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### Opinion

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### The Last Airbender reboot raises concern among fans

By Jake Widdowson  
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Netflix announced via Twitter last week that the fan-favorite animated show *Aang: The Last Airbender* was receiving a live-action reboot. The announcement comes more than 13 years after the original release of the television show, and only eight years after the release of the critically praised *M. Night Shyamalan* live-action film.

The show follows a young "Airbender" named Aang who, with the help of his friends, Katara and Sokka, attempts to use bending to end war with the Fire Nation.

Between Netflix's recent *Harry Potter* and *Star Wars* live-action reboots, some fans are worried that this will be another adaptation destined for failure.

The good news is that *Aang* creator Bryan Konietzko and Michael Dante Dornier will be returning to head the show.

Some of Netflix's most well-received adaptations have come from shows where creators have been directly involved.

A good example is *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, which author Daniel Handler helped to produce. Giving creators more control allows for a retooling that stays true to the source material.

"We can't wait to realize Aang's world as cinematically as we always imagined it to be, and with a culturally appropriate, non-white-washed cast." Konietzko and Konietzko wrote in a statement released on their official Facebook page. "It's a once-in-a-lifetime chance to build upon everyone's great work on the original animated series and go even deeper into the characters, story, action, and world-building. Netflix is wholly dedicated to maintaining our vision for this retooling, and we're incredibly grateful to be partnering with them."

White-washing has been a major problem in Hollywood lately. Last year the *Big Budget, Anime-Adapted* *Ghost in the Shell* starred a Caucasian Scarlett Johansson. To hear the creators' loudly and clearly address that issue so quickly is reassuring that franchise has been put in the right hands.

The good news doesn't end there for fans of the original series, either. Jeremy Zuckerman, who composed the score to the original series, is returning to the Netflix reboot to create a brand-new soundtrack. I won't count my Sky Broom eggs before they hatch, but judging by the announcements that have come out over the last week, things are looking pretty good for the new series.

Not all *Aang* fans share my enthusiasm, however. Many internet commenters seem to worry about the announcement referring to this as a



Concept art by John Stahl/Released by Netflix

The reboot is being greeted with both worry and excitement from *Aang* fans.

"retooling" of the story, but I think this could be a welcome change. The series always hinted at something a little more sinister and violent than what could be shown in a children's show on Nickelodeon. Now Dornier and Konietzko have a chance to explore the world they created in a slightly more mature and grown-up setting. Aang's struggles with war, masculinity, and violence are complex and interesting topics that were at most lightly touched upon in the series, but offer room for character growth.

It is also important to remember that while the animated series ends with the arrival of Sozin's comet, Dornier and Konietzko have released an additional *Aang: The Last Airbender* graphic novel since the



Capital University

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September	13, 20, 27	February	7, 14, 21
October	4, 18, 25	March	21, 28
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\*\*PDF of the ad must be submitted by the Monday before the print date. PDF files must have fonts and images embedded.

### CONTACT

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