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**THE LORD OF THE RINGS:  
THE FILM AS THE DIRECTOR'S PERSONAL VISION**  
Bakalářská práce

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Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto závěrečnou práci vypracoval samostatně pouze s použitím uvedených zdrojů.

V Uherském Hradišti dne .....

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podpis

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## **Abstract**

The aim of this thesis is to present The Lord of the Rings films as Peter Jackson's subjective vision of the narrative. In the first section, a couple of various positions on adaptation of books will be introduced. Afterwards, in the main section of the thesis, significant scenes will be commented on and analysed in terms of their relation to the books' content. It will also be communicated what the film-makers' original drafts were and how they ultimately developed. As well as conveying the film-makers' reasons for deviating from the books, this thesis will, in its final chapter, include the analysis of the Czech dubbing of the trilogy as the localised recreation of the original performance supervised by Peter Jackson.

## **Introduction**

The Lord of the Rings has for a long time been of great importance to me. When I saw the films for the first time, I was as young as ten. Immediately, I became very fond of them, even though I may not have understood them in their deeper meaning. Here it is apt to confess that I had not read the books before so my acceptance of the film was not influenced by the original literary story. It was only after seeing the films that I endeavoured to read the trilogy. Reading the novels, I immediately realised they differed from the films in many aspects. However, it was also apparent in the course of the narrative that the films, indeed, carried something from the books. The director had managed to capture the essence of the novels.

Thus, my intention to write a thesis on the comparison of the novels and the films has lately been conceived. My approach, however, will be in reverse. Commonly, a film adaptation is compared with the book as the original source of inspiration. I have determined to compare the books with the films and the film-makers' intentions. As the extent of this thesis does not facilitate devoting sufficient space to every tiny detail, only selected key scenes will be analysed. On these scenes, I will illustrate the film-makers' vision and determination to render the story of Middle-earth real.

The films as such exhibit a particular eclectic grasp of the novels by an individual. Therefore, in their concise form, it is more convenient to compare these chosen bits and pieces adapted from the novels with the actual information contained within the novels.

It is also essential to accent which film version is the one discussed in this thesis. Since there are two, which are the theatrical cut and the extended cut, it appears to be apt to aim at the extended one, incorporating the director's ultimate vision. Consequently, all the references in the following text will be in relation to the extended edition. Nevertheless, there may still be references to whether a scene was in the theatrical cut or not.

As the books focusing on the life of J. R. R. Tolkien and his trilogy do not take into consideration the contemporary film adaptations, there is a dearth of reasons to exploit them for statements or explanations helping to comprehend the films. The only source containing the information about the development of the films are thus the film producers and the film crew themselves.

Considering how elaborated films the director and all the people involved in the process of

shooting managed to deliver, it would seem very likely of such films to have been granted a rich budget. Strikingly, the contrary is true. As Andrew Lesnie, the director of photography, commented: “*This is the biggest low-budget film being made anywhere in the world at this time.*”<sup>1</sup> In the face of the numbers, his claim can be agreed on as the overall budget for the trilogy was \$280 million<sup>2</sup> or, as another source states, almost \$297 million.<sup>3</sup> By the way, such a sum almost matches the budget for a single film of The Hobbit Trilogy.<sup>4</sup> Being aware of this fact, it is even more staggering what a feat the film crew managed to accomplish.

The films contain a number of errors, visual and narrative ones. Still, their essence is loyal and pays homage to the novels. Yet, as it is going to be presented, film adaptations will always suffer from changes, at least for the director's personal bias. And these films are no exception. In addition, a number of such mistakes were made willingly, intentionally and solely for Peter Jackson's bias and desire to portray the events in accordance with his own vision.

Apart from intentional directorial modifications, there were also alterations of parts of the story which, as Peter Jackson implies, “*work in the books but not in the films.*”<sup>5</sup> The books thus retain their own distinctive imagery and specific dialogues which would be overly heroic or striking and thus ridiculous for the audience to see in a motion picture.

Having said that, the films on the other hand offer, in its own distinctive manner, a greater volume of information from Middle-earth as the film-makers exploited not only these three novels but other books concerning Middle-earth too. For this reason, even those who have read the novels may find fragments of information unexpected, not to mention surprising. In this fashion, these films attest to the claim that film adaptations should not be viewed as something inferior to literature.<sup>6</sup>

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1 Behind the Scenes. 2001, time 2:10

2 Lord of the Rings film trilogy. *Lotr.wikia.com*

3 Box Office History for Peter Jackson's Lord of the Rings Movies. *The-numbers.com*

4 *Ibid*

5 Commentary with Director and Writers. 2001, time 1:03:00

6 BUBENÍČEK, Petr. 2010, p. 18



## 1. The term “adaptation”

As it will be presented in the following chapters of this thesis focusing on the very narrative of the films, rendering the story of novels into films is always, at least to a degree, affected by their respective film-makers, predominantly by their director. Eventual acceptance or evaluation of such films is then bound to differ considerably, depending on whether the audience have read the original books or not. Watching the films, the concepts and mental images of the content of the books are exposed to somebody else's comprehension of the content which does not have to, and surely seldom do, coincide with the reader-viewer's constructs.<sup>7</sup>

Brian McFarlane in his book claims that “*much of the dissatisfaction which accompanies the writing about films adapted from novels tends to spring from perceptions of ‘tampering’ with the original narrative [...], (and) from a failure to distinguish what can from what cannot be transferred.*”<sup>8</sup> Such a claim aptly attest to Peter Jackson aforementioned indication that what works in a book may not necessarily work in a film<sup>9</sup>. The director must bear in mind that the adaptation they are creating is not supposed to be a product targeted on those who have read the adapted book however on a potentially wider audience.<sup>10</sup>

For an illustration of loose film adaptation, it can be referred to Josef Škvorecký. In his essay, he suggests that books should not be adapted literally and verbatim, but it is rather their spirit which the director would be advisable to apprehend and adapt. He compares the director of such an adaptation to the translator of a poem, who must not concentrate exclusively on its words when rendering the poem but rather on its essence and message, disregarding its original content and structure in the process for the sake of preserving its prosody.<sup>11</sup>

While we can agree with Škvorecký's claim about being faithful to the spirit of the book, his statement also provides for and justifies potential violation of the content of a book. This theory thus should not be applied to *The Lord of the Rings* whatsoever. Containing such an extensive mythology and history, these novels are not appropriate for Škvorecký's approach to adaptation, for his possible adaptation of the novels would likely be deprived of its story to an even greater extent than it is in Peter Jackson's works, regardless of the fact that the essence might remain

7 MCFARLANE, Brian. 1996, p. 21

8 Ibid, p. 12

9 Commentary with Director and Writers. 2001, time 1:03:00.

10 MCFARLANE, Brian. 1996, p. 21

11 ŠKVORECKÝ, Josef, ŠPIRIT, Michael (ed.). 2010, p. 269-270

unaltered.

Although theories of adaptation aim at conveying what is essential to notice and take into consideration when analysing the bond between a novel and a film, critics do not find themselves in concord with one another. Their comprehension of proper adaptation differs based on what they deem relevant from the literary source.<sup>12</sup> Such discord thus inadvertently grants film-makers freedom to grasp their adaptation in their own distinctive way and to begin the creative process since there are not virtually any fundamental official constraints and regulations. Directors, in fact, should become authors in their own right.<sup>13</sup>

If we consider these above-mentioned approaches to adaptation, such films will always convey solely the director's personal vision of the book. In this regard, they can only hope to meet with understanding from the audience, expecting the film to be true to the book. Such audience can, of course, hardly be forced to accept the belief that fidelity is only one of various relations existing between film and literature – and rarely the most exciting.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, all the subtleties of the book may not necessarily be translated into a film to create a well-crafted adaptation.<sup>15</sup>

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12 BUBENÍČEK, Petr. 2010, p. 19-20

13 Ibid, p. 9

14 MCFARLANE, Brian. 1996, p. 11

15 VÉMOLOVÁ, Klára. 2014, p. 20

## 2. Summary of the film storyline

Before we focus on the film-makers' interpretation of the novels, it is apt to at least briefly summarise the storyline of the films. It will set the background for the analysis and give the reader a sense of orientation.

The first film starts with a prologue, conveying the history of Middle-earth and the One Ring. Afterwards, the film continues with the main storyline about Frodo. In *Hobbiton*, Bilbo's birthday is celebrated, and he then goes away, leaving the Ring to Frodo. Gandalf then discovers that this is the One Ring, the one which has been long lost. Knowing this, Gandalf orders Frodo to leave. Thus, Frodo leaves his home, accompanied by his kinsmen.

On their journey, the hobbits reach Bree, where they meet Aragorn. With his help, they survive the attack of the Nazgûl and meet Arwen, who then transports Frodo to Rivendell. Frodo recovers there, and at the council of Elrond, he determines to take the Ring and destroy it. In order to help him, the Fellowship of the Ring is made.

The Fellowship travels to its destination: Mordor. On its way, it visits Moria, where Gandalf falls. The remaining members of the Fellowship then successfully arrive at Lothlórien, where all the members are given gifts. Frodo is invited to look into Galadriel's mirror and sees what might happen in the future.

In elven canoes, the Fellowship is carried down the Anduin as far as Amon Hen, where they disembark. They are attacked by a company of the uruk-hai there. During the battle, Merry and Pipin are captured, Frodo and Sam leave on their own and Boromir is killed. In the aftermath of these events, the Fellowship breaks, but Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas set out to save Merry and Pipin.

In the second film, we follow three separate storylines. In the first one, Frodo and Sam are toiling to Mordor. On their way, they encounter Gollum, who takes them across the Dead Marshes and to the Black Gate. When going through Gondor, they are captured by Faramir's Rangers and marched to Osgiliath. The situation is eventually resolved there, and Frodo and Sam are set free. Then they are allowed to continue in their original quest.

In the meantime, Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas are in pursuit of Merry and Pipin. As the trio is informed by Éomer, the uruk-hai were all slaughtered. When they do reach the uruk-hai, they see they are all dead, indeed. But Aragorn is able to track the hobbits to the Forest of Fangorn. Even though they do not manage to find the hobbits, they encounter Gandalf the White, who joins them. As they learn that Merry and Pipin are safe and sound, being in Treebeard's company, they all together ride to Edoras.

In Edoras, they realise how the situation has escalated. Using his special powers, Gandalf frees Théoden of Saruman's curse. The king, who can now be reasoned with, orders his people to evacuate to Helm's Deep. While the people are leaving, Gandalf abandons the action to find Éomer and his men in order to bring them back.

On the way to Helm's Deep, the column of refugees is attacked by wargs. This is a mere skirmish in comparison with the Battle of Helm's Deep. However, Aragorn is lost in the battle so that he could appear later on informing Théoden about the vastness of the uruk-hai army. This piece of news only conveys how desperate the situation is. At this moment, a small elven army comes to help to defend the fortress and to honour the Last Alliance of Elves and Men in this manner. The Battle of Helm's Deep is eventually won, and the fleeing uruk-hai are ambushed by the huorns.

As the crisis in Rohan escalates, Treebeard befriends Merry and Pipin. He immediately takes them to the Entmoot, where they are witness to a long session of the Ents. The Entmoot decides that the Ents will not intervene in the ongoing events. Eventually, Pipin helps to change this resolution when he leads Treebeard to the vicinity of Isengard. Seeing that all the trees there are gone and the land is left barren, Treebeard musters the Ents and together they storm Saruman's fortress. Ultimately, Isengard is flooded and cleansed.

As Gandalf leads all his friends to Isengard, where they reunite with Merry and Pipin, these two storylines now merge together. While in Isengard, Saruman and Gríma are killed and removed from the story. Pipin finds a palantír, which reveals him Sauron's imminent attack on Minas Tirith. As a result, Gandalf and Pipin travel to the capital of Gondor.

In Minas Tirith, Gandalf realises that Denethor's judgement is clouded. The fact that his beloved son is dead has driven him mad. Despite this, Gandalf does what he must. Pipin thus lights a

signal beacon and Rohan starts mustering an army.

The Rohan cavalries gather in Dunharrow. Aragorn knows that their army is not numerous enough to defeat the Mordor army. At this moment, Elrond arrives bringing Andúril to Aragorn. Equipped with the reforged sword, Aragorn leads his friends to the Paths of the Dead, where they gain an invaluable ally.

The Rohan army rides out to Gondor when the great battle is about to begin. With the help of the Rohirrim, the first wave of the Mordor army is fended off, nevertheless, its only with the assistance of the Dead that the battle is ultimately won. As a gratitude for their help and fulfilling the oath, Aragorn sets the ghosts free. In the aftermath of the battle, Aragorn decides to gather all the remaining forces and march to the Black Gate to draw out Sauron's forces in order for Frodo to accomplish his task.

Frodo's storyline, happening simultaneously with the that of the rest of the Fellowship, follows him on his way to Morgul Vale, where he sees the emergence of the Mordor army. Along his toiling up the stairs, he sends Sam away. Then he is betrayed by Gollum, leading him to Shelob.

Instead of falling victim to Shelob, Frodo is taken prisoner by orcs to Cirith Ungol. Luckily, owing to a mutual fight between the orcs, Sam is capable of rescuing Frodo. Then they move to the final stage of their journey.

Crossing Gorgoroth, Frodo and Sam finally reach the entrance to the Mount Doom. There, as Frodo is wavering, Gollum appears. While fighting for the Ring, Gollum falls over the edge and the Ring dissolves. Frodo and Sam are then saved by the Eagles.

In the following victory celebration, Aragorn is crowned king. The hobbits then return home. In the final scenes of the film, Frodo and Bilbo join Gandalf and the Elves on a ship to Valinor, and Sam stays with his family.

### 3. Film interpretation of the novels

At last, we embark on the coverage of the films themselves. The following three chapters will introduce the artistic intentions behind the project and the reasons for modifying or being unfaithful to the narrative, yet retaining its spirit. As regards deviations from the books, the films share a mutual characteristic: their cardinal focus is Frodo's journey.<sup>16</sup> Consequently, the films are deprived of a portion of the novels' plots and their essentials, however the film-makers managed to implement subtle – and therefore attractive for the reader-viewer – details. As Klára Vémolová states in her bachelor thesis: “*The movie certainly accentuates certain aspects of the book and downplays others as it simply cannot go to so much detail as the book.*”<sup>17</sup> This claim can truly be agreed upon due to the limited runtime of the films.

Each film in this respect tends to be noticeable for one major deviation from the novel. In *The Fellowship of the Ring*, it is the omission of Frodo's journey to Crickhollow and the encounter with Tom Bombadil. In *The Two Towers*, it is general modification of the story due to pacing reasons and considerable reconstruction of the chronology of the story. And finally, in *The Return of the King*, it is the omission of a set of new characters.

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<sup>16</sup> *Assembling an Epic*. 2001, time 6:30

<sup>17</sup> VÉMOLOVÁ, Klára. 2014, p. 7

### 3.1 The Fellowship of the Ring

The very first film of the trilogy might, right at the very start, seem to ignore the course of the book narrative. Opening the film with a prologue, the director on one hand provides an uninitiated audience with the background and the history of Middle-earth, but on the other hand, he intentionally deviates from the book. However, this prologue proves Peter Jackson's comprehension of the book since the information conveyed in the prologue is indeed contained within the book.<sup>18</sup> Instead of this story behind the Ring narrated at the council of Elrond, it is narrated at the start of the film in a more concise fashion.

The first extra scene included in the extended edition is an excerpt from Concerning Hobbits. Although it does not have a crucial part in the narrative of the film, it helps to convey more about what the lives of hobbits are like and thus oblige the book readers. In spite of the fact that the scene is of little significance for the drama of the film, it was originally intended to open the film instead of the prologue.<sup>19</sup>

What is definitely a fundamental deviation from the book is the time span in which the events of the first chapters of The Fellowship of the Ring happen. Being under a permanent pressure to convey the story of the whole novel within the time duration of the film, which is not by far sufficient for such an extensive work, Peter Jackson had to think of a manner to present as much of the books' contents as possible. The simplest way to tackle such a task, although frequently not the best, is ignoring bits and pieces of information. And such a move was resorted to in the case of time setting.<sup>20</sup>

Viewing the story from the perspective of the book first, it starts with Bilbo's and Frodo's birthday both on 22<sup>nd</sup> September. But rather than knowing the exact date, it is the year which the reader needs to know and bear in mind. The Appendices<sup>21</sup> convey that the story starts in the year 3001.<sup>22</sup> Afterwards, following the course of the story, we are informed that several years go by before the actual adventure begins.

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18 TOLKIEN, J.R.R.. 2009a, p. 311-353

19 Commentary with Director and Writers. 2001, time 8:40

20 Ibid, time 36:25

21 The Appendices are contained in a section in The Return of the King book. They provide further information about the history of Middle-earth, its peoples and languages.

22 TOLKIEN, J.R.R.. 2009b, p. 1431

*“For three years after the Party he [Gandalf] had been away. Then he paid Frodo a brief visit, and after taking a good look at him he went off again. During the next year or two he had turned up fairly often, coming unexpectedly after dusk, and going off without warning before sunrise. [...] Then suddenly his visits had ceased. It was over nine years since Frodo had seen or heard of him, and he had begun to think that the wizard would never return and had given up all interest in hobbits.”*<sup>23</sup>

Given the extract from the book and explicit date in The Appendices, we know that Frodo's journey with the Ring begins in 3018, seventeen years later.<sup>24</sup> In spite of these exact dates, the film-makers decided not to respect them even though Peter Jackson did manage to embed a sense of time having gone by subsequent to Bilbo's birthday in the film. As he himself explains: *“In our movie, we felt that seventeen years were just too long a time so we reduced it to seem like a few months had gone by.”*<sup>25</sup> Fran Walsh, one of the producers of the films, promptly explains further: *“There are fairly leisurely time frames in The Fellowship of the Ring. And this was not a luxury that we could indulge in the making of the film. We had to compress the time frames in order to get the story of the Ring underway.”*<sup>26</sup> As a result, the whole trilogy ignores the chronology beyond the year 3001 on. For those familiar with the book, this introduces a serious collision predominantly in relation to characters' age, for respecting the chronology prior to the year 3001, as it is established in the novels, and employing the one fabricated by the film-makers, the sheer set of characters would have to be and appear younger accordingly. However, such a consequence of altering the timeline is not portrayed in the films since it is not compatible with the human characters, otherwise Boromir would be twenty-three years of age (born in 2978), Éomer would be ten (born in 2991) and Éowyn would be six (born in 2995).<sup>27</sup> Infusing their distinctively personal interpretation of the book to the films, the film-makers seriously violated the original chronology, although the temporal setting and the background of the narrative themselves were retained.

Another omission relates to the hobbits venturing to The Old Forest. As the initial events unfold, the hobbits set out to Crickhollow and then to The Old Forest, hoping to escape the Black Riders. This detour leads them to the domain of Tom Bombadil's. He is an example of a minor,

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23 TOLKIEN, J.R.R.. 2009a, p. 60

24 TOLKIEN, J.R.R.. 2009b, p. 1432

25 Commentary with Director and Writers. 2001, time 36:40

26 Ibid, time 36:50

27 TOLKIEN, J.R.R.. 2009b, p. 1431



momentary character, whose presence in the book is profoundly iconic and memorable to such a degree that omitting him and his wife Goldberry ought to have disappointed the audience having read the book.

Regardless of the impact which this omission might have on the public, Peter Jackson had to think of a plausible manner of adapting the books into films. As a result, he came to the decision that the films would focus solely on the story of Frodo and the Ring.<sup>28</sup> While the books tell the story of each individual character and impart abundant information as to what is happening globally against the backdrop of the War of the Ring, it is impossible to recreate such a chain of events in the identical way to the books. A director always has to resolve what omissions or what changes they can risk. It is appropriate to remember this since adaptations will always be dependent on the director's interpretation of a particular novel.

Returning back to Tom Bombadil, his absence in the film is, as it was explained earlier on a different occasion, mainly for the limited duration of the film. After all, venturing to The Old Forest and meeting Tom is not the main concern of the narrative but rather a device to learn more about the world. Regardless of his informative occurrence in the novel, he does not help drive the story forward. Additionally, as Klára Vémolová aptly claims in relation to Bombadil's part in the novel, “... *we feel it is not exactly matching the whole story.*”<sup>29</sup> There is, nonetheless, one additional reason for excluding him from the film, this being Tom's immunity to the craving for the Ring.

In the book, Tom in fact puts on the Ring, which would definitely not be consistent with the power of the Ring as seen in the films. While in the books Frodo and Bilbo are not by far the only ones donning the Ring, in the film, it is solely them. As the aim of the films is to observe the journey of the Ring to its doom, the film-makers wanted to imbue the Ring with more fatal power<sup>30</sup>, not allowing for others to put it on. Its use is portrayed as dangerous since it draws Sauron's attention in spite of its benefit, rendering one invisible when it is donned. Apart from these active powers, the Ring constantly instils yearning for it in the people in its vicinity. This fundament, nevertheless, is what Tom Bombadil simply defies.

What is a solemn topic throughout the trilogy becomes playful with Tom. Here Tolkien devoted

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28 From Book to Script. 2001, time 10:51

29 VÉMOLOVÁ, Klára. 2014, p. 24

30 Commentary with Director and Writers. 2001, time 4:50

an inadequate explanation in relation to Tom and his resistance to the Ring. How is it possible that Tom possesses immunity to the desire for the Ring? Provided with insufficient information, the film-makers had one more reason to abandon this part of the book rather than to fabricate their own explanation. Yet, they did pay homage to his part of the story, but this is going to be elaborated on later when talking about Treebeard.

Another deviation from the book is the motif of the broken sword, which ought to be unveiled in Bree. While in the book Aragorn has been carrying the sword with him all the time<sup>31</sup>, in the films, it is completely stationary, displayed in Rivendell. What made the producers change the meaning of the book was their intention to attribute significance and more relevance to the sword to contribute to the drama.<sup>32</sup> In addition, Peter Jackson commented on the moment when the broken sword is revealed: “*The one thing that I knew from the book that I could never do in the movie, mainly cos I could never imagine it working, is the rather iconic moment where Strider pulls out his sword and it's the broken sword. It's great in the book, but in the movie, people are gonna laugh.*”<sup>33</sup> Thus, the sword is only reforged in a convenient moment and delivered to Aragorn by Elrond as late as in *The Return of the King*.

Having abandoned that original motif of the sword from the novel, the producers inadvertently altered Aragorn's personality and qualities rather drastically. In the films, he appears to be quite a humble and respectable character. In the books, however, he is the exact opposite, being assertive, stern, proud or even arrogant. Such an adjustment seems only appropriate for the film as he would not have been a personable protagonist. What is further in contradiction to the novels is his strong objection to travelling to Gondor voiced at the Council of Elrond, since he does not deem the land to be safe for the Ring. In the novel, however, he announces: “*A new hour comes. Isildur's Bane is found. Battle is at hand. The Sword shall be reforged. I will come to Minas Tirith.*”<sup>34</sup> And once the Council is brought to its conclusion, the Sword is, indeed, reforged thereafter.

After Frodo is stabbed by the Witch-king, Aragorn intends to lead his hobbit charges to Rivendell. On their journey, they are surprised by Arwen, having been following them. Her presence is a mere example of how the producers intentionally toyed with the purpose of various

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31 TOLKIEN, J.R.R.. 2009a, p. 224

32 Commentary with Director and Writers. 2003, time 1:40:40

33 Commentary with Director and Writers. 2001, time 1:03:00

34 TOLKIEN, J.R.R.. 2009a, p. 324

characters, originally appearing in the book and eventually not appearing in the films. In this case, it is Glorfindel. He is, in fact, the one coming to Frodo's aid. Nonetheless, in the film it is Arwen appearing to substitute for him. For such an alteration, there may seem to be no justification, but Liz Mullane, a casting director, was able to present a reasonable statement that casting elves is a time-consuming job, having to find very handsome individuals.<sup>35</sup> Provided that Glorfindel had, indeed, been adopted for the film, this would not have incurred any problems with the length of the film or any substantial changes to the film. Still, the producer explains that it was imperative to introduce Arwen quickly for the sake of time.<sup>36</sup> In addition, Glorfindel, whatever role of importance he plays in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, does not appear again in the book. In spite of him being momentarily important in the book, he could not be introduced in the film and then immediately abandoned as each protagonist in the film has their purpose for the entire length of the films.

As the Fellowship travels through the mines of Moria, it encounters goblins. A difference presented here in relation to the novel is the ability of Sting and Glamdring to register presence of Orcs.

*“No gleam came from the blades of Sting or of Glamdring; and that was some comfort, for being the work of Elvish smiths in the Elder Days these swords shone with a cold light, if any Orcs were near at hand.”<sup>37</sup>*

Unfortunately, Peter Jackson or the producers do not give any explanation in relation to the film as to why they depicted Glamdring without its unique glow. It is as late as now, after ten years since the trilogy release, that Philippa Boyens implied that they had made a mistake, it being an oversight.<sup>38</sup>

The *Hobbit* films were intended as integral part of the universe established in the antecedent film trilogy. Ergo, the crew had to resort to repeating the identical alleged mistake. Yet Philippa Boyens informs: *“When we did do that effect, I remember it looked like a light sabre.”<sup>39</sup>* Thus an attempt was made, albeit to no avail. What the film-makers did not consider as a potential justification for not having Glamdring glow was that having more blades glowing in the film

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<sup>35</sup> Behind the Scenes. 2001, time 29:45

<sup>36</sup> Commentary with Director and Writers. 2001, time 1:18:50

<sup>37</sup> TOLKIEN, J.R.R.. 2009a, p. 404

<sup>38</sup> Commentary with Director and Writer. 2013, time 2:24:25

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, time 2:24:35

might result in diminishing the impact which Sting may have on the audience. Suppose that the director had determined to such undertaking, the audience might have mistaken the swords for one another – depiction of Frodo's birthday on the same day as Bilbo's birthday was omitted with the same intention.<sup>40</sup> In the actual film rendition, Sting retains its unique quality.

As the members of the Fellowship are travelling through the mines, they reach Balin's tomb in the Chamber of Mazarbul. Here Gandalf finds a book and reads out what is written in it, in a most similar manner to the novel. What the director and producers inadvertently planted here was an idea which, by chance, enabled them to expand it a decade later, and with a little help of the director, we finally are introduced a new way of understanding this scene in its completeness.

In the novel as Gandalf reads out the book, he discovers the name of one of the dwarves from Thorin's company from the book *The Hobbit, or There and Back Again*.

*“Here is something: a large bold hand using an Elvish script.”*

*“That would be Ori’s hand,” said Gimli, looking over the wizard’s arm. “He could write well and speedily, and often used the Elvish characters.”*

*“I fear he had ill tidings to record in a fair hand,” said Gandalf.*

This scene, which would keep the same impression even a decade after the films had been released, is now given more significance for an experienced audience. Based on the content of the novel, we are informed that Ori, Balin and Óin ventured to Moria and settled there once more. As the events escalated, Ori made his contribution to the Book of Mazarbul, assuming it was not his own creation in the first place.

Exploiting this slight indication of Ori being capable of fair handwriting, the director and producers decided to put this mention into practice when designing his appearance for *The Hobbit* trilogy. Given his literacy, he was given a book as an item of his property, which he carries with him for the time of the quest.<sup>41</sup>

Apart from this presence of Ori, the audience may now be moved more at Balin's death, seeing his Tomb. This is again due to *The Hobbit* trilogy, having helped to expand the meaning of this

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<sup>40</sup> Commentary with Director and Writers. 2001, time 26:00

<sup>41</sup> *The Company of Thorin: Dori, Nori and Ori*. 2013, time 4:26

scene to more depth as we are now not only familiar with these protagonists from the book but from the film as well.

Having left Moria, the Fellowship travels on to Lothlórien. Although a scene captures its arrival at the forest in the film, the narrative is longer in the novel. The Fellowship is, in fact, chased by goblins and the producers originally wanted to pay homage to it by filming a scene where the goblins are consequently shot by elves.<sup>42</sup> Nonetheless, for an unspecified reason, a decision was made not to include such a scene into the film and rather to have the Elves ambush the Fellowship.

While travelling by canoes after their departure from Lothlórien, the Fellowship encounters rapids on the way down the Anduin river. Regardless of this passage being in the book, this scene was not incorporated in the film. However, it is now apt to explain that the crew did manufacture such a set. Unfortunately, due to an unexpected escalation of events, the set was destroyed and lost, having been flooded and washed away.<sup>43</sup> The film-makers did intend to be faithful to the novel, but the weather decided otherwise.

Coming to the finale of the film, any film needs a proper ending. In relation to the novel, it is the breaking of the Fellowship. However, the beginning of *The Two Towers* novel immediately connects to the end of the first novel and conveys Boromir's death at the very beginning. In spite of shifting the story-telling slightly, the director employed this imagery to climax the film and to help bring it to a close.

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<sup>42</sup> Commentary with Production Team. 2001, time 2:30:00

<sup>43</sup> Commentary with Design Team. 2001, time 2:55:15

## 3.2 The Two Towers

As Peter Jackson established in the first film, right at the beginning of the film, there is an action opening scene of Gandalf clashing Balrog as they are plummeting down the chasm of Moria. While we see this vignette unresolved, the climax follows later on in the film. Explaining merely what happened to Gandalf after his unfortunate disappearance, the crew storyboarded an additional scene of Gandalf being carried away by Gwaihir to Galadriel. Moreover, the very duel was conceived more extensively, depicting the extinguished balrog and both of them making their way up The Endless Stair to Zirakzigol.<sup>44</sup> In such a manner, the scene would have been more effective as it would have given the audience a reference as to where the characters were located.

A significant portion of the second film is devoted to Saruman's raid on Rohan as it is so in the novel. However, the fashion it was undertaken in differs drastically in comparison with the novel. The plot involving Saruman began to unfold in the first film more than it does in the first novel. Yet it is as late as in *The Two Towers* that his agenda and scheme are fully disclosed.

In *The Fellowship of the Ring* film, we are introduced the facts conveyed predominantly in the second book through Gandalf's comments and assumptions. *The Two Towers* film thus proceeds in this fashion, yet Saruman does not pose as a remote character, who is only referred to, because for the purpose of the film, it is essential to actually present such an iconic villain.

Film two thus has a fairly established background, enabling the film to proceed to the very drama. Nonetheless, the film does not provide any more essential information apart from Saruman's intention to strike Rohan. Lacking the fractions of the novel's story imparting the insinuations about Saruman's volatile position, the film does not contribute to the depiction of Saruman as a power-yearning individual risking to oppose Sauron himself in his pursuit.<sup>45</sup>

The audience is familiar with Saruman's betrayal and his consorting with Sauron right from the first film. What, however, neither of the films conveys, in contrast to the novels, is his unclear role. In the novels, his character experiences a long-lasting evolution, pre-dating the events in *The Lord of the Rings*, as to whether to cooperate with Sauron or not. The reader learns about the

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<sup>44</sup> Commentary with Design Team. 2002, time 2:30

<sup>45</sup> Commentary with Director and Writers. 2001, time 2:47:10

tension between Saruman and Sauron and about the explicit rivalry and animosity between orcs. The films, on the other hand, are not encumbered with such information and portray Saruman as an outright ally of Sauron's.

Focusing now on another element of the film, prior to the Battle of Helm's Deep, Théoden orders to evacuate Edoras since it is in jeopardy of being attacked. The refugees are eventually surprised and raided by wargs on their way. However, this scene was not the original concept as a different skirmish ought to have happened elsewhere. Instead of having wargs raid the column of the refugees, Peter Jackson intended to shoot a grandiose warg attack on Edoras in the middle of the night. The film-makers did proceed with the initial preparations, although they soon realised that the sheer scope of it, as conceived by Jackson, was overly complex and consequently fund-demanding. Then they had to resort to forsaking the concept and conceived the scene as it actually appears in the film.<sup>46</sup> Nonetheless, Jackson confesses that he had never felt truly content with the resultant visual rendition of the actual battle, in spite of his admission that it works well for the film.<sup>47</sup>

Focusing now on the thrilling scene of the siege of Helm's Deep itself, the facts once again corroborate the claim that this film is predominantly Peter Jackson's vision. While in the book the battle is not perceived as of such a grand scale, in the film, its scope is overwhelming. Jackson grasped the battle motifs and the mentions of raiding and burning villages to intensify the threat. He virtually took all individual orc bands in the land and accumulated them with the main legion of orcs. In this manner, he created one massive battle.

One more feature supplemented distinctively by Peter Jackson, and violating the literary narrative, is the arrival of the host of the Elves. In a manner of speaking, it might be concluded that there is not a single reason or explanation for such an intentional change to the story. Nevertheless, the contrary is true as at least a reminiscence of an alliance between Men and Elves was mentioned in the prologue. Thus, the director exploited this motif and had the Elves sent out to aid Men in their dire need of help. And in the light of his creative approach, Jackson also took advantage of the Elves marching to Helm's Deep and decided to reintroduce Arwen as one of them. His explanation was that she needed more space in the film, and her reappearance alongside Aragorn is therefore a reminder of their mutual relationship.<sup>48</sup> Disregarding the essence

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<sup>46</sup> Cameras in Middle-earth. 2002, time 41:28

<sup>47</sup> Commentary with Director and Writers. 2002, time 1:58:20

<sup>48</sup> From Book to Script. 2002, time 12:20

of the novel beyond acceptance, this scene was not eventually used in the film whatsoever, in spite of it having been shot, as the reader-viewer may have responded to seeing it rather negatively.<sup>49</sup> Additionally, Tolkien gives Arwen minimal significance in the novel.

Proceeding now to the scenes with Treebeard, this storyline underwent another series of major alterations. In the film, Merry and Pipin are transported straight to the Entmoot by Treebeard, with only a brief detour to invigoration, as shown in the extended cut. Although in the film the Ents are utmost indecisive and wavering in their nature, and as a result do not consent to them marching on Isengard, in the novel, they do reach this agreement unexpectedly swiftly that even Treebeard wonders.<sup>50</sup> In the light of the film-makers having to elude and shorten the content of the books, it is exceptional that they endeavoured to prolong the Entmoot scene. The reason for that was not for Peter Jackson's urge to include in the film something of his own creation but for contributing to the drama of the film. As the Entmoot scene is not a single long sequence but a collection of short excerpts equally intercutting with the Battle of Helm's Deep, it interrupts the pandemonium of the battle with the leisurely views of serene creatures seeking to come to a decision.<sup>51</sup> Using this device, both the battle and the Entmoot seem longer. Moreover, these two contemporaneous actions are contrasting as the Entmoot depicts a political discussion against the backdrop of an actual fight to death.

In spite of all, the Ents eventually marched on Isengard and were victorious, flooding Isengard. Nevertheless, in the film the audience is witness to the actual flooding while in the novel, this sequence is merely outlined retrospectively as if it was a minor event.<sup>52</sup> As Tom Shippey comments, this is what a professional author would not have endeavoured while Tolkien did.<sup>53</sup> And he did employ this technique on more occasions, eluding the description of important events.

Focusing on the Treebeard's storyline, one more observation ought to be made. In the previous chapter, it was mentioned that Tom Bombadil did not appear in the film whatsoever, although the film-makers did manage to force at least his line from the book into the film. In the book, Tom saves Merry and Pipin from being trapped by Old Man Willow as he says: "*Eat earth! Dig deep! Drink water! Go to sleep!*" In the film, this scene retains its essence as in the novel, although it is

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49 From Book to Script. 2002, time 13:24

50 TOLKIEN, J.R.R.. 2008, p. 633

51 Commentary with Director and Writers. 2002, time 2:54:35

52 TOLKIEN, J.R.R.. 2008, p. 736-750

53 J.R.R Tolkien: Origins of Middle-Earth. 2002, time 8:13



Treebeard who replaces Tom Bombadil in his role, and this whole sequence happens in Fangorn instead of The Old Forest. This scene, featured only in the extended cut, is another example exhibiting that the film-makers were very flexible in approach to the story as they, on one hand, paid homage to the book and obliged the book readers, wanting to include as much of the content as possible, although, on the other hand, having a character's line uttered by somebody else introduced one extra deviation.

To include a few words relating to Frodo's journey, his travelling through Gondor is in substantial discord in comparison to the novel. In the light of such a diversion, it is necessary to explain that the film-makers had to tackle an inconsistency in the novel's timeline, for in the novel, Frodo reaches as far as Minas Morgul rather quickly and sees the emergence of the army of Mordor.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, it may seem that the storming of Osgiliath happens concurrently with or immediately after the Battle of Helm's Deep. Yet the contrary is true. Consequently, the film-makers were necessitated to conceive a storyline that would fill the gap in the film. To achieve this, the scene of Frodo being taken to Osgiliath was intentionally supplemented. In addition, the fabricated storyline focuses on Faramir as well. He, unlike in the novel, is depicted as not as resilient to the power of The Ring. His personal dilemma once more serves to instil more tension and to resonate the presence of The Ring, which is attenuated in this film and becomes prominent again in the third film.<sup>55</sup>

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54 TOLKIEN, J.R.R.. 2008, p. 923-924

55 Commentary with Director and Writers. 2003, time 2:00

### 3.3 The Return of the King

The third film, being unorthodoxly long, adapts the shortest novel of the trilogy, yet it was still impossible to fully respect the novel. As an epic finale of the trilogy, it had to conclude all the minor plots and the central one.

As it was implied earlier in a previous chapter, Andúril was delivered to Aragorn by Elrond. Having been commented on as a deviation from the book, it is reasonably justified by Peter Jackson: “*We wanted the moment of the reforging of the sword to have a significance and to mark a particular point in the story where the importance of that can be felt.*”<sup>56</sup> Thus, the sword is delivered by Elrond, whose presence is justified by Phillipa Boyens, stating that there are Elrond’s sons joining with Aragorn in the novel.<sup>57</sup> In addition, not only would it have been cumbersome to introduce a couple of new characters but, considering them being Elves, casting-demanding as well.

Moving now to the scene where Éowyn battles the Witch-king of Angmar, there would not seem to be anything inappropriate in relation to the books. Although such a claim is true, a subtle element was lost in the transition of the book to the film. When Merry stabs the Witch-king with his sword, the Witch-king screeches with pain. As he is now distracted and weakened, Éowyn is enabled to kill him. However, what the film does not convey is that Merry wields an enchanted blade from the Barrow-downs. It is immediately mentioned in the book that Éowyn’s sword shatters upon the contact with the Witch-king whilst Merry’s blade remains intact.<sup>58</sup> Such knowledge of the context always helps the reader to infuse these films with more depth, but as it was mentioned earlier, the director was not able to include the Barrow-downs scene in the film for the sake of its runtime.

In the book, Denethor dies burning to death on the pyre during the Battle of Pellenor Fields. His demise in the film is, however, solely Peter Jackson’s construct. Apparently, a cheap shot of Denethor running in flames along and ultimately falling off the courtyard is sheer nonsense, as Jackson himself proudly confesses.<sup>59</sup> It is not for a slight deviation from the novel but predominantly for Denethor’s running along a mile long pier while on fire, which was too much.

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<sup>56</sup> Commentary with Director and Writers. 2003, time 1:40:26

<sup>57</sup> Ibid

<sup>58</sup> TOLKIEN, J.R.R.. 2009b, p. 1105

<sup>59</sup> Commentary with Director and Writers. 2003, time 2:38:27

In addition, an explanation imparted in a bachelor's thesis<sup>60</sup>, that this change to the scene was made in order to demonstrate Sauron's power over people's minds or to diminish a gruesome image of Denethor being incinerated, is not made on any grounds.

In the book, Aragorn and his more plentiful team go through the Paths of the Dead, and with the assistance of the Dead, they raid and liberate the corsairs' harbours. Then the Dead are released by Aragorn. Afterwards, it is only the living people disembarking at Minas Tirith and helping to defend it. In the film, however, the Dead are employed to turn the tide of the great battle and the sequence of them attacking the corsairs is merely hinted with a short vignette in the extended cut. Due to such a change, the director was faced with a challenge as to how to provide reasonable enough an explanation for releasing the ghosts now. Therefore, a scene was written specially for this occasion, and Peter Jackson also explains: *"If I was an audience watching this, I'd be saying: 'They're gonna go and take on Mordor [...] so why don't they keep all the ghost with them [...] they can go and beat any bad guys in the world.'* [...] *And so we had to actually get rid of the ghost and we had to have Gimli ask the audience's question.*"<sup>61</sup> And Gimli does complain about setting the ghosts free: *"Bad idea. Very handy in a tight spot, these lads, despite the fact they're dead."*<sup>62</sup> This is not the only example of deus ex machina in the trilogy. The eagles are recurring embodiment of another, which the film-makers had to tackle.

Right before the climax of the film, Aragorn finds himself involved in his ultimate sword fight. As it was desirable to involve a strong enough creature, worthy of challenging Aragorn in the final battle, the film-makers came to the decision to design a battle troll as his opponent. Yet this was not their original concept since they had devised a scene where Aragorn was facing Sauron himself in his human form. The film-makers did shoot a scene with Sauron, not only wearing his iconic armour but also in his appealing form prior to his corruption.<sup>63</sup> The scene ought to have supported Jackson's claim that their resort to giving villains more important role was due to the simple fact that main villains in the books were very limited, being confined to Mordor and Isengard.<sup>64</sup> Apart from Sauron and Saruman, there are few antagonist characters mentioned in the books by their name, although their functions are minute.

The very last but not the least omission, which was made in this film, concerns the chapter The

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60 ZLÁMAL, David. 2015, p 19-20

61 Commentary with Director and Writers. 2003, time 2:53:40

62 Pán prstenů: Návrat krále (rozšířená verze). 2003, time 2:53:40

63 From Book to Script: Forging the Final Chapter. 2003, time 10:21

64 Commentary with Director and Writers. 2003, time 55:05

Scouring of the Shire. Unlike in the films, where the four hobbits arrive back home and find everything as it was before they left, unspoiled by the war, in the book, the Shire is in ruins and occupied. Thus instead of merely returning to their normal lives, they have to begin a revolt to drive Saruman out of the Shire. His demise here is what the director used as the inspiration for the depiction of his actual death in the film. The motif retains part of its essence since in the film<sup>65</sup>, Saruman is, indeed, stabbed by Gríma Wormtongue. In spite of Gríma, being killed by hobbits shooting their arrows, in the film, it is Legolas who does so.

To include an explanation as to why The Scouring of the Shire was not incorporated at the end of the film, it is surprising that time constraints were not the main reason. Instead, Jackson claims that the film had already reached its climax, having had Frodo destroy the Ring.<sup>66</sup> In spite of the absence of the imagery from this chapter, the director successfully managed to transfer its content to the mirror of Galadriel, where it appeared in a series of images and flashes. Yet such a brief sequence of images may only be comprehensible by the book readers.

Justifying this loose adaptation, John Howe, one of the concept artists, is quite pleased at Saruman's triple death, being stabbed, impaled and drowned. Being familiar with Celtic cultural features, he admits that such a depiction is convenient given the feel of the films.<sup>67</sup> Ultimately, a possible depiction of The Scouring of the Shire would have merely prolonged the film and deepened the notion of postponing the end of the film.<sup>68</sup> After all, the Ring was successfully destroyed.

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65 From Book to Script: Forging the Final Chapter. 2003, time 56:00

66 Ibid, time 56:20

67 Commentary with Design Team. 2003, time 17:00

68 A Discussion of the 'Multiple Endings' of Peter Jackson's [i]The Return of the King[/i]. *Theonering.com*

#### **4. Dubbing of The Lord of the Rings**

In the identical manner as there are numerous approaches to grasp adaptation of novels, there exists an unresolved dispute whether a dubbing director should feel obliged to create a precise localised rendition respecting the vocal resemblance between the actors and the voice-actors, or feel free to create a virtually independent and distinctive piece of audio art, which not only complements the film but might result in reinterpreting it. Considering that this thesis elaborates on the film-makers' – predominantly Peter Jackson's – interpretation of the novels, incorporating a topic about dubbing may easily seem misplaced. Nevertheless, a justification is going to be conveyed.

In spite of the fact that this thesis is written in English, it is not going to focus on the original language – audio track – of the films but on their Czech rendition. The main reason for this step is logical as there are few features of the original audio track for analysis: the actors' voices are their own and therefore the most natural part of the films. Prior to the shooting of the films themselves, the producers undoubtedly cast the actors not only for their physique or facial expression but for their voice as well. This thus once more supports the fact that the producers are not responsible merely for the concept and creation of the films and the interpretation of the books but for the manner in which the story talks to us. And this very same principle is applied when talking about the Czech dubbing.

## **4.1 Features of dubbing**

Any dubbing can be, and should be, analysed and reviewed on several levels. In spite of the popular notion that a good dubbing needs to cast voices sharing common features with the actors – or at least cast the voice-actors we are used to hearing on a specific actor –, this is a misleading and not the only way of approaching potential analysis. Dubbing analysis ought to cover: translation, dialogue synchronisation, final sound mix and voice casting. Even though the audience have the final say – frequently a very critical one – in proving whether a dubbing is well-made, this thesis is not going to take possible praise and complaints into consideration. In addition, for the sake of the relation to the novels, the thesis is going to concentrate on translation and voice-casting only.

## 4.2 Translation

In the same fashion as the film makers approached making the language of the book come alive in the film dialogues, the assignment of the dubbing creators was to realise an adequate Czech interpretation. In order to achieve such an objective, the creators wisely employed Stanislava Pošustová, the translator of the very books, as the film translator. Her participation in the project was paramount due to her being prior familiar with the books. It is her rendition of the novels, having established the Czech Middle-earth nomenclature, which is reproduced in oral form in the films. Had she not been invited to translate the films, for the sake of retaining all the terms in their correct form, as appearing in the novels, the studio should have had to resort either to employing a different translator familiar with the content of the books or a technical supervisor. The example of the latter was done in the case of *Stargate Universe*<sup>69</sup> or *Apollo 13*<sup>70</sup> in order to ensure the continuity of the correct nomenclature related to the franchise and the accuracy of scientific terms, respectively.

Nonetheless, in spite of her participation in the creative process, a fair measure of errors in translation appears in the *Fellowship of the Rings*. Considering Pošustova's involvement in the process of making, it appears rather shocking that she would have caused such numerous errors in the translation. In addition, the majority of the mistakes is restricted solely to the first film and is furthermore confined to a particular scene explaining geographical orientation. The scene depicts the Fellowship disembarking from the canoes at Amon Hen with Aragorn talking about their and theirs and the uruk-hai's whereabouts.

The other aspect of the translation appertains to pronunciation. The Czech language, unlike English, serves quite conveniently in an encounter with unknown, new words, which are pronounced as written. And in *The Lord of the Rings*, there is plenty of words whose pronunciation is not firmly imprinted in people's minds. In Czech, the words ought to be uttered in the manner they are written, whereas the nature of English language allows for more variants of pronunciation of a single word, depending on the accent of the speaker.

Apart from the English pronunciation in the films, there is one practically unresolved issue as to how Celeborn's name ought to be pronounced in Czech. Being a character with no more than a

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69 Hvězdná brána: Hluboký vesmír / SGU Stargate Universe. *Dabingforum.cz*

70 Apollo 13 / Apollo 13. *Dabingforum.cz*

momentary role in the first film, his name is not even mentioned in the theatrical cut. As a result, there was no opportunity for the dubbing creators to provide it with a Czech pronunciation since only the theatrical cut was dubbed. As a result, he remains a nameless character for the English as well as the Czech audience not having seen the extended cut. In the extended cut, his name is pronounced /kelebo:n/. Staying loyal to the Czech undertaking, had the extended version been dubbed, the dubbing creators might have ignored the English pronunciation retaining the Czech /celeborn/. In this respect, this is what the Czech pronunciation of Cirith Ungol indicates, pronounced /cirit unɔl/. As it was mentioned above, the Czech translation localised the pronunciation as well, although here the dubbing creators had a prescription for the proper utterance. The Appendices state, both in English and Czech, that “*C has always the value of k.*”<sup>71</sup> In this respect, the Czech pronunciation /cirit/ is incorrect. Regarding this pronunciation, it is surprising that in the first film, Caradhras is, indeed, uttered accurately with /k/ sound. Consequently, it appears rather abstruse as to how such an inconsistency occurred in a trilogy of films. A simple explanation might be due to the two years' time span between the first and the third film. After all, the films (and the books are even more obvious in this respect) are completely Czech-localised, which means that all the English texts are rendered into Czech, and therefore the translator might have forgotten and simply ignored the English pronunciation. In the light of this misunderstanding, it is convenient to mention that these are the only names beginning with letter “C” in all three films conveyed in Czech. The extended cut offers also the names Caras Galadhon and Cair Andros, which have never been rendered into Czech and thus can by no means pose as specimens for accuracy or inaccuracy.

Speaking of the proper pronunciation, there is the elvish language to discuss as well. Although reproducing elvish speech in Czech may not seem mandatory, it is appropriate to do so for the sake of the uniformity of voices. Such a dubbing always makes a better impression than the one with the voices of the actors and the voice-actors interchanging in the course of the film. That being said, a problem remains here as Elvish is not performed in a correct way, which frequently results in utterance of different words. It is most noticeable in the Helm's Deep when Aragorn gives the Elves the command to fire. In comparison to *The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies* where Thranduil commands his army, it is hard to believe that he and Aragorn do utter the same command to release the arrows. Apparently, the dubbing creators were not provided with a transcript of Elvish, and thus the translator could rely solely on her discriminating hearing, which was not entirely perfect.

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71 TOLKIEN, J.R.R.. 2009b, p. 1461



To summarize, the Czech translation of the films in terms of the terminology is in its utter completeness loyal to the novels. That being said, it must be noted that the final piece of art is not flawless as there is a couple of misinterpretations.

### 4.3 Voice casting

When deciding which voice-actor is going to dub whom, Czech dubbing creators find themselves in a situation much alike the one of film-makers. Obviously, the film-makers decided to cast a role according to the respective actor's appearance. However, their innate vocal capacities must have contributed to them being chosen as well. Ergo, the dubbing creators were given the identical task: to cast a Czech voice on the already existing film role.

However, in the field of dubbing, there is a constant discord and inconsistency among dubbing creators in regard to whether it should be the actor whom a voice-actor is supposed to be cast on, or rather the film character. It is true that a dubbing director has their sacrosanct privilege to make their own decisions relating to the creative process and casting, yet even they are occasionally obligated to conform to a superior authority, that being the very film-makers. A dubbing director's freedom to choose voice-actors is thus hamstrung, and then it is left solely for their consideration as to in what manner they will capitalise on the little opportunities they still have. A dubbing director still has a say in inviting voice-actors for the casting, even though the film-makers have the decisive say. In the case of *The Lord of the Rings*, it was Peter Jackson himself.<sup>72</sup>

The very casting procedure started before the *Fellowship of the Ring* was due to be released to cinemas. *The Lord of the Rings* was originally supposed to be complemented with a Czech dubbing as early as for the cinema premiere. Unfortunately, in the light of unforeseen events, the initial preparations were cancelled and the first film of the trilogy, and the remaining films likewise, were eventually dubbed as late as for the DVD. In spite of this course of events, the initial concept and arrangements remained valid, and regardless of the dubbing happening in early 2002, the process was still supervised by the film director himself. And despite the contemporary trend that such supervision<sup>73</sup> has proven to be an encumbrance in a number of cases, this one was apparently not the case.

The studio LS Productions indeed held a voice-casting for the potential voice-actors as early as in 2001. Each of the main roles was auditioned for by three or four actors. As the excerpt from

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<sup>72</sup> Pán prstenů: Společenstvo prstenu. *Dabingforum.cz*

<sup>73</sup> The majority of films dubbed for cinemas are supervised by the film producers themselves. The dubbing-makers then have to comply with their demands relating to the choice of voice-actors or translation of nomenclature at the expense of prior continuity. Possibly the best contemporary example of incompetent interference is the dubbing of *The Avengers: Age of Ultron*.

the casting list indicates, the film-makers supervised casting of at least these roles for the first film:

Gandalf – Bohumil Švarc / Otakar Brousek / **Petr Pelzer**  
Bilbo – Ladislav Mrkvička / Bohuslav Kalva / **Vladimír Brabec**  
Galadriel – Valérie Zawadská / Zlata Adamovská / **Simona Postlerová**  
Aragorn – Ondřej Vetchý / **Michal Dlouhý** / Jan Štátný  
Frodo – Jakub Zdeněk / Kryštof Hádek / Michal Michálek / **Jan Maxián**  
Arwen – Simona Vrbická / **Jitka Ježková** / Tereza Chudobová  
Elrond – Zdeněk Dolanský / **Vladislav Beneš** / Jiří Štěpnička  
Legolas – **Michal Jagelka** / Kamil Halbich / Hynek Dřížhal  
Boromir – **Lukáš Hlavica** / Jiří Schwarz / Zdeněk Dolanský / Kamil Halbich  
Gimli – Antonín Molčík / Bedřich Šetena / **Pavel Pípal**  
Saruman – Karel Chromík / Bedřich Šetena / **Boris Rösner**<sup>74</sup>

The names in bold indicate the voice-actors who were eventually decided on and confirmed by Peter Jackson, which corroborates that the dubbing director had merely the authority to propose suitable voice-actors.

Considering that this selection was held in 2001, almost none of the film actors starring in the trilogy had any Czech voice-actor who would automatically be cast on them. This fact only facilitated the process of casting since the director and the producers did not need to feel obliged to employ a specific voice-actor for whichever role. However, this dubbing successfully managed to establish at least a handful of Czech voice connections for the future. As illustrations of these, it can be referred to Cate Blanchett, Orlando Bloom, Ian McKellen or Karl Urban, whose voice-actors from the trilogy pose as the top choice based on popular voting.<sup>75</sup>

If we consider the final selection of the voice-actors now, after more than a decade since the release of the dubbing, the dubbing of the trilogy has established its position among the great Czech dubbings. The fact that it has never been re-dubbed only attests to this statement. Nevertheless, given the casting list of the auditioned voice-actors, it can be commented that the dubbing creators could have auditioned a voice-actor for a different character. It can also be

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<sup>74</sup> Pán prstenů: Společenstvo prstenu. *Dabingforum.cz*

<sup>75</sup> Dabingforum rankings serve for dubbing enthusiasts. They do not constitute an official, mandatory regulation, however dubbing directors do take them into consideration when casting a dubbing.

observed that they auditioned some voice-actors for more than solely one character. An example of the former can, without any doubt, be Bohumil Švarc. Intentionally cast on Gandalf, he could have been cast more properly on Saruman. The reason for this is that Christopher Lee, playing Saruman, was one of the few actors in the films with a recognised Czech voice connection, dubbed by Bohumil Švarc.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, it would have been at least worthy of casting him for such a role to see whether Peter Jackson would have agreed with the auditioned voice-actor. Nevertheless, he ultimately gained his share in the dubbing as he dubs the Witch-king of Angmar.

Examples of the latter are Kamil Halbich, Bedřich Šetena and Zdeněk Dolanský. They all auditioned for two roles and none of them were successful. However, had Messrs Šetena and Dolanský been cast, their voices would not have harmed the Czech rendition since their voices share certain common qualities with the starring actors. On the other hand, this statement does absolutely not apply for Kamil Halbich, whose mild voice is not compatible with Boromir's deep voice. Thus, the first two voice-actors did not succeed in achieving their major roles in the films, although they were eventually cast on minor roles.

What the dubbing creators managed to achieve as opposed to the original was the voice of Treebeard, speaking with John Rhys-Davis' voice. In spite of his starring as Gimli as well, this did not prevent the film-makers from employing him for this vacancy too. In that process, his voice underwent a substantial transformation by the sound engineers, applying various filters to render it hollow and more sonorous. In spite of this undertaking, John Rhys-Davis' presence in the voice is undeniable, and observant audience might register this. The contrary applies for Treebeard's Czech voice, spoken by Jiří Zavřel. His voice was not edited to such an extent as Rhys-Davis', and as a result, the Czech Treebeard sounds less sonorous, less edited and yet raspier.

This trio of dubbings, capitalising on well-crafted translation and dialogues, suffers, on the other hand, from a shortage of additional voice-actors. In *The Fellowship of the Rings*, we encounter Gollum in the prologue, Barliman Butterbur at the Prancing Pony Inn and Celeborn alongside Galadriel. While it may not be identifiable with Gollum, as the voice-actor distorted his voice in a barely credible manner, these three aforementioned characters were dubbed by Martin Zahálka. The human protagonists either do not appear in the films again or do not utter a single word, thus

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<sup>76</sup> Christopher Lee. *Dabingforum.cz*

it can be an acceptable fashion of tackling the necessity of involving and having to remunerate two extra voice-actors.

The same handling of casting voice-actors for the minor roles is the inappropriate employment of above-mentioned Kamil Halbich. He was eventually not cast on a major role but on two minor characters, Haldir and Gamling. While casting him on Haldir is by no means a mistake in the first film, as his voice is suitable for the role, his double appearance in *The Two Towers* is quite cumbersome since he also dubs Gamling.<sup>77</sup> In spite of such a practice being perfectly mundane nowadays, the fashion in which it was done here is inappropriate. The protagonists appear on the very same set, fighting in Helm's Deep, and their separate lines follow shortly one after another.<sup>78</sup> This whole issue may indicate that the creators had to rationally conform to budgetary constraints.

If there is an aspect these dubbings which does not deserve a pardon, apart from the prior mistake, it is undoubtedly the abundant use of Bedřich Šetena in *The Two Towers* and *The Return of the King*. He was cast on Faramir's ranger officer called Madril while he dubs many cameos in the second film as well. Moreover, he was entrusted with even two more major roles in the third film, these being the King of the Dead and Gothmog.<sup>79</sup> Such a way of casting voice-actors proves very disturbing, predominantly in the scene when Madril is killed by Gothmog. Madril moans for the last time and Gothmog immediately says his line, both performed by Šetena.

To bring this chapter to a close, the dubbing of these three films, or any film whatsoever, is not based solely on the choice of voice-actors. As it was mentioned above, a dubbing must be analysed on more levels, voice-casting being merely one of them. That being said, voice-casting is ironically the cardinal aspect of dubbing since the audience responds either positively or negatively primarily according to this. Although it is vital to employ matching voice-actors, and thus oblige the audience, here it was paramount to generate an appropriate translation, which was achieved. It was only then that the voice-actors could introduce their convincing performance.

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<sup>77</sup> Gamling is only dubbed by Kamil Halbich in *The Two Towers*. In *The Return of the King*, not starring Haldir, he is dubbed by Jaroslav Kaňkovský, who also dubs a few more extras. This only proves Gamling's depiction as a minor character in the films, and as such, he is treated accordingly.

<sup>78</sup> Compare Gamling ordering Aragorn to fall back to the Keep followed by Haldir commanding his fellow Elves.

<sup>79</sup> Pán prstenů: Návrat krále. *Dabingforum.cz*

## Conclusion

In this bachelor thesis, I attempted to introduce The Lord of the Rings film trilogy as Peter Jackson's undertaking, infused with his own ideas based on his comprehension of the novels.

The first section was aimed at presenting a handful of different approaches to the term "adaptation". As it was demonstrated, the experts in the field of film theory do have diverse opinions about this term. As a result of this disunity, the theory of adaptation can not be viewed as the official regulation or instruction for adaptation of books. Directors still have freedom to render their own concepts without having to conform to limitations established by the academic community.

The main part of the thesis was devoted to the analysis of selected scenes from all three films. The aim was to present these scenes as the examples of Jackson's involvement in the project, infusing it with his distinctive ideas, and thus to prove the complexity stemming from the personal bias during interpretation of books. It should also be evident that the film-makers did not realise the films according to a merely one rigid script. A few changes were caused by objective conditions, although the majority was still in the hands of the director, yearning to materialise his vision.

The last chapter bridged the making of the film with the creation of the film dubbing since Peter Jackson was involved in both processes. His task was to decide on the suitable voice-actors for the roles. Even though this task was most simple for him, the voice-casting is what the audiences are primarily sensitive to. In relation to the pool of voice-actors, the dubbing ought to have employed a higher number of voice-actors to cover minor roles. Elaborating on another feature of dubbing, it was conveyed that these dubbings are faithful to the book translation despite a couple of errors which, however, do not appertain to the nomenclature.

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## **Résumé**

Práce se zabývá rozbořem filmové trilogie Pán Prstenů jako osobitého díla svého režiséra. V první kapitole je nejprve představen pojem adaptace, jenž nemá mezi odborníky jednotný výklad. Stěžejní část práce poté rozebírá vybrané filmové scény ve vztahu k předloze. Především ale představuje režiséřův vliv na tvůrčí proces. Peter Jackson, i přes nezměrné množství zúčastněných, dokázal do značné míry prosadit svoji představu příběhu. Poslední část přibližuje vznik českého dabingu trilogie, jehož hlasové obsazení bylo ovlivněno samotným režiséřem filmů.

## Annotation

<b>Jméno a příjmení:</b>	Michal Jurčík
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<b>Rok obhajoby:</b>	2017

<b>Název práce:</b>	Pán Prstenů: film jako osobní vize režiséra
<b>Název v angličtině:</b>	The Lord of the Rings: the Film as the Director's Personal Vision
<b>Anotace práce:</b>	Bakalářská práce se zabývá rozbořem filmů trilogie Pán Prstenů z hlediska režisérova osobního pojetí knih. V první kapitole je nejprve vysvětlen pojem adaptace. Hlavní část se zabývá samotným rozbořem vybraných scén z filmů. Poslední část přibližuje vznik českého dabingu filmů.
<b>Klíčová slova:</b>	Pán Prstenů, Tolkien, Peter Jackson, filmová adaptace, teorie adaptace, dabing
<b>Anotace v angličtině:</b>	The bachelor thesis deals with the analysis of The Lord of the Rings trilogy as the result of the director's individual comprehension of the novels. In the first section, the term adaptation is explained. The main body of the thesis is devoted to the analysis of selected scenes from the films. The final section focuses on the conception of the Czech dubbing of the films.
<b>Klíčová slova v angličtině:</b>	The Lord of the Rings, Tolkien, Peter Jackson, film adaptation, theory of adaptation, dubbing
<b>Rozsah práce:</b>	44
<b>Jazyk práce:</b>	angličtina

When Gandalf discovers the Ring is in fact the One Ring of the Dark Lord Sauron, Frodo must make an epic quest to the Cracks of Doom in order to destroy it! However he does not go alone. He is joined by Gandalf, Legolas the elf, Gimli the Dwarf, Aragorn, Boromir and his three Hobbit friends Merry, Pippin and Samwise. This film impressed me hugely, more than anything else because of how true it was to my imagination, both in the characters as well as in the effects and setting- a sentiment I have heard consistently from other fans of the books. Elijah Wood brought across the character of Frodo with the kind of haunted, frail courage that Tolkien captures so well in the books. The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring is a 2001 epic fantasy adventure film directed by Peter Jackson, based on the 1954 novel The Fellowship of the Ring, the first volume of J. R. R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings. The film is the first installment in The Lord of the Rings trilogy. It was produced by Barrie M. Osborne, Jackson, Fran Walsh and Tim Sanders, and written by Walsh, Philippa Boyens and Jackson. The film features an ensemble cast including Elijah Wood, Ian McKellen, Liv Tyler The film adaptation of "The Lord of the Rings" wasn't just an excellent series of fantasy movies it was a defining adaptation of the work. The characters, the setting, the very feel of Middle-earth were established for millions of fans by the way they were presented in the films. With that in mind, questions are being asked about whether anything from that production will carry over to the Amazon show. Some familiar faces from the films may also be making a return to Middle-earth. There are rumors that Peter Jackson, director of "The Lord of the Rings" and "The Hobbit" films, may be brought on board as an executive producer. Although nothing is set in stone, negotiations of some sort have recently begun between Jackson and Amazon. In the case of The Lord of the Rings, yes, all three instalments have a great focus on the action, though rarely is it mindless: the battle at the end of The Fellowship of the Ring exists to give an emotional climax to Boromir's end that doesn't exist in the books; the Nazgûl attack on Osgiliath in The Two Towers foreshadows the Ring's subjugation of Frodo's will in Mount Doom; the sub-plot with the King of the Dead in The Return of the King serves as the climax of Aragorn's own character arc, in which he embraces the burden of rule which he dreads. Thus do the films preserve the scope of the story and its morals, and develop its central characters to fill the empty spaces left by the absence ...