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Komericializace J. R. R. Tolkienova Hobita ve filmových adaptacích

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and Education



The Commercialization of J. R. R. Tolkien's The Hobbit in Its Film Adaptations

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Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Cílem práce je poukázat na to, že filmové adaptace románu Hobit J. R. R. Tolkiena jsou značně komercializovány.

Metody:

1. Studium odborné literatury.
2. Porovnání aspektů stylu vyprávění ve filmech a v románu.
3. Zjištění rozdílů mezi předlohou a filmovými adaptacemi z hlediska komercializace.

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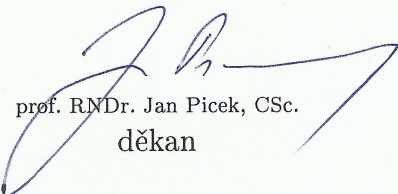
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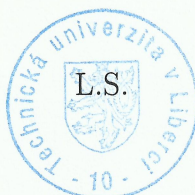
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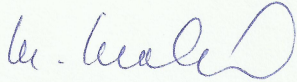
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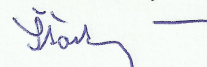
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Anotace

Tato bakalářská práce pojednává o různých případech nadměrné komercializace ve filmových adaptacích J. R. R. Tolkienova románu *Hobit*. Práce zkoumá změny, které byly provedeny během procesu adaptace tohoto známého románu na filmovou trilogii od Petera Jacksona, a snaží se poukázat na to, že hlavní motivací pro mnoho z těchto změn byla skutečně komercializace.

Klíčová slova:

Hobit, Peter Jackson, John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, komercializace, adaptace

Annotation

This bachelor thesis discusses various instances of excessive commercialization in the film adaptations of J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*. The thesis explores the changes that have been made during the process of adapting this famous novel into a film trilogy by Peter Jackson, and attempts to call attention to the fact that the main motivation for many of these changes was, in fact, commercialization.

Key Words:

The Hobbit, Peter Jackson, John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, commercialization, adaptation

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1 Introduction

The aim of this paper is to identify and analyse cases of excessive commercialization in the film adaptations of J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*. Despite the existence of several other, mostly animated film adaptations of this famous novel, this paper focuses on the live-action trilogy from 2012 – 2014 by Peter Jackson, both the theatrical and the extended editions of these films.

In this paper, I am going to analyse the differences in the narrative styles of the films and the source material. I am further going to explore the changes that have been made during the process of adaptation of *The Hobbit* and attempt to determine whether commercialization was the main motivator behind these changes. If the incentive for these changes were indeed chiefly commercial interests, I am going to attempt to discover whether the changes might have affected the films in a negative way. I am going to provide examples of similar conduct in other Hollywood adaptations and use both academic and other sources to support my claims.

2 Commercialization

The Oxford dictionary defines *Commercialization* as “The process of managing or running something principally for financial gain.” (Oxford Dictionaries 2019). I acknowledge that majority of films, especially in Hollywood, are made for profit. Film making is a business after all, and at the very least, the films need to pay for their – usually considerable – production costs. For this reason, this paper is only focused on what could be considered an “excessive or unnecessary” commercialization in these film adaptations, which may have possibly, if not probably, transpired at the expense of the quality of the final product. Furthermore, I do not consider marketing for a film to be commercialization and it is therefore not going to be addressed in this paper.

3 The Hobbit

The Hobbit is an early work of J. R. R. Tolkien’s. It is a children’s fantasy novel, which was published in 1937, was immediately critically acclaimed and during the following years took its place among the absolute classics in children’s literature (Auden 1954, Rothman 2017).

The Hobbit follows the story of one Bilbo Baggins, a respectable, comfort-loving hobbit from the Shire, who decides to embark on a dangerous quest in the company of thirteen dwarves and a wizard. The reader follows Bilbo on his journey, as he initially struggles to navigate through perilous adventures, but eventually discovers his courage and maturity.

At first, *The Hobbit* was meant only as a story for Tolkien’s children. Only years later did he expand his legendarium and incorporated *The Hobbit* in it, serving as a prequel to *The Lord of the Rings* (Carpenter 1981, Letter#163).

4 *The Hobbit* Trilogy

The Hobbit trilogy is a three-part film series that was released in theatres in Decembers of the years 2012 – 2014. It is predominantly based on *The Hobbit* novel, but uses some appendices from *The Return of the King* as source material, as well. It was directed by Peter Jackson, who had already shot an immensely successful trilogy based on Tolkien's fantasy universe. For this reason, expectations were high, and pressure tremendous. Of all Hollywood trilogies, *The Hobbit* had been given the largest budget to date (Garofalo 2014). In fact, the expectations of success were so enormous that it was rumoured that Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc., the producing studio of this trilogy, which is arguably also the largest film studio in Hollywood (WarnerBros. 2019), had intended for the three *Hobbit* films to be the highest-grossing films of their respective years. Even though the Warner Bros. studio did not succeed in this particular endeavour (IMDb 2019a), *The Hobbit* trilogy was still a major financial accomplishment. Altogether, with a budget of \$750 million, the trilogy grossed circa \$3 billion worldwide (The Numbers 2019). Taking inflation into account, these figures are comparable to what *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy made (IMDb 2019a).

Thus, with the studio's goal more or less achieved, one could expect *The Hobbit* trilogy to be a worthy successor to its beloved, critically acclaimed predecessor. Yet, the situation seems to be radically different. Even though *The Hobbit* certainly does have its follower base, not only are the fans not as enthusiastic (Rotten Tomatoes 2019), but Peter Jackson himself admits that *The Hobbit* is not as good as it could have been, nor as good as its predecessor (Child 2015, McMillan 2015).

4.1 Peter Jackson

Peter Jackson is an acclaimed film director, producer, and screenwriter. He was born in New Zealand in 1961. He is best known as the director of *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, two world-famous trilogies adapted from the novels of J. R. R. Tolkien.

Since his early years, Jackson was drawn to cinematography and began making short home films as a teenager. He started his career with splatter film, a subgenre of horror film which focuses on graphic portrayals of gore and violence. His first film was a horror comedy picture called *Bad Taste*. During production, Jackson met his future life partner and co-screenwriter Fran Walsh, with whom he has two children. *Bad Taste* premiered in 1987. It was well received and praised for its ingenious special effects. Two years later Jackson released his next creative endeavour - *Meet the Feebles*. A black comedy film featuring puppets, on which Jackson for the first time worked with Richard Taylor and Tania Rodger, the people who later founded Weta Workshop, a special effect and prop company that would work on every single one of Jackson's future films. Since then, chiefly thanks to the success of *The Lord of the Rings*, Weta has become an industry giant in charge of special effects for many large-budget Hollywood pictures (Woods 2005). Other Jackson's notable projects are, for instance, *Braindead*, *Heavenly Creatures*, *The Frighteners*, *King Kong*, or *They Shall Not Grow Old*, a World War I documentary in which Jackson and his team use cutting edge technology to restore and colorize never-before-seen historical footage (Buerk 2018).

Jackson has won several Academy Awards, including the ones for Best Director and Best Picture (IMDb 2019b), and has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. His devotion to New Zealand is legendary. He shot all his pictures there,

and the success of *The Lord of the Rings* significantly boosted New Zealand's economy (Pinchevsky 2012). For his life's work, Sir Peter Jackson has been awarded the Order of New Zealand, as well as the New Zealand Order of Merit.

In the film industry, Jackson is known as a man of great ingenuity, ambition, creativity, and resourcefulness (Sibley 2006). However, as I am going to examine in this paper, *The Hobbit* project might have, for various reasons, put even a man of his talents and experience to the test and perhaps make him forget his values in the face of overwhelming circumstances.

4.2 *The Hobbit vs. The Lord of the Rings*

The Lord of the Rings and *The Hobbit* are both three-part film series released over a period of three years. Both are adaptations based on Tolkien's legendarium. Both have comparable run times and box office earnings, and they both share the same director, Peter Jackson. Yet, for some reason, the former received significantly higher recognition than the latter.

While it is impossible to objectively measure artistic quality, it is possible to analyse factors such as ratings, awards, and respected opinions. The majority of the data available suggests that *The Hobbit* trilogy is seen as a product artistically inferior to its precursor. For instance, such a consensus seems apparent visiting Metacritic and Rotten Tomatoes, arguably two of the most influential film rating websites, where professional film critics and fans alike can make their opinions known. *The Hobbit* films average 61% on Metacritic and 67% on Rotten Tomatoes, whereas *The Lord of the Rings* films average 91% and 94% respectively (Metacritic 2019, Rotten Tomatoes 2019). Examining other similar websites, such as IMDb or CSFD (to see the films' standing in our Czech context as well), does not make any

significant difference; the results follow nearly identical trend (IMDb 2019b, CSFD 2019).

Another measure of critical acclaim can be the number of film prizes and nominations, the kings of which are the Academy Awards. *The Lord of the Rings* films garnered an impressive 30 Academy Award nominations and 17 wins. Furthermore, they did this in an upward-trending manner, in which *The Return of the King* won staggering and record-breaking 11 Oscars (IMDb 2019b), suggesting the fans were getting more excited as the trilogy advanced and the last film was a culmination of the entire project. In contrast, *The Hobbit* only managed 8 nominations and 1 victory, in a downward-trending manner, in which *The Unexpected Journey* took the single award (BBC 2013) and *The Battle of the Five Armies* received the least recognition (IMDb 2019b).

It is true that the Academy Award results each year are affected by a variety of diverse political and social factors, and thus should not be considered a direct measure of a film's artistic values. However, when the differences between such similar film series are as marked as in the case of these two, it is highly likely that artistic value plays a major role.

What is now left to be determined is whether commercialization was responsible for this diminishment in quality.

5 Primary Instances of Commercialization in *The Hobbit*

5.1 From Two to Three

The decision to make the third film is probably considered the most controversial amongst the disgruntled fan base of the franchise.

The Hobbit adaptation was first conceptualized in 2006. The films were officially announced in December 2007; originally as a two-part enterprise, with Peter Jackson as the executive producer (Glaister 2007). In 2011, when the names of the films and their release dates were announced, it was still to be a two-film project (BBC 2011). In the meantime, Jackson replaced Guillermo del Toro in directing the project. Rumours of *The Hobbit* trilogy started to appear in 2012. In July of the same year, after Peter Jackson had confirmed this to be true via a Facebook post (Jackson 2012a), the decision received mixed reactions. While many people were just excited to see more of Middle-earth, others, who were more familiar with the source material, were worried. Especially since Jackson had previously said about the project that “One of the drawbacks of *The Hobbit* is it is relatively lightweight compared to *The Lord of the Rings*” (Bailey 2014). At first, it was speculated that the reason behind this decision may have been pressure from the studio to create more profit. We have seen many examples of this problem in Hollywood over the years, though never quite in this fashion. In many Hollywood sagas were their final instalments split into two films. Examples would be *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay*, or *The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn*. Whether the primary reasons for this were financial or not, it is a fact that splitting a large-production, high-publicity franchise into more parts practically always creates a better financial situation for the studio. This becomes

apparent looking at box office earnings. All of the examples above have earned considerably more money than they would have with a one-part final instalment (The Numbers 2019). However, the quality of the final product may suffer at the expense of such conduct. Despite the speculations, during the European premiere of *The Desolation of Smaug* in Germany, Jackson said in an interview that it was his and the other writer's idea to split the project into three films. He said that making *The Hobbit* into a trilogy just suited the needs of the project better, directly contradicting his previous statements about the scarcity of the source material (Jackson 2014a, 4:25). Whether he was telling the truth will remain a mystery, but even if he was, the producers were certainly happy with the decision.

What is known for sure is the fact that the third film was the worst received out of the three (see above). It is also known that the third film, albeit requiring some additional shooting, used much of the footage previously shot for the first two parts (Outlaw 2012). It is known that the third film earned nearly a billion extra dollars in box office alone (IMDb 2019a), not to mention the revenue from merchandise and other related sources that were the result of extending the publicity period of *The Hobbit* by a year. Was all this merely a fortunate coincidence for the producing studios? One has to come to their own conclusion on this matter.

5.2 Despite Production Problems and Time Constraints

From the time *The Hobbit* was first conceived to the time it finally saw the light of day, which was more than five years later, the project faced a tremendous amount of production problems.

Firstly, the films had to cope with financial and legal issues. The project was first conceptualized in 2006 and it was to be co-financed by New Line Cinema and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (IGN 2006). It was unclear who would direct the project.

At the time Peter Jackson, the director of *The Lord of the Rings*, was suing New Line Cinema over lost profits from *The Fellowship of the Ring*. New Line co-founder Robert Shaye accused Jackson of arrogance and said that he would never direct *The Hobbit* “on his watch” (Hall 2007). Yet, MGM wanted Jackson at least involved. In 2007, it was announced that Jackson would contribute to the project as producer and co-writer (Keating 2007). In 2008, New Line was acquired by Warner Bros., and also sued by the Tolkien Estate for breach of contract on *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. The Tolkien Estate sought financial compensation, as well as to block the filming of *The Hobbit*. Fortunately, New Line Cinema quickly settled the lawsuit and the development of *The Hobbit* could finally continue (Reuters 2009).

Secondly, an unexpected change of directing half-way through production presented many serious problems for *The Hobbit*. In 2008 Guillermo del Toro, an Academy Award winning director, was hired to direct the then-envisioned two-part project (Gorman 2008). Del Toro worked on the preparations for two years. He worked twelve-hour days at times and flew in and out of New Zealand to meet Jackson and Walsh (Toro 2008b). He even planned to move there with his family (Toro 2008a). However, in 2010 Toro announced his departure from the project due to continuous delays in setting a start date for filming, which were the result of MGM’s financial struggles (Jackson 2012b, 34:43).

Thus, Peter Jackson, despite originally not even wanting to direct (Kaufman 2010), concluded that there was no other option and decided to take Toro’s place. Unfortunately, since the two directors had profoundly different visions of the project, Toro’s two years of work had to be abandoned by Jackson and many of the numerous pre-production sets, concepts and ideas were completely redesigned (Jackson 2012c). John Howe, a world-renowned illustrator, and a conceptual designer for *The Hobbit*,

said that they started all over again from scratch after Jackson inherited the directorship (Howe 2015).

I think that at this moment, *The Hobbit* project should have been reevaluated and perhaps delayed to accommodate these crucial setbacks. However, despite the clear lack of preparation time for Jackson, the film decided to follow the original deadlines and schedules. In this manner, Jackson was faced with a hopeless task. “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. I didn’t know what the hell I was doing,” admitted Jackson in one of the behind-the-scenes clips from *The Battle of the Five Armies* DVD (Shepherd 2015, McMillan 2015). He was, understandably, soon overwhelmed.

According to the crew members, filming *The Hobbit* was like desperately laying tracks directly in front of a moving train for the entirety of their work on the project. “I spent so much time on *The Hobbit* feeling like I was not on top of it. I was making it up as I went along,” said Jackson, confirming the crew’s assessment of the predicament. This was a trend throughout the filming. According to Andy Serkis, the second unit director, when the filming of the third instalment began, they were forced to shoot arbitrary fight elements, because the plot was still a complete mystery to everybody; nothing had been formulated at all (Shepherd 2015, Serkis 2015). It is not at all unfounded to think that this is likely why *The Battle of the Five Armies* feels so incongruous and why it received the poorest reviews (see above).

In conclusion, the filming of *The Hobbit* was absolutely chaotic from the production point of view. In many of the behind-the-scenes videos, Jackson looks browbeaten, exhausted, and frustrated. He openly admits that, for the majority

of the filming time, he was “winging it”¹ as he went along (Shepherd 2015). I think that it must have been clear to him that *The Hobbit* was not going to be the next *Lord of the Rings*. Thanks to the impossibly demanding timetable, there were far too many rushed, improvised decisions and solutions in the films, which, as a result, felt superficial and one-dimensional. Jackson, the seasoned and accomplished director that he was, had to have realised this at some point. I think that Jackson, knowing that the films were not going to do *The Hobbit* justice, decided to make the best out of a bad situation and at least make the films as commercially successful as possible. This might be the reason for many of the issues that I explore further in this paper, for example the gender and racial diversities, the PG-13 rating, or the approach taken with the home market and the extended editions.

5.3 Technological Decisions

For *The Hobbit* trilogy, Peter Jackson decided to disregard the conventional methods and standards of the industry. He chose to shoot with digital technology, as opposed to his previous trilogy, which was shot on film. Furthermore, Jackson decided to shoot *The Hobbit* in high frame rate (HFR), which doubles the industry standard of capture and projection from 24 frames per second (fps) to 48. (Jurgess 2017, Schaefer 2012). The intent of HFR is to reduce motion blur and help create a more faithful image, enhancing clarity and smoothness.

Unfortunately, the audience’s reactions deemed Jackson’s judgement questionable at best. There was considerable pushback from viewers who did not enjoy the new format. Many claimed that the high frame rate made the computer-generated imagery look fake and poorly made. Robbie Collin (2012), of *The Telegraph*, summarized the reactions: “The intention is to make the digital

¹ To do something with no preparation.

special effects and swoopy landscape shots look smoother, which they do. The unintended side effect is that the extra visual detail gives the entire film a sickly sheen of fakeness: the props look embarrassingly proppy and the rubber noses look a great deal more rubbery than nose.”

A study by Carolyn Michelle, Charles H. Davis, Craig Hight, and Ann L. Hardy further explores some of the reasons for this dissatisfaction. The study surveyed audiences of the first two *Hobbit* films to learn whether HFR improved or diminished their theatrical experience. In accordance with many previously mentioned responses, the subjects surveyed by Michelle et al. likewise claimed that HFR projection brought attention to the artificial character of shots of sets, props, and CG effects, which suddenly appeared much more like a production design, rather than Middle-earth reality. Further, the surveyed viewers complained that in HFR, scenes with “rapid motion” seemed “sped up, as though watching something on fast forward,” making the films look ostensibly “‘choppy’ and ‘disorienting’” (Michelle, et al. 2015). Moreover, there have been a generous number of reports of the HFR in 3D causing nausea and motion sickness in viewers (Acuna 2012).

The reasoning behind the decision to shoot in HFR is not totally clear. One could argue that Peter Jackson is well-known for his ambitious use of new technology in film making and that it is just something he does. He showed similar modus operandi on his previous projects, such as *The Frighteners* (1996), as well as his subsequent creative enterprises, such as *They Shall Not Grow Old* (2018).

However, I think it could be argued that his decision had an extensive commercial rationale behind it. According to Jurgess (2017), HFR is only a contemporary example of Hollywood’s longstanding practice of introducing new

exhibition modes to combat losses driven by competing media. And according to Jackson (2012b), nowadays one has to give people a reason to go buy theatre tickets (4:17). For decades has Hollywood experimented with ‘innovative’ and ‘revolutionary’ presentation in an effort to attract television’s audience back into theatres by offering a new, previously unseen spectacle. Besides HFR, this includes things like 3D, 4D, Cinerama, CinemaScope, or Smell-O-Vision. Even sound in film was part of this innovation process decades ago. While many of these novelties have failed, others have prevailed.

It is all about getting people to buy a ticket. Thus, “bragging rights” play a significant role. Buzzwords like a “new and revolutionary format” sound appealing, are extremely easy to advertise, and will lure larger audiences to the theatres in order to maximise the profit. It would not be unreasonable to assume that Jackson decided to make *The Hobbit* in 3D for precisely this reason, too.

In conclusion, even though it is possible that Jackson might have also had the artistic quality of the films in mind, it is apparent that commercial reasons could have been the primary motivator for HFR and his approach to other technological decisions in *The Hobbit*.

5.4 Extent of Adaptation

Perhaps the most oftentimes heard complaint from the viewers is that *The Hobbit* films are simply too long. Many felt the films were unnecessarily stretching the source material thin (Cox 2012, Gilchrist 2013). Combined, they made for a gruelling 474 minutes of film to watch. Better yet, 542 minutes for the extended editions.

After the release of *The Battle of the Five Armies*, Walter Hickey, a chief culture writer for the FiveThirtyEight portal, decided to explore *The Hobbit* films run

times further. He conducted a study in which he examined the run times per page of the source material of many famous book adaptations. This minutes-to-pages ratio dictates the pace of the film. If it is too high, momentum is being lost and the picture starts to feel tedious.

Hickey analysed over fifty of Hollywood's most popular adaptations, ranging from the *Harry Potter* films to *The Da Vinci Code*. For each of these films, he determined how many minutes does it take for the adaptation to cover one page of the source material. His analysis shows that of dozens of Hollywood adaptations, the three *Hobbit* films decisively place 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. *The Battle of the Five Armies* was determined length-wise the most adapted Hollywood film, with its truly staggering 2 minutes of run time per a single page of the novel. This film is followed closely by *The Unexpected Journey* and *The Desolation of Smaug*, at 1.69 and 1.33 minutes per page respectively. To put things into perspective, *The Great Gatsby*, an adaptation known for being almost word-for-word true to its source material, placed 4th at mere 0.79 minutes per page. The difference is colossal. In comparison, *The Lord of the Rings* films range from 0.41 to 0.51 minutes per page. These numbers were very close to the average of this study. In conclusion, *The Battle of the Five Armies* has more than four times the run time per page than the average Hollywood film adaptation. Hickey's study further found Jackson's *Hobbit* films to be the only film adaptations that have more minutes of film than book pages. Moreover, Hickey achieved these heinous results using the run times of the theatrical versions of the films. Had it been the special editions, which combined added another one hour and eight minutes to the run time, the results would have been correspondingly worse. It is, however, important to note that the study is not supposed to provide precise scientific data, but rather an estimate to help one

understand the issue at hand. According to Hickey, exact word counts of the source materials proved difficult to find, which is why he used the page counts of the top-selling editions of the books on Amazon for his study, instead. Page counts among different editions may, however, vary (Hickey 2014).

Ranking	Title	Minutes of runtime	Pages adapted	Minutes per page
1.	The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies (2014)	144	72	2,00
2.	The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey (2012)	169	100	1,69
3	The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug (2013)	161	121	1,33
4	The Great Gatsby (2013)	143	180	0,79
5	The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 1 (2014)	123	177	0,69
12.	The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy (2005)	109	224	0,49
23.	The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring (2001)	178	432	0,41
28.	The Fault in our Stars (2014)	126	352	0,36
32.	Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (2004)	142	448	0,32
46.	The Twilight Saga: New Moon (2009)	130	576	0,23
53.	Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix (2007)	138	896	0,15

My excerpt of Hickey's Study: Some Notable Examples

The magnitude of adaptation does not concern length alone. Since the contents of the novel simply were not enough to occupy *The Hobbit* trilogy's arduous run time, Jackson decided to pursue other plotlines, which allowed him to add characters and extend the narrative.

Furthermore, in order to make the films more commercially successful, the maker's felt that many different elements should be included for the purpose of widening the appeal and attracting broader audience, for example the inordinate action sequences, the romantic plotline, or the pandering to *The Lord of the Rings* fans (see below).

5.4.1 Excessive Action

Another intensely discussed topic around Jackson's latest Middle-earth trilogy was the amount of action in the films. Many, myself included, felt that the adaptation of the action from the novel was disproportionate and excessive. Each film features multiple lengthy action sequences, which are, compared to the source

material, either heavily adapted or contrived altogether. This particular concern contributes a considerable amount to the length of the films, as well as the magnitude of the adaptation, which I discuss in other chapters (see above).

An extreme example of this is the stone-giants scene from *The Unexpected Journey*. The company is on a mountain path when a severe storm rises, catching them unprepared. When Bilbo looks over a cliff, there is this passage in the book: “[Bilbo] saw that across the valley, the stone-giants were out, and were hurling rocks at one another for a game, and catching them, and tossing them down into the darkness where they smashed among the trees far below, or splintered into little bits with a bang... And they could hear the giants guffawing and shouting all over the mountainside,” (Tolkien 2007, 67). The giants, who may well have just been a figment of Bilbo’s imagination during a harsh storm, are never heard of again. Yet, Jackson somehow managed to make these two sentences from the novel into a four-minute action sequence (Jackson 2012d, 1:44:13).

Both *The Unexpected Journey* and *The Desolation of Smaug* culminate in either one or several large-scale action sequences, whereas *The Battle of the Five Armies* practically is a large, continuous action sequence in itself, with little to no story development. In the case of *The Unexpected Journey*, there are two extensive, consecutive action sequences at the end; the fight with the Great Goblin and his servants under the mountain and the cliff-side confrontation with Azog the Defiler (Jackson 2012d, 2:11:40). Both sequences, while not totally fabricated, are heavily expanded in their adaptation. In like manner, *The Desolation of Smaug* also contains two large action sequences. The first is roughly in the middle of the film, and it is the chaotic amalgamation of orcs, elves, and dwarves in barrels (Jackson 2013, 47:56). The second major sequence is the conclusion of this film, and it is the bizarre

confrontation of the dwarfs with Smaug in Erebor (Jackson 2013, 2:08:55). Notably, unlike in *The Unexpected Journey*, both of these major action sequences are completely fabricated by the writers of the films and have little to no foundation in the source material.

The Battle of the Five Armies contains too much action to go into detail, as this film adapts the smallest portion of the source material (Hickey 2014). Similarly to *The Desolation of Smaug* scenes, the majority of the action does not appear in the novel.

Moreover, the battle itself is beyond chaotic and astonishingly incoherent. This seems to be the trend with many of the action sequences mentioned. The quality of these action sequences could easily provide the topic for another paper. That being said, to mention at least a few reasons, the scenes often fail to feel suspenseful, as the action is frequently over-the-top, physics-defying, and disorganized. Furthermore, the action is often farcical, silly almost, with no real sense of danger, where the protagonists effortlessly cut down enemies left and right. Lack of blood or any other visible damage also contributes to this (see below). Examples of this are more than abundant in the films, notably Bombur effortlessly butchering dozens of orcs during the barrel scene in *The Desolation of Smaug* (Jackson 2013, 53:04), the company of dwarves dispatching hundreds of foes during their flight under the mountain in *The Unexpected Journey* (Jackson 2012d, 2:13:53), or Thorin and Dwalin in *The Battle of the Five Armies* about to fight “no more than a hundred goblin mercenaries” seemingly unfazed (Jackson 2014b, 1:32:41). This would not be a problem on its own, but it does undermine the occasional darker, more serious moments in the films, which could be argued to have the function to make the audience feel uncertain about the safety of the heroes. It is as if Jackson could not

decide whether to adhere to the light-hearted nature of his source material novel or to the more menacing, gloomy world of *The Lord of the Rings*, which he had created earlier. Furthermore, these inconsistencies were likely amplified by the nightmare that was the production of the films (see above).

The reason for the abundance of action scenes in *The Hobbit* is probably, once again, the filmmaker's desire to encompass as many varied elements as possible, in order for everyone to find something enjoyable in the films. Jackson somewhat explained his rationale for this in an interview. He admitted that one of his concerns was that the film industry has dwindling audiences, especially amongst young people. According to him, when he was young, he and his peers would go to the theatre every Friday night, and it did not matter what they were seeing. Jackson further says that this practice has changed and that nowadays he has to provide a reason for people, especially the youth, to go (Jackson 2012b, 4:17).

We can presume that those packed action sequences discussed above are targeted mainly, though not exclusively, at a younger audience. Further evidence to this presumption is provided by the fact that the action sequences had to be moderated at times, particularly in the third film, in order to earn the PG-13 rating (see below) that would allow youngsters to actually go see them.

In 2016, Sascha Trültzsch-Wijnen and Vanda de Sousa conducted a study that usefully unpacks the motivations of younger audiences in Austria and Portugal to go see *The Hobbit*, and also further explores their assessment of the films and their impressions after seeing it. The study finds a tendency for younger respondents in these two countries to rate the films more positively than older ones (Trültzsch-Wijnen and Sousa 2016, 481). A possible explanation for this tendency is that

the younger respondents, at whom the action sequences are likely targeted, enjoyed them more than the older respondents in the audience.

Furthermore, the study shows that the viewers of *The Hobbit* who have read the novel tended to rate the films less highly than the non-readers (Trültzsch-Wijnen and Sousa 2016, 482). The apparent explanation of this tendency is that the readers are somewhat dissatisfied with the adaptation. While the reasons for this might be numerous, it is not unfounded to say that the excessive magnification of the action, which is an essential part of the trilogy, is a major one.

I think that it was Jackson's intent to attract common young people to see *The Hobbit*, not only young Tolkien fans. The results of this study show us that he succeeded. While Tolkien fans had their reservations about the films, the youngsters who merely went to see a cool-looking fantasy action trilogy, without being too familiar with its source material, enjoyed the experience to a greater extent.

It could also be argued that while the action is targeted more at young men, the romance in the films is trying to appeal more to young women (see below).

5.4.2 Fan Service

In every single trailer for the three *Hobbit* films, there is a slide which reads: FROM THE DIRECTOR OF "THE LORD OF THE RINGS" TRILOGY. Being the prequel to these immensely successful and critically acclaimed films has been an integral part of *The Hobbit* films since they were first conceptualized, until its release years later. Since *The Lord of the Rings* has had such an extensive fan base, there are fan service references to it throughout *The Hobbit* films.

Some are rather subtle and more tactful than others, for example "The eagles are coming!" proclamation towards the end of *The Battle of the Five Armies*, the fact that Azog the Defiler in *The Unexpected Journey* is commanding his forces

from Weathertop, the place where Frodo was stabbed in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, the fact that both Ian Holm and Elijah Wood (older Bilbo and Frodo) reprised their roles from *The Lord of the Rings* for the prologue of *The Hobbit*, the fact that at the beginning of *The Desolation of Smaug*, Thorin meets Gandalf at *The Prancing Pony*, or seeing Bret McKenzie again as Lindir in Rivendell. These fan service references do not interfere with the plot and warm the heart of a devoted *Lord of the Rings* fan when noticed.

Some references, however, are rather extensive and actually substantial to the plot. For example, Orlando Bloom was brought back for his role as Legolas. Originally, it was speculated that his appearance would be only a cameo (Polo 2011), which I think would have worked fantastically. I enjoy the scene where Legolas meets Gloin, Gimli's father, and insults Gimli's appearance in his portrait, because their future rivalry and later friendship is an important theme in *The Lord of the Rings*.

However, instead of a cameo, Legolas was given an extensive role in *The Hobbit*, one that is heavily criticised. Firstly, he is involved in an incongruous and entirely fabricated love triangle, to which he seems to be totally indifferent in most of his scenes. The reason for that is the fact that the triangle was added during reshoots (see below). Secondly, he is involved in many of the incoherent, over-the-top action scenes (see above). Even though examples of this are generous in the films, one scene in particular was broadly mocked by the viewers (Allain 2015) – the one where Legolas runs up the blocks of a bridge as they fall.

Several other actors have reprised their *Lord of the Rings* roles for *The Hobbit* despite not appearing in the book, including Kate Blanchett (Lady Galadriel) and Christopher Lee (Saruman). Their roles were, however, less extensive

than Bloom's, and they appeared mainly in scenes adapted from *The Return of the King* appendices.

Allegedly, even Viggo Mortensen (Aragorn) was approached to see if he would be interested in reprising his role in *The Hobbit*. Luckily, Mortensen (2013) refused, because Aragorn does not appear in *The Hobbit* novel and there is a 60-year gap between the books.

There seems to be a trend here. All of these actors portrayed beloved characters in *The Lord of the Rings*, whose appearance in the prequel alone could be argued to boost ticket sales.

One of the best examples of the fan service in *The Hobbit* being excessive and, as a result, problematic is the dialogue between Thranduil and Legolas at the end of *The Battle of the Five Armies*. "Go north. Find the Dúnedain. There is a young ranger amongst them, you should meet him. His father Arathorn was a good man. His son might grow to be a great one," says Thranduil to Legolas. "What is his name?" asks Legolas. "He is known in the wild as Strider. His true name you must discover for yourself," replies Thranduil (Jackson 2014b, 1:58:06). Why is Thranduil speaking in riddles? Why would he not tell Legolas Aragorn's name? And why would he send him there to begin with?

The reason, one could argue, is poor writing. It is Jackson's weak attempt to connect the Legolas from *The Hobbit* to the Legolas from *The Lord of the Rings*. His character is introduced at the Council of Elrond and his first line of dialogue is: "This is no mere ranger! He is Aragorn, son of Arathorn." So, did Legolas wander the wilderness for sixty years looking for Aragorn? That does not seem plausible. What makes even less sense is the continuity and dates. *The Battle of the Five Armies* occurred in 2941 of the Third Age. Bilbo was fifty years old. Sixty years later,

on Bilbo's 111th birthday, the events of *The Lord of the Rings* begin. Seventeen years later, in 3018 of the Third Age, Frodo leaves the Shire with the One Ring and meets Aragorn, who then is 87 years old (Tolkien Gateway 2019). This would make Aragorn ten years old at the end of *The Hobbit*. At that age, he was growing up in Rivendell and he certainly was not "known in the wild as Strider". Somebody surely must have noticed this discrepancy during filming. This considered it becomes apparent that the writers valued the aimless Aragorn reference more than consistency.

Therefore, it is not unfounded to say that at times, Jackson's attempts to pander to *The Lord of the Rings* fans and appeal to their nostalgia in order to sell more tickets actually resulted in a certain confusion in *The Hobbit* films.

5.5 Home Market

The home market performances of films are often overlooked, as the main focus is always on the box office earnings. Yet, these sales cannot be ignored, especially in the case of films with as big a fan base as Jackson's and Tolkien's.

About four months after each of *The Hobbit* films premiered, the theatrical versions of the films were released on DVD, Blu-ray, and 3D Blu-ray for the home market. The combined domestic profits from these home video sales are estimated at \$326 million (The Numbers 2019). Data on worldwide sales are unfortunately not available, but they can be reasonably expected to be considerable. This becomes apparent comparing the domestic and worldwide box office performances of the films. The domestic earnings were 35-40% of the worldwide figures (The Numbers 2019); therefore it is reasonable to presume that the home video sales could show a parallel trend.

Notably, these releases included limited collector's editions retailing for over one hundred dollars per set (Chitwood 2014), and these were being sold despite the fact that the extended editions would be released the same year only a few months later.

5.5.1 Extended Editions

Extended editions, sometimes referred to as "special editions" or "director's cut", are edited versions of films aimed at the most devoted fans. They often contain some extra scenes, as well as the director's commentary and perhaps some original music or behind the scenes footage.

The original reason for their existence is the fact that after every large-production film, there is plenty of unused footage left. Moreover, the final cut and the director's cut often differ to a varying degree, because investors reserve the right to impose changes that they feel might improve the film's likelihood of success (Jones 2011). In fact, only the most reputable of directors are given the final cut privilege on the theatrical release. Peter Jackson, however, reportedly had this privilege for *The Hobbit* (Siegel 2010), but decided to create extended editions anyway. In the case of all of *The Hobbit* films, the extended editions were released on DVD, Blu-ray and 3D Blu-ray approximately eleven months after their theatrical release.

Since the nineties, director's cuts have often been used as a marketing strategy (Jones 2011). This is because doing so is very profitable. After all, the customers, many of whom presumably already bought a theatre ticket for the film, once again pay the full price for a product that is not that different from the original and requires much less effort to make. Moreover, in the case of *The Hobbit* films, the special editions of the latest part of the trilogy were always

released not long before the release of the upcoming next instalment (The Numbers 2019) – likely to serve as a form of additional promotion.

When done right, extended editions are a great way for devoted fans to revisit their favourite films and see some new footage. Peter Jackson did this with *The Lord of the Rings* and it was an enormous success. Those films received celebratory reviews (Dellamorte 2011, White 2011) and enjoy near-universal approval amongst the fan base. Yet, Jackson decided to take a slightly more commercial approach with *The Hobbit*.

Firstly, the special editions of *The Hobbit* were the first time special editions had ever released in theatres (Trumbore 2015). It happened in October 2015 and regular admission prices were being charged for each film (Anderton 2015).

Secondly, unlike *The Lord of the Rings* special editions, *The Hobbit* ones were actually vital to the story. For instance, the *Arkenstone* storyline is a rather important part of the narrative. The *Arkenstone* corrupts Thorin, gets stolen by Bilbo and is later used as a bargaining chip by Bard and Thranduil (Jackson 2013, Jackson 2014b). Yet, its storyline only gets resolved in the extended editions. One must purchase them to find out that the *Arkenstone* was, in fact, returned to the dwarves and got buried with Thorin (Jackson 2014c, 2:20:49). This is not a singular occurrence. The storyline of Alfrid Lickspittle, a character who is mostly there just for comedic relief, but who also has more screen time than many of the dwarves in the company in both *The Desolation of Smaug* and *The Battle of the Five Armies*, leads nowhere in the theatrical cuts. It only gets concluded in the extended editions with his death (Jackson 2014c, 1:46:21).

I think Jackson is too experienced a storyteller to accidentally overlook such inconsistencies. All this leads me to believe that commercialization played

a significant role in planning the extended editions of *The Hobbit*. By removing crucial scenes, Jackson entices more people to buy them. Sadly, I could not find any data on the profits from these editions, but they must have been, more than likely, substantial.

5.6 PG-13

The *Motion Picture Association of America* film rating system has become incredibly important for the fiscal success of films. In fact, of the 100 highest-grossing films of all time, only 2 films without PG-13² or lesser rating made the list - *Deadpool* and *Deadpool 2*, placing 87th and 89th respectively (IMDb 2019a).

Therefore, film studios go to great lengths to secure a PG-13 or lower rating for their films, even if it potentially means a diminishment in quality. We have seen an example of such conduct in *The Avengers*, which was by far the highest-grossing film of 2012 (IMDb 2019a). Moreover, this film has started a franchise that today has four films in the top nine highest-grossing films of all time (IMDb 2019a). It is thus not difficult to see why when the first *Avengers* cut came back from the MPAA rated R³ was this totally unacceptable for Disney, the producing studio. The film was therefore modified in order to earn the desired PG-13 rating (Sampson 2014). The main instance where some moderation was applied was agent Coulson's death scene (Whedon 2012, 1:23:59). Originally, when he gets stabbed in the back by Loki, the blade comes out his chest, which is then removed completely. This is notable because it is very similar to the death of Fili in *The Hobbit*.

The Hobbit, principally *The Battle of the Five Armies*, contains so much fighting that much of it had to be moderated in order to earn the PG-13 rating.

² Parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

³ Restricted. Person under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.

Despite the high amount of fighting, the film shows practically no blood, no wounds, or anything of that sort. The mainly CGI characters hack at each other with no visible damage, to the point it almost feels comical. Examples of this in the films are plentiful, bloodless decapitations are no exception (Jackson 2014b, 1:18:20). Some have even compared it to a “2 hours long video-game cutscene” (Singer 2014). The death of Fili is a strong example of this. The film shows his death by a close-up shot of his face (Jackson 2014b, 1:38:44). There is no blood, not even the sound of the blade entering, which is something that was kept in agent Coulson’s death scene in *The Avengers*. Furthermore, Azog’s weapon is completely clean afterwards (Jackson 2014b, 1:38:59), which really shatters immersion and diminishes authenticity.

Most importantly, it is impossible not to notice how all of the most brutal scenes only appeared in the extended editions. This is most apparent in the extended edition of *The Battle of the Five Armies*, which actually got rated R after its release (Brown 2015). One scene is exceptionally eye-catching in this regard – the flight to Ravenhill in the war chariot. It shows some of the dwarves’ adversaries killed rather brutally. For example, the audience gets to see a violent, bloody decapitation of six trolls (Jackson 2014c, 1:1:45), or a warg thoroughly annihilated by the chariot (Jackson 2014c, 1:43:46). I think that it is apparent that the only reason why these scenes have been cut from the theatrical version is the PG-13 rating. Moreover, because of the painfully obvious contrast between the levels of violence, these scenes feel remarkably inconsistent with the rest of the film, and this could be argued to diminish the experience of watching the extended edition.

It is therefore unfortunate, but evident, that the requirement for a PG-13 rating, motives for which are fundamentally commercial, probably worked to the detriment of the quality of the final product.

5.7 Gender Diversity

The Hobbit novel famously does not contain any female characters. That was, of course, unacceptable in modern Hollywood, where sexism and gender inequality are contemporary topics of heated discussion (Miller 2015). If creators want to avoid public uproar these days, both genders need to be “properly” represented in their work. Having only male characters in *The Hobbit* films would mean a scandal waiting to happen, which could possibly endanger its box office success.

Thus, in an effort to avoid any potential accusations of sexism or boycotts by various women’s rights advocate groups, the character of Tauriel was created. The writers, possibly under pressure from the studio (see below), created Tauriel for the purpose of “bringing some feminine energy to the film” (Boyens 2012). However, Tauriel’s character was mostly disliked. Not only for not appearing in *The Hobbit* novel, nor anywhere in Tolkien’s legendarium, but chiefly for her involvement in the infamous, out of place *Hobbit* love-triangle (Wilken 2014).

In an attempt to further increase women’s representation in the films, we get a scene in *The Battle of the Five Armies* where the women of Lake-town valiantly proclaim that they will fight alongside their men instead of hiding (Jackson 2014b, 1:28:40). Yet, their presence in the battle never amounts to anything. In fact, we never see them again in the theatrical cut. This makes the scene look like its only purpose is to preventively counter any potential critiques of sexism. Only in the extended edition, there is a short scene of the women fighting the orcs (Jackson 2014c, 1:39:25). That considered, I would still argue that such apparent

tokenism is in the end actually more offensive than if such a scene was not included at all.

Still, the creators were ultimately rather successful at escaping anti-feminism critiques. Some criticisms of such sort did emerge (Konigsberg 2012), but to the studio's satisfaction, the films went mostly unnoticed in this regard.

5.7.1 The Love Triangle

The love triangle in *The Hobbit* is infamous for being disappointing, poorly written, and essentially inconsequential (Larison 2013). The reason it feels so atrocious and incongruous with the rest of the story is that Legolas seems mostly uninterested, while Tauriel and Kili have only one real conversation during the entire trilogy (Jackson 2013, 41:50). For the rest of their scenes together, they mostly just look at each other. Despite the protracted run times of the films (see above), their relationship had not been given enough screen time to properly develop. The reason for this might be the fact that the entire subplot was added during reshoots in 2012 (Lilly 2013).

Moreover, Evangeline Lilly, the actress portraying Tauriel, said she only had one condition for accepting the role – not to be involved in a love triangle (O'Connell 2014, Lilly 2013). However, she had been misled and found herself in one nonetheless. Furthermore, according to Lilly (2013), it was the studio that put pressure on the writers to make this love triangle happen.

Such a decision rightfully angered many fans, as a love triangle drama is not a thing one wants or expects to see in fantasy action films. Evangeline Lilly herself says that this approach was not “totally Tolkien” (Whyte 2014).

Romance has been a major Hollywood theme since the beginning. Its selling power has been proven many times over, most notably with pictures like the *Titanic*,

or the *Beauty and the Beast*, which are both in the top fifteen highest-grossing films of all time (IMDb 2019a). It could be argued that while action generally appeals more to men, romance typically appeals more to women. Romance novels are the biggest selling genre of fiction and they are primarily purchased by women (Croston 2012). I think that it is sensible to assume that romance in film would show a similar trend.

The studio's rationale behind the love triangle likely was that if *The Hobbit* films did not include any romance, they would be overlooking a potential appeal to possibly half of the ticket buyers. This is why it was the studio that pushed for the inclusion of the love triangle, even despite the wishes of Evangeline Lilly (see above). This is also why they ensured that a glimpse of the romance made an appearance in the trailer for *The Battle of the Five Armies* (Warner Bros. Pictures 2014, 1:48).

It would be unreasonable to presume that the studio's motives behind this decision were any other than purely monetary. I believe that the idea was, same as with other matters I discuss in this paper, an attempt to widen the appeal of the films, so it would include audience members who perhaps favour romance over action or fantasy. The studio does not want exclusively Tolkien and Jackson fans in the theatres. They can be argued to want their partners and their families to be buying tickets, too. In order to achieve that, the films must contain a variety of elements. That way, the probability of everybody being able to find something appealing to them in the films is considerably higher. The excessive action is another example of this (see above).

5.8 Racial Diversity

Racial diversity in *The Hobbit* is in many regards similar to gender diversity (see above). Much like with proper gender representation, there seems to be a push for racial diversity in modern Hollywood. The examples of this are numerous; a major instance of this would be John Boyega's character in the latest *Star Wars* films (Capps 2014, Hawkes 2014).

The Hobbit, however, did this in a drastically different fashion than *Star Wars*. Finn, portrayed by John Boyega, is one of the leading characters in the latest *Star Wars* films. In *The Hobbit*, racial diversity had been incorporated only into the most insignificant characters imaginable.

Firstly, there are not even that many human characters in the trilogy. Arguably, they also play a less important role than the dwarves, the elves, the orcs, or even the hobbit. This begs the question if it is even necessary to have racially diverse humans in films with various mystical races. The term "race" has an entirely different meaning in Middle-earth. This considered, the filmmakers' options for incorporating racially diverse cast members were rather limited. In fact, they only had one option – The Lake-town villagers. In a manner reminding one of the filmmaker's solution to diversity of gender, none of the racially diverse characters ever get a single line of dialogue in the trilogy. We do, however, get a scene full of reaction faces of several ethnic villagers (Jackson 2013, 1:24:51). Besides all the rest, one particular black woman is cut to four times during this one scene.

Similarly to the "girl power" scene (see above) in regard to anti-sexism, I think that in an effort not to offend anybody, the final result is actually more offensive and racist than if there was no ethnic diversity at all. After all, this is

a trilogy where all the humans are from one small town and do not have nearly as much screen time as many other races of Middle-earth.

During preparations in 2010, a casting director in New Zealand actually lost his job for placing newspaper ads seeking extras with “light skin tones” to play the hobbits. Jackson and the production company quickly distanced themselves from the incident, saying that no specifications regarding skin colour were ever made (Hudson 2010). Despite this, there are nevertheless no ethnically diverse hobbits in the films; another argument showing the filmmakers’ approach to diversity being nothing more than a lip service to political correctness.

The tactic, however, seems to have worked from a utilitarian point of view. *The Hobbit* once again evaded any racism-related critiques and controversies rather successfully, which was undoubtedly the studio’s goal.

5.9 Adaptational Attractiveness

Adaptational attractiveness is something we see rather often in modern Hollywood. It is a trend of making characters in film adaptations more attractive than they are in their source material (TV Tropes 2019). The *Trope Anatomy* YouTube channel made a very informative video essay on this subject, from which I will be borrowing some ideas. The theory behind the concept of adaptational attractiveness is that the audience is more likely to relate to or form an emotional connection with more handsome characters (Trope Anatomy 2019). Examples of this are abundant. Some notable ones would be Tyrion Lannister in *Game of Thrones*, Hermione Granger in *Harry Potter*, Mr. Rochester in the latest adaptation of *Jane Eyre*, Erik (the Phantom) in the latest film adaptation of *The Phantom of the Opera*, Art3mis in *Ready Player One*, and many more. All of these characters are adapted to be significantly more attractive on film.

Adaptational attractiveness is often achieved just by casting an exceedingly attractive actor for the role. For example, Emma Watson is arguably far too attractive an actress to play Hermione, who in the *Harry Potter* novels is very mediocre-looking, with large front teeth and bushy hair. Even J. K. Rowling herself acknowledged this. “You and Rupert and Emma are all too good looking,” said Rowling to Daniel Radcliffe in a feature video interview (Rowling 2011). Similarly, Tyrion in George R. R. Martin’s novels has twisted legs and eyes of different colours. Yet, Peter Dinklage, who portrays him, is a rather attractive actor. Erik’s appearance in the source material for *The Phantom of the Opera* is described as corpse-like. Yet, in its latest film adaptation, Gerard Butler was cast for the role. Sometimes, even deliberate changes to the plot are made in the name of adaptational attractiveness. For instance, Tyrion Lannister lost most of his nose in the novel; however, he only got a scar on his face in the TV show.

The problem with this is the fact that more often than not, the appearance of these characters is a vital part of their identity. Being uneasy on the eyes affects their judgement, opinions, and personality. I would say this is particularly true for Tyrion Lannister from *Game of Thrones* and Erik from *The Phantom of the Opera*. Therefore, in this regard, adaptational attractiveness can often diminish the quality of a scene or a film it was applied to, by unintentionally altering the context and implications of a situation, taking away some of the depth it has in the source material. A notable example of a scene dampened by this trope is *The Yule Ball* from *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, where Hermione transforms herself into looking really beautiful for the festivity. In the books, Harry does not even recognize her at first. In the film, she is still the gorgeous Emma Watson we know, only wearing a dress (Trope Anatomy 2019). Another notable example of this

is Art3mis meeting Wade in *Ready Player One*. In the book, she repeatedly rejects him online, because she has an enormous port-wine stain on her face and believes that he would never be attracted to her in real life. In the film adaptation, the scene loses much of its credibility and relatability, as it is performed by the very attractive Olivia Cooke, who has a barely-visible birthmark around her eye (Trope Anatomy 2019).

Adaptational attractiveness appears in *The Hobbit*, too. Even though many of the dwarves are given distinctively dwarvish features, such as large noses and foreheads and thick beards, using prosthetics, Thorin, Fili and Kili look noticeably different from the rest of the dwarves. While some of the actors portraying the dwarves are hardly recognizable under all the layers of make-up, these three seem to look almost human. I think that the idea is to make them look more appealing and relatable this way.

Aidan Turner's character, Kili, is the one involved in a romantic relationship. If he was not relatable, the romance could be argued not to have the desired effect on the audience. Similarly, Thorin is the one dwarf who is given the most depth. Richard Armitage had the most lines of dialogue and had to convey the most emotions. Perhaps the filmmakers thought that having him covered in make-up and having distinct dwarvish facial features would undermine his relatability in the eyes of the audience. Besides Thorin and Kili, Fili is the only other dwarf of the company who dies in *The Hobbit* films. Perhaps the reason for his adaptational attractiveness is that the filmmakers felt that if he bore more dwarvish features, which at times can look silly, his death would not have as big an impact on the audience. However, this is mostly only speculation.

I do not necessarily think that Adaptational attractiveness is a bad thing if done with taste, measure, and moderation. However, in the case of *The Hobbit*, same as with many other examples mentioned above, I feel that it takes something away. It creates this very unfortunate and painfully obvious contrast between the dwarves. Kili is called “the sexy dwarf” and “the hot one” by his castmates (McTavish and Nesbitt 2012), showing how his character is intended to be perceived. I think that, in this way, adaptational attractiveness interferes with immersion and diminishes authenticity. And since its nature is fundamentally commercial, it becomes another example of how the quality of *The Hobbit* films is potentially diminished for commercial reasons.

6 Conclusion

In this thesis, I examined many different aspects of *The Hobbit* trilogy in search of instances of excessive commercialization. During my examination, I made comparisons of *The Hobbit* trilogy to its source material, to *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, or even to some of its Hollywood equivalents.

It proved to be a truly complex issue, where all of the different investigated aspects of the films appeared to be intertwined to a high degree. For example, many of the problems stemmed from the decision to make *The Hobbit* into a trilogy.

Further research on this topic could certainly be done. Although I briefly mention these in the paper, such areas as the decision to make *The Hobbit* in 3D, the comedic relief in the films, or the expanded plotlines and characters, mainly the scenes adapted from *The Return of the King* appendices, would perhaps deserve more detailed analysis. However, as I was limited by the extent of the paper, I decided to concentrate on the issues that I considered to be the most critical.

In conclusion, I think that it is absolutely fair to say that commercialization played a critical role in the making of *The Hobbit*. While some aspects of the films could be argued to have had various motivations and explanations beyond the commercial, other aspects, such as the home market, the PG-13 rating, or the miscellaneous embracements of diversity, were irrefutably motivated predominantly by commercialization.

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