's thoughts and memories are used to introduce the novel. The character of Seneca is also not present in the first book; in fact, he appears much later in the trilogy as a memory. These new elements are caused by the switch to a different narration style, which is typical for movies. Since the filmmakers decided not to use voice-overs for Katniss's thoughts and decided on a narrator outside of Katniss, the viewer gets the most important information mostly from the Interviews, views into the "behind the scenes" of the Games in the headquarters, and from the conversations between President Snow and Seneca.

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<sup>106</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 202.

The nightmare scene in the movie is also not in the novel; the book does state that Prim had a nightmare but that she crawled up into her mother's bed and fell asleep again. But in the movie, she is screaming, and Katniss is calming her down. Overall, Prim is portrayed as a much more anxious girl in the movie because of this nightmare or because of her expressions before the reaping. In the book, for example, when Katniss and Prim are saying goodbye before Katniss leaves to the Capitol, Prim even jokes around: "Maybe you can win." "Then we'd be rich as Haymitch."<sup>107</sup> The filmmakers' decision to make Prim seem more anxious might be because her character is otherwise only a sister to Katniss, and they wanted to make her more interesting. Before the young people of District 12 sign in with their blood, there is a scene in the film where Prim freaks out at the sight of that, and Katniss has to calm her down again and encourage her to continue, telling her that it hurts just a little. This scene, along with singing in with blood, is not in the novel.<sup>108</sup>

When Katniss goes hunting in the forest on the morning of the reaping, the movie shows that she is trying to shoot a deer with her bow. This scene is not a part of the novel; in there, she is meeting up with Gale. During their time in the forest, a hovercraft appears in the movie to show that the people from the Capitol are arriving. This scene is also not in the book.<sup>109</sup> This scene might have been added to show that people from different social classes are coming because, based on the visuals of District 12, it is obvious that such a vehicle is not from around there.

Another interview scene comes on with Caesar and Seneca talking about the reaping. Seneca admits that this year's tributes are an interesting mix and points out Katniss as the volunteer. A broadcast is held when the tributes are parading in front of Snow and the Capitol people, and Caesar is commenting on the tributes.<sup>110</sup>

After the evaluation of the tributes and after the scores are announced, there is a scene with President Snow and Seneca. Snow is unhappy with Seneca giving Katniss a score of eleven. He explains why the Games are held and says it is not because of fear, there is an emotion much more powerful, and that is hope. It would be easier to kill the twenty-four tributes on the spot to intimidate the districts, but the hope gives the Capitol power over the people.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 36.

<sup>108</sup> *The Hunger Games*, 00:10:45 to 00:11:30.

<sup>109</sup> *The Hunger Games*, 00:04:15 to 00:06:00.

<sup>110</sup> *The Hunger Games*, 00:28:40 to 00:29:00.

<sup>111</sup> *The Hunger Games*, 00:49:30 to 00:50:35.



During the start of the games, the viewer has a chance to look into the Gamemaker's quarters and see Seneca manage the whole team of technicians.<sup>112</sup> Scenes like this appear multiple times throughout the movie, whenever there is a change of rules or when the Gamemakers are somehow manipulating the tributes to move from one place to another, for example, when starting the fire or planting the mutants. Another scene that the viewers can see is the look at the people from the districts watching the Games. For example, when Prim and her mother were watching Katniss start the Games.

After Katniss grabs the backpack and runs away in the movie, she gets to the forest and runs into Foxface, another tribute from District 5; they both fall on the ground and are looking at each other, unsure what to do. After a few seconds, they both get up and run the other way as if they have made a deal and both thought the same thing.<sup>113</sup> The first night, Katniss found a water source and filled up her water bottle that she got in the backpack, she caught a squirrel and cooked it over a small fire. This new scene might have been created by the filmmakers to make the beginning of the Games more dramatic because otherwise, Katniss would just run away and look for water for a couple of days.

After Rue's death, Katniss decorates her dead body with flowers and holds her three fingers up to show her admiration for Rue. She does this to the camera on purpose so that the people from Rue's district know that Katniss buried Rue's body with respect. A scene that is not in the novel appears after this sign from Katniss. The people from Rue's district are seen fighting the Peacekeepers. After that, another scene comes up in which Katniss has a complete meltdown. In the meantime, Haymitch comes to Seneca and gives him the idea to pursue young love instead of killing Katniss.<sup>114</sup> This scene shows the dystopian side of Panem and how the people of the districts are participating in these Games against their will.

Before the interview scene with the victors, the head Gamemaker Seneca is brought into a room, and the doors lock behind him. Seneca looks around the room and finds a bowl of the deadly berries, signaling that President Snow was quite unhappy with the way Seneca handled the end of the Games and Seneca was forced to commit suicide.<sup>115</sup> And at the very end, the scene with President Snow appears, he is visibly furious and walks away from the Gamemaker's quarters.<sup>116</sup> This might signal to the viewer that another film is coming and that it probably will not be very happy for the victors.

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<sup>112</sup> *The Hunger Games*, 01:07:30 to 01:08:00.

<sup>113</sup> *The Hunger Games*, 01:09:35 to 01:09:50.

<sup>114</sup> *The Hunger Games*, 01:42:50 to 01:46:10.

<sup>115</sup> *The Hunger Games*, 02:09:45 to 02:10:30.

<sup>116</sup> *The Hunger Games*, 02:13:05 to 02:13:25.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis analyzes the differences between the 2008 novel *The Hunger Games* and its 2012 film adaptation of the same name. It also aims to discover the reasons why certain changes took place based on the theory.

The theory touched on the basis of film adaptation theory. Some of the biggest adaptation theorists include Linda Hutcheon, Kamilla Elliott, Patrick Cattrysse, and James Harold. Adaptation, in general, is quite a fluid area of study, and according to Elliott, adaptation itself is always adapting. Adaptation can be understood as translation, as Chapter 1.1 explains. Until the 1990s, one of the biggest issues of adaptation was fidelity, which is now not as prominent as it once used to be. Perhaps adaptation has adapted enough already that fidelity is no longer important, i.e., complete fidelity between modes such as literature and film is simply not possible.

Some of the adaptation methods have been explained, for example, why the visuals and descriptions do not always match. Changes in narration are the most important and probably most frequent since novels tell a story while films show it. Also, the written speech in novels cannot match the screenplay exactly; otherwise, it will not sound natural. And lastly, unfortunately, not every detail makes it into the film.

Based on the analysis and the opinions of other researchers, the film adaptation of *The Hunger Games* is generally considered faithful; for example, in her 2012 article, journalist Kelly Davis describes *The Hunger Games* as “religious in its page-to-screen translation, turning the story into a masterpiece of battles of the body and mind alike.”<sup>117</sup> Some of the biggest differences were in the chapters considering narration and omission. The biggest of the narrative differences might be the switch from a first-person narrative to an omniscient narrator. Examples of the omission might be of the two characters, Avox and Madge, but also the omission of Peeta’s sicknesses and leg injury, which might have been too traumatic for the audience of a Hollywood film to take in regarding one of the movie’s main characters. Since the narration changed, there has been a need for additional scenes involving the interviewees with Caesar Flickerman, who introduced *The Hunger Games*, talked to the head Gamemaker, and led interviews with the tributes.

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<sup>117</sup> Kelly Davis, “‘The Hunger Games’ comes to life in film adaptation,” *The Triangle*, accessed April 29, 2024, <https://www.thetriangle.org/entertainment/the-hunger-games-comes-to-life-in-film-adaptation/>.

The analysis of the film adaptation showed that the filmmakers of *The Hunger Games* movie used many methods of adaptation. The main categories the adaptation process influenced were the narration of the story, the omission of certain aspects, and the creation of new scenes. The adaptation also used the psychological usage of colors, and the analysis lightly touched on the camera and point of view aspect.

To conclude, I would like to use Davis's statement, which I agree with entirely: "This is the blockbuster we've been waiting for, and I can safely say that the odds have proven ever in our favor."<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Kelly Davis, "The Hunger Games."

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