

”You must admit I have a right to live in a pigsty if I want” – comparing Howl’s character between the book and the film versions of *Howl’s Moving Castle*

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## Abstract

This thesis studies Howl's character in comparison between the book and the film version of *Howl's Moving Castle*. The original novel was written by Diana Wynne Jones, and it was first published in 1986. The anime film of the same name that came out in 2004 is an adaptation based on Jones's work, and it was directed by Hayao Miyazaki. Comparative method is applied in the analysis, while focusing on aspects such as character's appearance, background, and personality. Both versions offer different aspects to discuss, and in the book section, the analysis is supported by the traditions in both fantastic literature and Jones's writing, whereas adaptation theory is applied to some extent in the discussion of the film and the character that is represented there.

The analysis shows that there are similarities in the overall storyline of Howl's character, as well as in his personality and appearance. Both characters have made a contract with the fire demon Calcifer, but the way the contract affects their overall character is portrayed differently. In the book, Howl's contract and the curse serve as a secondary plotline and as the basis for his character development, whereas in the film, the contract reflects the slow decline of his humanity. Moreover, in the film Howl's transformations play a crucial role in his overall story, which in turn has gone through thematic changes in the process of adaptation – Howl's character is greatly affected by the aspect of war in the film version.

## Tiivistelmä

Tämä tutkielma tarkastelee Howlin hahmoa, vertaillen keskenään *Liikkuvan linnan* kirja- ja elokuvaversiota. Alkuperäisen romaanin on kirjoittanut Diana Wynne Jones, ja se on julkaistu ensimmäisen kerran vuonna 1986. Samanniminen anime-elokuva ilmestyi vuonna 2004. Elokuva on adaptaatio, joka perustuu Jonesin teokseen, ja sen on ohjannut Hayao Miyazaki. Analyysissä sovelletaan vertailevaa metodia, keskittyen esimerkiksi hahmon ulkonäköön, taustaan, sekä persoonallisuuteen. Molemmat versiot tarjoavat erilaisia näkökulmia analyysille, ja kirjaversioon analyysin tukena hyödynnetään näkemyksiä fantasiakirjallisuuden piirteistä sekä Jonesille ominaisesta tavasta kirjoittaa fantasiaa. Elokuvaversioon ja siinä esiintyvän hahmon analyysissä sovelletaan adaptaatioteoriaa.

Analyysi osoittaa, että samanlaisuuksia esiintyy molempien versioiden välillä, olipa sitten kyse Howlin hahmon tarinasta, hänen ulkonäöstään, tai persoonallisuudestaan. Molemmissa versioissa Howl on tehnyt sopimuksen tulidemoni Calciferin kanssa, mutta miten tämä sopimus vaikuttaa

kokonaisvaltaisesti hahmoon, on esitetty eri tavalla. Kirjassa Howlin sopimus ja kirous vaikuttavat toissijaisena juonikuviona sekä pohjana hahmonkehitykselle, kun taas elokuvassa se heijastaa hänen ihmisyytensä menettämistä. Elokuvassa Howlin muodonmuutokset ovat keskeisessä osassa hänen tarinassaan, joka taas on käynyt läpi temaattisia muutoksia adaptaatioprosessin tuloksena – sota-aspekti vaikuttaa voimakkaasti Howlin hahmoon.

## Table of Contents

1. Introduction .....	5
2. Research material .....	6
2.1. <i>Howl's Moving Castle</i> .....	6
2.2. <i>Hauru no ugoku shiro</i> .....	6
3. Theoretical frameworks.....	8
3.1. Adaptation theory.....	8
3.2. The new mythology.....	9
3.3. Anime and adaptation.....	10
4. Analysis .....	12
4.1. Flamboyant Wizard – character of Howl in the book.....	12
4.1.1. Appearance and looks .....	12
4.1.2. Portals and dimensions.....	13
4.1.3. Personality and traits .....	16
4.1.4. Howl and Sophie .....	20
4.2. Transforming character – Howl in the film .....	21
4.2.1. Appearance and personality .....	21
4.2.2. Transformations .....	24
4.2.3. Shadow of War.....	25
5. Conclusion .....	27
References .....	29

## 1. Introduction

This thesis will be examining the character of wizard Howl, one of the main characters of both book and the film version of *Howl's Moving Castle*.

The idea of comparing the character appearing in the book and the film version is intriguing, and the main question in this thesis is: what is the character like in comparison between two different versions of the story, focusing on aspects such as background and appearance? It is important to note that in comparison there are the original novel and the film adaptation that is based on it. This thesis argues that the discussion of the adaptations is relevant as the number of adaptations is ever growing, and analyzing the original material and the adaptation in comparison helps to understand not only the various forms of adaptations, but also the different conventions of the adaptation process. The aim of this thesis is to study and compare the differences between two versions of the same character in relation to contexts that are relevant to the media at hand.

Considering this paper, it is not necessary to talk about which one of the characters is better or if the adaptation stays faithful to the original, because of the distinction between the original version and the adaptation as its own creation. The question of originality is indeed central in the adaptation studies – whether the adaptation is faithful to the original version and how is that achieved. Aspects of adapting will be examined shortly in the third chapter, but the focus of the comparison will not be on the authenticity of the adaptation.

The focus will be mainly on comparative approach. The adaptation theory will be applied in the comparison, however, the focus will be on characterization and how is the character created – or rather, what aspects make the character what it is. In the comparison and analysis both book and the film will be discussed separately, focusing on the theoretical aspects that apply to the media at hand. In the discussion on Howl's character in the book, the focus will be on conventions of fantasy literature and especially Jones's tradition. In the discussion on film version, the focus will be on the aspects of anime and adaptation, and what new does the adaptation bring to the character and their story, for example on a thematic level.

## **2. Research material**

In this section I will introduce the research material. The research is focused on two medias which are the original book and the film version. Therefore, these two are the main materials and sources of data when it comes to the comparative work. *Howl's Moving Castle* is the first book in a trilogy, and the character of Howl appears also in the following books, *Castle in the Air* (1990) and *House of Many Ways* (2008). However, this thesis will focus only on the first book, on which the standalone film adaptation is based on.

### **2.1. *Howl's Moving Castle***

*Howl's Moving Castle* is the first book in the trilogy written by Diana Wynne Jones, and it was first published in 1986. In this thesis I will be using the year 2009 edition by HarperCollins, which is illustrated by Tim Stevens. In the end of the book there are also included interviews with Jones in the section *More than a Story*. These interviews offer insight on Jones's view of the film, as well as how the characters are presented.

The story of *Howl* is set in the fictional land of Ingary, and it follows Sophie Hatter who has been cursed by the evil Witch of the Waste. The curse has turned her into an old woman, and unknowing what else to do in her current condition, Sophie sets up leaving her home and the hat shop she has been working in. She ends up in wizard Howl's moving castle and there she strikes a bargain with the fire demon Calcifer, who in turn requests Sophie to break the contract he has with Howl, a wizard who is rumoured to have an appetite for the hearts of young girls. Sophie sets off to find a solution to the problem, while staying as a cleaning lady and housekeeper in Howl's castle, befriending the inhabitants of the castle, and finding herself a new home among them. Despite their troubles in the beginning, Sophie becomes attached to the fickle wizard as well. Along the way, she will discover her own magical powers, which in the end help her to save Howl from a gruesome fate.

Jones's story is fast-paced and humorously written, and it combines various elements of fairy tales. The way Jones utilizes the various fairy tale conventions is further discussed under the title of "new mythology" in the third chapter.

### **2.2. *Hauru no ugoku shiro***

The film version, written and directed by Hayao Miyazaki, came out in 2004. Upon its release, *Howl's Moving Castle* (*Hauru no ugoku shiro*) became awarded and highly popular. It was screened at 450

cinemas at the same time, making it “the most extensive theatrical release ever accorded to a Japanese film” (Cavallaro, 2006, p. 157). This thesis is based on the version dubbed and subtitled in English.

The plot of the film follows closely the original story, but there are variations in characters and their names, and also the events and the forces that drive the story and character’s motives forward. Some aspects are addressed or presented in a different way, but they still are there included in Miyazaki’s version of the story. As an example, the scene could be mentioned where Sophie meets Howl for the first time – that is a scene that already changes the representation of the character from the start. Even though character of Howl is portrayed as vain and somewhat self-centred in the film version as well, he does not strike to the viewer first as a man who is only interested in love affairs, but perhaps more mysterious and enigmatic. Overall, on Howl’s character throughout the film, much is left to the own interpretation of the viewer. This, though, is quite superficial perspective on his character, and I will return to these conceptions later in the analysis section.

The original plot in the book has multiple branches and there is a considerable amount of things going on at the same time. Miyazaki has developed the plot into a more straightforward way, still remaining “fundamentally faithful to its drift and tenor” (Cavallaro, 2006, p. 159). There are, as already discussed, many things that remain unexplained in the film considering the characters and their motifs and relations. Cavallaro discusses the “narrative complexity” that is shown in the film, and how “temporal displacements and superimpositions contribute vitally to such complexity, as does the employment of intertwined and prismatic characters whose multi-dimensionality is both increased and made problematic by their interactions” (2006, p. 159).

One main difference compared to the book is that there is a war going on. It does not only affect the overall story of the film, but also greatly the character of Howl. Howl is fighting off evil in the war, transformed into a bird-like monstrous creature, but much of the reasons for Howl’s participation in it are not explained. The thematic aspect of the war and its effects on Howl’s character will be further discussed in the analysis section.

### 3. Theoretical frameworks

In this section I will discuss the theoretical and methodological frameworks this paper is interacting with. The main theory will be the adaptation theory, which will be applied to some extent alongside the comparative method. Following sections discuss the adaptation theory and adaptations from the aspects of anime, adaptations and western literature, as well as Jones's new mythology.

#### 3.1. Adaptation theory

There are different theories and views in the adaptation studies, but in this thesis the focus will be on Linda Hutcheon's theory of adaptation, introduced in the book by *The Theory of Adaptation* (2013) by Hutcheon and Siobhan O'Flynn.

When the story is adapted into the different medium, it also affects the way the story is told – framed by the possibilities and restrictions of the current media. In the discussion of how does the novel turn into a film and what happens to the original work, Hutcheon and O'Flynn suggest that “a novel, in order to be dramatized, has to be distilled, reduced in size, and thus, inevitably, complexity” (2013, p. 36). The fact that story or its elements are sometimes cut off or reduced can often be seen as negative among the audience, but, according to Hutcheon and O'Flynn, “when plots are condensed and concentrated, they can sometimes become more powerful” (2013, p. 36). Considering the possibilities and restrictions of a media or medium, it is important to also acknowledge what new an adaptation can bring to the story or its characters, when it ventures outside the original medium.

Hutcheon and O'Flynn (2013, p. 10) introduce three “different modes of engagement” in the way media and genres deal with the story formally – these modes being the narrating, performing, and interacting. According to Hutcheon and O'Flynn, adaptation can be seen as both a product and a process. When the emphasis is on the adaptation as a process, the traditional “medium-specificity” can be expanded by the “modes of engagement”, permitting to think about the ways “how adaptations allow people to tell, show or interact with stories” (2013, p. 22). The narrating (or telling) mode enables the imagination, which is directed by the text and the words and the relations and arrangements of words, but at the same time it is free, or “liberated”, from the visual restraints. Things are left up to the imagination. When moving on to a performing, or showing mode, such as film adaptations, the story moves into the area of “direct perception”. Visual and gestural representations together with music and sounds that can reinforce the visual experience, show that the language is not the only way to “express meaning or to relate stories”. (Hutcheon & O'Flynn, 2013, p. 23). In the case of this study, the adaptation at hand should be examined on the level of the performing mode



since the film brings the story alive visually. The world and the characters are introduced with the vision that the adapter has on the story, and that vision is shown to audiences directly within the frames of visual storytelling and narrative. Hutcheon and O’Flynn also discuss what is adapted – what is included in the adapted version of the original story. It is clear that themes, characters, and certain elements of the story can be transferred, but they can have different meanings in the story.

Dani Cavallaro addresses the issue on story elements in the book *Anime and the Art of Adaptation: Eight Works from Page to Screen* (2010) – among the film adaptations there is the concern of contextual accuracy within the story. Aspect that concerns some commentators is the overall faithfulness to the original story in terms of “content, style and figurative structure”, whereas some are more eager to build ideas on whether the adaptation just transcribes or whether it interprets the original work “by suggesting a particular way of reading it or by engaging in speculations about issues it implicitly raises”. (p. 8).

Then, when moving on to the character translation – or adaptation – itself, character in the book is usually created by the reader, and therefore is a reader’s interpretation of the character. The character in the film, then, is also a certain person’s interpretation of a character. In the senior thesis *Analysis of Character Translations in Film Adaptations of Popular Literature*, Emmanuel Camarillo (2014) argues that “indeed, when one reads a novel he or she creates mental images of the characters in the story based on the descriptions that the author provides” (p. 5). The picture readers have on Howl is therefore way different than the version the film brings in front of our eyes. This becomes a valid point when further discussing what is the character like, and what kind of picture does the reader or the person watching a film get from the character. This could also go the other way round – it is possible that a person who would have seen the film before reading the book would imagine Howl to look like he is presented in the film. Similar aspect is discussed by Hutcheon & O’Flynn (2013), how the picture the film gives might affect permanently in the way characters or things are viewed (p. 29).

### **3.2. The new mythology**

The aspects of fantasy and fairy tale get a new perspective in the terms of new mythology. Jones’ *Howl’s Moving Castle* is a combination of fantasy and science-fiction, and even though there are familiar fairy tale elements, it still creates a whole new way to express those things. It is not only the story elements that draw from the traditional fairy tales, but this also applies to the characters and their roles. Yavas (2015) writes on the traditional fairy tale elements in her discussion on the new mythology:

Following the traditional pattern in fairy tales, Sophie will experience three magical encounters with a scarecrow, a dog and a shepherd. When she reaches her destination (Howl's Castle), Sophie will struck a deal with the fire demon, Calcifer like in Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus in which a man sells his soul to the devil for power, experience, pleasure and knowledge. The demon agrees to raise her spell if she is able to break the contract he is under, a contract forced upon him by Howl. (p. 32).

There are wicked wizards and witches, but in Jones's writing, characters appeal as more grey in tone – meaning that they are not just evil or good, or certain archetypes though they might be affected by the traditional arrangements and patterns of fairy tales. Yavas argues that the conditions for the “new type of mythology” are created by breaking up with these traditional conventions, and that there lies the novelty of Jones's work (2015, p. 31). Considering the traditional archetypes, the character of Howl, for instance, cannot be seen as a hero in the traditional way even though he manages to become a certain type of hero towards the end. In the book *Diana Wynne Jones: The Fantastic Tradition and Children's Literature* (2005), Farah Mendlesohn discusses the different aspects of Jones's writing and works, and there are also a few words on Jones's view of heroes. Against the traditional, morally good and righteous hero, Jones argues that “heroes will not follow the rules”, and that “if they cannot stamp and shout their way to glory, they will be cunning or slithery or devious” (Mendlesohn, 2005, p. XXII).

### **3.3. Anime and adaptation**

According to Napier (2005, p. 10) “anime is a medium in which distinctive visual elements combine with an array of generic, thematic and philosophical structures to produce a unique aesthetic world”. It would be an underestimation to just describe anime as a “Japanese cartoon” (Napier, 2005, p. 6). Napier's definition goes well with the idea that there is also a unique aesthetic world with Studio Ghibli's films, and that world is also evident in Miyazaki's *Howl's Moving Castle*. Then, considering the anime adaptations on Western works of literature, it is clear that Miyazaki's *Howl's Moving Castle* is not the only anime that has its roots and inspiration in Western literature. In the field of anime and manga there are multiple series that draw inspiration from Western literature and that are influenced by the Western culture, but there is also cross-cultural interaction. Napier (2005, p. 22) cites a film scholar Susan Pointon on “cross-pollination” between Western cultural texts and anime, arguing that “at least in terms of entertainment, they are as equally interested in and influenced by Western influences as they are by specifically Japanese ones”.

Cavallaro (2010) also discusses the influence of Western literature in anime, and how children's literature has worked as a source material for adaptations in Western and Japanese animation. When

it comes to Western animation, the source material for adaptations often draws from the children's literature and fairy tales and strives to stay true to the original messages of the source. In contrast, the Japanese animation is "frequently drawn to stories with grave undertones or even to the realms of tragedy and epic" in the selection of sources. When adapting the children's literature, they often emphasize the possible underlying mature themes, or in some other way "reimagine the initial yarns by infusing their worlds with complex subtexts". (2010, p. 1).

## **4. Analysis**

This section discusses the findings of the analysis and the comparative work. The analysis will be divided in two sections. First section discusses Howl's character in the book and what characteristics can be discovered. The second section discusses Howl's character in the film. To support the analysis, the book section focuses on Jones's writing tradition and its relations to the character, and the film section discusses anime and Miyazaki's work in relation to the adaptation theory. Both sections will focus on Howl's appearance and the way he is portrayed in both the book and the film. Howl's relations to other characters will also be discussed to some extent, the focus being on Howl's and Sophie's relationship.

### **4.1. Flamboyant Wizard – character of Howl in the book**

#### **4.1.1. Appearance and looks**

Howl's character in the book is first introduced when “a tall, black castle” (Jones, 2009, p.11) appears roaming around the hills near the town of Market Chipping. People say it is the Witch of the Waste who has come back to torment the people but turns out that the castle does belong to Wizard Howl instead. There are rumours going around about Howl, how “he was known to amuse himself by collecting young girls and sucking the souls from them. Or some people said he ate their hearts” (pp. 11–12). Unbeknownst to these people, this rumour was originally made up and spread around by Howl's apprentice Michael Fisher, after Howl had asked him to blacken his name. The rumour started to live its own life and proves that it has become quite eloquent, since Sophie also assumes this to be true upon her arrival to the castle. It is not true, yet not completely unfounded either, as she later will discover.

Sophie and Howl have met before Sophie's arrival to the castle, although at that point his name is not mentioned. Sophie does not know that it is actually Wizard Howl, who offers to buy her a drink at the celebration of May Day, and even walk with her as she tells him she is going to see her sister. He is described having a “sophisticated face” and being “well into his twenties” (p. 21). He is wearing fancy clothes, and Sophie even catches him wearing perfume which smells like hyacinths. They will not meet again until Sophie arrival to the castle, however, when Howl enters the room where the other residents of the castle are having breakfast, she does recognize him from the Market Square.

The tall young fellow in a flamboyant blue and silver suit who had just come in stopped in the act of leaning a guitar in the corner. He brushed the fair hair from his rather curious glass-green eyes and stared back. His long, angular face was perplexed. (Jones, 2009, p. 58)

Howl does not recognize Sophie, although he does ask where he has seen her before. At that point, Sophie is determined to not let him know: “she would have died rather than let this overdressed boy know she was the girl he had pitied on May Day” (p. 59). Howl’s eyes are described as glassy green – however, after he gets back his heart, Sophie remarks how they have turned into a deeper colour and are “more like eyes and less like glass marbles” (p. 300). His hair is described as blonde, but it does change its colour a few times along the story. The way Howl dresses and looks after his appearance is also noted upon multiple times, and that emphasizes the impression of his flamboyance. Throughout the story, he is described wearing a fancy blue and silver suit, flowing sleeves, as well as grey and scarlet and all black garments. Howl spends a great amount of time in the bathroom, most likely adjusting his appearance and dyeing his hair, as well as applying spells to enhance his looks. As mentioned earlier, he also wears perfumes which smell like flowers – from time to time he is described wearing the scent of hyacinths, roses, and apple blossoms, for instance. Almost every time he steps out of bathroom before going to his outings, there is a new scent and new marvellous glow to his appearance. Howl is also described wearing an earring, a blue jewel (p. 59), which later changes into a jet black one alongside his all-black garments and hair (p. 211).

#### **4.1.2. Portals and dimensions**

Howl has made a contract with the fire demon Calcifer. In exchange of Calcifer’s magical powers, Howl has given his heart to him, which in turn keeps Calcifer alive. Calcifer is the one who moves the castle, and therefore he is bound to it meanwhile Howl is able to go wherever he pleases. Howl’s castle is a multidimensional complex, and there is a door which can lead to multiple places by turning the knob – there are various colours of which each lead to a specifically set location. The green knob leads to Market Chipping, blue one to Porthaven, and red one to Kingsbury. Out of these knobs, the black one remains the most significant: it leads into the modern-day Wales, where Howl is originally from. There he is not known as Wizard Howl, but as Howell Jenkins, which is his real name. He has a sister, a niece and a nephew living in there, and sometimes he goes to visit them. Even though he is not permanently living in Wales, he still has some of his property stored in his sister’s house (pp. 151–152). The otherworldly aspect brings more dimension to Howl’s character, but it also reflects different forms of fantasy that are essential to Jones’s writing. In the article *Fairy Tale and Fantasy: From Archaic to Postmodern* (2003), Maria Nikolajeva discusses the worlds of fantasy, introducing the term “heterotopia”. This term refers to the way how our world – the real world – becomes

defamiliarized when it is perceived “through an outsider’s eyes”. In doing so, it is possible to observe its “unexpected and peculiar aspects”, while also being able to question “the values and attitudes we take for granted”. (p. 144). According to Nikolajeva, heterotopia is pertinent in Jones’s novels, and this also applies to *Howl’s Moving Castle* (2005, p. 144). The real world in Wales is reflected through Sophie’s eyes, but her insights hardly offer anything new to Howl. What for his part is more important, is the question of reality and his experience of these worlds – Nikolajeva argues that the multitude of worlds reflects the protagonist’s picture of reality (p. 144). All in all, it could be argued that Howl also questions the reality, or rather, which one of these worlds he would want to be his reality. He has a chance to choose between these worlds, as he can travel between them through a portal, in this case the doorway, as the knob can be set to whichever location he desires. That is where the term “portal fantasy” comes in – according to Mendlesohn (2005) there are two ways to decipher the meaning of portal in Jones’s story. For Sophie the portal might just open a door to a new world of wonder, but as for Howl,

the portal is a false route to adulthood: Howl loses confidence in Wales, and his agency is diminished by his own avoidance of confrontation. Only in what has become his home world is he able to self-consciously manipulate his own cowardice into recognizably adult self-control and authority. (p. 41).

This is interesting, when considering the conversation Howl has with his sister during their visit in Wales. His sister, Megan, goes lecturing Howl about his life choices and how he is a disgrace to their family: “You had all that education, and you don’t even get a decent job, you just hang around, wasting all that time at the college, wasting all those sacrifices people made, wasting your money...” (p. 152). Comparing Megan’s view on Howl’s character to what is presented to the reader in the world of Ingary, can be argued that Howl has indeed gained self-control and authority over his life in another world, allowing the growth of his self.

In Ingary, a man named Howell Jenkins does not exist. He is Wizard Howl for the people of Market Chipping, however, he does have various aliases for the other parts of Ingary, as well. He goes by name Sorcerer Jenkin in the town of Porthaven and by Wizard Pendragon in Kingsbury – he has created all these false names for he wants to conceal his true identity. There are people he would rather not want to know where he resides, and this also applies to the Witch of the Waste, who is the main antagonist of the story. She is Howl’s arch enemy, but also his former love interest. Considering Howl’s reputation as a ladies’ man, and taking into account his numerous love affairs, it is not surprising that the wrath of the Witch is upon him for the sole reason that he left her after a short-lived relationship. Howl may have run away from her, but the Witch did not take his escape lightly:

she was not over for not having Howl's heart for herself, and therefore she cast a curse upon him. The curse is meant to eventually lead Howl back to her to the Waste. The reason why the Witch so eagerly pursues Howl throughout the story is to finally be able to fulfil her masterplan – that is, to become the queen of Ingary with the King by her side (Jones, 2009, p. 286). The King would be her own creation, a “perfect human” (p. 286), mixed with body parts of different people – and to complete her creation she would yet need Howl's head. She would also need Howl's heart to complete her plan and to bring that creation to life. To prevent this from happening, Howl must keep her away from himself, the castle, and Calcifer. It is implied that if Calcifer dies, so does Howl. When things are nearing the conclusion, Howl tells Sophie how Miss Angorian, the woman they met back at their visit in Wales, is actually the Witch's fire demon, and “if it gets inside the castle, then Calcifer's had it and so have I!” (Jones, 2009, p. 291). Despite Howl's attempts to avoid the curse, one by one all the parts come true and Howl ends up having a final confrontation with the Witch.

This storyline between Howl and the Witch applies elements from various genres. According to Nikolajeva (2003), fantasy itself is an “eclectic genre”, meaning that it borrows and combines various genres, such as fairy tales, myths, gothic novel, and romance (p. 139). As for the classical fairy tale elements: there is a battle between good and evil, and the confrontation between the hero and the antagonist – not to forget that both of them wield magic, which is yet another element present in fairy tales. The curse cast upon Howl reminds of the prophecies from archaic myths and the fate which cannot be denied, whereas the Witch's unrequited love and her desire for revenge, as well as the creation of perfect human, combine elements from both romance and the gothic. In terms of the character construction of Howl, the fairy tale elements here are the most essential: they build up a certain basis for his storyline and are distinguishable in his character. However, these elements do not define him as Howl manages to rise above these conventions and become a conscious character of his own rather than a generic performer. Considering Howl's role as a hero in the story, for instance, it is evident that he hardly represents the classical fairy tale hero. Nikolajeva (2003) points out that in fantasy the protagonist “often lacks heroic features, can be scared and even reluctant to perform the task, and can sometimes fail” (p. 140). All these apply to the character of Howl, even more so when comparing Nikolajeva's view to Mendlesohn's (2005) discussion on Jones's tradition. Mendlesohn notes that in Jones's opinion the hero fights not only against the enemy, but more importantly against themselves: the hero wins because they have won the battle with their own “insecurities”. (p. XXII).

### 4.1.3. Personality and traits

As discussed above, the curse upon Howl resembles a prophecy, since there are certain steps that await to come to pass. The curse is important in a sense that, for its part, it determines Howl's plotline. According to Yavas (2015, p. 33), the curse itself is an intertextual reference to John Donne's poem, *Go and Catch a Falling Star* (1633). Howl discovers the curse in two parts along the story, and the first part of it reads as follows:

*“Go and catch a falling star,  
Get with child a mandrake root,  
Tell me where all past years are,  
Or who cleft the Devil's foot.  
Teach me to hear the mermaids singing,  
Or to keep off envy's stinging,  
And find  
What wind  
Serves to advance an honest mind.”*

(Jones, 2009, p. 127)

Yavas (2015, p. 33) argues that such intertextual reference expresses the novelty of Jones's writing: as the poem is transformed into a spell, it acquires new symbolic meanings. Yavas notes that “the falling star usually associated with somebody's death acquires new meanings: Howl has interfered with the natural course of a falling star thus changing it into a demon and losing his own heart in the process”. (p. 33). Howl does not die, though, neither does Calcifer. However, upon doing so Howl is bound to lose his own heart, which can be figuratively seen as death. It is not much explained what this contract does to him, however, his former teacher Mrs Pentstemmon remarks to Sophie how “Something has happened to him” (Jones, 2009, p. 167). She is concerned that Howl will face the same fate as the Witch of the Waste, who also happens to have a contract with fire demon. According to Mrs Pentstemmon, the Witch was not always wicked either. Moreover, she mentions that “Howell has gifts in the same order as hers. It seems as if those of high ability cannot resist some extra, dangerous stroke of cleverness, which results in a fatal flaw and begins a slow decline to evil”. (p. 167). This implies that the contract might lead to Howl's downfall sooner or later. Furthermore, Sophie recalls Calcifer's words: “The contract isn't doing either of us any good in the long run.” (p. 167).

As mentioned in the discussion on Howl's appearance, Sophie notes how Howl's eyes have turned into a deeper colour once he gets back his heart. If his eyes reflect his body and soul, this could imply that giving away his heart resulted in giving away a part of his soul. In addition to this, another



interesting aspect is the way Howl is courting girls. His goal is to make a girl fall in love with him, and during that time he barely notices anything else – in Michael’s words “you can’t get any sense out of him until he has” (p. 84). Here one can assume that Howl does seek a thrill, perhaps, but when a girl finally falls in love, he does not consider the affair interesting anymore and he decides to run away. Calcifer points out that he is “very fickle” (p. 84), which is quite an accurate description. Sophie later questions Howl why he does this, and Howl vaguely refers to the bargain he has made: “-- I brought it on myself by making a bargain some years ago, and I know I shall never be able to love anyone properly” (p. 199). It can be assumed that he refers to his contract with Calcifer. He has given his heart to Calcifer, and indeed, it could imply that without his heart he is not capable of true love – he tries but to no avail, and instead he keeps running away.

A prominent feature in Howl’s character is that he avoids responsibilities and tends to slither out from situations that he finds troublesome. As discussed earlier, he is trying to keep the Witch away from him, however, this also applies to the King. The King insists Howl to assist in the search of Prince Justin, who has gone missing, and assign him the title of Royal Wizard since the previous Wizard, Suliman, has gone missing as well. Howl, however, does not feel comfortable with the idea. He is not interested in meddling with royalty, furthermore, considering that Wizard Suliman has gone missing in the Waste would only imply that the Witch has something to do with it. Howl persuades Sophie to go to the royal capital as Wizard Pendragon’s old mother, and to blacken his name for the King. The King will not be convinced – he goes saying how this last resort (that is, to send your old mother in your stead) only proves that Wizard Pendragon has no other choice but to accept. What is interesting in this scene, is how Sophie describes Howl when the King asks her to tell him more about Wizard Pendragon:

“Well, he’s fickle, careless, selfish, and hysterical -- Half the time I think he doesn’t care what happens to anyone as long as *he’s* all right – but then I find out how awfully kind he’s been to someone. Then I think he’s kind just when it suits him – only then I find out he undercharges poor people. I don’t know, Your Majesty. He’s a mess.” (Jones, 2009, p. 175).

Sophie’s description is rather accurate. Furthermore, it reflects her own impression and feelings about Howl. She recognizes his negative traits, however, she has conflicting thoughts about him – Howl is both kind and selfish at the same time, for instance. Sophie’s words also reflect Howl’s dramatic demeanour as she goes calling him “hysterical”. She admits that she does not even know herself, since Howl probably appears as quite confusing character to her. Moreover, Sophie might find herself confused not only with Howl, but also with her feelings for him. It is worth mentioning that she does not sound accusing, considering that she is supposed to blacken his name. On the contrary, the King’s

response is quite in contrast with Sophie's words, as it might reflect the more universal opinion on Howl: "My impression -- was that Howl is an unprincipled, slippery rogue with glib tongue and clever mind" (p. 175). That is, the people of Ingary, or the people who do not know him, tend to regard him as wicked and devious.

Howl has his own evasive way of dealing with things and he might get overwhelmed at times, but he also proves to be able to act when needed. Despite his dread for the Witch, he does not hesitate to engage in a fight with her when she finds out their whereabouts (pp. 213–214). After their battle in Porthaven, Howl is determined to move the castle (p. 221): the entrances are switched, and the castle itself is moved to the outskirts of the Waste and therefore near the Witch, which implies that Howl is overcoming his own fears. However, he is still worried for the curse. He gets drunk when he realizes that inevitably all parts of it will come to pass no matter what, since so many of them have done so already. While drunk, he exclaims that his "shining dishonesty" will be his salvation (p. 265). Yet, it is his honest answer to Sophie that fulfils the last part of the curse – that is, the honest mind. Howl tells Sophie that he had to use the curse to get near the Witch in order to find Prince Justin (p. 293), which proves that he was going to find him, after all. Moreover, Howl admits to Sophie that he is a coward and says that "Only way I can do something this frightening is to tell myself I'm *not* doing it!" (p. 293). Referring again to Mendlesohn (2005) and Jones's view of heroes, Howl overcomes his insecurities and fears, thus winning his inner battle. This demonstrates that Howl is ultimately righteous person, and ready to put himself in danger for others, especially for those he cares about.

When discussing Howl's personality and traits, it becomes prominent that he is a complex character. It could be argued that the castle itself reflects his character in all its complexity, as well – at least it does reflect Howl's hasty lifestyle. Sophie calls Howl "a mess" (p. 175), but that is also the state of his house where "the stones of the floor were stained and greasy, ash was piled within the fender, and cobwebs hung in dusty droops from the beams" (p. 53). Howl's own room is not any better – Sophie tries to sneak in there to do some cleaning, but Howl stops her (pp. 74–75). Sophie goes saying that his room is a pigsty, to which Howl responds:

"And I like my room the way it is. You must admit that I have a right to live in a pigsty if I want. Now go downstairs and think of something else to do. Please, I hate quarrelling with people." (Jones, 2009, p. 75)

The very title of this thesis draws from this quote by Howl. It does combine a few of his characteristic features: he is prone to do what he likes, and there is not much that others can say about it. He also agrees that he does live in a pigsty – that is, the castle is in disarray and rather messy to say at least,

quite in contrast with Howl's vanity and desire to look appealing. In a way, the quote reflects his overall character in the book. The way he interacts with other people is also prominent: he is not outright mean; however, he does sometimes lack delicacy when it comes to dealing with others – especially considering matters that are sensitive or irritating to him. Howl admits that he hates quarrelling with people – he tends to run away from his problems and avoid everything unpleasant, or things he does not feel like dealing with at the moment. He is polite when he needs to, and he also admits himself being “too patient and too polite” (p. 79). Although, quite often in his interactions with Sophie, he comes out as rather haughty at first. This could be due to the fact that Sophie has suddenly appeared in his life, uninvited, meddling with his affairs and causing trouble to him. He calls her with a variety of names, such as “Mrs Moraliser” and “Mrs Nose” – depending on which feature of hers is being most prominent.

The hair incident scene in the book – where Howl's hair accidentally turns ginger after Sophie has rearranged in the bathroom – reflects his stress and “obsession” with his appearance and looks. When Howl discovers the injustice that has fallen upon his hair, he storms in the room Sophie is in and starts yelling at her. Howl goes calling her “the one-woman force of chaos” (p. 86). Sophie remains calm, even though Howl is distraught, and says that it looks very nice. In the interview Jones describes Howl as a “drama queen” (HarperCollins, 2009), and this feature is quite evident in Howl's response:

“Nice!” screamed Howl. “You would! You did it on purpose. You couldn't rest until you made me miserable too. Look at it! It's *ginger*! I shall have to *hide* until it's grown out!” He spread his arms out passionately. “Despair!” he yelled. “Anguish! Horror!” (Jones, 2009, p. 87)

Howl can become quite melodramatic, as is seen not only with the hair incident, but also when he catches a cold. He acts like he is on a brink of death, simply announcing: “I'm going to bed, where I may die” (p. 192). He also craves some attention in his condition, no less dramatically yelling: “Help me, someone! I'm dying of neglect up here!” (p. 192). Another example of Howl's dramatic behaviour follows directly the hair incident: in his desperate state he conjures shadowy figures alongside horrendous noises all around, all the while covering himself in green slime that pools all over the place (pp. 87–89).

Alongside his ability to conjure green slime, Howl is quite a powerful wizard. Mrs Pentstemmon regards him as by far her best pupil, and comments on his “high ability” (pp. 166–167). Howl has obviously gained more power through his contract with Calcifer, and together they have invented the castle solely with magic (p. 61). During the fight with the Witch in Porthaven, Howl is seen creating clouds and flames, as well as massive illusions that clash with the Witch's conjurations. Calcifer,

despite being tied to his fireplace, lends Howl his strength to enhance his magic. (pp. 214–219). Howl is also able to transform into different beings, for example when he sneaks back from the fight with the Witch in a form of a cat (p. 220). He is also capable of much more mundane magic, such as being able to conjure tissues from out of nowhere (p. 190), as well as dry his soaked suit with a single movement (p. 189).

#### **4.1.4. Howl and Sophie**

It is important to note that in the book the story is focalized through Sophie's perspective. She is the main character of the story who sees and feels, and the interpretation of Howl as a character comes for the most part of what she thinks of him and how she sees him. Sophie thinks a lot in the story: she has opinions and musings which create many nuances for the story and the description of Howl's character. That is, the way Howl is represented is brought to the reader through Sophie's eyes, though indirectly in a sense that she is not a first-person narrator. In addition to the representation, Sophie also completes Howl's character, as seen in the end of the story.

Sophie and Howl do not get along very smoothly in the beginning since Howl tends to be irritated by her presence and nosy behaviour. Nevertheless, Sophie stays in the castle, determined to break the curse that is upon her. Howl is too busy to mind too much of her staying, until Sophie gradually becomes a part of their little household, also befriending Michael and Calcifer. Howl, too, begins to acknowledge Sophie's presence and even rely on her. Despite Howl being hysterical and dramatic at times, Sophie manages to put up with his behaviour. When the castle is moved, their new flower shop is located in the old hat shop and the house where Sophie used to live (pp. 226–227). Whether this is a coincidence or Howl's conscious choice for Sophie's sake, is not revealed though. Howl does begin to understand Sophie, and when Sophie in the latter part of the book calls herself "a failure", Howl says "garbage" and that she just never stops to think (p. 293). Howl does not agree with Sophie's dismissive opinion on herself, and he wants to make her see the other side of things. At this point, it is clear that they both have started to develop feelings for each other along the story. Sophie does not directly admit being in love with Howl, but she is upset because she thinks that Howl is in love with Miss Angorian (p. 278). Howl proves her concerns wrong, though, as he tells Sophie once her curse is lifted: "I've been wondering all along if you would turn out to be that lovely girl I met on May Day" (p. 300). Howl has been aware that Sophie is under a curse, and it is thus implied that later on he might have known that Sophie indeed was the same girl. Their fates become entwined, as Howl kills the Witch, thus breaking Sophie's curse. In turn, it is Sophie whose magic saves both Howl and Calcifer in the end, bringing Howl back to life and breaking his contract with Calcifer. As everyone

hustles around them, Howl and Sophie just stand there holding each other's hands and smiling, finally getting their happy ending (p. 301).

## **4.2. Transforming character – Howl in the film**

### **4.2.1. Appearance and personality**

Upon Howl's first appearance in the film, he has blonde hair and blue eyes. He is seen wearing diamond-patterned coat, white shirt, and a necklace with blue stone, as well as green droplet earrings. He looks young and could be argued that he is around the same age as his counterpart in the book – although his real age is never mentioned or referred to in the film. Howl's overall look is rather "androgynous" (Odell & Le Blanc, 2019), and he has a beautiful face and shoulder-length hair. Howl does care about his looks, although he is not spending hours in the bathroom, neither is he seen changing his attire from time to time as he does in the book. According to Cavallaro, "Howl is portrayed as a substantially less flamboyant and capricious figure in Miyazaki's production" (2006, p. 160).

Both the book-Howl as well as film-Howl are vain, and their concern for their looks and appearance determines a part of their character. However, as seen in the hair colour incident that also occurs in the film, Howl shows more dramatic side of his character that is quite in contrast with his otherwise rather calm demeanour. He does also conjure piles of green slime like in the book, covering himself all over with it while becoming unresponsive and out of reach. Prior to this in the film, he buries his face in his hands, tearing up, and says in a defeated voice: "I see no point in living if I can't be beautiful" (Miyazaki, 2004, 00:44:44). This further implies that he is somewhat shallow as he is vain, however, the way he falls apart shows that he might not have much confidence in himself. It is evident that his faith in himself is faltering, as he tells Sophie after the slime incident: "The Witch of the Waste is trying to find my castle. – I am such a big coward, all I do is hide. And all of this magic is just to keep everybody away. I can't stand how scared I am." (Miyazaki, 2004, 00:48:06). In contrast to book-Howl, in the film he admits his fears to Sophie and shows his vulnerable side.

In the film Howl also presents himself as Pendragon and Jenkins, and by turning the knob in castle door it is possible to access the same specific locations. Howl tells Sophie that he once tried to pursue the Witch, and similar thing as in book happened: the Witch never got over for not having Howl's heart, therefore she tries to find him to get what she wants. Howl is running away, but again not only from the Witch, but also the King. A major difference regarding the King's request is that he has

summoned all the witches and wizards to fight for the country since the land of Ingary is at war. Howl is obligated to report to the palace, as he has taken an oath while attending the Royal Sorcery Academy. Howl does not want to go, but his reasons go beyond that of being just irresponsible person. He wants to keep his freedom – that is, all witches and wizards that answer the call are being turned into mindless monsters who may no longer remember who they are after the battle is over. Howl is terrified of such fate, and therefore he tries to avoid having to go and meet the King. Instead, he fights the war of his own.

As in the book, Howl is often absent in the film. He tends to leave without elaborating further of where he is going at each time: he merely ignores any inquiries before going his way. In the book he goes out chasing girls, but in the film, he goes out fighting the war. His reasons and motives for this will be discussed further in the following section, but the drastic difference in comparison to his book counterpart emphasizes film's different thematic approach to Howl's character. There are same plot devices between both versions, however, it is evident that the film version highlights the aspects of Howl's plotline that are the most functional for the adaptation. The film also adds new aspects, such as the war – and as Hutcheon & O'Flynn (2013) put it, “adaptation is an act of appropriating or salvaging, and this is always a double process of interpreting and then creating something new” (p. 20). Moreover, making a successful adaptation is not simply an act of copying, but rather a process of making something “one's own” (p. 20).

There is no curse in the film that would mark the fate of Howl's character, however, the Witch does send Howl a message which reads as follows: “You who swallowed a falling star, oh, heartless man, your heart shall soon belong to me” (Miyazaki, 2004, 00:30:43). There are two things to note on this message. For one, it is the only thing resembling the curse that the Witch has cast upon Howl in the book. Second, it indicates that in the film, too, Howl has given his heart away. Calcifer's origins are therefore the same as in the book: he used to be a falling star who was about to die, but Howl caught him and gave away his heart to keep him alive. In the film, too, they share a contract that must be broken before it is too late. Calcifer asks Sophie to break the contract, and again in turn he promises to help Sophie to break the one that is upon her. In the book, it is implied that Howl might eventually succumb to evil if the contract is not broken in time, whereas in the film, Howl is depicted as gradually losing his humanity. It can be assumed that his monstrous form is somehow related to the contract, although that is never directly pointed out. Calcifer seems to be aware of his state, though, which would imply that the contract is at least partially a reason for his loss of humanity. Then again, Calcifer points out to Howl that if he continues to transform like that, he will not be able to turn back into a human again. At that Howl only comments that “This war is terrible” (Miyazaki, 2004,

00:40:16), mentioning other wizards who have turned themselves into monsters for the king. This would imply that by taking a monstrous form one would gradually become a monster themselves.

It is evident that both the book-Howl and Howl in the film have their own personal demons that they are trying to fight off. Both keep running, but in the end, they must face what cannot be avoided forever. In the film, Howl is afraid of losing not only his freedom, but also his self. He's been fighting the war, but it becomes evident that he is losing his faith in himself. He has also begun to question that what it is that he is fighting for, although he begins to see things differently when Sophie enters his life. Sophie is afraid for him, and she tells Howl that they could just run and leave the place, to which Howl responds: "Sorry. I've had enough of running away, Sophie. And now I've got something I want to protect. It's you" (Miyazaki, 2004, 01:30:05). Similar to his book counterpart, Howl will have face his own fears and insecurities and fight for what he holds dear. Furthermore, this quote also represents the relationship Howl and Sophie share in the film. Overall, Howl's character can be seen as kinder and more compassionate than in the book, and this is evident especially in his relationship with Sophie. It is important to note that their love story is more present there in the film than it is in the book, and could be argued that it is one of the key themes in the film.

Considering the changes that have been made to Howl's character and his story, it is important to note that the adaptation is, for one, the adapter's interpretation of the story and its characters. In addition to this, the mode in which the story is presented affects both the process of creation as well as the final product. Hutcheon & O'Flynn (2013) discuss the differences between the "modes of engagement" and their effect on adaptation (pp. 22–23). In the case of *Howl's Moving Castle*, the original book represents the telling mode, whereas the film represents the showing mode. While inspecting further this shift from telling mode to showing mode, Hutcheon & O'Flynn (2013) argue that "the performance adaptation must dramatize" the original work. In this process of dramatization, the narrative and its various aspects are being "transcoded into speech, actions, sounds, and visual images" – moreover, in this process "conflicts and ideological differences between characters must be made visible and audible". (Lodge 1993, as cited in Hutcheon & O'Flynn, 2013, p. 40). For the story, this means "a certain amount of re-accentuation and refocusing of themes, characters, and plot" (Hutcheon & O'Flynn, 2013, p. 40). As the story of *Howl's Moving Castle* is brought into a visual form, the dramatization is evident in the way some plotlines, characters and themes have gone through changes, or have been rearranged or emphasized to better serve the purpose of the film. As the discussion above shows, dramatization is prominent also in Howl's character. For instance, the emphasis is on his personal conflict, as well as on his love story and relationship with Sophie. Howl's transformations also play a key role while they add something completely new to his character. When

it comes to visual form, and especially animation, could be argued that it offers a great opportunity to explore this dimension. This idea is supported by Napier (2005), who in the discussion on Paul Well's views suggests that "animation can and does emphasize transformation in a way that simply no other artistic genre is capable of doing" (p. 36).

#### **4.2.2. Transformations**

Transformations are an essential part of Howl's character, and in the film Howl's character is reflected to a large extent through his transformations. In the book, his transformations serve as lesser key factors that get the story through, rather than being a major element that the story is partially based upon. That is, there is no such thematic basis for his transformations, whereas in the film the transformation of a character is one of the main elements – considering that also Sophie's character alters between young and old. The bond between Howl and Sophie seems to play a key role in these transformations, since Sophie is the one that saves Howl from completely turning into a monstrous creature. In addition, Howl is able to see her true self despite the Witch's spell.

In the book, Howl mainly transforms to create a disguise, which allows him to work in situations where he else would be in danger of revealing his true self. These transformations do not affect his character in a way that would change his true self, whereas in the film each transformation into a bird-like creature seems to take a toll on his character. Howl is able to alter his appearance for disguise in the film, too – however, the main focus is on his changing form between a monster and a man. This is an effective way to portray the transformation as something thematic rather than only character-focused aspect. That is, the transformation is as much a theme as it is a part of Howl's character in the film. Transformation can also be seen as a link to the complexity of Howl's character. Napier (2005) discusses male characters in contemporary anime and refers to the way in which the complexity of these characters can be "portrayed as having dual selves". Character might have the other side or self that is "characterized in bestial terms", however, according to Napier, the other self might also be influenced by the shadows of the past. Both can be applied to Howl. (pp. 122–123). Howl can sometimes come across as light-hearted and vain, but due to his transformations and ability to change into something non-human he can be seen as the manifestation of this "dual self" – there is a darker side to him which is enhanced by his monstrous, or bestial, form.

Much is not explained about Howl's past in the film – Sophie gets a glimpse of it, though, when she enters the door that most likely leads into Howl's memory. There she sees Howl as a child, when he catches a falling star and gives his heart to it – before the memory shatters, Sophie is able to see Calcifer in Howl's hands. This indicates that Howl was but a child when he made the contract with



Calcifer and has been bound to it ever since. It is also revealed that Howl has been attending Royal Sorcery Academy, and that he has been an apprentice to Royal Wizard Madame Suliman – whose character is actually a combination of Mrs Pentstemmon and Wizard Suliman from the books. Madame Suliman voices out her concerns of Howl being dangerous with the demon in his possession, and how without his heart he might end up like the Witch of the Waste. Considering the aspect of dual self, it is possible that the choices Howl has made in the past are shadowing his life at the time of the film. There might be things that he regrets or would want to atone for, even though such things are never mentioned directly in the film. Either way, this could be one possible explanation to why he goes to fight the war on his own, even though he does it by risking his own humanity. When it comes to Howl's past, his transformations, or his motives, much is left open for interpretation. One major difference between written text and a film is that there is no "space of mind" (Hutcheon & O'Flynn, 2013, p. 14) – in the novel there is a narrator who is able to describe various things and travel through time and space, as well as "sometimes to venture inside the minds of characters" (p. 13). When watching a film, the viewer is forced to only rely upon what is shown.

#### **4.2.3. Shadow of War**

One of the main differences between the original story of Jones's *Howl's Moving Castle* and Miyazaki's film adaptation is the aspect of war. There is no war going on in the book, but in the film the war affects in the background of the major storyline as well as in the actions of the characters. The effect of war is most evident in the portrayal and actions of Howl's character. Two countries are at war with each other, yet what is Howl's part in all that is not explained. There is a contradiction between his thoughts about the war and his actions in it: he is seen alone fighting massive war machines, although he seems to be against the war himself. Howl is not committed to fight on anyone's side, his conflict is portrayed alongside the war as he fights off his personal demons. Then again, what has driven Howl into the point that he is ready to sacrifice himself in a fight against unnamed enemy, is not fully explained. Cavallaro (2006) suggests that "it is crucial to recognize that the film posits his role as exterminator as a crucial component of the curse under which he toils" (p. 160). That is, Howl is slowly turning into something inhuman, and it affects his character. The curse, or the contract he is under, slowly eats away what human is left of him, and in time he might turn into a mindless being who no longer can distinguish good or evil.

Howl's transformations are in alignment with the course of the war, as he is seen transforming when he confronts the enemy war machines and bombs. His forms vary between more or less human: in the beginning of the film, he is seen taking a bird-like form, which has Howl's human face and

swallow-like appearance: his legs have turned into a feathery two-winged tail and his arms have turned into wings. Along the story, Howl is seen enabling his bestial form more or less – sometimes he resembles more human when his form has two legs and human arms, as seen for example in the scene where he stops the bomb from landing on the house where Sophie and others reside. He still has Howl’s face, though now partially covered in dark feathers, and he greets Sophie outside and seems like his gentle and kind self. It is important to note Sophie’s effect on his transformations: according to Cavallaro (2006), it is Sophie’s love towards Howl that “dispels his bird-like incarnation” (p. 160). In the film, too, it is Sophie who in the end saves Howl from his curse and gives him back his heart.

According to Rayna Denison (2020), Miyazaki was impacted by the horrors of Iraq war when he adapted the story of Jones’s novel. Furthermore, it affected the creation of Howl’s character, resulting in “some of the film’s most disturbing and beautifully realised scenes of metamorphosis, as the wizard Howl -- transforms repeatedly from a beautiful young man into a horrific giant, crow-like bird who reappears after battles oozing slime and shedding humanity by turns” (Denison, 2020). The impact of real-life war in Miyazaki’s adaptation reflects Hutcheon & O’Flynn’s (2013) idea that “an adaptation can obviously be used to engage in a larger social or cultural critique” (p. 94). That is, Miyazaki’s *Howl’s Moving Castle* can in a certain context be seen as a critique for war and the conflict. The theme of war can also be enabled to emphasize the meaning of other themes, such as love and humanity in the film (Suzuki 2002, as cited in Cavallaro, 2006, p. 170).

## 5. Conclusion

This thesis set out to answer the question of what is the character of Howl like in both the book and the film version of *Howl's Moving Castle*. The main idea was to analyse the features – such as appearance, personality, and background – of Howl's character in these different versions, then also use the comparative method and to see what had changed and what remained same. In the analysis of Howl's character in the film, the adaptation theory was applied to some extent, as the film version is the adaptation of the original novel.

In the book Howl is much reflected through the character of Sophie, since the narration is mainly focused on her perspective. Howl is fickle, vain, and rather self-centred, but his character goes through development along the story as he realizes his own weaknesses and learns to face his own insecurities. Thus, Howl also represents Jones's view on heroes, according to which the heroes need to battle their own insecurities in order to win the battle (Mendlesohn, 2005, p. XXII). In terms of Jones's new mythology, there are fairy tale elements also in Howl's plotline, such as the battle between good and evil –the inevitable battle between the hero and the antagonist. Although, some of these fairy tale elements are subtly on the background – they are not brought to the reader as straightforward definitions of his character, but rather as intertextual references. In the book, Howl is originally from Wales and from the real world, which brings a whole another dimension to his character in the form of portal fantasy.

In Miyazaki's film, Howl is a mysterious character whose past is left much open for interpretation. Howl has made a contract with the fire demon Calcifer in both versions, but in the film the effect of the contract is much more visible in Howl's gradual transformation into something inhuman and monstrous. Howl's character is greatly reflected through his transformations. The themes of war, humanity and love are key features in the film, and they heavily define Howl's character and his role in the story, as well as his relations to other characters. Adaptations reflect the adaptor's interpretation and vision of the story and characters that are being adapted, and sometimes the plotlines and characters may go through some drastic changes. In Miyazaki's *Howl's Moving Castle*, there can be distinguished some plot devices as in the original story, but their meaning varies to some extent – some of the characters have also gone through changes which affect their role in the story.

As for the further research, it would be interesting to possibly focus on some certain aspect regarding either the book or the film version of *Howl*, such as the narrative or more thorough analysis on the character construction. It would also be interesting to study how the film adaptation might have affected the last book in the trilogy, *House of Many Ways*, which was published after the film was

already out. As for Howl's character, the analysis including all the books in the trilogy would also be a possible direction to take this study further.

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