Expanding *The Hobbit.* An Analysis of Peter Jackson's Adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's Novel

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1. Introduction

The Hobbit is one of the most beloved novels of the 20th century. The story, written by the British author John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, follows Bilbo Baggins, the titular hobbit, who embarks on an adventure with the wizard Gandalf and a company of dwarves led by Thorin Oakenshield in order to reclaim the dwarves' homeland of Erebor, the Lonely Mountain, which is occupied by the evil dragon Smaug. The novel is considered the entry gate to the literary world of Middle Earth in which Tolkien set his best-known stories, but due to the enormity of its sequel, *The Lord of the Rings*, it is often put one step behind it, to the point that some consider it a prelude to its follow-up, which was so long and complex that had to be divided in three books: *The Fellowship of the Ring*, *The Two Towers* and *The Return of the King*. Despite this, Tolkien's first novel set in Middle Earth is still analysed and read as much as when it was first published in 1937 or even more, and not without a reason, since it contains many of the themes that interested the author and that have been so popular with readers. *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings* and everything related to it has become a massive and very profitable intellectual property which has sparked films, video games, role playing games and merchandise. One of the most important additions have been the reconstructions of several books regarding the story of Middle Earth edited by Christopher Tolkien, one of the author's sons, who compiled the notes and ideas written by his father and published several books, including *The Silmarillion*, which tells the story of Middle Earth prior to the events told in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. However, although it is now a behemoth comparable to other properties like *Star Wars*, this world of fantasy first came to be as a book of 300 pages intended for children, one that started with one of the most famous sentences in English literature: "In a hole, in the ground, there lived a hobbit."

This quote was written, according to Tolkien himself, when he was "writing examinations in the summer time, which was very laborious and also very boring" (Serck), and so, in the back of one of these exams that had thankfully been left blank, the author wrote that first line. Naturally, Tolkien did not imagine what would come after, and he told his children the story that would eventually become *The Hobbit*. At the time, the story was a mixture of improvisation and, sometimes, actual writing. Christopher Tolkien explained how his father remembered "that I [Christopher Tolkien] (then between four and five years old) was greatly concerned with petty consistency as the story unfolded, and that on one occasion I interrupted: 'Last time, you said Bilbo's front door was blue, and you

said Thorin had a gold tassel on his hood, but you've just said that Bilbo's front door was green, and the tassel on Thorin's hood was silver'; at which point my father muttered 'Damn the boy,' and then 'strode across the room' to his desk to make a note" (Langr). This is indicative of how *The Hobbit* was always intended to be a story that children could enjoy, and at that point it is likely that Tolkien had not even considered publishing it. However, "elements from mythology began to creep in" and the story gained in complexity during the period of time in which Tolkien told it to his kids, but he "did not allow it to become overwhelmingly serious or even adult in tone" (Carpenter 178). After a few years in which the story was abandoned, Tolkien returned to it and finally finished the draft that would eventually be published in 1931. The novel would not, however, remain unchanged, and in 1951 a new edition would present some aspects of the original altered, such as the passage with Gollum and the riddles, to better connect *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. In fact, Tolkien would even go as far as to try to rewrite *The Hobbit* in its entirety "but abandoned the project when the story reached Rivendell" (Rateliff, *The Hobbit* 129) mostly because it was too different from the original book.

It is evident, then, that the question of tone was of vital importance for the author, who had started his fantasy world with a story for children but continued it with a sequel that was much more adult, and with *The Silmarillion*, which is often the subject of jokes among fans who claim that it is the ultimate test for the followers of the author due to its dense prose. This problem with tone would be present in the only two adaptations that tackled both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. The first one was an animated version of *The Lord of the Rings*, directed by Ralph Bakshi and released in 1978, which would be left unfinished and later completed by a different creative team with a follow-up under the title of *The Return of the King*, directed by Jules Bass and Arthur Rankin Jr. and released in 1980. This second studio was responsible for a TV animated film based on *The Hobbit*, also directed by Bass and Rankin Jr. and released in 1977, with which *The Return of the King* shared many similarities, particularly regarding its light-hearted tone. *The Lord of the Rings* —which adapted *The Fellowship of the Ring* and most of *The Two Towers*— was much darker and serious. The films were never intended to be linked to each other, causing a strong lack of coherence between them, but even as standalone films, *The Lord of the Rings* never got an actual sequel by its original director —although his film did influence the following adaptations of Tolkien— and *The Hobbit* has been described as "truly execrable" by experts on the British author (Anderson 23). The second

attempt would be Peter Jackson's and, although this one did care for continuity, it still had to overcome issues concerning tone, as well as other even more complex problems.

The Lord of the Rings trilogy was director Peter Jackson's biggest project to that day and it found many obstacles before it was actually made. People before Jackson had already tried to film an adaptation of Tolkien's book to no avail due to the enormity of the endeavour. Jackson began his pitch with a trilogy which would adapt *The Hobbit* in a first film and then *The Lord of the Rings* in a second and third film, but the rights for *The Hobbit* were too difficult to obtain, so he chose to adapt *The Lord of the Rings* first and leave *The Hobbit* for a later time. This basic outline would eventually come to fruition, but many things changed along the way. *The Lord of the Rings* would prove to be a difficult project since it was a risky bet and producers were not keen on the idea. At one point, the two films were to be produced by Harvey Weinstein, who was known for his tendency to cut films short and who tried to reduce it to one film. Jackson, unhappy with this, managed to move the adaptation to New Line, a different producing company that agreed to make three films. The director was mostly known for his horror gore films and fans were not too convinced that he was the appropriate person for the job, but three films, almost three billion dollars and seventeen Academy Awards later, he had managed to do the impossible and succeed where others had failed. The trilogy was an astounding success and people started to wonder about the future of Tolkien on the silver screen.

1.1. Reception of *The Hobbit* Film Trilogy

From the release of Peter Jackson's *The Return of the King* in 2003 to that of *An Unexpected Journey*, the first instalment of *The Hobbit* trilogy, in 2012, there was a lapse of nine years in which many things changed. Contrary to what people tend to believe, Jackson was involved in the making of *The Hobbit* since the very beginning, if not as a director, as a screenwriter. The position of director was to be held by Mexican filmmaker Guillermo del Toro and what would eventually become a trilogy was still a two-film adaptation. On May 30th, 2010, Del Toro abandoned the project citing the "ongoing delays in the setting of a start date for filming *The Hobbit*" (Xoanon), but he would remain as a screenwriter, since he had already been involved in the films for two years. In October of the same year, Jackson was confirmed as the director of the two films based on *The Hobbit*, which would start to film a few months later, starting less than a year after Del Toro's departure. Once principal photography for these two films had ended, a third film was confirmed, which led to an extensive secondary shoot after the first instalment had

already been released. This indicates that the entire narrative structure of the project was significantly reworked after filming what were supposed to be the entire two films in order to turn them into three. At this point, Jackson was making three films out of a 300-page book, when he had previously adapted three books, each of them longer than *The Hobbit*, into one film each. Fans started to voice their concerns, saying that this movement was "the illogical but inevitable conclusion of Hollywood's never-ending quest for more dollars, at the expense of story and original artistic intent. And it's going to turn one of the world's best fantasy novels into a big screen farce" (Solomon). Meanwhile, Jackson had to face different problems from a studio that did not give him any extra time and that also entered in conflict with New Zealand's filming regulations. It is safe to say that the filming of *The Hobbit* trilogy was nothing short of exhausting and Jackson himself would state, after the trilogy was finished and released, that he "winged it" after Del Toro abandoned the project and that "it was impossible, and as a result of it being impossible I just started shooting the movie with most of it not prepped at all" (Child).

The three films, titled *An Unexpected Journey*, *The Desolation of Smaug* and *The Battle of the Five Armies* would be a commercial success regardless of all this controversy and internal problems, amassing again almost three billion dollars, slightly under what *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy raised when it was released in the early 2000s. Critically, however, it was always compared to its big brother, a comparison that *The Hobbit* trilogy always lost. Fans also criticized the film heavily, citing the script and the excessive CGI (Computer Generated Images) as its main flaws. The general consensus tends to point out that the trilogy goes from best to worst, with *An Unexpected Journey* being decent while *The Battle of the Five Armies* is regarded by some as simply a bad film, one that takes too many liberties with the source material and that disregards what made both the original novels and the previous film trilogy a resounding success. Ultimately, the whole trilogy was criticised for these same reasons, with some saying that "his interpretation of *The Hobbit* uncouples it from the novel and follows a vision focused on spectacle, exaggeration and the celebration of violence" (Oziewicz 267). Despite this, some aspects were praised, such as the dragon Smaug, many of the main characters like Bilbo, Gandalf or Thorin Oakenshield and even some additions that were not present in the original book.

The films have since been analysed thoroughly, and far from being forgotten, fans and experts continue to talk about them, discussing what they like or do not like. Although not overwhelmingly, *The Hobbit* films are still being talked about when other films with

a similar reception may have been forgotten, and that is most likely due to its association with Tolkien. At this point, the Tolkien name sustains itself, and even if there were no other adaptations of whichever nature, his books and what has already emerged from them will always be subject of different analyses and interpretations. By being an adaptation of a Tolkien book and due to its commercial success, *The Hobbit* trilogy will continue to be discussed in the following years, perhaps even more than *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, since *The Hobbit* trilogy has proven to be more divisive.

Most of this discussion currently happens online but it does not necessarily reflect the majority of audiences. The webpage Cinemascore.com, for example, asks people to rate the film as they are coming out of the theatre: the first instalment got an A, whereas the second and third got an A- each, which are pretty good marks but are also based on an immediate reaction to the films. This score is certainly not that of the general opinion of the internet, much more negative, but besides the fair criticisms that these films may deserve, it seems to be part of the nature of the internet itself to judge strongly and rapidly. Chris Terrio, a screenwriter known for adapting characters of DC Comics to the silver screen, stated that "the audience has to know that they're in good hands. The minute that you lose them from a story point of view, they lose the desire to look at it generously. Once the critics decide a movie is incoherent, it's just a pile-on. Then they attack everything" (Breznican). This description suits perfectly the modus operandi of the internet: once there is a consensus among a few people, the internet is soon to follow. This is exactly what happened with *The Hobbit* trilogy: once there are a few things that do not appeal to a majority of audiences, the entire film, or series of films, is discarded.

The internet has a very Manichaean view of the world and nuance is easily lost in a debate in which being hateful generates more clicks than being reflective. People are more likely to click on a page or a video that rants about a film than one that tries to understand the creative decisions taken by the director and other people involved. Fortunately, the internet has a very short attention span, and after the initial pile-on, as Terrio describes it, time puts the film —or whatever cultural expression that has been the object of such a harsh judgement— in its place. *The Hobbit* trilogy is precisely at that point in which analysis of the creative decisions by those involved in its transformation into film is most welcome and it is that analysis that this paper will carry out within the framework of literary and film adaptation, dissecting the trilogy's screenplay[1] and comparing it with the book and other texts from which the films take extra information. The essay will analyse

the films' structure in comparison with that of the book and then how Peter Jackson went from adapting *The Lord of the Rings* to *The Hobbit*, and how his approach to the written sources was different in both instances. After that, the paper will focus on the religious themes, following with narrative aspects such as the character development, the way Jackson builds an overarching narrative and how he chooses to be as faithful as possible to the book or how he dares to go beyond it. The final section focuses on how Jackson and his team link this film trilogy with the previous one. The purpose is to show how Jackson and the other creative minds involved in these films truly understood not only the themes from the source novel, but also how to translate them into the screen in a way that maintained consistency with both the book and the previous film trilogy.

2. Structure: From Three to Six to Nine Acts

The most obvious problem regarding this adaptation is how to create three films that are independent from each other while at the same time serving to a bigger narrative. *The Lord of the Rings* may have seemed easy to adapt structurally given that it is usually sold as three instalments, but the truth is that Tolkien never wanted to split the book into three parts, because he considered it just one book, but was forced to divide it in order to publish it. In fact, *The Lord of the Rings* is internally conformed by six books that tend to overlap by focusing on different perspectives of the same events. For example, the third and fourth books —that conform the second instalment, *The Two Towers*— show the same period of time from the perspective of two different groups of characters. In his adaptation of *The Two Towers*, Jackson mixed both books so that the different perspectives would be presented parallel to each other instead of consecutively, reaching their climax simultaneously.

The Hobbit is an even more difficult scenario. Not only are there no divisions in smaller books that could be used, but the narrative does not experience any moments of closure until the very end, in which three consecutive climactic scenes —the conversation between Bilbo and Smaug, the death of the dragon and the battle of the Five Armies— bring things to an end. Besides this, the decision to turn the two-part series into a trilogy was done very late in the process, and that change required a significant reworking of the structure of the films. The following chart is a timeline of how *The Hobbit* was shot:

End of March, 2011.	Filming begins for the two films that were supposed to be made.
July 6, 2011.	Main photography finishes. The two films are, in theory, completely shot, but it was later revealed that, due to the lack of time for preproduction, Jackson and his team could not continue filming several things that they needed. Jackson and his team knew that they would be making three films at some point during filming.

July 30, 2012.	Peter Jackson officially confirms that the two films will now become three films.
December 14, 2012.	*The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* is released.
May, 2013.	Secondary shoot for the next two *Hobbit* instalments. The controversial love triangle between Tauriel, Legolas and Kili was added here, as well as other scenes, mainly belonging to *The Desolation of Smaug*, which "really was the movie that we had to sort of craft and create in terms of material that we had to add and write, probably more so than the other two movies" (Jackson & Boyens, *Desolation* 0:00:40). This shooting would last for around ten weeks.
December 13, 2013.	*The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug* is released.
December 17, 2014.	*The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies* is released.

As the chart presents, the script evolved as filming took place, and what were initially three acts from the book turned into six acts for the planned two films and, later, to nine acts for the trilogy that ended up arriving to theatres. Jackson stated that he wanted each film to have its own standalone feel, therefore, each one of them had to have its own beginning, middle and end while being part of an overarching narrative. It is interesting, then, to analyse that evolution.

2.1. The Cancelled Two-Part Series

In the commentary of *An Unexpected Journey*, Peter Jackson mentions that "when the decision was made to go do a third *Hobbit* movie before we had spoken to the studio, Fran [Walsh, screenwriter on the films] and I sat down and restructured the story so we [...] would know how to make three standalone films. The scene in the burning trees became the climax of the first film" (Jackson & Boyens, *Unexpected* 2:30:10). The film

was supposed to end with the barrel scene, which in the book is a little bit after the midpoint of the story.

Although much shorter than the eventual trilogy, it seems to be closer to it than to the first plan envisioned by Guillermo del Toro, whose second film would have worked as a bridge between the events of both books. This idea does not seem plausible, because the events of *There and Back Again* —the film that should have been the last of the two— included too much of *The Hobbit* to put any more things in it and make a film that was less than three hours long, and it would not have made sense to include the climax of the novel and then continue for an extra half an hour just to include events between both stories.

The first film would most likely have been focused on Bilbo. One of the most important moments of Bilbo's development happens in the scene with the spiders and continues with the escape from the caves of the elves, both moments in which Bilbo acts on his own to save the dwarves. It would seem that the first film's emotional backbone would have been his development in which he would have gone from a scared hobbit to an active character. Most critics agree that the naming of his sword was the true turning point for the character, and finishing it on a high note after the barrel scene, which was turned into a long and complex action set-piece, would have been a nice point to end the film. It would have also introduced the elves, Legolas included, who would be very important in the second film.

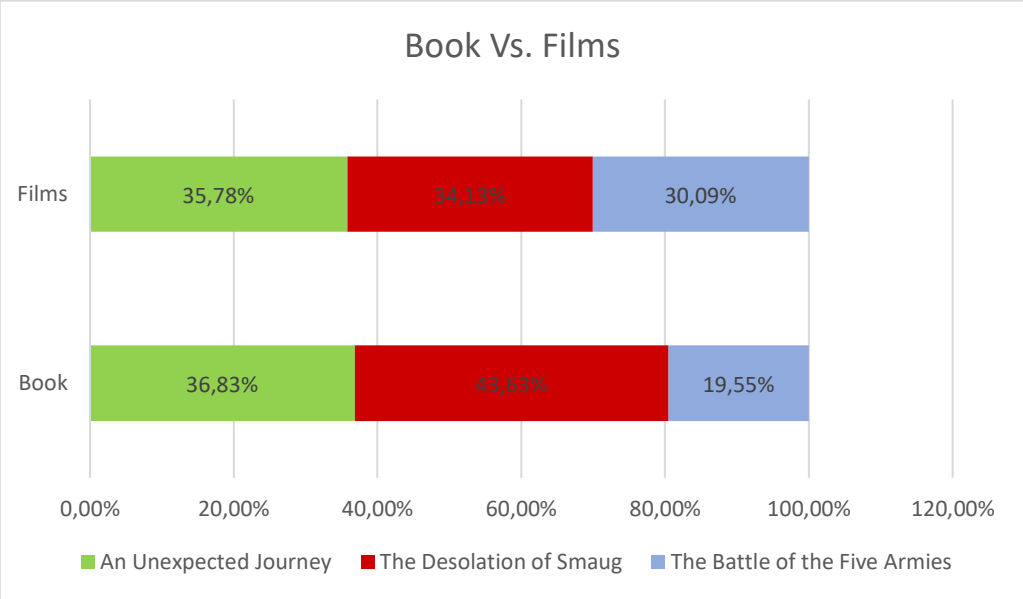
The second film, *There and Back Again*, would have put Thorin front and centre. There are hints of this in the current trilogy and his development is greater than Bilbo's during the latter half of the book. Having the story pick up when the Company arrives to Lake-Town would have provided a slow build-up towards the dragon, which would have been, most likely, the middle point of the film with a grandiose set-piece —it would not have diverged much from what audiences finally saw—, followed by a slower second half, with Thorin becoming insane, that would conclude explosively with the battle of the Five Armies.

Not much is known about the two films that could have been, but in the commentary of *An Unexpected Journey*, Philippa Boyens reveals that "when it was originally two films, we had thought of revealing Azog [an antagonist] at the moment that Thorin saw him [...] but when it became three films [we thought] 'yeah, you're right, [we] very differently felt the lack of him, the villain" (Jackson & Boyens, *Unexpected* 1:34:01). This implies that

Jackson was improvising on set already knowing that there would be three films and substantially changed the structure as he went. The result of that is *The Hobbit* trilogy that was released.

2.2. The Trilogy

This graphic shows the correspondence between the three films and the book:

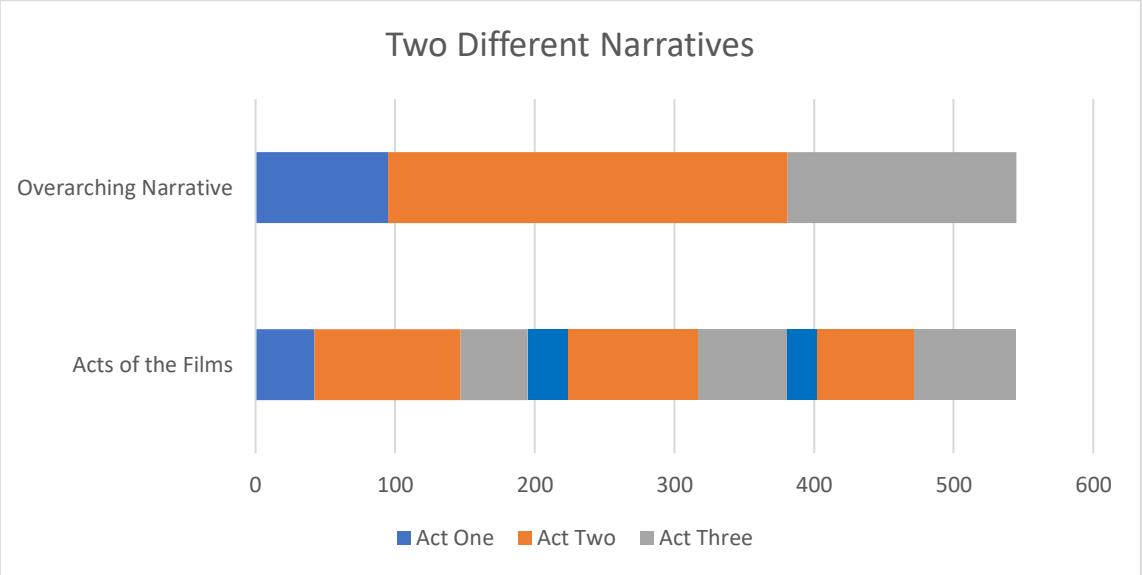


As the graphic shows, there is not a huge difference between the percentage the film gives to the same events as the book. The most important point in which both diverge is how the events on the second film actually take less time to develop than the ones in the book, whereas the ones in the third film take more time. The shorter percentage of the second film is mostly due to the need of the first film to set more things in motion and of the third film to close more threads. The second film can just continue from where the previous one ended and has no need to give a satisfying conclusion to any of the overarching stories. Despite this, the internal structure of the book and the films is very different, because each film is intended to be a standalone adventure to a certain degree, which is why every one of these films can be split in three acts and has its own themes and ideas.

In order to analyse both the internal structure of each film and how they belong to a broader, overarching narrative that takes places throughout the three films, this paper is going to divide the films and the trilogy in three acts each. An act is "a series of sequences that peaks in a climactic scene which causes a major reversal of values, more powerful in its impact than any previous sequence or scene" (McKee 41), and the three-act structure is "the cornerstone of drama" (Yorke 26), mostly because of how much it has been used,

which is why this paper will apply it to the films. The purpose of this is not to set a series of objective acts for the films, but rather to prove that each film has its own set of internal acts, which would mean that each of them is, to a certain extent, a standalone film while also being part of a bigger narrative conformed by the entire trilogy. This is, however, not only achieved by narrative elements, but also by aesthetic choices that help further distinguish each film.

The following graphic is the result of this division, comparing the length —in minutes— of the trilogy's overarching narrative with the length of each act of each film:



2.2.1. *An Unexpected Journey*

The first film of the trilogy has two first acts: one for this film and one for the entire trilogy. The first of these two first acts ends once Bilbo decides to go with the dwarves. The film follows him closely and his development —as we will see in the following pages— is the most important of this first part. This point marks his initial acceptance to go on the journey after having established his internal struggle of staying at home or risking his life.

The film's second act continues and could be mixed with the third act as to when one ends and the other starts, but making the longest second act possible, it would end as the characters escape the Goblin realm. The third act and climax of the film has Bilbo's character development ending, as will be explained later in this paper, and a final set-piece which also affects Thorin on an emotional level, confronting him with his nemesis, Azog The Defiler. To top things off and give a feeling of closure, the characters get the

chance to see, even if from afar, their objective: the Lonely Mountain. A shot takes the audience near the Mountain and later inside it, where they are greeted by the eye of the dragon. The journey has not ended, but characters have moved onwards physically and emotionally in a successful manner.

The first act of the entire trilogy is much longer than that of this individual film, since it has to introduce more characters and events than the first act of the film, such as the Necromancer or Azog The Defiler, that will be relevant throughout the films, which is why it ends once the dwarves arrive to Rivendell. This is around the midpoint of the film and is a moment of rest for the characters, but it also gives the opportunity to introduce one of the villains and the main parallel subplot of the trilogy that mostly involves the character of Gandalf.

The film also uses nature and seasons as a way of mirroring the characters and their journey. "Nature can comment on a story as it unfolds" (van Sijll, 248), and in *The Hobbit* that is exactly what happens, by linking nature with the events of the narrative. Tolkien made Bilbo leave The Shire in the middle of spring, nearing summer. Jackson takes this idea and uses it to split the journey aesthetically in the three films of the trilogy. *An Unexpected Journey* is an adventure film, one that can tackle dark topics occasionally but that is much more humorous and focused on the adventure itself than its two sequels, hence the summer setting. The colourful palette and the good weather are parallel to the characters' emotional state, hopeful and willing to embark themselves on an adventure.

It is this aspect of adventure that is reinforced by the soundtrack, composed by Howard Shore, with the leitmotif of the Misty Mountains appearing several times during the film. The theme is "a familiar song of hope and resolve that slowly fades as the characters cross into the true Wilderland (Ojala). Ojala also paraphrases Doug Adams, author of *The Music of the Lord of the Rings Films*, saying that "the film makers felt that this disappearance of this comforting musical idea would emphasize the danger, urgency and uncertainty of the journey in the sequels" (ibid.). As we can see, the music also becomes a distinctive element of the film, to the point that the song that plays at the end of the film, *Song of the Lonely Mountain*, also includes that leitmotif.

2.2.2. *The Desolation of Smaug*

The second instalment has, as the previous one, three acts, each of them with a pivotal scene that ends them. Regarding the overarching narrative, however, it is all second act,

which differentiates the films from the book in that, for most people, the second act of the book ended with the encounter with Smaug, but that will be discussed shortly.

The first act of the film can be difficult to pinpoint, since the film, besides a brief prologue, starts in medias res, with the characters on the run from the threat they narrowly evaded in the previous film, that is, Azog and a pack of orcs. However, after this quickly paced beginning there is a moment of pause similar to that of Rivendell in the previous film, in which the characters get to rest for a moment. It is after they leave, once they are about to enter Mirkwood and Gandalf leaves them to go on his own quest, that the second act begins, since they are continuing their journey and Gandalf is embarking himself in his own quest.

After many adventures, the second act finishes as the dwarves manage to open the secret entrance to the Mountain. This was the point in the book in which the second act ended too, so it is all the more fitting. The film makes this an explosive ending in which a confrontation with the dragon provides one last immense action set-piece that is meant to be the big finale but that, surprisingly, leaves audiences hanging, at least on a narrative sense. The dragon exits the Lonely Mountain and, as he is going to burn Lake-Town and its poor inhabitants, the film ends. Jackson crafts an entire action scene to create a satisfying ending, but it is true that the final fight with the dragon could have been left in this film. On the other hand, the feeling of conclusion would have never been as the one from the first film, because the structure of the book does not allow for a moment of rest after the dragon is killed. It would seem that Jackson was forced to choose a moment and chose this, probably because it marks the involvement of the inhabitants of Lake-Town in the story as more than just one of the places visited by the Company. It is also interesting to see how he considers the films as a whole, even if he gives them individual qualities that separate them from each other: “After this next couple of years we’re not gonna be releasing one of these movies each year anymore. What’s gonna be the case from that point on for decades to come, well, fortunately for decades, [is that] there’s gonna be six movies that have an overriding sort of an arch” (Die Geek Geek Show 2:05). Given the lack of options available, Jackson chooses to cut the climax of this film — having provided that final set-piece that was not in the book to make the film more whole— and puts the end of it at the beginning of the next film, because he sees the three films as one story.

Autumn is the background for the story of this second film: "As seasonal changes are both visually and universal, audiences easily read them as representing the passage of time" (van Sijll, 246). The season brings darker colours and signifies a certain decay, mirroring Thorin's mental state, increasingly obsessed about the gold in Erebor. It is also related to the disastrous conclusion of the film and the journey, in which the dwarves mission ends up unleashing the fury of the dragon, an idea that is constantly alluded to in the film until it finally happens.

2.2.3. *The Battle of the Five Armies*

The final film in the trilogy starts with an even more remarkable in medias res. There is no prologue and it goes straight to the action. The first scene is an action set-piece in which the dragon is killed, becoming the first plot thread to arrive to its natural conclusion. The first act includes this as well as the set up for what is going to be the rest of the film, that is, the promise that Thorin is effectively going insane for the gold of the Mountain and a few other subplots: Bard's quest to keep the inhabitants of the now destroyed Lake-Town safe or Kili and Tauriel's relationship. The first act ends as Thorin welcomes the few dwarves that were left behind to Erebor, which is when all the relevant information has been appropriately conveyed to the audience.

The second act is a blend of drama, following the progressive decay of Thorin, and includes a more action-focused part in the end of the Necromancer subplot, which ends as the second act starts for two reasons. Firstly, it does not end, the antagonist is banished but only temporarily defeated, setting up *The Lord of the Rings*, and secondly, his plan is still unfolding, and the army he has sent will be the cause of the final battle. Jackson finishes what had been a story mentioned in the *Appendices* and, at the end of the third film, connects it with the main plot.

The third act is difficult to pinpoint, as the battle itself lasts for almost two hours. It is far too long to be considered entirely a third act, even if its beginning is undoubtedly a pivotal moment in the film. However, from the point of view of the characters, the actual central moment is Thorin's change of mind. It is after the scene in which Thorin realises his mistake that the third act of the film begins, since that scene gets its natural conclusion in Thorin's sacrifice, later in the film. In the graphic, the third act is longer than the second act, but that is due to the overwhelming amount of action set-pieces present: there is

barely any narrative development in most of these scenes but they are quite long, which increases the length of this third act.

The third act of the overarching narrative is, perhaps, the most complex one of them all. It is impossible to situate it in a different place than at the beginning, because Smaug's death was the objective of the protagonists since the very beginning. However, after the dragon's demise there is still an entire film that has to take place, and at this point it is necessary to refer to the book, in which there is a false ending, that is, "a scene so seemingly complete we think for a moment the story is over" (McKee 224). The serialized narration of the book includes the battle of the Five Armies as something of an afterthought, which translates into the films' structure in that Smaug's death is part of the third act by necessity, which may explain why it was reserved for the last film, but the battle also takes place during the third act. This strange structure is the reminiscence of the structure of the book, creating a quite long third act for the entire trilogy, but a third act nonetheless.

As time passes, so do seasons, and winter and snow provide a bright colour palette full of white. The surprising visual clarity brings even more attention to the seriousness of the film, which is now tackling themes of greed and corruption much more in depth than in the previous instalments, providing a contrast that is very much exploited by the beautiful cinematography.

3. From *The Lord of the Rings* to *The Hobbit*

The Hobbit and *The Lord of the Rings* are widely different. *The Lord of the Rings* is an epic book, four times the length of *The Hobbit*, which is a story for children. This difference poses a challenge for its translation into the different medium of cinema, as this paper has explained in the introduction, because it forces both stories to coexist in the same world. When directing *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, Jackson only had to take into account one trilogy of books with a similar aesthetic and style throughout, but with *The Hobbit*, he is forced to adapt its small story taking into account that *The Lord of the Rings* already exists.

Tolkien was aware of this issue himself, as proved by his second edition of *The Hobbit*, in which he tried to better link it with *The Lord of the Rings*, or his abandoned attempt to rewrite the whole book, which was "a wholesale recasting of the book into the mold of its sequel" (Rateliff, *The History* 766). As *The Hobbit* progresses, its themes gain in maturity from the initial thrill of the adventure to the greed of Smaug, Thorin and everyone who wants a share of the wealth of the Lonely Mountain; and as Bilbo gained knowledge of the Middle Earth, so did Tolkien, who found himself wanting to write a story whose target would be adults. His strategy to achieve this was to use *The Hobbit*'s writing style, or a similar one, in the first chapters of *The Lord of the Rings* and rapidly turn it into the style that would be used throughout the entire new novel.

Unfortunately for Jackson, he cannot reshoot moments from his first trilogy to improve the coherence with the second one, nor can he abandon the style of *The Lord of the Rings* entirely for the sake of faithfulness to *The Hobbit*, because there would be too much of a difference between both trilogies. In fact, Jackson had completely eliminated any possibility of creating a sense of transition between the two trilogies by starting his adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings* with an epic prologue that explained the history of the Ring of Power and by cutting short the time between Bilbo's departure from the Shire and Frodo's, which takes a few scenes in the film but took years in the novel and was part of the transition of writing styles between *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. This means that the main effort to link both trilogies was always going to be made by *The Hobbit*. Jackson and the other screenwriters, Philippa Boyens, Fran Walsh and Guillermo del Toro, used two strategies to go from *The Lord of the Rings* to *The Hobbit*: using the time jump from the events of one trilogy to the next —around sixty years— and changing the way in which they filmed action, as the following two sections will explain.

3.1. A Different Time

In *The Lord of the Rings* there are allusions to the Red Book, a volume in which Bilbo is writing his adventure with the dwarves. Bilbo is seen writing it and, eventually, Frodo ends up writing his own adventure there too. In fact, Bilbo's narration of the account would serve as an excuse for Tolkien, who claimed that Bilbo lied when explaining his version of the Gollum passage to hide how he had found the Ring, and that the new version —the one published in 1951— was the true account of the facts. Jackson uses the writing of the Red Book as an excuse to tell the story by introducing the events as if they were being told by the old Bilbo (with Sir Ian Holm reprising his role). Although seemingly unnecessary, the brief scenes in which old Bilbo appears are meant to draw distance between the events of the two trilogies and, at the end of the trilogy, to unite them perfectly with one of the first scenes of *The Lord of the Rings*.

Despite adopting much of the epic tone of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, the story of *The Hobbit* makes it impossible to put it at the same level. In one, the entire world is at stake; in the other, a group of dwarves may die burnt to a crisp by an angry dragon. Jackson boosts the epic in this story to its maximum degree —as this paper will discuss shortly— but as much as that helps, *The Hobbit* is still at heart a tale for children. To better transmit this, Jackson makes the world around it younger, and this strategy is seen particularly in elements that audiences already now from other films, such as Gandalf.

One of the most memorable scenes in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy is that in which Bilbo lets the Ring to Frodo with the help of Gandalf, who scares him to the extent that the old hobbit chooses freely to abandon it. In the film, effects are used to make Gandalf sound not menacing, but severe, with darkness surrounding him, his voice heavily edited and his demeanour much more aggressive. In *The Hobbit*, Gandalf does the same thing in the same place, Bilbo's home, but effects are much less present, darkness is toned down, the voice is barely edited and even trembles. This type of behaviour is shown several times throughout the film, pointing out that this Gandalf is a much less experienced character, something that is impressively transmitted by Sir Ian McKellen, who presents a different Gandalf than the one he played in *The Lord of The Rings*. Like the Grey Wizard, Middle Earth changes too. Other characters are also less developed than they were in *The Lord of the Rings*, such as a less frightened Saruman or a more violent Legolas. The film uses these characters to present a different Middle Earth, one younger and still far from the War of the Ring.

Once the events of *The Lord of the Rings* start to develop, there is no doubt about the seriousness of the situation. *The Hobbit*, on the other hand, spends the majority of its pages focused on the adventure itself, putting the characters in one dangerous situation after another for the sake of entertainment. It is not until the very end that Tolkien presents real consequences for the characters' actions, such as the destruction of Lake-Town by Smaug. In the films, Jackson plants this idea in the first half of *An Unexpected Journey*, showing that the dwarves' quest may lead to a disastrous conclusion. By doing this, Jackson presents a Middle Earth which is safe and in which characters rest without worrying about the evil that once menaced them. Jackson goes as far as to place events differently: in the novel, Gandalf has not only heard about the Necromancer —a character that is only mentioned in passing and that would be revealed in later books as a weakened Sauron—, but has also been to his fortress in Dol Guldur. In the films, Gandalf does not know anything about this character and most of his subplot is linked to making this discovery. His encounter with the Necromancer is told in the second film, creating a sense of increasing seriousness and danger, but one that allows for a more innocent and careless beginning, easing the viewer for three films straight into what will be the events of *The Lord of the Rings* and giving this trilogy its own distinctive feeling of adventure, one that has been deliberately chosen by the characters instead of been imposed on them.

3.2. Two Approaches to Action

There is a scene in *The Two Towers*, the second film of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, in which Aragorn, one of the bravest and strongest warriors and one of the main characters, falls down a cliff trying to kill an orc. It is a thrilling moment that surprisingly ends in tragedy, after his friends give him up for dead. Aragorn miraculously survives, having fallen into a river and later awoken by his horse, but it is played as a serious instance in which he was in real danger. In *An Unexpected Journey*, the first instalment of *The Hobbit* trilogy, there is a moment in which Gandalf and the thirteen dwarves fall, on top of a wooden platform, down a ravine. The platform collapses as it falls, trapping most of the dwarves beneath it once it finally gets to the bottom. None of the dwarves nor Gandalf are injured or even concerned about this event, which concludes as follows:

> Bofur: Well, that could have been worse.
>
> Dwalin: You've got to be joking! (*The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* 2:24:10).

Dwalin's remark stems from the fact that the dead body of the Great Goblin, an exceptionally big character, has fallen on top of them. Jackson's approach to action in *The Hobbit* films has been widely criticised, especially when put in comparison with that of his previous trilogy, in which action scenes were realistic and gritty. In *The Hobbit* trilogy, every scene tries to go beyond what the previous one did, ignoring that most characters would have their physical integrity seriously threatened, that the sequences are much longer than they would need to be on a narrative sense and that often times they are simply physically impossible. However, the decision to use action this way is one of the biggest trademarks of *The Hobbit* trilogy, not only because of how different they are to the other trilogy, but because they are meant to emulate the narrator of the book in order to create a sense of levity that *The Lord of The Rings* never had, as the following paragraphs will illustrate.

None of the aforementioned scenes are actually in the books: Aragorn does not fall down a cliff nor the dwarves fall down a ravine, but there are other possible comparisons of similar events in both books. For example, the fight against the orcs in Moria from *The Lord of the Rings* can be compared to the chase of the goblins in *The Hobbit*. Both scenes share a group of main characters facing hideous creatures, but what is meant to be analysed here is the narrator. This is the extract from *The Fellowship of the Ring*:

> "There was a crash on the door, followed by crash after crash. Rams and hammers were beating against it. It cracked and staggered back, and the opening grew suddenly wide. Arrows came whistling in, but struck the northern wall, and fell harmlessly to the floor. There was a horn-blast and a rush of feet, and orcs one after another leaped into the chamber.
>
> How many there were the Company could not count. The affray was sharp, but the orcs were dismayed by the fierceness of the defence. Legolas shot two through the throat. Gimli hewed the legs from under another that had sprung up on Balin's tomb. Boromir and Aragorn slew many. When thirteen had fallen the rest fled shrieking, leaving the defenders unharmed, except for Sam who had a scratch along the scalp. A quick duck had saved him; and he had felled his orc: a sturdy thrust with his Barrow-blade. A fire was smouldering in his brown eyes that would have made Ted Sandyman step backwards, if he had seen it" (Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring* 423).

The scene is harsh and described rather objectively. The use of a word such as *harmlessly* is meant to inform the reader that none of the arrows has hit a member of the Fellowship, which already shows that it was possible for a character to be injured. The narrator does

not focus on violence but does show it if it happens, such as Legolas shooting two orcs or Gimli cutting off legs. The only light-hearted reference happens at the end of the fight, in a brief moment of peace, and could actually remind of *The Hobbit*'s writing style, but it is related to Sam, a hobbit, and has a narrative purpose in that it is making a strong contrast between the Shire and the present of the characters. The allusion to Ted Sandyman, a hobbit that Sam disliked, makes it more evident that the character is far from where he began, even if it is somehow humorous. Besides this, there are no other similar comparisons in the whole chapter, which concludes with the tragic death of Gandalf. On the other hand, this is an extract from *The Hobbit*:

> "Murderers and elf-friends!" the Great Goblin shouted. "Slash them! Beat them! Bite them! Gnash them! Take them away to dark holes full of snakes, and never let them see the light again!" He was in such a rage that he jumped off his seat and himself rushed at Thorin with his mouth open.
>
> Just at that moment all the lights in the cavern went out, and the great fire went off poof! into a tower of blue glowing smoke, right up to the roof, that scattered piercing white sparks all among the goblins.
>
> The yells and yammering, croaking, jibbering and jabbering; howls, growls and curses; shrieking and skriking, that followed were beyond description. Several hundred wild cats and wolves being roasted slowly alive together would not have compared with it. The sparks were burning holes in the goblins, and the smoke that now fell from the roof made the air too thick for even their eyes to see through. Soon they were falling over one another and rolling in heaps on the floor, biting and kicking and fighting as if they had all gone mad" (Tolkien, *The Hobbit* 76).

The narrator in *The Hobbit* is much more playful with words, and the dialogue itself helps in the endeavour to make this tale a much more approachable text to his intended audience: children. The repetition and alliteration of "Slash them! Beat them! Bite them! Gnash them!" uttered by the Great Goblin is a similar strategy to that employed by the narrator when he says "The yells and yammering, croaking, jibbering and jabbering; howls, growls and curses; shrieking and skriking, that followed were beyond description" (Tolkien, *The Hobbit* 76) The enemies were not being shot in the throat nor their legs were being cut off, but "the sparks were burning holes" in them (ibid.). There is a stronger emphasis on aesthetic, on the creation of a beautiful image —the dark tunnel illuminated by sparks—, than in *The Lord of the Rings*. The brief mention of Ted Sandyman in the previous extract cannot be compared with the darkly comical remark of this one regarding the yells of wolfs and cats being burnt alive.

In *The Hobbit*, only three dwarves die: Thorin, Fili and Kili. On the side of the enemies, Smaug and Bolg, an orc captain, are the only relevant deaths. Four of these deaths happen in the battle of the Five Armies, at the end, and the fifth one, that of Smaug, happens shortly before the battle. The rest of the book puts the characters in constant danger and the characters perceive it like it but a death or a serious injury in a scene like the one with the goblins would feel completely out of place. The sequences are thrilling, but there is not a great fear of death, because it would make no sense narratively. Peter Jackson imitates this by creating scenes of a great scale, turning a scene such as the goblin chase, done in complete darkness in the book, into a grandiose set-piece full of light and movement. These scenes are meant to be beautiful and thrilling, even comical, and not to scare the audience making them think that a character might die. This can create a certain detachment from the scene itself because it can be harder to become emotionally invested in a scene in which characters seem to be able to survive impossible events, and this is something that critics have pointed out, but it also creates a less serious experience and can focus on astounding set-pieces which are impressively designed.

Peter Jackson cleverly uses an otherwise simple and funny moment to establish how action and movement are to be treated throughout the films in the scene in which the dwarves sing and dance in Bag End. Their movement is incredibly agile for what the viewer expects based on the previous films but, being done in a comedic moment, the audience might be more acceptant than if they were presented with the enormity of the goblin chase immediately. Throughout *An Unexpected Journey*, action significantly evolves until that moment and, from that point to the very end of the trilogy, every scene is an attempt to surpass the previous one: the dwarves hiding in the trees from the wargs, the sequence of the barrels in the river, the chase with Smaug and most action scenes in the battle of the Five Armies. It is true that it is not exactly consistent with how *The Lord of the Rings* approached action, but it is an inconsistency inherited from the source material, and one that is part of the difficult balance that Jackson has to manage.

These two strategies try to go from *The Lord of the Rings* to *The Hobbit*, exactly the opposite of what Tolkien had to do, since he wrote the latter story first. However, there are certain aspects of *The Hobbit* that Jackson adapts as if they were from *The Lord of the Rings*, such as its religious themes, as this paper will explain in the following section.

4. Religion in *The Hobbit* Trilogy

Tolkien was a devout Catholic, although that might actually be putting it mildly. In his biography on the author, Humphrey Carpenter noted that "his commitment to Christianity and in particular to the Catholic Church was total" (Carpenter 128). In fact, he convinced his wife, Edith, to convert to Catholicism from Anglicanism, but Tolkien's "rigid, almost medieval, insistence upon frequent confession" as well as other strict views regarding his faith led to arguments between the pair, although these fights would end "after one such outburst in 1940" when there was "a true reconciliation between her and Ronald" (ibid. 157). C.S. Lewis was also influenced by Tolkien, going from agnosticism to theism, and from theism to Christianism. Tolkien's only sorrow regarding Lewis was that he became an Anglican and not a Catholic, which was matter of arguments between the two, with Lewis calling Tolkien a papist because of how strict he was, while Tolkien called Lewis a Christian apologist because of his texts on religion. In the end, however, he still had "an almost unbounded affection for Lewis" (ibid. 151). This is proof of Tolkien's understanding of religion, but his texts were much more subtle than those of his friend. Where Lewis would be absolutely explicit in his texts' Christian ideas, Tolkien would hide them, but the basis of his world was undeniably Christian.

One of the most evident examples of religious themes in Tolkien's texts is found in *The Silmarillion*, in particular its first chapter, "Ainulindalë". In this chapter, Eru creates the Ainur and he "declares them a mighty theme", which is what, combined with the harmony of the Ainur, is called the Great Music (Tolkien, *The Silmarillion* 26). This Great Music creates the world, but the most powerful of the Ainur, Melkor, wants "to bring into Being things of his own," that is, to do what only Eru does, which Melkor attempts to achieve by introducing his own music in the Great Music: "Some of these thoughts he now wove into his music, and straightaway discord arose about him" (ibid. 27). Eru, instead of erasing Melkor's music, continues the song taking it to where he wants to take it. Eventually, there is a conflict between Eru and Melkor in which the latter tries to impose his music but fails to do so. In religious terms, this shows how Eru treats Melkor by not "killing" him, but rather by redirecting the song again and again. This is an evidently Catholic view of the Creation in order to establish his own fantastic world of Middle Earth, and it works similarly in his other texts, even if Eru or the Ainur are not as present. However, this is not only a view of the Creation, but an explanation of how God acts in the world according to Catholicism in what is called Divine Providence, which is "God's

sovereign guidance and control" ("Divine Providence"). Tolkien's view on the matter was that "every evil design that is meant by the evil characters will ultimately serve the greater good that is meant by God" (Pearce 45). Throughout *The Hobbit*, there are examples of Divine Providence that are usually attributed to "luck".

4.1. "Luck" and Divine Providence

Many of the events in *The Hobbit* are the result of luck, which in Tolkien's texts implies a divine intervention: "'Luck' is not merely chance but is evidence of meaning and purpose in the cosmos" (Pearce 26). The arrival of the dwarves to Rivendell is a popular example of this, since they just so happen to be there at the exact time for them to read a map that will point out where the secret entrance to Erebor can be found. This coincidence is almost impossible, and the screenwriters were forced to address it, with Philippa Boyens saying that "it is a tricky piece of storytelling because they just happen to be there exactly at the right time to read them [the moon runes of the map] so we sort of took that and actually made it as if fate meant Thorin Oakenshield to come near there" (Jackson & Boyens, *Unexpected* 1:33:05). A different, more complex view on Providence is linked with the character of the Necromancer.

The Necromancer is just mentioned a few times in the book and Bilbo never learns much about this mysterious character, so neither does the reader. This character lives in Dol Guldur, an abandoned fortress, in which he is trying to regain his power. At the end of the novel, only this is said about the Necromancer:

> "It was in this way that he learned where Gandalf had been to; for he overheard the words of the wizard to Elrond. It appeared that Gandalf had been to a great council of the white wizards, masters of lore and good magic; and that they had at last driven the Necromancer from his dark hold in the south of Mirkwood.
>
> "Ere long now," Gandalf was saying, "the Forest will grow somewhat more wholesome. The North will be freed from that horror for many long years, I hope. Yet I wish he were banished from the world!"
>
> "It would be well indeed," said Elrond; "but I fear that will not come about in this age of the world, or for many after"" (Tolkien, *The Hobbit* 343)

In the film, Gandalf has an entire subplot in which he discovers the identity of the Necromancer, which is none other than Sauron and, with the help of the White Council, defeats him and banishes him from the fortress of Dol Guldur. Sauron would eventually return in *The Lord of the Rings* as the main antagonist of that story, and Tolkien was

simply leaving a few clues of a bigger world, outside of what Bilbo Baggins —and the Tolkien that wrote him— knew at the time of his adventure.

The first scene from *The Desolation of Smaug*, the second film in the trilogy, is an encounter between Thorin and Gandalf. This encounter was not featured in the book but is mentioned in the *Appendices*, a compendium of information about Middle Earth, and in one of the *Unfinished Tales*, but these were written after *The Lord of the Rings* and do not belong to *The Hobbit*. Jackson chooses to include them because it illustrates the concept of Providence. In the film, Thorin is unsure of embarking himself on the quest of Erebor, saying:

> "Thorin: My father came to see you before he went missing. What did you say to him?
>
> Gandalf: I urged him to march upon Erebor, to rally the seven armies of the dwarves. To destroy the dragon and take back the Lonely Mountain, and I would say the same to you. Take back your homeland.
>
> Thorin: This is no chance meeting is it, Gandalf?
>
> Gandalf: No, it is not. The Lonely Mountain troubles me, Thorin. That dragon has sat there long enough, sooner or later darker minds will turn towards Erebor" (*The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug*, 0:05:17).

This brief exchange shows how Gandalf, himself one of the Istari —a group belonging to the Maiar—, is concerned about the Mountain and fears what may come. In the films, Gandalf is completely unaware of the Necromancer and has no reason to fear anything, as is Thorin. In fact, the extract shows how Thorin's father already declined the proposition and chose to try to conquer Moria instead, with disastrous result. Thorin is unsure of this until Gandalf reveals the following:

> "Gandalf: I ran into some unsavoury characters whilst traveling along the Greenway. They mistook me for a vagabond.
>
> Thorin: I imagine they regretted that.
>
> Gandalf: One of them was carrying a message. It is Black Speech. A promise of payment.
>
> Thorin: For what?
>
> Gandalf: Your head. Someone wants you dead. Thorin, you can wait no longer" (*The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug* 0:05:56).

Thorin is being hunted by Azog, an orc who serves the Necromancer, and the dwarf learns about this in this conversation with Gandalf. This means that, whether he wants it or not, he has become involved in the story and has now to participate. It is the Necromancer the one who starts the chain of events that leads to Thorin trying to retake his homeland and, therefore, he is also the reason for his own eventual defeat, not only in *The Hobbit* but also in *The Lord of the Rings*. The forces of good, such as Gandalf, are redirecting Sauron's evil actions as Eru redirects the song after Melkor's interference.

This recontextualizes the whole adventure, making it a powerful statement on how Tolkien believed the world works. The author himself did a similar thing in *The Quest of Erebor*, the short text from the *Unfinished Tales* in which this meeting appeared for the first time, but Jackson makes the Necromancer's involvement direct and not a decision born merely out of Gandalf's concern and a few "lucky" incidents. Both Tolkien and Jackson arrive to the same point eventually, but Jackson's introduction of this moment in *The Hobbit* and his portrayal of the Necromancer as directly responsible of his own demise give a new dimension to the story.

4.2. Providence and Free Will

Tolkien's most remembered scenes related with Providence usually start on a smaller scale. Jackson and his tendency to make everything bigger is put to good use with how it tackles the Necromancer by adapting a brief text from the author, but that does not mean that these smaller events are forgotten. Not only are they more approachable by audiences, but also address a common problem linked with Providence: free will. Tolkien believed in free will, and he also believed that it cannot simply coexist with Divine Providence, but that there is an interrelation between the two. Joseph Pearce, expert in Tolkien and religion in his texts, says that there is a distinction "between the 'biased fortune' of Providence, which is connected to the cooperation of the individual will, and the robotic determinism of Predestination, in which an individual is 'saved' regardless of his willing participation in his salvation" (Pearce 47). The most famous example of this in *The Hobbit* is the riddle competition between Bilbo and Gollum, after which Bilbo has the possibility of killing Gollum —who stands between him and the exit and who had tried to kill him moments before. Bilbo, however, chooses not to, initiating a chain of events that would conclude with the destruction of the One Ring. When Frodo, at the end of *The Lord of the Rings*, succumbs to the power of the Ring, it is because of Gollum that the Ring ends up being thrown —along with the evil creature— to the depths of Mount Doom. Had Bilbo

killed Gollum, this would never have happened. Gandalf reflects about this topic in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, saying:

> "So now, when its master was awake once more and sending out his dark thought from Mirkwood, it abandoned Gollum. Only to be picked up by the most unlikely person imaginable: Bilbo from the Shire!
>
> 'Behind that there was something else at work, beyond any design of the Ring-maker. I can put it no plainer than by saying that Bilbo was *meant* to find the Ring, and not by its maker. In which case you also were *meant* to have it. And that may be an encouraging thought'" (Tolkien, *Fellowship of the Ring* 73)

He also adds, in the same scene, how Bilbo's actions were entirely his own:

> "'Pity? It was Pity that stayed his hand. Pity, and Mercy: not to strike without need. And he has been well rewarded, Frodo. Be sure that he took so little hurt from the evil, and escaped in the end, because he began his ownership of the Ring so. With Pity. [...]
>
> I have not much hope that Gollum can be cured before he dies, but there is a chance of it. And he is bound up with the fate of the Ring. My heart tells me that he has some part to play yet, for good or ill, before the end; and when that comes, the pity of Bilbo may rule the fate of many – yours not least" (Tolkien, *Fellowship of the Ring* 78).

The scene with Bilbo and Gollum is faithfully represented in the film and it manages to convey one important fact: "It should be noted [...] that Gollum's bad luck is his own fault" (Pearce 40). Despite the changes that are made to the scene —mainly in the order and number of riddles—, Gollum tries to cheat while playing, as he does in the book, which is what causes him to lose. In Tolkien's world, both good and bad actions have consequences.

Besides the passage of the riddles, there is one character in the film which did not exist in the book and that actually follows these ideas: Alfrid. This character is a second to the Master of Lake-Town, who is very evidently afflicted with the Dragon Sickness. In both the film and the book, the Master dies while trying to run away from Lake-Town with a great amount of gold. However, in the film he is also trying to escape from the dragon that is burning the town and, to go faster, throws Alfrid off the boat. Ironically enough, him going faster is what kills him, because the dragon's dead body falls right on top of him. Alfrid, on the other hand, is saved, but then is immediately after almost killed by the inhabitants of the now destroyed Lake-Town, who hate him for collaborating with the Master of Lake-Town. Bard, the archer —who has a much more important role in the

films than in the book—, saves him. In the battle of the Five Armies, Alfrid has the opportunity to be heroic and fight or to be a coward and run away, and chooses the latter. In the theatrical edition, Alfrid runs away and nothing is known of him after that point, which left audiences quite disappointed. In general, this character is considered the most useless one out of all the additions, and the fact that he is so disagreeable does not help. However, in the extended edition, Alfrid does get his comeuppance, in a rather darkly humorous way when he hides in a portable trebuchet on top of a dead troll. Meanwhile, Gandalf is fighting against a different troll and is about to die, which is when a terrified Alfrid tries to run away, accidentally dropping a gold coin to the mechanism of the trebuchet, which activates, throwing him to the mouth of the troll, killing both. Gandalf survives and sees how a few golden coins fall from Alfrid's corpse. Alfrid was saved by an evil person, the Master of Lake-Town; he was later saved by a good person, Bard, and finally, he made a decision himself to be greedy and coward, escaping with the gold. All of these moments lead him to his death and the unvoluntary salvation of Gandalf, who is now alive to act in *The Lord of the Rings*. Alfrid is a reduced, simpler version of what Gollum represented in *The Lord of the Rings* and presents the same topic. Of course, the elimination of his final scene in the theatrical version takes away everything interesting about him, which might explain, at least partially, why he is poorly considered by some.

5. Character Development: From a Tale to a Film Trilogy

In Tolkien's novel, everything revolves around its titular character. Bilbo is the only character who appears in almost every chapter —he is not present when Smaug is killed, but that is the only exception— and although the narrator does show thoughts belonging to other characters, his are not only prevalent but direct, showing what he thinks word for word while the rest are only told by the narrator. It is because of this that many aspects linked with Bilbo's journey but not witnessed by him are either told by other characters or directly ignored, and that character development is severely restricted to the little hobbit or, near the end, to Thorin Oakenshield. These two characters in particular see their development significantly altered in order to create a trilogy of films.

5.1. Bilbo Baggins: From The Shire to Mirkwood

Bilbo Baggins is "quite a little fellow in a wide world after all," as Gandalf describes him at the end of the novel (Tolkien, *The Hobbit* 351). Critics have analysed Bilbo's character carefully, given that he is at the centre of a tale in which he should not be at all. It is only because of Gandalf's intervention that he is forced to embark in an adventure which ends up being quite beneficial for him. Bilbo's journey is one of self-discovery, but also one of self-improvement: "Bilbo, on a microcosmic scale, is, therefore, nothing less than a figure and prefigurement of Smaug the dragon. He is afflicted with dragon sickness" (Pearce 7). The jealous attachment that the hobbit feels for his house disappears throughout the novel, substituted by a healthy appreciation of the comforts of home, but having such a reluctant protagonist could be detrimental for a film protagonist, which is why Peter Jackson gives Bilbo much more agency than Tolkien did, starting by the beginning of the journey. In Tolkien's novel, Bilbo does not choose to leave his home, but is almost pushed outside of Bag End by Gandalf:

> ""That leaves you just ten minutes. You will have to run," said Gandalf.
>
> "But—," said Bilbo.
>
> "No time for it," said the wizard.
>
> "But—," said Bilbo again.
>
> "No time for that either! Off you go!"
>
> To the end of his days Bilbo could never remember how he found himself outside, without a hat, a walking-stick or any money, or anything that he usually took when he went out; leaving his second breakfast half-finished and quite unwashed-up,

> pushing his keys into Gandalf's hands, and running as fast as his furry feet could carry him down the lane, past the great Mill, across The Water, and then on for a mile or more" (Tolkien, *The Hobbit* 36).

Films tend to feature protagonists that are more active than those in books. A film protagonist has around two hours to finish his development or an important part of it, if it is a film series. John Yorke, lecturer on narrative structure, stated that "if a character doesn't want something, they're passive. And if they're passive, they're effectively dead" (Yorke 8). Bilbo does not have a proper moment of agency, one in which he becomes a part of the group instead of being almost kidnapped by them, until the spider scene, which is "Bilbo's initiation in the world of the warrior [...]. He has come of age. He has become something more than he was before. He has grown-up" (Pearce 59). The problem with this moment is that it does not happen until the middle of the book or, in the trilogy, the second film. In the first plan of a two-film series, this would not have been a problem, because his development would have gotten to a turning point in the first film, but with the three-film scenario, that had to change.

Jackson and the rest of the screenwriters alter the character of Bilbo, who is not simply pushed by Gandalf out of his house, but does so himself in a brief moment of bravery. In the scene with the three trolls, the first serious danger that the Company of Thorin Oakenshield faces, Bilbo is partially the cause for the near death of the dwarves, as is the Bilbo from the film, but this second Bilbo manages to stall the trolls long enough for them to be turned into stone by the sun, whereas in the book this task was entirely undertaken by Gandalf. Later in the story, the group is captured by goblins and, in their escape, Bilbo falls from the back of one of the dwarves —who had to carry him because he was too slow— and bumps his head, falling unconscious, which leads to the scene with Gollum. In the film, Bilbo does not fall unconscious, but deliberately hides when the goblins apprehend them in order to save his friends. He does not manage to do so and ends up with Gollum anyways, but he has tried, which is much more than the Bilbo from the book ever did. What the writers are doing here is try to make a more active protagonist, one that, by the end of the first film, is emotionally attached to the group and their quest:

> "Bilbo: Look, I know you doubt me. I know... I know you always have. And you're right, I often think of Bag End. I miss my books, and my arm chair, and my garden. See, that's where I belong. That's home. And that's why I came back, cause... You don't have one. A home. It was taken from you, but I will help you take it back if I can." (*The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* 2:28:35).

By the end of *An Unexpected Journey*, Bilbo has understood the way his new friends are lacking a home and has an actual personal reason to stay with them. This moment is so important for Bilbo that it is even present on a musical level: while he is speaking, the music from the Shire can be heard, which reminds audiences of Bilbo's home, but as soon as he finishes his speech, the leitmotif that appears is that of the Misty Mountains, which is "a call to adventure and a symbol of the Quest itself" (Ojala). Bilbo now belongs to the group and shares their objective. On the contrary, the book's Bilbo missed his home several times throughout the story but never once thought of actually going back, even if he was a visible burden for the group until the scene with the spiders. The film adds this internal conflict in order to make Bilbo more realistic and relatable.

It is evident that Bilbo's development in the second and third films, with the exception of the moments with the spiders and the Arkenstone —very relevant, but also very brief— becomes less important, and that is because the book did not make Bilbo change all that much outside of these moments, which is why Thorin will be the character with more development from this point on. After Mirkwood and the spiders, Bilbo works in a similar way to that of the books: a companion of the dwarves, saving them from a series of dangers and putting his abilities to use. His outsider perspective —he understands the dwarves but he is not one of them— is as helpful as it is in the novel, because he is the only one capable of handing the Arkenstone to Thranduil and Bard to try to end a conflict between men, elves and dwarves. This selfless act is the conclusion of Bilbo's development and, after a few slight deviations, puts Bilbo in the same place he was at the end of the novel. The films, however, have the need to have a more compelling protagonist.

5.2. Thorin Oakenshield: From Mirkwood to Erebor

Thorin's character development is the exact opposite as Bilbo. It is not a surprise, since their experiences are also opposite: while Bilbo is straying further and further from his home, Thorin is going towards it. Bilbo learns throughout the story that he has to appreciate Bag End but not be jealously tied to it, while Thorin grows greedy about the Lonely Mountain and its contents. Thorin's salvation is, in fact, that Bilbo does not give him the Arkenstone —which would have given him command over the Seven Armies of the dwarves— which eventually snaps him out of his greed and makes him fight along with his fellow dwarves.

The second and third films, especially the third, focus more on Thorin than on Bilbo at times, which is understandable, since Bilbo's development, once he chooses to be there, consists mostly on him just being there at all. Thorin, however, starts with a clear objective that is progressively corrupted, as he gets closer to achieving it. The book does this change fairly quickly and in the last stages of the book, in which Thorin suddenly grows jealous of his treasure and becomes obsessed with the Arkenstone. However, once the battle of the Five Armies begins, Thorin and the dwarves immediately exit Erebor, where they had been awaiting, and fight. Thorin is badly wounded and, after apologising to Bilbo, dies. Because the narrator follows Bilbo so closely, the change operated in Thorin, both towards greed and against it, is very abrupt, and the films have to work with that.

In the films, Thorin's change is foreshadowed in the very first film, in which both Bilbo and the dwarf overhear Gandalf and Elrond speaking about the possibility of Thorin becoming obsessed with it. Audiences now know what to expect of Thorin, but the change is more progressive than it is in the book. For example, Thorin does not wait nor worries about Kili, his cousin, who is badly injured, and keeps going towards the Mountain with the rest of the dwarves and the hobbit, leaving Kili behind, as well as three other dwarves that stay with the wounded. Afterwards, when Bilbo is apparently at risk because the dragon has awakened, Thorin refuses to help him. These two extracts can be compared, one about Kili and the second one about Bilbo:

> "Fili: I will carry him [Kili] if I must!
>
> Thorin: One day you will be King and you will understand. I cannot risk the fate of this quest for the sake of one dwarf. Not even my own kin" (*The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug* 1:41:50).

> "Thorin: You're afraid.
>
> Balin: Yes, I'm afraid. I fear for you. A sickness lies upon that treasure horde. A sickness which drove your grandfather mad.
>
> Thorin: I am not my grandfather.
>
> Balin: You're not yourself. The Thorin I know would not hesitate to go in there.
>
> Thorin: I will not risk this quest for the life of one burglar.
>
> Balin: Bilbo. His name is Bilbo" (*The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug* 2:19:08).

The way he words both denials is different, portraying his increasing greed for the outcome of the quest: "I cannot risk the fate of this quest for the sake of one dwarf" implies that there is a sense of duty on his part, one that can —and does— contain his personal ambition, but one that is also related to the dwarves' lost home that goes beyond his own goals. The second quote, "I will not risk this quest for the life of one burglar," is very different. Thorin goes from *cannot* to *will not*, which is much more personal. It is not that he cannot, but that he does not want to do it, and now it is not just leaving a dwarf behind because he is sick, but letting Bilbo die. He also goes from respecting the injured dwarf, "my own kin," to depersonalizing the hobbit, calling him "burglar".

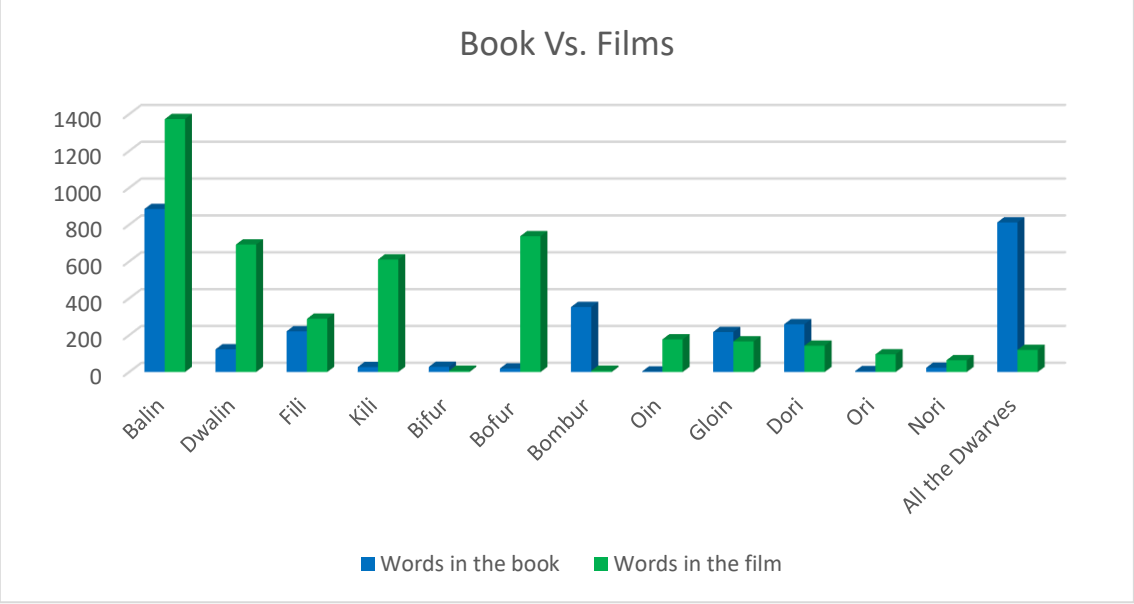
Richard Armitage, the actor portraying Thorin, said the following about the character: "I thought of it as more kind of Greek tragedy. I looked at Shakespeare, a lot of my preparation I was looking at *Henry V* and bits of *Richard III*, just to find roots in British literature that were deeper" (Woerner). The Shakespeare influence is quite evident in how he is portrayed, slowly descending into madness and with a tendency to monologue. Tolkien himself wrote him as a quite talkative dwarf, but the use that Jackson does is pretty clever when it comes to illustrate his madness, such as when, through editing and effects, Thorin's speech is slowed down in order to sound similar to that of the dragon.

If Thorin's obsession takes its time, Thorin's redemption is much more sudden. At this point, Jackson has to face that Thorin goes from madness and greed to a brave hero in the span of eight pages —from violently expelling Bilbo out of the Mountain to bravely fighting in the battle of the Five Armies. The screenwriters do their best to flesh out this by prolonging the battle as much as possible, even going as far as to make elves and dwarves fight first, which gives the opportunity to insert other moments with Thorin, such as when Dwalin tries to make him react. Shortly after, Thorin's pivotal scene provides a simple but very sharp metaphor in which the dwarf sees himself devoured by the gold, which awakens him from his morally decayed state, allowing him to reach the end of his development by sacrificing himself in order to kill Azog.

It would seem that Peter Jackson was particularly keen of Thorin as a character, but it is also true that, in the novel, Thorin is given more importance as the story progresses. It is a difficult task to make explicit what in the novel was left completely undescribed, but Jackson manages to put Thorin in the spotlight enough for his personal journey to make sense out of what was merely implied.

5.3. The Dwarves: The Lack of Development

In *The Hobbit*, the Company of Thorin Oakenshield consists of thirteen dwarves and the titular halfling. The narrator follows the hobbit, so the main focus is on him, but with that many dwarves, it is nearly impossible to give each of them a separate personality. The dwarves are Thorin Oakenshield, Fili, Kili, Balin, Dwalin, Bifur, Bofur, Bombur, Oin, Gloin, Dori, Ori and Nori, and if their names sound funny is because they were deliberately written to be funny. Most of these dwarves do not have character development or even a personality, and the translation of this to the screen has been controversial. In the book, the dwarves are precisely that, the dwarves, a group of people who sometimes talk as a group and whose personalities are not fleshed out in the slightest. Only four of the dwarves have an important quality: Thorin is the leader and the only one who changes throughout the story; Fili and Kili are Thorin's cousins, which makes them the next dwarves in the line of succession, and Balin becomes a friend of Bilbo throughout the adventure. The rest of the dwarves are mostly an excuse to have other characters talk and are often defined by one trait alone or are not defined at all. However, this does not mean that they have not been adapted and that there has been no thought put into them. Most of them have been presented in a different way to that of the book in order to fit the new medium.



This graphic[2] illustrates the dialogue of the book compared with that of the films regarding twelve of the thirteen dwarves that belong to the Company. Thorin has been omitted because both the films and the book treat him differently to the other dwarves in

many ways. These are "the dwarves", as they are often defined as a group in the novel, and the graphic shows several interesting aspects on the quantitative side that may point out other aspects in the qualitative side as to how they have been adapted.

In first place there is the group of dwarves, that is, the dwarves who work as a group and not as individuals. There was some criticism regarding the dwarves and how they were portrayed with people claiming that they were mere props, but the book already did this and the film is forced to focus on just a few of them. Dori, Ori, Nori, Oin, Gloin, Bifur and Bombur are background characters for most of the trilogy. Their dialogue, both in the book and the films, is mostly irrelevant or could have been uttered by every other dwarf and there would not have been a difference. Jackson, however, does provide most of them with some personal traits or moments to shine, such as Gloin's brief mention of his son —Gimli, from *The Lord of the Rings*—, Bifur's axe that is stuck in his forehead or Oin's position as the group's medic. The only character that really has an important presence in the films from this group is Bombur, who in the book is described as fat at least eight times —not insultingly, just as a fact—, most of them by the narrator. Jackson takes this idea and runs with it, putting Bombur, who speaks only once in the three films, as the slapstick action hero of the series, with moments like the long shot of the dwarf inside a barrel, bouncing out of the river and crushing orcs as he goes. His size is used as a comedic relief and as an excuse to aim higher with some action set-pieces. However, he is the exception, and Jackson does not take as much care with all of them, but Tolkien did not either, so it is an inherited problem, if a problem at all. These dwarves are there to create the feeling of a company and to have a common objective which this paper will address in the following section.

Secondly, there are the dwarves which are distinct enough from their fellows for it to be relevant: Fili and Bofur. These dwarves do not help move forward the plot, but work on an emotional level and are much more developed than their book counterparts. Bofur serves as a representative of the other dwarves, as if he were talking for them, in two scenes which Bilbo. Fili, on the other hand, has been substantially boosted as a character, with one particular scene, that in which Thorin leaves Kili in Lake-Town:

> "Fili: Uncle, we grew up on tales of the mountain. Tales you told us. You cannot take that away from him!
>
> Kili: Fili.

> Fili: I will carry him if I must!
>
> Thorin: One day you will be King and you will understand. I cannot risk the fate of this quest for the sake of one dwarf. Not even my own kin.
>
> Thorin: Fili, don't be a fool. You belong with the company.
>
> Fili: I belong with my brother" (*The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug* 1:41:44).

Nowhere in the book there is any allusion to the brothers' relationship. It is completely forgotten until the end, when it simply signifies the end of their side of the family. In this departure from the novel, some of the dwarves stay in Lake-Town to take care of Kili, including his brother. This scene works as the set up for Fili's death, making it an emotionally relevant moment. In the book, the reader fills up what Tolkien does not, but in the films, Jackson sees the opportunity to make it more emotionally comprehensive, and adding scenes such as this —or the ones between Bilbo and Bofur— is his way of doing it.

Finally, there are two other dwarves that also change, as can be seen in the graphic: Balin and Dwalin. These two characters serve as the intellectual and physical representatives of the group, with Balin serving as a more expository character —he narrates the flashback of the battle of Azanulbizar— and Dwalin being focused on action. Both have a purpose moving the plot forward by being more outspoken than the rest and both have an emotional task, showing how the dwarves feel towards Thorin's behaviour after their entrance in Erebor. Choosing Balin in particular to fill this role was a clever move by Jackson, since the more attentive viewers would remember him from *The Lord of the Rings*, where he laid dead in Moria, in one of the key scenes from the first film. In the book, Dwalin would belong to the first category of the group of dwarves, being mostly a background character, and Balin occupied Bofur's role in the films, whereas here he is allowed to be a little bit more than Bilbo's friend. The conclusion is that Jackson not only shows interest in the dwarves, but tries to give a function to as many as he can. Thirteen characters are too many to give them more development, but many of them see their roles expanded in a coherent manner.

There is one last dwarf that has been omitted from this analysis, Kili, but his story is intertwined with a different character, Tauriel, as will be seen in the following pages. However, before that, there is one final explanation for Jackson's approach to the dwarves: the concept of home. Home is what Bilbo is chained to and is what the dwarves are lacking. In a similar way to Thorin, although not exactly the same, the dwarves are

trying to get back home, and that melancholy for what they do not have accompanies them always, even in the soundtrack of the film. The theme of Erebor is always with them, from the prologue of the film, when audiences first hear it, to other moments, especially when they finally see the Mountain in the second film. It is "an ever-present memory of the mountain kingdom that calls to the dwarven company and urges them on to retake their old home" (Ojala). In the scene in which they see the mountain, the Erebor leitmotif is followed by Thorin's leitmotif, equally melancholic, because at that point their desire is the same. As Thorin becomes obsessed with the treasure, their motifs, personal and musical, diverge. The dwarves represent, then, the purity of the journey back home, one that longs for what Bilbo already had. This could be understood from the book and there are moments in which it is implied, but the screenwriters make it not only explicit, but one of the emotional cores of the films.

6. Two Different Approaches to Adaptation in *The Hobbit* Trilogy

The Hobbit trilogy has often been criticised for being too different from its written counterpart. Some have even gone as far as to say that "their failure as adaptations of Tolkien's work is hard to overlook" and that "the filmic *Hobbit* is only minimally based on the novel" (Oziewicz 265). This criticism against Jackson's alterations of the source material on a narrative level is not new and already appeared when *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy was released in the early 2000s. It is undeniable that in both cases, but especially in *The Hobbit* trilogy, Jackson is not afraid to stray far from the book when he deems it convenient, even on major plot points and characters. His changes, however, are never done without a reason and, most of the times, are meant to better translate a written story to an audio-visual medium. On the other hand, Jackson is also very faithful to the books in other respects, and these two approaches, the fearless changes and the loyalty to the written word, coexist in *The Hobbit* trilogy in a blend of reverence for the original source and the necessity to make changes to retell the story in a different form.

6.1. Beyond the Source Material

The Hobbit has one particular and very important villain: Smaug. Tolkien himself painted an illustration that featured the dragon front and centre, which would be used as the cover for multiple editions of the book throughout the years, and yet, Smaug only appears in the latter third of the book. The book is written with a very clearly serialized structure: most chapters provide a new threat that is defeated in that same chapter. However, the emotional connection with both threats and moments of peace is very limited: the trolls, the stone giants, the goblins, Gollum —at least, not in this book—, the wargs, Beorn, the spiders or the elves. "A protagonist and his story can only be as intellectually fascinating and emotionally compelling as the forces of antagonism make them" (McKee 317), but in *The Hobbit*, every single enemy besides Smaug —and in a very collateral way, Bolg— are a mere series of loosely connected challenges, if connected at all, that the heroes have to face to continue with their quest. In order to create a more coherent structure, Jackson created an overarching narrative that has its most important piece in the character of Azog.

This following reference is everything related to Azog, the orc, in the book *The Hobbit*:

> ""I did not 'get hold of it,' I was given it," said the wizard. "Your grandfather Thror was killed, you remember, in the mines of Moria by Azog the Goblin."
>
> "Curse his name, yes," said Thorin" (Tolkien, *The Hobbit* 30).

In the films, however, Azog is one of the main antagonists: he is the actual main antagonist of *An Unexpected Journey* and plays a very important part in the second and third instalments of the trilogy, in which he is always Thorin's nemesis. Bolg, Azog's son —although this is not revealed in the book but in the *Appendices*—, also appears in *The Hobbit* and is mentioned a mere five times. His appearance is limited to the battle of the Five Armies, being killed by Beorn without any dialogue at all, which is also very little compared to his presence in the last two films in the trilogy, in which he fights with his father against the dwarves.

In order to make a more cohesive story, Jackson allows himself to play with a series of characters and changes their position in Tolkien's world to better serve his purposes. In the case of Azog and Bolg, most of his information comes from the *Appendices*, in which Tolkien described Azog as a great orc[3] that was killed in the battle of Azanulbizar prior to the events of *The Hobbit*. In the *Appendices*, it is stated that the orc killed Thorin's grandfather, which caused the battle, but, in the films, Thorin's grandfather dies during that same battle, killed by Azog, who survives. Jackson needs an antagonist to move the action forward until Smaug finally appears and that role is assumed by the orc. By doing this, events such as the wargs assembly are now not simply due to bad luck, but fruit of a deliberate chase done by this character, who wants to kill Thorin and his entire dynasty —which includes Thorin's cousins, Fili and Kili. Azog managed to kill Thorin's grandfather and kidnapped Thorin's father, giving the dwarf a reason to want to kill him. These two characters, then, have a personal grudge against each other, making for a much more personal conflict.

Meanwhile, Bolg serves as a substitute for Azog when he is forced to answer to his master, the Necromancer, but Bolg is given a different opponent: Legolas. It is explained that Bolg belonged to the group of orcs that killed Legolas's mother, making the elf particularly resentful against them. As we can see, what Jackson is doing is creating interpersonal relationships between the characters in order to provoke an emotional response from the audience.

These changes, even if they stray away from the book, provide closure in the last film, in which a simultaneous fight between Legolas and Bolg and between Thorin and Azog occurs, reaching the climax for the four characters at the same time. In his book, *The Anatomy of Story*, John Truby claims that "a simplistic opposition between two characters kills any chance at depth, complexity or the reality of human life in your story. For that,

you need a web of oppositions" (Truby 94), and in this final confrontation audiences see a series of characters interact with and against each other for a variety of reasons: Azog and Thorin kill each other, fulfilling their objectives —although Thorin wins, since he deliberately chooses to sacrifice himself to kill the orc—; Legolas helps Thorin, which paves the way for the elf's relationship with Gimli years later and is the payoff for a previous scene in which Thorin helped him; and finally, Bolg gets his comeuppance, being killed by Legolas, whom he had previously defeated unfairly in combat. The complexity of this conflict can be compared with how it is portrayed in the book:

> "But even with the Eagles they were still outnumbered. In that last hour Beorn himself had appeared—no one knew how or from where. He came alone, and in bear's shape; and he seemed to have grown almost to giant-size in his wrath.
>
> The roar of his voice was like drums and guns; and he tossed wolves and goblins from his path like straws and feathers. He fell upon their rear, and broke like a clap of thunder through the ring. The dwarves were making a stand still about their lords upon a low rounded hill. Then Beorn stooped and lifted Thorin, who had fallen pierced with spears, and bore him out of the fray.
>
> Swiftly he returned and his wrath was redoubled, so that nothing could withstand him, and no weapon seemed to bite upon him. He scattered the bodyguard, and pulled down Bolg himself and crushed him. Then dismay fell on the Goblins and they fled in all directions" (Tolkien, *The Hobbit* 334)

The battle of the Five Armies in the book is partially told in past tense because Bilbo is hit in the head and later told what happened while he was asleep. Although it works for Tolkien, it is also clear that Azog and Bolg were necessary antagonists in order to sustain such a long trilogy and Jackson managed to give each character new motivations that fit with their personalities, as well as a narratively appropriate ending. However, not every addition to the book is born out of a narrative need, and Tauriel is one of these additions.

6.1.1. The Problem of Tauriel

Tauriel was the single most controversial addition to *The Hobbit* trilogy, which is ironic because this is not the first time a female elf has been introduced in an adaptation of *The Hobbit* in that same point of the story: the 2003 video game based on the book did a similar thing with a character called Lianna, although she was not part of a love triangle and her role was more secondary. In both cases, the addition is probably due to the fact that the number of lines uttered by female characters in the book is zero, which is not a negative quality of the book by itself, but it makes sense that the creative minds behind

the trilogy would want to add women to the story —they also added Galadriel to the film in a brief but very relevant role, as she had in *The Lord of the Rings*. Tauriel is an elf who lives with the Mirkwood elves and who is attracted to Legolas. However, once she meets Kili, the dwarf, she is attracted to him as well, and both of these male characters are attracted to her. *The Desolation of Smaug*, the film in which Tauriel was first introduced, was released in 2013, which was just a year after *The Twilight Saga* ended and in the midst of a series of young-adult films which were at their peak of popularity at the time. The genre died down in the following years, at least in the silver screen, but one of its trademarks was the love triangle. Evangeline Lilly, the actress who portrays Tauriel, explained the reason behind this subplot in an interview:

> "When I started out and I was engaged on this job, my one stipulation, the one thing I said to them: 'In order to be in this job you have to promise me I will not be in a love triangle.' [...] And they said: 'We promise you you won't be in a love triangle.' And then, we came back for reshoots and, seriously, this was added. We came back for reshoots in 2012 —we'd finished shooting in 2011, we came back in 2012 for reshoots—, and they were like 'Uh, the studio would really like to see...' and I was like 'Here we go, here we go,' and sure enough I'm in another love triangle" (Doty).

It is, then, quite safe to assume that this love triangle was not Peter Jackson's idea, but rather an idea from one of the producing companies, maybe in an attempt to capitalize some of the success of other intellectual properties.

Unfortunately, the subplot does break the established world of Tolkien, in that this kind of relationship was not just rare, but non-existent, as fans pointed out: "Tauriel's relationship with the other two changes their character and those changes ripple and reverberate through the rest of Middle-earth history, both in the book and Jackson's previous films *The Lord of the Rings*" (Lynn 16). Lynn is alluding the change that this character operates in both Kili and Legolas, especially the latter since he appears in the story of the War of the Ring. On the other hand, most critics of Tauriel and her relationship with both male characters fail to mention that Legolas and Kili also have development outside of this character dynamic: Kili with the dwarves and Legolas with Thorin and with his father, and both of these are arguably much more important and definitive than their relationship with her. It is evident, however, that this does break some of the core concepts established in Tolkien's mythology —the dwarves were initially not created by Eru, which would make a romantic relationship impossible, but this goes much

deeper into Tolkien's *Silmarillion*. It is still soon to see how time will digest the short space that is given to this romantic subplot, but although it is true that it goes against what Tolkien would have done narratively, it does not seem to affect as much as others have said.

Tauriel herself, however, is an invention of Guillermo del Toro, and traces of what she was supposed to be before being a love interest —or at least, a love interest for two characters— are still present:

> "Tauriel: It is our fight. It will not end here. With every victory this evil will grow. If your father has his way, we will do nothing. We will hide within our walls, live our lives away from the light and let darkness descend. Are we not part of this world? Tell me, *mellon* [friend], when did we let evil become stronger than us?" (*The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug* 1:31:05)

Tauriel is actually making one of the same points of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, in which the hobbit Merry makes a similar point:

> "Treebeard: The Ents cannot hold back this storm. We must weather such things as we have always done.
>
> Merry Brandybuck: How can that be your decision?
>
> Treebeard: This is not our war.
>
> Merry Brandybuck: But you're part of this world! Aren't you? You must help! Please! You must do something" (*The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* 2:50:40).

This idea is very present in *The Hobbit*, especially when Thranduil, Legolas's father, decides to fight against the orcs in the battle of the Five Armies. Most experts agree that Tolkien was heavily influenced by his experience in the 1st World War, saying that "war runs like iron ore through the bones of Tolkien's Middle Earth" (Garth). The concept of standing aside and not doing anything or actually trying to improve the situation is at the centre of his stories, as we can see in the way the protagonists in both stories are forced to leave the warmth of their homes to fight in a war that is far from them. Tauriel is fighting, not because there is someone she loves, but because it is the right thing to do and, in doing so, is entirely in line with the spirit of Tolkien's texts. It is true that the studio-mandated romantic triangle is contradictory when one looks at Jackson's work in this and the previous trilogy, but there are still things to appreciate about this character.

However, additions are not the only way in which *The Hobbit*'s scripts were written. Despite their obvious licenses with the source material, Jackson adapts some moments with reverence and yet has to confront the impossibility of a completely faithful adaptation.

6.2. The Automatic Difference

One common problem of narratives that are structured around a journey is to make the destination worthwhile. It is interesting to see how C.S. Lewis, a friend of Tolkien who belonged to the same literary group as him, the Inklings[4], had to face this very challenge with *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, the fifth entry —third chronologically— of the *Narnia* series[5]. Both authors approach this structure in a different fashion and the comparison shows how both ideas are possible. In *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, the destination does not matter as much as the journey itself, which is achieved by giving most encounters a similar sense of importance and not providing a definitive end goal. The characters in Lewis's book are travelling and have a place which they may or may not be able to find, but the character development and the sense of adventure are the main focus. Tolkien, on the other hand, puts Smaug as the inevitable destination of the journey, one that is always looming in the distance. Before the Company has to enter in Mirkwood, a dark forest full of dangers, they are discouraged upon seeing that what they thought would be an easy, if long journey, was turning into a difficult adventure with a likely tragic ending:

> "They thanked him [Beorn], of course, with many bows and sweepings of their hoods and with many an "at your service, O master of the wide wooden halls!" But their spirits sank at his grave words, and they all felt that the adventure was far more dangerous than they had thought, while all the time, even if they passed all the perils of the road, the dragon was waiting at the end" (Tolkien, *The Hobbit* 155).

Smaug is always present in the characters' thoughts and Tolkien knew that that encounter would have to be worth the expectations he was setting up. The conversation between Bilbo and Smaug has become one of the most beloved moments in this book, one in which Bilbo manages to behave as Gandalf expected of him and survives the deadly encounter with the dragon. It is the point in which Bilbo puts to use everything he has learned about the world and about himself. Besides this, Tolkien killed the dragon in a spectacular fashion with Bard, the archer, who manages to shoot an arrow into a weak spot of Smaug's armour while the creature attacks Lake-Town, burning it to the ground. To top

this off, Gandalf comes with the news that not one, but two armies are coming and men, elves and dwarves fight together against their enemies. It is a triple conclusion in which action becomes more desperate and the themes are more present than ever in Thorin's selfishness, but it is the conversation with the dragon what readers tend to remember more fondly.

Peter Jackson teases audiences with the dragon, giving glimpses of him in the first film without ever showing him to keep it as a surprise for the big revelation without letting viewers forget him. Audiences went into the second film expecting this exact moment and the screenwriters, instead of changing anything, left that conversation almost intact. Bilbo and Smaug have the same dialogue, almost word for word, as in the book. There are, however, changes that are inevitable, of the kind that Robert Stam calls the Automatic Difference:

> "The shift, in adaptation, from a single-track, uniquely verbal medium such as the novel to a multitrack medium like film, which can play not only with words (written and spoken) but also with music, sound effects, and moving photographic images, explains the unlikelihood, and I would suggest even the **undesirability**, of literal fidelity [...] Fidelity in adaptation is literally impossible. A filmic adaptation is **automatically** different and original due to the change of medium" (Stam 17).

In Tolkien's illustration of the dragon, we can see a series of details like the immense pile of gold, the actual appearance of the dragon and a small peak at Erebor, but the film changes most of it. At the time of writing *The Hobbit*, cinema was a relatively new medium, and although some advances had been made by the time Tolkien published the second edition of *The Hobbit* in 1951, it was far from what audiences would expect in 2012. Films with dragons had already been shown in the silver screen, from *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (2005) to *Eragon* (2006) and others, so the idea of a dragon that could impress a hobbit as the one in the illustration was no longer impressive for an average film enthusiast. In the same vein as the rest of the trilogy, Jackson makes everything bigger: the dragon, the gold —there is so much that audiences have to assume that they will not see everything Erebor hides— and the Mountain itself are immense. This is not only due to the exaggerated nature of this trilogy, but also to one-up what the previous one showed: Moria. Erebor was always going to be compared to the abandoned dwarven kingdom of Moria, and the Lonely Mountain had to be as impressive as that place or more. Jackson uses the Automatic Difference, that is, the unavoidable variation

between two media when they tell the same story, to his advantage: knowing that he cannot possibly achieve absolute faithfulness, he just takes everything that was described and makes it larger. Audiences were satisfied with this approach and its alleged loyalty to the book, when in fact it is only faithful from a screenwriting perspective.

7. One Open Thread: Narrative Links with *The Lord of the Rings*

Most changes presented in this paper until now were mostly self-contained to *The Hobbit*'s narrative. Tauriel does build upon themes seen in *The Lord of the Rings,* and Legolas was a part of that story, but their narrative connection to that story in *The Hobbit* is small. Legolas is sent by his father to find Aragorn, a character that appears in *The Lord of the Rings*, but that is the only repercussion. On the other hand, the White Council's battle against the Necromancer is the only plot thread that remains open even after the film ends, implying that the victory at the battle of the Five Armies is temporary.

The White Council is a group of elves and wizards that reunited to fight against the Necromancer. In *The Hobbit*, Gandalf abruptly leaves Thorin's Company to go with the White Council and expel this evil character from the fortress of Dol Guldur. This event would be of capital importance for the War of the Ring seen in the sequel, but Tolkien was unsure of what was to happen exactly when he wrote *The Hobbit*. In the films, the confrontation in Dol Guldur is an entire subplot devoted to linking *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. While the central plot with the dwarves and the dragon ends, this subplot remains open because it is a prologue to what will happen in *The Lord of the Rings*. However, in order to make it fit within the narrative of the trilogy, Jackson chooses to give it its own development.

In the books, the White Council reunites to expel the Necromancer knowing the actual identity of this character. In the films, Gandalf is investigating him, trying to uncover who is in the fortress and why, giving it a sense of progression that was not present in the book but that has a reason to exist in the films, because this story was entirely disconnected from the events of Bilbo's journey. Jackson chooses to link the two of them by creating a conspiracy between Smaug and Sauron, giving the story higher stakes than in the original book. In *The Hobbit*, the dwarves reclaiming their homeland was all that mattered whereas in the trilogy the dwarves' mission could impact the entire Middle Earth. As this paper has remarked before, Tolkien wrote several details of what happened in *The Hobbit* while Bilbo was on his quest, and Jackson builds a secondary plot that connects both trilogies narratively.

This intention of making the six films as one continuous story is all the more evident in the last moments of *The Hobbit* trilogy, when old Bilbo reappears and his reunion with Gandalf, seen from the wizard's perspective in the first film of *The Lord of the Rings,* is

now seen from Bilbo's perspective. One story ends where the other begins, linking them as closely as possible.

8. Conclusion

Although it has already been widely discussed, and most experts tend to agree, that when talking about adaptations "'fidelity' to the original text (however distinguished) is a wholly inappropriate and unhelpful criterion for either understanding or judgement" (McFarlane 15), it is also a concept that is impossible to avoid, and that unavoidability has one of its maximum representatives in Jackson's adaptations of Tolkien's books. People still argue about the changes to the source material done by Jackson in *The Lord of the Rings* film trilogy, as famous and acclaimed as it is, such as the erasure of characters like Tom Bombadil, the changes of Aragorn, whose development is opposite to how he was presented in the novel, or the way some pivotal moments of the end, such as the Scourging of the Shire were completely cut from the story. Christopher Tolkien, son of the author and editor of his posthumous work, claimed that Jackson's adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings* "eviscerated the book by making it an action movie for young people aged 15 to 25" (Jagernauth). However, when *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy was released, fans were "willing to see changes and looked forward to the films as a way of continuing the experience of the books and validating their devotion to them" (Hunter 157). This is a very different scenario from that in which *The Hobbit* trilogy was released, since even before the first film arrived to theatres, people were already wary of the idea of a new trilogy, as was Christopher Tolkien, who did not look forward to the new adaptation: "It seems that *The Hobbit* will be the same kind of film [as the previous ones]" (Jagernauth).

Peter Jackson and his team had to make these films under enormous pressure, only for the films to be lukewarmly received by a vocal part of the fans, and yet, it is evident that there was an indescribable amount of love for the source material, and more than that: knowledge. Jackson, Boyens, Walsh and Del Toro understood the text so well that they arrived to the conclusion that the only way to adapt it "faithfully" was to go the opposite direction and embrace the differences in a way that Tolkien himself considered doing. It is also unheard of in the history of filmmaking that a director and his team managed to change an entire trilogy as they filmed it, and that the result was a series of films with their own distinctive structure and an overarching narrative which manages to both tie up every loose end of its own story and set up the previous trilogy retroactively. That alone would be reason enough to appreciate and analyse these films, but the way the themes of humanity, greed, friendship, home and the religious subtext were transported from the

written page to the silver screen is nothing short of genius, even if Jackson's approach — which is still very much personal— can be controversial.[6]

Despite its possible flaws, *The Hobbit* trilogy is a wonderful adaptation of the original text, one that was done by people who truly understood and respected the source material and who knew how to translate it to a different medium. This trilogy will undoubtedly gain in popularity and appreciation in the coming years, as people abandon the initial pile-on and start to analyse the numerous, often brilliant creative decisions that took place behind these films.

Endnotes

[1] There are two versions of each film in *The Hobbit* trilogy: theatrical and extended. Peter Jackson adds and reedits scenes in the extended version, as he did with *The Lord of the Rings*, for those more interested in the characters and the story. This is the version used for the analysis of this paper, since it is longer, more complete and a better representative of what the director was trying to achieve, particularly in the third instalment of the trilogy, which is the one that diverges the most from the book.

[2] This graphic was made by compiling every quote from each of the dwarves from the novel and from the films. The films' script was never officially released, so a transcribed version of the theatrical release of each of the films was used (The Hobbit Movies). After careful revision, it was edited by the author of this paper, adding the scenes from the extended edition from a different webpage that deals with different cuts of films called Movie Censorship (Muck47). These sources can be found in the Works Cited section at the end of this paper.

[3] In the extract the narrator describes him as a goblin but, in Tolkien's texts, *goblin* and *orc* were synonyms. *Orc* would eventually prevail and is much more easily linked with Tolkien's texts directly than *goblin* but in *The Hobbit* he still used that noun.

[4] The Inklings were "no more (and no less) than a number of friends, all of whom were male and Christian, and most of whom were interested in literature" (Carpenter 166). They would sometimes share their texts with each other and make comments about them. Tolkien and Lewis became the most famous members of this group.

[5] The *Chronicles of Narnia* series (1950-1956) contains seven books, all of them directed towards children and much more explicitly Christian than Tolkien's texts. The books are set in Narnia, a fantastic world which is visited by the young protagonists in which they experience exciting adventures.

[6] Controversial but successful, since it seems that the cinematic world created by both Tolkien and Jackson has not said its last word: an anime film based on some parts of the *Appendices* is currently being developed with the name of *The War of the Rohirrim* and "scribe Philippa Boyens will be a consultant on the new project" (D'Alessandro). Peter Jackson is not directly involved in the film but it will be set in his universe and it will be

very interesting to analyse how this adaptation evolves with new people directing while keeping in line with Jackson's work.

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