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Adaptation in the Lowveld : a comparative case study of the live-action to 3D animation filmic adaptation of Duncan MacNeillie's Jock of the Bushveld

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Abstract

Duncan MacNeillie's *Jock of the Bushveld* is the first feature length 3D animated film to be produced almost exclusively in South Africa. This, coupled with the fact that MacNeillie also produced the live-action version of the film in the mid-1980's, gives rise to a particularly pertinent question: Given our turbulent history, how is a colonial story adapted to fit and suit modern audiences? Additionally, how close does the adaptation need to adhere to it source text? The canon of adaptation studies hold various definitions; the most commonly accepted debate is that around fidelity discourse. Fidelity states that an adapted film needs to be loyal to its source text (in this case the source text is a live-action film) however, this definition becomes problematic when looking at South Africa's turbulent and hostile socio-economic and political makeup. Textual fidelity becomes impossible, so different definitions need to be explored. Out of a film to film adaptive comparison I have attempted to use the notion of 'intertextuality' as a basis, that is, no text is completely free from its source text. Cultural context and popular understanding will always play a role in understanding societal shifts. Racism has been a part of popular consciousness since the advent of colonialism, how is this addressed in a current context, especially in a children's story that was originally peppered with many taboos. The aim of this research report is to address the socio-political and cultural shifts that have occurred over the last twenty-five years or so. By using the *Jock of the Bushveld* films as a comparative vehicle I have attempted to debunk and unpack our difficult and convoluted historical identity, whilst using filmic adaptation studies and the theory of anthropomorphism within the animated feature as a foundation.