

SPANISH AND FRENCH TRANSLATIONS OF THE RIDDLES

IN *THE HOBBIT OR THERE AND BACK AGAIN*:

A PRISMATIC APPROACH

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A THESIS SUBMITTED

TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN TRANSLATION STUDIES

YORK UNIVERSITY

TORONTO, ONTARIO

August 2020

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Abstract

The riddles in chapter five of *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien have intrigued researchers for many years. Influenced by Norse mythology, they were more than a game: they were a cultural tradition, with binding powers and serious consequences. Filled with wordplay and meaning, their answers were hidden behind stylistic features of language. Translators tried their best to capture and transfer the voice of the author and his characters into other languages. The novel was first translated into Spanish and French in the 1960s. Over time, literary genres and the status of writers evolved. Works get retranslated, and signs of involvement from translators in the process can still be detected. A close link between culture and language may reveal that through reading, translators create individual perceptions of the source text. As though reading through a different lens, they may develop a prismatic approach to translation.

Acknowledgments

Eight years ago, I expressed interest in obtaining a Master of Arts in Translation Studies from York University. At the time, the GPD patiently answered all my questions and my Glendon adventure —there and back again— began. Today, my thesis supervisor, Dr. Marie-Christine Aubin, is still answering all my questions! I am so grateful that our paths crossed again. For all the guidance and fruitful conversations, un très gros merci!

To Jacqueline, my defense committee, and all the professors who taught me at Glendon, thanks for all your support. Also, to my professors at the University of Guelph, Dr. Dawn Cornelio for sparking my interest in translation and Dr. Margot Irvine for directing my first long project in comparative literature.

To my Concordia Summer School friends for your input at the early stages of this thesis. To my CMEC friends, especially Marcel, for encouraging me to pursue my dreams and education, even while working full-time. To all my MATS friends for the fun times and study sessions. To Evan for the reassurance, the linguistic debates, and for sharing your paper on the riddles of *The Hobbit*.

A mis padres, gracias por su amor y decisión de meterme al Liceo Francés donde comenzó mi pasión por los idiomas. A Juan, gracias por haber compartido tu entusiasmo por la lectura desde que éramos niños. Por la pluma con la que escribí los resultados de mis investigaciones para este proyecto, por tus consejos, y por todos los cuentos y películas de caballeros, vampiros, monstruos y todo tipo de creaturas. Por último, lo más importante: a Dios por la vida y la fuerza.

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List of Abbreviations

DL	Daniel Lauzon
FL	Francis Ledoux
MF	Manuel Figueroa
<i>MWD</i>	<i>Merriam Webster Dictionary</i>
<i>ODLT</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms</i>
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
TSC	Teresa Sánchez Cuevas
UP	University Press

Introduction

The Hobbit is one of the most beloved and influential works of the twentieth century. It is currently well-known as the prequel to J.R.R. Tolkien's other famous work *The Lord of the Rings*. Published in the United Kingdom in 1937, the story was originally written for his children. The adventure takes place in a distant past, in a magical world similar to ours called Middle-earth. Tolkien claimed to have derived the story from *The Red Book of Westmarch*, a fictional manuscript written by hobbits. *The Hobbit* includes riddles and songs, and its storyline is delivered by a narrator located in the present. Middle-earth is inhabited by creatures of different races such as hobbits, wizards, and dwarves though *The Hobbit* was not originally meant to be part of that universe. The novel existed as a stand-alone work for seventeen years and encountered considerable success.

Chapter five, titled "Riddles in the dark", became especially memorable as it introduces the creature Gollum, who is probably Tolkien's most legendary character thanks to his peculiar speech and treacherous personality. During the chapter, the main character Bilbo stumbles upon a precious item accidentally discarded by Gollum. The item is precious both in and outside of the story, to Gollum as well as to Tolkien, who used it in his narrative to connect *The Hobbit* to the Middle-earth universe several years later. Also in this chapter, a battle takes place though not of swords but rather of wits and words: a riddle contest. Filled with hidden meaning and wordplay, the riddles have intrigued researchers for many years and obtained praise from critics and audiences.

Why have the riddles caused so much interest, and why are they important? As shown in this thesis, the riddles in *The Hobbit* were more than a word game. Their shape was determined

by Tolkien's creativity and culture, as well as the time in which *The Hobbit* was written. Influenced by old Anglo-Saxon tradition, in which Tolkien was well-versed, the riddles had binding power and their answers were hidden in plain sight through stylistic features. In a way they were an entrée to Tolkien's world.

The research in this thesis aims to shed light on the challenging work of literary translators at a point of cultural convergence. Studies related to literary translation form a particularly interdisciplinary area of research, drawing on other disciplines such as linguistics, stylistics, comparative literature, and literary criticism.

Shortly after the publication of *The Hobbit* in the United Kingdom, the book crossed borders when an edition was released in the United States. Tolkien's popularity, referred to as the Tolkien phenomenon, subsequently crossed linguistic borders when translations began to appear, initially into Germanic languages and then later into non-Germanic languages such as Spanish and French.

Considering the translations of the riddles into Spanish and French over time, this research aims to answer why *The Hobbit* was translated into the same language more than once. What changed?

To find answers, the focus shifts to the important link between culture and language. André Lefevere's concepts of poetics and refractions are useful to create a methodology that could be used to analyse variances in the translations. Poetics refers to the code behaviour of a literary system. Refractions, if they exist, would induce a slight change of perception from the original text, as if reading the text through different lenses. These perceptions yield refractions, like a spectrum in a prism that bends light causing it to look different when it goes in and out.

This is the idea at the core of a prismatic approach to translation; seeing translation as a process that inevitably produces multiple variants, both within and across languages.

Tolkien himself was a translator, having translated classics such as *Beowulf* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* from Middle English to Modern English. His academic work involved literary criticism. In particular, his lecture *Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics* formed a landmark in *Beowulf* criticism, and his essay “On Fairy Stories” explored the connection between language and mythology. This prominent exposure to issues related to language and translation may have been daunting and challenging for translators.

Translating Tolkien was especially difficult for the first Spanish and French translators since Fantasy and the Marvellous were not initially too well-known as literary genres in their time. The first translations of *The Hobbit* into Spanish and French were published decades after the original text in 1937. *El Hobito* by Teresa Sánchez Cuevas was published in Argentina in 1964 and *Bilbo le hobbit* by Francis Ledoux was published in France in 1969. Also, Tolkien’s guide to nomenclature and other notes on translation became available after the first translations into Spanish and French had already been published. These were mainly directed toward translators working with Germanic languages.

Many years after the appearance of these first translations, *The Hobbit* was retranslated into both languages. *El Hobbit* by Manuel Figueroa was published in Spain in 1982 and *Le Hobbit* by Daniel Lauzon was published in France in 2012. As can be seen, the four translations were published at different times, meaning that the literary traditions and features of language were unique to those times, no doubt influencing the strategies employed by translators.

Using a prismatic approach, researchers may be able to identify signs of their involvement in the process of translation. They can study how refractions (variances) impact the

field of Translation Studies. To describe his “Prismatic Jane Eyre” research project, Matthew Reynolds explains: “The key idea is to see translation as a process that inevitably produces multiple variants, both within and across languages, and to trace out the theoretical, practical, cognitive and creative consequences of this view” (Reynolds 2015).

In summary, this thesis draws attention to the variances that occur in the translations of the riddles of *The Hobbit* as a result of the translator’s prismatic view. Chapter one sheds light on J.R.R. Tolkien’s personal and professional life. It emphasizes how *The Hobbit* first came to be, how it reached his publisher and how it was received by the audience at the time. Chapter two continues the discussion on *The Hobbit*’s reception by focusing on the author’s evolution in the minds of readers through the Tolkien phenomenon. It brings attention to chapter five titled “Riddles in the dark” and it shows how *The Hobbit* became part of the Middle-earth universe.

As the Tolkien phenomenon spread all over the world, translations began to appear. Chapter three shifts the focus to the biographies of the Spanish and French translators. To shed light on literary traditions or systems of their times, it also dives into their publishers. Then, chapter four addresses the field of literary translation and describes the difficulty differentiating Fantasy from Marvellous as literary genres. It addresses the challenges literary translators have to face and discusses a theoretical framework that may lead to finding an approach to translation to study refractions. Chapter five explains the methodology based on the prismatic approach to identify refractions. It provides an analysis of the translations of the riddles into Spanish and French by the four translators, focusing on how stylistic features were rendered. Chapter six discusses and delivers the results from the analysis concentrating on the main findings. Finally, the thesis concludes on some of the challenges encountered while doing this study and presents a few ideas for future research.

Chapter 1: J.R.R. Tolkien and *The Hobbit*

1.1 J.R.R. Tolkien and a green great dragon

John Ronald Reuel (J.R.R.) Tolkien, known as Ronald, was born January 3rd, 1892 in Bloemfontein, South Africa. He was the elder son of Arthur Reuel Tolkien and Mabel Suffield. His brother Hilary Arthur Reuel was born two years later. His parents, both from the Birmingham area in England had moved to South Africa after his father, a bank manager, had accepted a position working for the Bank of Africa. Arthur and Mabel were engaged in England then married in Cape Town, South Africa.

When the boys were three and one, their mother took them on what was meant to be a visit to her parents (the boys' maternal grandparents) in England. Her husband who had stayed in South Africa contracted rheumatic fever and died within a year. The now family of three stayed in England and by 1896, they were living in the quiet village of Sarehole now swallowed up by the city of Birmingham:

The Tolkiens found themselves among plump, provincial-minded country people, some kind, some cross; and among mushrooms, berries and trees, about which Mrs. Tolkien knew quite a lot and passed it on to her sons. Hilary grew up to be a fruit farmer. She also tutored them in other subjects she knew, notably Latin and French, drawing and music. Ronald lapped up Latin, did not care for French and liked to draw: a pleasure which never left him. He also read stories, including that of Sigurd and Fafnir (a tale from Norse mythology in which Sigurd, a man, kills Fafnir, the son of a dwarf king who becomes a dragon as the result of a curse from a ring and gold [*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, s.v. "Fafnir."]). Inspired to try his own hand, the boy produced a small tale involving a "green great dragon".

Didn't he mean a great green dragon, asked his mother.

"Why?"

Mabel Tolkien did not know, though she was positive about the correct usage. John Ronald Reuel continued asking Why about language for seventy more years (Webster-Rogers & Rogers 1980, 18).

Mabel became a Roman Catholic. The conversion was not well-received by her Unitarian, Baptist, and Anglican relatives and in-laws. As a result, they withdrew their support. She struggled by herself but still shared her Catholic religion's teachings with her sons. The boys attended King Edward's school in Birmingham "where Ronald won a scholarship in 1903" (Anderson 2002, 1). Sadly, at the age of thirty-four, when Ronald was twelve and Hilary ten, their mother died of diabetes, leaving as guardian her friend Father Francis Xavier Morgan of the Birmingham Oratory.

1.2 Love, war, and romance

Their new guardian sent them to live with a widowed aunt "but her household was not nurturing and happy for the boys, so three years later, Father Francis found them a room in a Mrs. Faulkner's house" (Webster-Rogers & Rogers 1980, 19). Around 1910, a young lady named Edith Bratt, also an orphan, moved into the same boarding house. At the time, Ronald was sixteen and Edith was nineteen and not a Catholic. They developed a secret relationship but once discovered by their guardians, they were forbidden to see or speak to each other until Ronald reached the age of twenty-one.

In 1911 Ronald went to Exeter College, Oxford to major in Classics. In the end he found himself more interested in studying Comparative Philology and other languages, such as Finnish. He also began to create a language that eventually became Quenya or Elvish. On his twenty-first birthday in 1913 he resumed his relationship with Edith Bratt and asked for her hand in marriage.

Soon after, World War I broke out and he joined a program with the Lancashire Fusiliers (a military unit) which allowed him to complete his studies while receiving military training. He became a second lieutenant trained in signaling. By 1915 he graduated and obtained a First Class

in English Language and Literature (the top classification for a course of university study [*Oxford Reference*, s.v. “Honours degree”]).

Before being deployed in France, he married Edith on March 22nd, 1916. Tolkien was stationed at the village of Bouzincourt and spent some months in the trenches of Somme experiencing firsthand the horrors of war. In the fall, he contracted trench fever and was sent back to England, where he spent most of the remainder of the war. “The war’s physical cruelty to Tolkien had been minor; not so its psychological cruelty: ‘By 1918 all but one of my close friends were dead’” (quoted in Webster-Rogers & Rogers 1980, 21). Edith gave birth to their first child John Francis Reuel in 1917. She had stayed in England with an older cousin.

By November 1918, the war had ended and the family settled in Oxford. Tolkien accepted a position working for the Oxford English Dictionary searching the origin of words. A couple of years later, he was offered an English Language Reader (lecturer) position at the University of Leeds. The family moved north and Michael Hilary Reuel, their second child was born in 1920. Tolkien continued his academic career and his first major professional publication *A Middle English Vocabulary* appeared two years later.

In addition, his colleague Eric Valentine (E.V.) Gordon, a Canadian philologist, joined him in Leeds and together they edited the Middle English romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. The poem’s main character Sir Gawain was a knight of King Arthur's Round Table who accepted a challenge from a mysterious knight dressed all in green. The challenge tested Sir Gawain’s loyalty and chivalry. Ultimately, being successful in the challenge involved an exchange of rewards. Their edition was published in 1925 and that same year, Tolkien and his now family of five (his third son Christopher Reuel was born a year earlier) moved back to Oxford. Tolkien and Gordon had planned to continue working together to edit *The Pearl*, another

poem likely written by the same author as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. His Canadian colleague died unexpectedly in 1938. His widow Ida Gordon picked up the revision project and finished it.

1.3 Philology, the Inklings, and storytelling

Tolkien had moved to Oxford in 1925 because he was elected the Rawlinson and Bosworth Professor (Chair) of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford University. “Each subject had only one teacher with the title of professor” (Webster-Rogers & Rogers 1980, 22). Like E.V. Gordon, Tolkien was also a philologist, a word that requires some explanation: the word philology is derived from the Greek *philologos* where *philos* is “the love, or study of” and *logos* means “word” or “speech”.

Tolkien’s ruling passion was philology [...] the essence of philology is, first, the study of historical forms of a language or languages, including dialectal or non-standard forms, and also of related languages. Tolkien’s central field of study was, naturally, Old and Middle English, roughly speaking the forms of English which date from 700AD to 1100 (Old) and 1100 to 1500 (Middle) [...]. Closely linked to these languages, however, was Old Norse: there is more Norse in modern English than people realize, and even more than that in Northern dialects, in which Tolkien took a keen interest (Shippey 2001, xi-xii).

This passion served him well as Chair of Anglo-Saxon. He helped to revise the school curriculum where there seemed to have existed a divide between those studying the English language and those studying English literature. “In philology, literary and linguistic study are indissoluble. They ought to be the same thing” (Shippey 2001, xii). Tolkien shared this enthusiasm for language with a group of colleagues from the university.

He befriended Clive Staple (C.S.) Lewis and his older brother Warren Hamilton Lewis. Apparently, C.S. Lewis “[...] liked his friends to gather in his rooms in Magdalen College (pronounced maudlin), to read aloud whatever they were writing and to talk, discuss, and argue whatever might arise” (Webster-Rogers & Rogers 1980, 22). Henry Victor Dyson Dyson (known as Hugo Dyson) also joined them. Together they formed “The Inklings”, an informal literary discussion group at Oxford that gained more members over the years, including Tolkien’s son Christopher.

At home, J.R.R. Tolkien entertained his children by the means of storytelling. During the cold months, he held winter “reads” for them in the evening after teatime. In the 1920s, he began to write illustrated letters addressed to his own children on behalf of “Father Christmas”. The letters were filled with adventures taking place at the North Pole. Over time, the letters grew in complexity and length. He also invented stories to comfort his children when they lost toys or when they were afraid of storms. The family grew once again with the birth of Priscilla Mary Reuel, the only daughter, in 1929.

1.4 In a hole in the ground

At work, he continued his professorial career and sometimes he took up additional tasks over the summer breaks to supplement his income. One summer, a momentous event happened, one that he would recount several times in interviews and letters years later. While marking School Certificate examination papers on English literature, he came across a blank page:

One of the candidates had mercifully left one of the pages with no writing on it, which is the best thing that can possibly happen to an examiner, and I wrote on it: “In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit.” Names always generate a story in my mind: eventually I thought I’d better find out what hobbits were like (quoted in Anderson 2002, 8).

When exactly these lines were written is unknown. The scrap paper did not survive, and what remains of the earliest draft manuscript of *The Hobbit* was undated. Luckily, Tolkien had a habit of sharing his work with family and friends.

Tolkien's "home" manuscript had been lent to some people outside of the family, including C.S Lewis, Elaine Griffiths [Tolkien's student], the Reverend Mother St. Theresa Gale (the Mother Superior at Cherwell Edge, a convent of the Order of the Holy Child Jesus), and one child, a girl of twelve or thirteen, presumably Aileen Jennings, whose family was friends with the Tolkiens (Anderson 2002,12).

C.S Lewis wrote about the story in a letter to Arthur Greeves, a friend who suffered from a heart condition but who also shared his love of books. In the letter dated February 4, 1933 he wrote: "Since term began [January 15] I have had a delightful time reading a children's story which Tolkien has just written... Whether it is really good (I think it is until the end) is of course another question: still more, whether it will succeed with modern children" (quoted in Anderson 2002, 9). Then, according to this letter, it is likely that Tolkien finished writing *The Hobbit* towards the end of 1932 or by January 1933. Also, it is very likely that the habit of sharing his writing ultimately lead the manuscript into the hands of publishers.

Elaine Griffiths was pursuing a Bachelor of Letters, a second university degree, perhaps equivalent to a Master of Letters currently, with Tolkien. Her friend Susan Dagnall had also graduated from Oxford and now worked for Allen & Unwin, a publishing company in London, who was looking for someone to work on the revision of a translation of *Beowulf*. Tolkien had recommended Elaine for the job, but in the end, she was unable to do it. Elaine, who had read *The Hobbit* manuscript told Susan about it: "Dagnall did borrow the manuscript of *The Hobbit*, and after reading it, encouraged Tolkien to finish it so that it could be considered for publication by Allen & Unwin" (Anderson 2002, 12). In the end, one of Tolkien's colleagues completed the

Beowulf revision and it was published by Allen & Unwin in 1940 as *Beowulf and the Finnesburgh Fragment* with prefatory remarks by Tolkien.

Tolkien's fascination towards medieval languages and literature had begun early on in life. He had read *Beowulf* when he was a student in King Edward's school. First in a modern translation, and then in the original Anglo-Saxon. Then, as an adult (and professor) he delivered a lecture on literary criticism titled "*Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics*" in 1936 that was published as a paper that same year. The lecture has since been reprinted in many collections and is considered very influential.

That same year, on October 3rd, he sent the typescript of *The Hobbit* to the publishing company. It received approvals from the chairman Stanley Unwin, from a children's writer named Rose Fyleman, but more importantly, from Rayner Unwin, Stanley Unwin's youngest son who was ten years old at the time. Rayner's handwritten report stated that the story should appeal to all children between the ages of five and nine. Contracts were drawn up and after much back-and-forth between the author and publisher, the book was printed in June. However, publication was postponed to aim for the Christmas season market.

1.5 *The Hobbit* comes out

The Hobbit was published in England on September 21st, 1937. The first printing included 1500 copies. Tolkien arranged for his friends and family to receive a copy and the publishers sent some copies to critics. Fortunately, the book did very well and a second print was required before Christmas.

The second Allen & Unwin impression of *The Hobbit* consisted of 2300 copies. These were printed in early December 1937, but not all of the printed sheets were immediately bound. (423 copies of the printed sheets were destroyed in November 1940 when the publisher's stock was bombed) (Anderson 2002, 17).

During World War II, paper rationing was introduced in England and it remained until 1949. As a result, *The Hobbit* was unavailable for long stretches over this decade. Many adaptations and reworkings exist, including television programs, graphic novels, films, and opera performances.

It was even featured on a stamp collection:

On July 21, 1998, *The Hobbit* was honoured by the Royal Mail of Great Britain by being made the subject of a postage stamp, one of a series “Magical Worlds: Classic Fantasy Books for Children” (Anderson 2002,23).

Tolkien continued his duties as Rawlinson and Bosworth Professor (Chair) of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford University until 1945 when he was elected the Merton Professor of English Language and Literature. The position at Merton College, also part of Oxford University, was his last before retiring in 1959. During this period, having already worked on *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* with his Canadian friend E.V. Gordon, he translated it and *The Pearl* into modern English. “His modern English *Gawain* was broadcast by BBC [the British Broadcasting Corporation] in 1953” (Webster-Rogers & Rogers 1980, 24).

His publisher Allen & Unwin was anxiously expecting more children books from the author, but it seemed that Tolkien was caught up in his daily life (it was wartime after all). To the eyes of scholars and fans of *The Hobbit*, it seemed that nothing was happening for seventeen years. Of course, his family and some of his friends knew what was really going on. They had been hearing chapters from “the new Hobbit”, were very invested in the story, and encouraged the professor to continue. The six-book work was so long that the publisher now chaired by adult Rayner Unwin, the ten-year old who had approved *The Hobbit* in 1936, decided to print it in three volumes. *The Lord of the Rings* reached the public in 1954 and 1955. As a result, sales of *The Hobbit* picked up considerably during this decade.

The “Tolkien phenomenon” began and even though success brought financial security, the author’s peace was often interrupted by phone calls in the middle of the night from fans confused by time zones. He also received so much fan mail that an assistant had to be hired to handle it. His popularity reached across the Atlantic and in 1956, William B. Ready, director of libraries at Marquette University, considered *The Lord of the Rings* a masterpiece. Ready expressed interest in hosting a collection of Tolkien’s manuscripts at the Catholic university in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. After a period of negotiation, the original manuscripts and multiple working drafts for some of his works, including *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* were purchased by Marquette. Having crossed physical borders, the phenomenon also crossed linguistic borders and translations of his works began to appear around the world.

Seeking a quieter life, he and his wife Edith moved to the south coast of England, near Bournemouth. After three years living there, Edith’s health declined and she died in 1971. The retired professor returned to Merton College in Oxford where he was invited to stay. He received the order C.B.E. (Commander of the British Empire) from the British crown awarded to individuals who had prominent national or regional roles and to those making distinguished or notable contributions in their own specific areas of activity. He stayed in Oxford for the rest of his life. Sadly, he died on September 2nd, 1973 after a brief illness. His body and Edith’s are buried in Wolvercote cemetery near Oxford.

Chapter 2: The Tolkien Phenomenon

The “Tolkien phenomenon” continues to this day. His son Christopher continued the legacy by facilitating the publication of many of his father’s works. These include the translations into modern English of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *The Pearl*, and *Sir Orfeo*, another poem of Middle English romance. Christopher’s wife edited *The Father Christmas Letters*, a collection of the previously mentioned letters written and illustrated by Tolkien for his children between 1920 and 1943. Most notably, Christopher edited *The Silmarillion* which describes the universe of Middle-earth, where *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* took place.

The phenomenon also spread through translation. As said earlier, many had begun to appear before Tolkien’s death. Being an accomplished linguist himself, he assisted translators. His son Christopher also supported Tolkien scholars pursuing studies on his father’s work. At Marquette University, now home to the original manuscripts and multiple working drafts for *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, Taum J.R. Santoski was a scholar in residence specializing on Tolkien’s works and a volunteer staff member for ten years. Santoski studied the original manuscripts intensively, led conferences, and assisted other researchers.

Furthermore, the development of the conception of Middle-earth as a place with its own peoples and languages was recorded by Christopher in *The History of Middle-earth*, a twelve-volume series of books. In it he made a conscious effort not to include *The Hobbit* since originally, the story was not supposed to be part of the universe including Middle-earth. Santoski was entrusted with this task but unfortunately, he died in 1991. The task was passed on to John D. Rateliff. Rateliff relocated to Wisconsin and undertook an intricate study of Tolkien’s surviving draft manuscripts of *The Hobbit*. He published them, maps and drawings included,

along with his findings in a book called *The History of the Hobbit*. The book received the approval of Christopher Tolkien and it was published in 2007. A revised edition was published in 2011. Regrettably, Christopher Tolkien died earlier this year, on January 16, 2020.

Hence, *The Hobbit* was originally written as a stand-alone work and it existed for seventeen years before its well-known sequel, *The Lord of the Rings*. In *the History of the Hobbit*, Rateliff shows that even the author himself struggled to recall when he started writing the story because although he remembered writing “in a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit” on a blank examination page, the details regarding where he was when he wrote the line and the exact date when it happened, varied. In different accounts given during interviews or written in letters, he recalled writing it in his study at 20 Northmoor Road where he had moved from his former residence at 22 Northmoor Road early in 1930. However, his children remember their father writing and telling them a long story about a small being with furry feet at 22 Northmoor. The eldest, John, claimed that by 1930 he was old enough to read on his own. Although details behind the precise moment (place and time) of the book’s beginning is unclear, it is certain that the story became *The Hobbit* in the early 1930s.

2.1 A turning point in chapter five

So far, it is certain that *The Hobbit* was a success after publication, but when and how did it become part of the Middle-earth universe? The answers lie in chapter five of the book. In fact, this particular chapter titled “Riddles in the dark” became exceptionally important and much beloved for many reasons. First, it explains how Bilbo came across a very peculiar item. As we will see, this particular item became a turning point in Tolkien’s writing career because with it, he was able to connect *The Hobbit* with the *Lord of the Rings* and in turn, with the rest of

Middle-earth. Second, in this chapter readers are introduced for the first time to Bilbo's (the Hobbit's) adversary, the slimy creature Gollum, one of Tolkien's most legendary characters. Third, as hinted by the chapter's title, a riddle contest takes place. Even though the riddles may seem like a small part of the story, they belong to the genre of poetry, filled with concealed meaning. They have intrigued researchers for many years, and they certainly gained the public's attention after *The Hobbit* was first published. A year after it came out, an anonymous reviewer in *Catholic World* magazine wrote: "We guarantee that you will enjoy this stirring tale as much as your boy. Make him solve the riddles of Gollum and Bilbo. They alone are worth the price of the book" (quoted in Anderson 2002, 22).

2.1.1 Coming full circle

In 1951, as Tolkien was writing the sequel *The Lord of the Rings*, he found it necessary to revise *The Hobbit* to bring the stories in line. Although "the riddle contest is pretty much the same in both versions" (Anderson 2002, 128), two key aspects changed: first was the portrayal of Gollum and second was the stakes of the riddle contest. In 1937, the first edition, Gollum "is not nearly as wretched a creature" (Anderson 2002, 128) and the stakes of the contest changed by altering "Gollum's promise of a present if Bilbo won the riddle contest to Gollum showing Bilbo the way out" (Anderson 2002, 123). In other words, Bilbo's consequence of being eaten didn't change, but his reward did.

To further explain the differences between the two editions, it is useful to take note that in the first edition (1937), Gollum promises to give Bilbo a present if he wins the riddle game, not knowing that Bilbo had inadvertently picked it up and placed it in his pocket earlier, before meeting him. The riddle contest ends after Gollum is unable to answer Bilbo's last one. The

slimy creature then goes to look for the present without success and remarkably, he apologizes for this: “‘We are ssorry; we didn’t mean to cheat, we meant to give it our only present, if it won the competition.’ He even offered to catch Bilbo some juicy fish to eat as a consolation” (quoted in Anderson 2002, 129). Not only is Gollum apologetic, but he also seeks redemption by offering an alternative. Since it is obvious that Bilbo will not receive the present, the hobbit suggests a different arrangement: “‘[...]And I will let you off on one condition.’ ‘Yes, what iss it? What does it wish us to do, my precious?’ ‘Help me to get out of these places’ said Bilbo” (quoted in Anderson 2002, 130). Gollum abides by the new agreement and shows Bilbo the passage leading to the way out. They say goodbye: “So Bilbo slipped under the arch, and said good-bye to the nasty miserable creature; and very glad he was” (quoted in Anderson 2002, 131). Bilbo manages to escape and the chapter concludes.

The second edition (1951) of this chapter will be presented in more detail in chapter five of this thesis. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that in it, instead of a present, Gollum promises to show Bilbo the way out if he wins the riddle contest. The riddle contest is the same and its outcome, Bilbo winning, is also the same. However, Gollum goes to retrieve “something” before showing Bilbo the way out. Knowing that there are goblins guarding the ways in and out of the cave, Gollum foresees the need for invisibility, which he can achieve by using the “something”. While he is looking for it, he considers using it (to become invisible) to eat Bilbo. Ultimately Gollum becomes angry and inconsolable when he figures out that his precious item is lost and as we will see later on, the characters go their separate ways much differently, without a goodbye. In fact, Bilbo gets an opportunity to kill Gollum but he does not.

In summary, it is evident that *The Hobbit* became part of Middle-earth when Tolkien decided to revise it in 1951. Those familiar with *The Lord of the Rings* will know that its plot is

based on the destruction of Gollum's precious item, the same that gave him and Bilbo invisibility powers, that became the centre of the sequel *The Lord of the Rings*. For this reason, it is not surprising that Tolkien also altered the character of Gollum in his revision.

2.1.2 Gollum

As previously mentioned, in the first edition the creature is remorseful and apologetic when he cannot find the reward he had promised earlier. He finds redemption by showing Bilbo the way out and they politely part ways. In the second edition, after the riddle contest, Gollum seriously considers becoming invisible to intentionally attack Bilbo and eat him. Some critics believe that Grendel, the monster from *Beowulf*, could have been an inspiration for Gollum since they share certain characteristics such as being described as a creature or beast, living in isolation from the rest of the world, and having a preference to do so in or by water.

Gollum's most memorable trait is his speech. He emphasizes sibilants (a speech sound with a hissing effect, for example "s" and "sh"), refers to himself in the third person and often talks to himself. Sometimes he speaks of himself in the plural "we", hinting to a split personality. He constantly adds -es to the end of a plural and extends the third person singular ending -s to other persons: "If precious asks, and it doesn't answer, we eats it, my preciousss. If it asks us, and we doesn't answer, then we does what it wants, eh? We shows it the way out, yes!" (Tolkien 1995, 87).

Also, in the first edition Gollum uses the phrase "my precious" to refer mostly to himself only but in the second edition,

[...] the phrase might be taken to refer to the ring, as is often the case in *The Lord of the Rings*. The Old Norse word *gull* means "gold". In the oldest manuscripts it is spelled *goll*. One inflected form would be *gollum*, "gold, treasure, something precious". It can also

mean “ring” as is found in the word *finger gull*, “finger ring”- points that may have occurred to Tolkien (Anderson 2002, 120).

Again, those familiar with *The Lord of the Rings* will know that Gollum goes on to play an important role in its narrative. Tolkien expands on the creature’s identity by revealing more about his history. His past reveals what “race” of Middle-earth he belonged to, how he acquired the ring, and that his name before finding the ring was Sméagol.

Equally important, when Gollum is first introduced in *The Hobbit*, we learn that he had been in the cave for a very long time. His vocabulary reveals that he belongs to an old generation that no longer exists. He uses archaic words and is familiar with old traditions. The proof is the fact that he proposes a riddle contest. After all,

Tolkien was drawing on a rich Old English tradition that saw riddles not as infantile or trivial. Riddles were more than simple word-games; they had binding power. Riddles for the Anglo-Saxons were not any old word-game or puzzling question; they were rituals, poems, a canon of questions about the world and ways of seeing that world (Roberts 2013, 56).

Therefore, the riddle contest is definitely not a game, but rather, an important tradition with serious consequences. It takes place in Gollum’s cave, and as previously noted, for Bilbo, his failure in the contest would mean death. We will see that compared to Bilbo’s riddles, which tend to be livelier, Gollum’s are often darker, perhaps symbolizing their respective homes.

Although they both live underground, Bilbo’s home is cozy and comfortable. Gollum’s home is dark, cold and rocky. It seems then that riddles may uncover details about those stating them.

Then, aside from their answers, what exactly do riddles reveal?

2.1.3 Riddles

To begin, it may be useful to define what a riddle is. Merriam Webster Dictionary defines it as “a mystifying, misleading, or puzzling question posed as a problem to be solved or

guessed”. Collins dictionary defines it as “a puzzle or joke in which you ask a question that seems to be nonsense, but which has a clever or amusing answer.” The fact that a riddle is an action that always necessarily occurs with more than one person makes it a social action. In other words, it is not possible to be the person who asks the riddle and the person who answers it. As previously mentioned, riddles contain poetic language and they hide answers in plain sight. In addition, they may also reflect someone’s worldview.

From a linguistic perspective, Lyndon Harries who studies African riddles at the University of Wisconsin writes that riddles have a semantic identity. In very simplistic terms “semantic” implicates a relation to meaning in language or logic. He believes that there is a great deal to be learned from riddles about culture:

We do not all see things the same way, especially if we belong to different cultures. But we can learn a great deal from riddles about how people of other cultures see things as long as we dig deep [...] Riddles, with all their surface contradictions, ambiguities, and oppositions, do represent an essentially positive view of the riddler’s world and its processes, as he sees them (Harries 1976, 325).

In the beginning of this chapter it was mentioned that Christopher Tolkien recorded his father’s development of the conception of Middle-earth as a place with its own peoples and languages in *The History of Middle-earth*. J.R.R. Tolkien’s view as a Christian Catholic was that God created the world, therefore He is the only Creator. As a result, the professor never saw himself as a creator, but rather as a “sub-creator”. As a philologist, his passion for words was so great that a single one could emanate a whole character, and of course the characters would need an entire world to live in. This was the case with the words “hobbit”, “Gollum”, and the conception of Middle-earth.

As seen in his biography in chapter one, Tolkien’s culture was Western European. This culture “derives mostly from two others, each with its mythology: the Graeco-Roman or

classical, and the Judeo-Christian [...] As Christianity grew within Roman culture, the mingled classical and Hebraic streams flowed north and west into the territory of a third mythology, the Germanic or Norse” (Webster-Rogers & Rogers 1966, 29-30). Tolkien wished for England to have its own mythology, therefore it is not surprising that his writing was influenced by the mythologies that shaped his own culture.

The riddles in chapter five of *The Hobbit* were strongly influenced by Norse mythology. Consequently, I believe that these riddles reveal the entrée to Tolkien’s Middle-earth. *The Exeter Book*, a tenth-century book containing ninety-six riddles is a notable Anglo-Saxon work. Kevin Crossley-Holland translated the riddles into modern English. In the introduction he writes:

In many ways the riddles constitute a delightful and informative entrée into the Anglo-Saxon world. Some are folk riddles (distinguished by their use of popular material, their shortness and simplicity), some are literary riddles (full of conscious poetic elaboration and attention to detail), and some combine both elements. Just as the tone and treatment varies from one riddle to the next, so does the subject matter itself. As one turns from natural phenomena to animal and bird life, from the Christian concept of Creation to humdrum domestic objects, from weaponry to the peaceful pursuits of writing and music, one wins glimpse after glimpse of the Anglo-Saxons and their attitudes (Crossley-Holland, xiv, 1993).

Thus, in order to describe the sub-created world, Tolkien included riddles. His writing was lengthy, involving poetry and prose. A constant use of adjectives and long descriptions was criticized by those who felt that the stories dragged on and that descriptions took away from the action. But this same style was much appreciated by those who enjoyed reading his works, using those descriptions to escape reality by fully immersing themselves in the sub-created world.

The Tolkien phenomenon exists thanks to those fans. As mentioned in chapter one, the phenomenon first crossed physical borders when *The Hobbit* was published in the United States in 1938 and it crossed linguistic borders when translations began to emerge shortly after. Most

translations were published after the 1951 edition, and after *The Lord of The Rings*, the number of them increased sharply.

2.2 A turning point in translation

As mentioned earlier, Tolkien assisted translators with their task. Around 1967, after the Dutch and Swedish translations of the *Lord of the Rings* had come out, he wrote notes on the nomenclature to assist translators of the book in other languages. The notes were revised for publication by Christopher Tolkien and released publicly in 1975. Also, Appendix F, the last appendix to *The Lord of the Rings* concerns the languages of Middle-earth, though, unlike the guide, it is not a glossary.

Since the first Spanish and French translations of *The Hobbit* came out in the 1960s, it is unlikely that the translators had access to the nomenclature notes. In fact, Tolkien was not very fond of the French language. The style of riddles being poetic, made up of wordplay, makes it safe to assume that they caused many challenges for translation. The passing of time is also an important factor for translations. On the one hand, translating a work shortly after its release may be useful if the author is willing to work with the translator by answering questions and clarifying points. On the other hand, translating a work much after its publication may also be useful because more reference materials may be available, such as the nomenclature guide and Appendix F. The existence of sequels or prequels may also benefit a translation since translators can go refer to them to facilitate consistencies.

Regardless, variances are very likely to happen in translation due to the translator's creativity, culture, and time period. Retranslations into Spanish and French of *The Hobbit* were published years after the first ones in the 1960s. Were these new translations necessary? And what changed? To answer these questions, it is necessary to reflect on the role of retranslation

and find a method to study the variances in the target texts. In the field of Literary Translation, theories deeming culture as the unit of translation for literature may be useful. Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere remind us in their book *Constructing Cultures, Essays on Literary*

Translation that:

A writer does not just write in a vacuum: he or she is the product of a particular culture, of a particular moment in time, and the writing reflects those factors such as race, gender, age, class, and birthplace as well as the stylistic, idiosyncratic features of the individual. Moreover, the material conditions in which the text is produced, sold, marketed and read also have a crucial role to play (Bassnett and Lefevere 1998, 136).

Then, like writers, the work of translators is likely also the product of their particular cultures and times in which they lived. As a result, their translations would also reflect the factors mentioned above. Therefore, before diving into translation theories, it is of the utmost importance to research who the translators were and the context in which they created their translation. To learn more about the literary traditions in which they worked, it is also essential to learn more about the publishing companies, their history, and the editors that the translators worked with.

Chapter 3: Translators and Publishers of El Hobito, El Hobbit, Bilbo le hobbit and Le Hobbit

The Hobbit has been translated into more than seventy languages (Strelzyk 1992). As revealed, it was translated into Spanish and French more than once. The corpus of this research consists of *The Hobbit or there and back again (The Hobbit)*, a new reset edition based on the one first published in 1995 by Harper Collins Publishers, and four translations: two into Spanish, *El Hobito* translated by Teresa Sánchez Cuevas and published in Argentina in 1964 and *El Hobbit* translated by Manuel Figueroa and published in Spain in 1982, and two into French, *Bilbo le hobbit* translated by Francis Ledoux and published in France in 1969 and *Le Hobbit* translated by Daniel Lauzon and published in France in 2012.

In this study I will use the original edition translated by Teresa Sánchez Cuevas published by *Fabril Editora* in 1964 and the translation by Manuel Figueroa as it appears in the 2018 Booket edition, the imprint by Grupo Planeta for pocket editions. As it will be explained, Grupo Planeta purchased *Ediciones Minotauro*, the publishing house that originally released his translation.

I will use a 1996 edition of *Bilbo le Hobbit* translated by Francis Ledoux published by *Hachette Jeunesse* and the translation by Daniel Lauzon as it appears in its original 2012 *Le livre de Poche* edition by *Christian Bourgois Éditeur*.

3.1 Teresa Sánchez Cuevas 1964

Teresa Sánchez Cuevas was born on August 29, 1933 in Peñarroya-Pueblonuevo, a small town located forty kilometers away from the city of Córdoba in the south of Spain. Her father,

Pedro Luciano Sánchez Lomo studied economy and worked as a merchant. Her mother Teresa García-Cuevas was a homemaker. Fleeing the Spanish Civil War (1936 to 1939), the family boarded a carbon train to Alicante, a port city, with the goal of reaching France. They boarded a very crowded ship passing through Algeria and Morocco before reaching France. However, French authorities refused disembarking of the ship, and passengers were stuck on it for three days. Afterwards they were put in a concentration camp where the women were separated from the men. Fortunately, through family connections, they managed to leave the concentration camp and reach Marseille.

In France, her father secured visas for the family to emigrate to Bolivia, where he had a business contact. Six months later, the family made it to Le Havre, in the north of France, then to London, England. World War II broke out and they embarked a ship with other Spanish and Jewish refugees. The journey was treacherous, fearing attacks at sea, but eventually, they made it to Chile. The family made its way to Bolivia by train and settled there for a few years. Then, in 1944, after a business trip to Argentina, Mr. Sánchez decided to move the family there. Teresa was only eleven years old.

They stayed in Buenos Aires where she studied at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters. She led a conference on Mariano José de Larra, a Spanish romantic writer, journalist, and translator of French. His works were satirical and critical of the nineteenth century Spanish society. Teresa Sánchez Cuevas also became a professor in the Faculty of Social Sciences at *la Universidad de Buenos Aires* and a member of the *Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas* CONICET (National Scientific and Technical Research Council), an Argentinian government agency which directs most of the scientific and technical research done in universities and institutes.

In the 1960s and 1970s, she translated works such as *The Voice of Dolphins*, a book of short stories written by the Hungarian-American physicist and inventor Leo Szilard (Szilard 1963). She also translated *The Hobbit* in Spanish. These translations were published by *Fabril Editora*, a publishing company that started in 1958. *Fabril Editora* resulted from the expansion of a large financial industrial group called *La Compañía General Fabril Financiera*. The large company, a leader in the cotton and textile industry, started in 1929. In the 1930s it expanded by working closely with *La Papelera Argentina* in the paper industry, then joined the publishing industry with the creation of *Fabril Editora* (Belini & Badoza 2019).

3.1.1 *El Hobito*

The publishing company obtained the rights to translate *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, though, as it will be explained soon, the latter never took place. The first Spanish translation of *The Hobbit* was published in Buenos Aires under the collection “Los libros de Mirasol”. Translated by Teresa Sánchez Cuevas, *El Hobito* came out in 1964.

Fabril Editora did not sell many copies of the Spanish version of *The Hobbit*. Since only one edition was ever made, it is now exceedingly rare and therefore very valuable for collectors. Alina Dadlez who worked for the department of foreign rights and permissions at Allen & Unwin, Tolkien’s publisher, frequently corresponded with the author concerning the translations of his works.

In 1962, she forwarded a letter from *Fabril Editora* to Tolkien concerning the Spanish translation. Tolkien replied a few weeks later, sending her comments on how to translate specific words, suggesting the form *hobitos* for “hobbits”. Dadlez sent the comments to the Argentinian publisher who pointed out that since the “h” is mute in Spanish, *jobitos* might be a good option.

Tolkien responded saying that he still preferred *hobitos* by claiming that he was sure that many hobbits dropped their “h’s” like most rural folk in England.

Tolkien received a few copies of *El hobito* from Argentina and apparently gave a copy to his wife Edith. This copy contains his signature and a dedication in Spanish: “*Para Edita querida, R.*” Soon after his death, his eldest son John Francis Reuel, who had become a priest, gifted that very same signed copy to Father Antonio Quevedo. Father Quevedo led Father John’s church at Stoke-on-Trent, north of Birmingham, England, while he traveled to Oxford to bury his father.

As mentioned earlier, few copies of this edition were sold. The translation received criticism, such as:

No se había establecido un acuerdo de traducción sobre la obra. De tal forma, *goblin* se tradujo como «duende»; *troll* como «enano»; y *dwarf* se convirtió en «gnomo» [...] Por si esto fuera poco, la novela comenzaba con el típico «Había una vez un hobito...», mientras que la versión inglesa no contaba para nada con el equivalente «*Once upon a time*...» (Pato Rico 2019).¹

The word *duende* refers to a spirit in Spanish, Portuguese, and Filipino folklore and literally means "ghost" or "goblin" (*MWD* s.v. *duende*). The term *duende* originated as a contraction of the phrase *dueño de casa* or *duen de casa* "possessor of a house" and was originally conceptualized as a mischievous spirit inhabiting a house. *Enano* is the literal translation of “dwarf” while *gnomo* means “gnome” in English.

Furthermore, the cover picture designed by Luis Videla depicted Gandalf the Wizard having a small nose, wearing heels and an elongated top hat. In the novel he is described as having a large nose, being tall (no need for heels), wearing boots and a pointy hat. Bilbo’s nose

¹ A translation agreement on the work had not been established. As such, “goblin” was translated as *duende*; “troll” as *enano*; and “dwarf” became *gnomo* [...] As if this weren’t enough, the novel began with the typical *Había una vez un hobito...*, while the English version said nothing about the equivalent “Once upon a time...”

also looks larger than Gandalf's. The cover also lists the three parts of *The Lord of the Rings* in Spanish as "Other works by J.R.R. Tolkien" but these were never released by *Fabril Editora* because the publishing company went bankrupt and closed in the late 1960s. The rights it had acquired for *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* became available.

3.2 Manuel Figueroa 1982

The most important fact about Manuel Figueroa is that he did not exist. "Manuel Figueroa" was one of many pseudonyms used by the translator and editor of *El Hobbit*. His real name was Francisco "Paco" Porrúa, and even though his translations remained hidden behind fictitious names, his great contribution to the world of literature in Latin America has been well-recognized over the years.

He was born on November 7, 1922 in Corcubión, a town in La Coruña, in northwestern Spain. His family relocated to Argentina before he reached the age of two, due to his father's work:

Francisco Porrúa, *Paco* Porrúa, el gallego de Corcubión que el azar y la necesidad llevaron a la Patagonia argentina en 1924 porque su padre, marino mercante, había solicitado un puesto en tierra para poder estar más tiempo con su mujer. La familia recaló en Comodoro Rivadavia [...] y allí, en un lugar que según su expresión entonces "era el Far West", se instalaron en una casa a las faldas del cerro Chenque² [...] (Fernández 2013).

His three siblings were born there. In an interview from 2009, Porrúa recalled fond memories from his time in Patagonia:

Entre los años 1924 y 1930, viví frente al mar, en la falda de un cerro, y ese recuerdo, el recuerdo de la inmensidad del desierto junto a la inmensidad del mar, es algo muy

² Francisco Porrúa, *Paco* Porrúa, the Galician from Corcubión that chance and necessity brought to the Argentinean Patagonia in 1924 because his father, a merchant seaman, had applied for a post on land so that he could spend more time with his wife. The family landed in Comodoro Rivadavia [...] and there, in a place which, according to his expression at that time "was the Far West", they settled in a house on the slopes of Mount Chenque.

poderoso. Me lo pasaba todo el día en el cerro o en la playa, y quedó en mí un recuerdo muy hondo de la Patagonia. [...] Todo eso influyó mucho en mí y fue lo que me convirtió en argentino (Lennard 2009).³

He described his time in school as a lonely period of his life, where he was often bored.

Fortunately, he discovered a strong passion for reading and quickly found that there was much to learn from literature. He enjoyed reading works by authors like Jules Verne, H.G. Wells, and Proust.

At eighteen years old he moved to the Argentine capital to pursue postsecondary studies at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of la *Universidad de Buenos Aires*. Also interested in politics, Porrúa read Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir's *Les Temps Modernes*, a political, philosophical, and literary French journal, every month.

In 1951, the article «*Un nouveau genre littéraire: la science-fiction*» was published in the October issue. The article captured his attention. It was written by Boris Vian and Stéphane Spriel (pseudonym for Michel Pilotin, translator and editor of «*Le Rayon fantastique*», a collection of French science fiction works co-edited by Hachette-Gallimard) and it mentioned Ray Bradbury, a North American author. Porrúa purchased Bradbury's book *The Illustrated Man* (in English) and became highly interested in the genre:

Paco se enteró de los nuevos autores por una revista francesa, y fue a una librería de las que había en Buenos Aires con obras en inglés, encontró cuatro o cinco, las leyó y decidió crear una editorial para publicarlas (quoted in Castagnet 2017).⁴

Soon after, with the help of his brother Jesús, he purchased the rights of *The Illustrated Man* and *The Martian Chronicles* also by Bradbury, *More Than Human* by Theodore Sturgeon and *City*

³ Between 1924 and 1930, I lived by the sea, on the hillside, and that memory, the memory of the desert's immensity along with the sea's immensity, is something that is very powerful. I spent my days at the hillside or at the beach, and this left in me a profound memory of the Patagonia. [...] All of that had a lot of influence in me and it was that which made me Argentinian.

⁴ Paco discovered new authors through a French journal and went to one of the bookstores in Buenos Aires carrying works in English. He found four or five, read them, and decided to found a company to publish them.

by Clifford Simak. These works of science fiction were not yet known in Argentina. Until that point, Porrúa had mainly worked for encyclopedias and printing houses independently, and he had also translated many works privately. Then, in 1955, he completed the full translation of *The Martian Chronicles*. His own publishing company *Ediciones Minotauro* released *Cronicas Marcianas*, listing “Francisco Abelenda” as the translator. The translation contained a prologue written by Jorge Luis Borges on the subject of science fiction as a literary genre (Castagnet 2017, 291).

Of course, Francisco Abelenda was another pseudonym:

Francisco Porrúa fue conocido por todos como Paco. También fue conocido, sin que muchos lo supieran, como Francisco Abelenda (o F.A.), José y Joaquín Valdivieso, Luis Domènech, Manuel Figueroa, Gregorio Lemos y Ricardo Gosseyn⁵ (Castagnet 2017, 298).

He used different pseudonyms depending on the translation quality. According to him, the best was Francisco Abelenda. To create it, he borrowed his maternal grandfather’s name Jesús Fernández Abelenda. The second best was Luis Domènech, which he used in the translation of *The Fellowship of the Ring* by J.R.R. Tolkien. This alias was inspired by his paternal grandmother’s name, Cándida Figueroa Domènech. Manuel Figueroa was also derived from her name.

He was known for spending ten to twelve hours a day translating, going over his work several times. Porrúa’s views on translation were centered on the target language, meaning that he was willing to adapt the source text as necessary to transfer its general meaning and tone

⁵ Francisco Porrúa was known to all as Paco. He was also known, although few were aware of it, as Francisco Abelenda (or F.A.), José and Joaquín Valdivieso, Luis Domènech, Manuel Figueroa, Gregorio Lemos, and Ricardo Gosseyn.

rather than individual words. Andrés Ehrenhaus, who worked closely with the translator and editor at *Ediciones Minotauro* discussed this preference:

La elección de Paco Porrúa de suavizar el lenguaje soez resulta en una menor fidelidad a la lengua fuente con el objetivo de adaptarse mejor a la lengua meta. Estos cambios son especialmente relevantes en una traducción que elimina las diferencias entre las diferentes variantes del castellano, que suelen destacarse precisamente en el lenguaje soez⁶ (Castagent 2017, 302).

Around the same time, Porrúa worked for a publishing company called *Sudamericana*. Its owner, Antonio López Llausás, also a very successful editor, trusted him completely. Porrúa's job as literary director involved reading suggested books for publication and deciding whether they ought to be published. In the 1960s, he was reading a manuscript that had apparently been rejected by two Spanish publishing companies. It was *Cien años de soledad* by Gabriel García Márquez, an unknown author to Porrúa. After reading previous works by the Colombian author, he asked for their rights. These already belonged to a Mexican publisher, but *Sudamericana* obtained the rights to *Cien años de soledad*. The novel went on to become one of the most significant works in the Hispanic literary canon.

3.2.1 *El Hobbit*

Returning to Tolkien, Porrúa translated *The Lord of the Rings* before translating *The Hobbit*. In an interview discussing his work, he refused to boast about his achievements, claiming instead that books have a special power, and that his most successful books, like Tolkien's works, somehow found a way into his hands:

Tengo la impresión de que cuando uno vive en una atmósfera literaria empiezan a producirse una serie de fenómenos que yo llamaría “la fuerza de los libros”. Los libros

⁶ Paco Porrúa's choice to soften foul language results in less fidelity to the source language in order to better adapt to the target language. These changes are especially relevant in a translation that eliminates the differences between the different variants of Spanish, which are often highlighted precisely in foul language .

tienen una fuerza muy poderosa. Una mañana estaba yo escribiéndole una carta a la agente de Bertrand Russell y no sé cómo en ese momento se me ocurrió preguntarle por *El señor de los anillos* en una posdata, aunque en realidad no estaba interesado en adquirir sus derechos, porque yo me dedicaba a una cosa diferente. Pero era un fenómeno raro que en 1971 no se hubiera publicado en castellano ese libro aparecido en el cincuenta y cuatro. Ella me contestó un mes y pico más tarde hablándome de Bertrand Russell y añadiéndome también ella una posdata. “Llama a Nicolás Costa”, me dijo. Lo llamé. Y él me dijo: “Acabo de recuperar los derechos de *El señor de los anillos* hace diez minutos. Los tenía una editorial que ha quebrado. Si los quieres, son tuyos”. A mí en principio el libro no me interesaba, pero me pareció que aquello era una especie de dádiva, de modo que me los quedé. Y el libro se vendió bien⁷ (González Férriz, 2005)

To clarify, Nicolas Costa was a literary agent and the bankrupt publisher, as mentioned earlier, was *Fabril Editora*. Porrúa obtained the rights to *The Hobbit* in that deal.

In 1977, Porrúa moved to Barcelona, Spain where he continued editing and translating with his company *Ediciones Minotauro*. The first Spanish translation of *The Lord of the Rings*, also released as a trilogy, came out between 1977 and 1980. Then, Porrúa, under the pseudonym Manuel Figueroa, retranslated *The Hobbit* to Spanish and published it in *Ediciones Minotauro* in 1982.

In Europe, he worked for other publishing companies as well, and continued his own with much success. *Edicionies Minotauro* became the only non-English language publisher containing all of Tolkien’s works in its catalogue (Planeta de Libros 2020). In 2001, he sold the company to *La Editorial Planeta*. Francisco Porrúa died in 2014.

⁷ I believe that when we are living in a literary atmosphere, a series of phenomena begin to appear which I would call “the power of books.” Books have a very great power. One morning I was writing a letter to Bertrand Russell’s agent, and I don’t know how it occurred to me in that moment to ask her about *The Lord of the Rings* in a postscript when I really had no intention of acquiring the rights for it, as I had devoted myself to other things. But it was a strange phenomenon that in 1971 this book that appeared in fifty-four had not been published in Castilian. She replied to me about a month or so later, telling me about Bertrand Russell and adding a postscript of her own. “Call Nicolas Costa,” she said. I called him, and he said, “I just recovered the rights to *The Lord of the Rings* ten minutes ago; a bankrupt publishing house had them. If you want them, they’re yours.” The book didn’t interest me at first, but this seemed to me like a kind of gift, so I kept them. And the book sold well.

3.3 Francis Ledoux 1969

The Hobbit was translated into French much later than into other languages. The first French translation, *Bilbo le Hobbit*, was released in 1969 by *Editions Stock* “twenty-two years after the Swedish version (1947) and twelve years after the German (1957), but also after the Dutch, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish and Japanese editions” (Ferré, Lauzon, Riggs 2003, 46).

The translator was Francis Ledoux. He was born on June 10, 1906 in Sheffield, England. His parents Edmond René Jean Ledoux and Marie Villaret were French and had moved to England in 1899 for work. His grandfather Charles Ledoux founded a large mining and metallurgical company and his father worked in the industry. Francis had six siblings, including Albert Ledoux, an important diplomat who served as the French ambassador in countries like Denmark, Norway, Uruguay, and Peru. The family returned to France at the beginning of World War I.

Francis Ledoux translated many important anglophone authors such as Charlotte Brontë, Charles Dickens, Edgar Allan Poe, and William Shakespeare. Having a vast catalog of translated works, including *The Hobbit*, Francis Ledoux was chosen by Christian Bourgois to do the translation of *The Lord of the Rings*.

3.3.1 *Bilbo le Hobbit*

Christian Bourgois, a French editor, founded his own publishing company in 1966.

The turning point was in 1970, when Christian Bourgois published *Admirations*, a collection of critical articles by Jacques Bergier concerning texts by [...] authors who were almost unknown to the French audience. Subsequently, Christian Bourgois asked J. Bergier’s opinion on which of these works should be published first. He suggested four texts, one of which was *The Lord of the Rings* (Ferré, Lauzon, Riggs 2003, 46).

Bourgois obtained the rights from Allen & Unwin and *Le Seigneur des Anneaux*, translated by Ledoux, was published as a trilogy between 1972 and 1973 by *Editions Christian Bourgois*. The company published most of Tolkien's works into French, and even though Bourgois died in 2007, the publishing house is still active.

Translating Tolkien into French was not easy, "although the historical influence of French in modern English is unmistakable, much of the basic framework of Tolkien's work (place-names, character names, and made-up words) is drawn from the rich store of English Germanic heritage which French does not share" (Ferré, Lauzon, Riggs 2003, 46). Tolkien's reputation suffered due to the translator's apparent conservatism and careless mistakes in the French translation of *The Lord of the Rings*. For example, the choice to translate "race" (of Dwarves, of Men, of Elves...) by the literal *race*, has a pejorative connotation in French, or using the term *noiraud* (a racial slur in French) to translate "black-like" as the adjective used to describe the way the Black Rider is dressed. "We are not saying that Ledoux was acting consciously, but rather, that a translation, thirty years later, may, in another context (i.e. the rise of extreme-right in France), acquire a meaning which alters the original text and allows the possibility of grave misunderstandings" (Ferré, Lauzon, Riggs 2003, 52). *The Hobbit's* literary genre may have also contributed to misinterpretations because it was not yet popular in France. *The Hobbit's* literary genre will be explored in the next chapter.

Tolkien was not yet very well known in France, and while his translations were an attempt to introduce the French audience to Tolkien's world, it seems that at the time, they did not fully succeed. In regards to *Bilbo le Hobbit*, the translation by Ledoux, « Privée de guide,

cette première exploration a défini des contours, mais sans toutefois permettre de pénétrer au cœur de l'univers tolkienien. »⁸ (Dor 2013,2).

The guide mentioned by Dor is the guide to the names in *The Lord of the Rings*, later known as *Nomenclature of The Lord of the Rings*. It is a collection of notes written by Tolkien after the Dutch and Swedish translations had come out. It first appeared in *A Tolkien Compass* written by Jared Lobdell and edited by Christopher Tolkien in 1975, and a new edition by Wayne G. Hammond and Christina Scull, called *Nomenclature* was published in *The Lord of the Rings: A Reader's Companion* in 2005. Even without access to the guide, the translation by Ledoux of the first installment *The Fellowship of the Ring* won the *prix du Meilleur livre étranger* in 1972, given every year to a translated book into French. He died on July 10, 1990.

For decades, perhaps due to a lack of interest from the French audience, a retranslation did not seem necessary. Then, in 2001 when Peter Jackson's film adaptations of *The Lord of the Rings* were released, sales figures for that year showed that as many copies of the books were sold in that single year in France as in the seven previous years combined, from 1994 to 2000. The films encountered much success.

A few years later, although *The Hobbit* was not a trilogy, Jackson's film adaptation was released as a trilogy, from 2012 to 2014. As a result, the adaptation included many additional characters and new plots. Yet, it is important to note that perhaps as a result of a new Tolkien fanbase formed over the films in the 2000s, a second translation into French appeared in 2012. The translator is Canadian.

⁸ Without the guide, this first attempt defined a general layout. However, it failed to reach the core of the Tolkienian universe.

3.4 Daniel Lauzon 2012

Daniel Lauzon was born on September 27, 1979 in Saint-Jérôme, Québec. He discovered Middle-earth at the age of fourteen, first in French, then in English. He completed an honours degree in translation at l'Université de Montréal in 2003.

While completing his degree, he was involved in the administration of websites dedicated to Tolkien and *The Lord of the Rings*. In particular JRRVF, a fully francophone website dedicated to J.R.R. Tolkien and his works. Lauzon met Vincent Ferré, a professor in comparative literature and Proust specialist, who at the time was working on the revision of the French translation of *The Lord of the Rings* with David Riggs and the company *Christian Bourgois Editeur*.

In 2003, the publishing company and Vincent Ferré entrusted Lauzon with the translation of two volumes of *The History of Middle-earth*, a twelve-volume series edited by Christopher Tolkien. He co-translated a third one with Elen Riot. These were published between 2006 and 2008.

3.4.1 *Le Hobbit*

In 2012, his translation of *The Annotated Hobbit* by Douglas A. Anderson, containing a new translation of *The Hobbit* with its commentary, was published by *Christian Bourgois Editeur*. In September of that year, during an online interview with Tolkiendil, another website dedicated to Tolkien and his works, Lauzon revealed that the translation process took three years. When asked what he would say to readers attached to the first translation (by Francis Ledoux) to encourage them to read his version he said:

Voilà, je pense que cette traduction offre beaucoup de nouveauté, une nouvelle interprétation en français du texte de Tolkien que j'ai voulu beaucoup très [sic] proche de

l'original. Et je pense que ceux qui connaissent la version originale et ont une bonne base d'anglais s'en rendront compte immédiatement (et dans certains cas, c'est déjà fait, merci bien) F. Ledoux et moi avons une approche différente. Et Tolkien a évolué depuis ce temps (dans l'esprit des lecteurs)⁹ (Tolkiendil.com 2012).

One of his strategies to maintain his version close to the original was by maintaining the voice of the narrator in the novel. After all, Tolkien had originally written it as a story for his children.

Eh bien, il fallait forcément tenir compte (entre autres) du niveau de langue. Les imparfaits du subjonctif (comme dans la traduction de 1969) n'avaient pas leur place, par exemple. Il y a aussi le côté ludique, la question des cartes, que j'ai traduites et préparées moi-même, pour l'impression. Histoire de redonner ce livre au lectorat auquel il était initialement destiné... même si on sait depuis qu'il plaît aux enfants de tous âges !¹⁰ (Tolkiendil.com 2012).

Eventually Lauzon went on to retranslate *The Lord of the Rings* and many other works by Tolkien. He continues to write about translation, including “Traduire Tolkien en français: On the Translation of J.R.R. Tolkien's Works into French and their Reception in France” in collaboration with Vincent Ferré et David Riggs, in *Tolkien in Translation* by Walking Tree Publishers, quoted in the section about Francis Ledoux. He lives in Canada and continues to write about his work and about Tolkien on different Web sites.

3.4.2 *L'esprit des lecteurs*

As can be seen, the constraints faced by all four translators were unique to them and to their time. On the one hand the most recent ones had access to Tolkien's instructions regarding

⁹ I think that this translation offers a lot of novelty, a new interpretation in French of Tolkien's text, which I wanted to be very close to the original. And I think that those who know the original version and have a good base in English will realize it immediately (and in some cases, they already have, thank you very much). F. Ledoux and I have a different approach. And Tolkien has evolved since then (in the minds of the readers).

¹⁰ Well, the language level (among other things) had to be taken into account. There was no place for the imperfect subjunctive (as in the 1969 translation), for example. There is also the playful side, the question of maps, which I translated and prepared myself for printing. The idea was to return this book to the readership for whom it was originally intended... even though we now know that it appeals to children of all ages!

translation but they had to translate knowing that another translation already existed, perhaps feeling pressure to improve or update the translations? On the other hand, the first translators carried the immense responsibility of introducing Tolkien as an author to their target readers, without any guides. To help us answer the question whether new translations were necessary, Lauzon implied in his interview that *Tolkien a évolué depuis ce temps (dans l'esprit des lecteurs)*¹¹. This means that the research approach in this thesis must focus on the reader's perception of the author. Translators, initially, are readers too, but readers with a mission.

Aside from major edits in 1951, *The Hobbit*'s text has remained unchanged. In contrast, it was shown that its translations varied over time. An approach to see what caused these variances, what encouraged particular translation strategies over others, must take into account the perceptions of the original text formed by the translators. How does Literary Translation differ from other types of translation and what kind of challenges do literary translators face? What literary genre best describes *The Hobbit* ? Is there an equivalent genre in French and Spanish literatures? What influenced the perceptions of translators? Do any approaches in the field of Translation Studies focus on the translator's perception as a result of their background? A theoretical framework encompassing the text's function, literary systems, and the close link between language and culture might address these questions.

¹¹ Tolkien had “evolved” in the “minds” or “souls” of his readers.

Chapter 4: The Theoretical Journey

To address the questions asked in the former chapter, it is necessary to consider the specific role that literary translation plays within translation, but also as a cultural mediator. As a literary genre, Fantasy was not popular in France in the 1960s for instance, so how did translators manage to transfer such a genre so that it could be appreciated in the receiving culture? In this chapter, we will go over some of the theories that have been useful for this research and have helped establish the appropriate methodology to study the translations of *The Hobbit*'s riddles.

4.1 Literary Translation

Translating is the action or practice of converting or rendering a word, a text, etc. into another language (*OED* s.v. “translating”). To do so, it does not suffice to find equivalent words in the target language. Meaning and purpose of the source text must be identified to accurately convey what the author intended to say. The first step in the act of translation is to read and understand the source text. A translator then is, first and foremost, a reader.

Literary translators practise the most intimate form of reading by diving deep into the works to discover/uncover their very pith and marrow. This includes paying great attention to features such as word choice or, in connection with rhyme or alliteration, individual sounds or letters. They must do what is called “close reading”. Close reading “refers not only to an activity with regard to texts but also to a type of text itself: a technically informed, fine-grained analysis of some piece of writing, usually in connection with some broader question of interest” (Herrnstein Smith 2016, 58). The question of interest being the translation of the work for an audience that may otherwise not have access to it.

In the *Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, Mona Baker states that “literary translators are involved at a keen point of cultural convergence because they translate those works which, for whatever reason, are selected for translation and which now exist where otherwise there would be silence” (Baker, 2001 127). Teresa Sánchez Cuevas and Francis Ledoux found themselves exactly at that point of cultural convergence. Their translations filled a gap because Tolkien’s writing was not yet well-known in their target cultures. As implied by Lauzon, by the time he and Francisco Porrúa retranslated *The Hobbit*, Tolkien had evolved in the minds of readers.

Translation scholars have studied the concept of retranslation. In this thesis the concept is used refer to the work done by Lauzon and Porrúa since each one created a new translation while those by Sánchez Cuevas and Ledoux already existed. I refer to all four as translators instead of two translators and two “retranslators” because they all translated directly from Tolkien’s source text in English. Porrúa was known to work extensively on his translations and even rewrite them completely (Castagnet, 2017) while Lauzon emphasized that he did not make use of the translation by Ledoux to realize his own.

Still, the most recent translators were also at a point of cultural convergence, a point created by the passing of time both within their own culture, and in relation to Tolkien’s culture when he wrote the text. Antoine Berman proposed that original texts stayed young indefinitely while translations became older depending on the traditions of the target culture (Berman, 1990). The idea of translations aging might have been behind the need to retranslate the novel. Adding to the complexity of cultural convergence, *The Hobbit* may belong to a literary genre that was still relatively unknown in the target audience’s literary tradition at the time of publication. The genre has much evolved over time.

4.2 Fantasy and Marvellous

The Greek *phantasia*, meaning “vision” or “appearance” is at the root of the word for ghost in Spanish *fantasma* and French *fantôme*. It is also in the English “to phantom” meaning “picture to oneself”. Fantasy then exists only in the imagination. Fantasy is a literary genre in which the plot cannot occur in the real world:

Fantasy is a general term for any kind of fictional work that is not primarily devoted to realistic representation of the known world. The category includes several literary genres (e.g. dream vision, fable, fairy tale, romance, science fiction) describing imagined worlds in which magical powers and other impossibilities are accepted. Recent theorists of fantasy have attempted to distinguish more precisely between the self-contained magical realms of the marvellous, the psychologically explicable delusions of the uncanny, and the inexplicable meeting of both in the fantastic. (*ODLT* s.v. “Fantasy”).

Tolkien claimed to have derived *The Hobbit* from *The Red Book of Westmarch*, a fictional manuscript written by hobbits. The narrative in *The Hobbit* describes Bilbo’s adventures as they happened in the past: “This is a story of long ago. At that time the languages and letters were quite different from ours today. English is used to represent the languages” (Tolkien 1995, 1). As a result, the presumed gap in time between the events of the story and the present would make the events and magic within it believable.

Tzvetan Todorov, a Bulgarian/French historian and literary critic, explained the Marvellous as a literary genre in his book *The Fantastic, a structural approach to a literary genre*:

The fantastic [a work of Fantasy], we have seen, lasts only as long as a certain hesitation: a hesitation common to reader and character, who must decide whether or not what they perceive derives from “reality” as it exists in the common opinion. At the story’s end, the reader makes a decision even if the character does not; he opts for one solution or the other, and thereby emerges from the fantastic. If he decides that the laws of reality remain intact and permit an explanation of the phenomena described, we say that the work belongs to another genre: the uncanny. If, on the contrary, he decides that new laws of nature must be entertained to account for the phenomena, we enter the genre of the marvelous (Todorov 1975, 41).

The acceptance of events from readers would then place *The Hobbit* in the category of the Marvellous. Still, the threads connecting Fantasy and the Marvellous are not easily untangled in Spanish and French. “Latin American critics deal almost unavoidably with the burden of delineating among the fantastic, magical realism, and the marvelous real” (Corral 2003). After Ledoux translated *The Hobbit*, it was precisely this distinction which led to some of its criticism:

Almost from the beginning, Tolkien’s work has been perceived by the media as an example of “fantastique” and juvenile literature. First, it is worth noting that French has no equivalent for “Fantasy” as a genre: the word is usually borrowed from English unless “Fantaisie” is used, but may cause misinterpretation, for the word is equivalent to “whim” or “fancy” in contemporary French. In similar fashion, French journalists often use the adjective “fantastique” to refer to Fantasy, which is a fatal misinterpretation, as Tzvetan Todorov has shown in underlining the important distinction between “fantastique” and “merveilleux” (Todorov 1976). The *Lord of the Rings* [and *The Hobbit*] is definitely not a “roman fantastique”, but a romance in which “merveilleux” is essential. Consequently, the link between Tolkien’s work and our world is often overlooked by the media (Ferré, Lauzon, Riggs 2003, 50).

David Roas, a writer and literary critic from Barcelona, Spain, put together an anthology dedicated to the genre: *Teorías de lo fantástico*. It is worth noting that like in French, “fantástico” refers to the literary genre. The volume offers a selection of the most relevant contributions on the subject, including Tzvetan Todorov’s distinction between *literatura fantástica* (Fantasy) and *literatura maravillosa* (Marvellous).

Translators of *The Hobbit* then had the difficult task of ensuring that all aspects of the Marvellous were conveyed in their translation. The narrative in chapter five exceptionally captures the essence of the genre: the characters are in a mysterious place, the cave, Bilbo makes use of several magical items like a sword and a ring, and he encounters the very peculiar creature, Gollum. Gollum is said to have been in the cave for a very long time. Once again, it is possible that this separation in time between his origin and Bilbo’s present was used for

credibility. Adding another layer of complexity, their dialogue includes the riddle contest. While the riddles belong to the work as a whole, their function, style and text type also require careful consideration from translators.

4.3 Functional theories of translation

In *the Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* by Mona Baker, the terms “communicative” and “functional” refer to approaches to translation “representing a view which refuses to divorce the act of translating from its context, insisting upon the real-world situational factors which are prime determinants of meaning and interpretation of meaning” (Baker 1998, 29). In other words, functional theories of translation focus on the text’s context, aim, and purpose: its function.

J.R.R. Tolkien used his advanced language skills and creativity to write an enigmatic scene filled with danger. He “took pleasure in linguistic puzzles and linguistic complexity. It pleased him to make sense of shifts in meaning and form; and it pleased him to include, as much as possible, variant accounts in his own literature” (Burns 2005, 23-24). Borne from Anglo-Saxon tradition, riddling was a way to solve significant issues between two parties with a clear winner and loser.

The riddles were expressive and filled with concealed meaning and rhymes similar to poetry. Katharina Reiss identifies text types according to their communicative function. The “expressive text type” is the communication of artistically organised content. Riddles are like poems in that “poems are examples of expressive texts as they are creative compositions where the author uses the aesthetic dimension of language to express himself. The author or ‘sender’ is foreground, as well as the form of the message” (Reiss 1989, 109). Tolkien certainly made use of the aesthetic dimension of language in the riddles filling them with stylistic features.

Knowing who the sender is, what the sender is saying, and how it is being said are imperative for communication, and therefore also for translation. After all, as previously stated, the first step in any act of translation is to read and understand the source text. Like in communication, problems arise in translation when languages fail to represent a similar enough reality. In an interview from 2016, Susan Bassnett mentions that the reason for this challenge is that “no two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached” (quoted by Kumar Panda 2016). She also states that translation is absolutely crucial in the movement of texts across linguistic borders, cultures, and time.

4.4 Cultural shift

The importance of movement across systems has been highlighted by other translation scholars. Even-Zohar’s Polysystem theory sees translated literature as a part of the cultural, literary and historical system of the target language: “translation is no longer a phenomenon whose nature and borders are given once and for all, but an activity dependent on the relations within a certain cultural system” (Even-Zohar 2000, 197).

Culture then becomes the unit of translation. Defining culture is a very difficult task since it is a social construct, meaning that it exists not in an objective reality, but as a result of human interaction. For this research culture is defined as a way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs of a particular group of people at a particular time (*Cambridge Dictionary* s.v. “Culture”). It is an umbrella term that encompasses social behaviour and norms found in human societies. There is a vital link between culture and language. Language is the guide to social

reality. “Language, then is the heart within the body of culture, and it is the interaction between the two that results in the continuation of life-energy. In the same way that the surgeon, operating on the heart, cannot neglect the body that surrounds it, so the translator treats the text in isolation from the culture at his peril” (Bassnett 2002, 22).

4.4.1 Lefevere’s poetics and rewriting

As mentioned about the work of writers at the end of chapter two, the work of translators is also the product of their particular cultures and times in which they lived. Their creativity also plays an important role. Derived from Aristotle’s discourse on poetry, André Lefevere defines the poetics of literary systems as a kind of code behaviour, “this poetics consists of both, an inventory component (genre, certain symbols, characters, prototypical situations) and a ‘functional’ component, an idea of how literature has to, or may be allowed, to function in society (Lefevere 2000, 206).

Deviations from the source text were not to be regarded as “mistakes”. Instead, he proposed to determine if there was a pattern to the deviations. “Isolated deviations are mistakes; deviations that can be shown to follow certain patterns indicate a strategy the translator has developed to deal with the text as a whole” (Lefevere 1992, 109). For Lefevere translations were acculturations because the system of ideas, the poetics, was more important than linguistic considerations when translating. A translation or rewriting then was simply a cultural given of our time. Translators would apply their own poetics by rewriting the source text through their own experiences.

Considering Lefevere’s view of translation as rewriting, we may wonder if *The Hobbit*, once translated, could still be referred to as “Tolkien’s writing”. After all, a translation is

technically the translator's writing in the target language. Translators use "Tolkien's writing" as the source text, then they transform it into another language to create (rewrite?) a target text.

Were the translations of *The Hobbit* "rewritings"? the following is what Lefevere proposed:

A view of literature that recognizes the construction of the greatness of Great Books has to recognize the part played by rewritings while not denying the intrinsic value of the books themselves. Translations, monographs, extracts in anthologies, and literary histories all have two features in common: they refer to books other than themselves and they claim to represent these books. They have no reason to exist on their own. They are not "writing" as the texts they write about are; they are "rewriting". The paradox of literary evolution appears to be that writings hardly ever make it on their own. Rather, rewritings seem to be a vital factor in determining whether a writing does or does not secure a label of greatness. Writings that are not rewritten in one way or another tend to sink without a trace (Lefevere 1992, 138).

Tolkien's stories did not sink into oblivion and they were introduced to nonspeakers of English through translation. This notion brings up important questions: could the Tolkien phenomenon have spread as widely without translation? If his stories had not been translated, is it possible for them to have sunk without a trace? Of course we know that *The Hobbit* was translated in Spanish and French in the 1960s, but was it starting to "sink" for those audiences before it was retranslated?

The translators of *The Hobbit* produced unique translations, even when translating into the same target language. They translated at different times, which means that their works must have reflected the poetics of their time. Using their own viewpoint and creativity, we could say that each translator formed his or her own spectrum, thus yielding different outcomes from one another. Lefevere proposed a term for the variances in the outcomes: "refractions". He also believed that they could be identified, studied, and that translations especially tended to be filled with refractions.

4.4.2 Lefevere's refractions

“A refraction [...] which tries to carry a work of literature over from one system into another, represents a compromise between two systems [...]” (Lefevere 2000, 207). “Refractions [are] the adaptation of a work of literature to a different audience, with the intention of influencing the way in which that audience reads the work. [...] Refractions are to be found in the obvious form of translation [...]” (Lefevere 2000, 205). For this reason, recognizing refractions will be an important step to study the translations of the riddles of *The Hobbit* into Spanish and French. Is it possible that the compromise between the source and target systems had to be reworked over time? What changed?

4.4.3 Prismatic approach

Refractions, if they exist, would induce a slight change of perception from the original text, as if reading the text through different lenses. This is precisely the central concept of the prismatic approach in translation studies.

A prism is an object made up of a transparent material, like glass or plastic, that has at least two flat surfaces that form an acute angle (less than 90 degrees). When light passes from the air into glass, it slows down, and when it leaves the glass, it speeds up again. If the light hits the glass at an angle instead of dead-on, it undergoes refraction. The angle at which it hits the glass is not the same as the angle it travels inside the glass. The light is no longer moving in a straight line, but gets bent at the surface. The same thing happens when the light leaves the prism, it bends again. Snell's Law predicts the optical principle. It deals with the angles in which light enters and leaves a prism, called the index of refraction. This index shows how much light slows down when it goes in (Papiewski, 2017).

Inspired by this metaphor, researchers can study how refractions as described by Lefevere impact the field of translation studies. To describe his “Prismatic Jane Eyre” research project, Matthew Reynolds explains:

The key idea is to see translation as a process that inevitably produces multiple variants, both within and across languages, and to trace out the theoretical, practical, cognitive and creative consequences of this view (Reynolds 2015).

Refractions are very likely to emerge from a spectrum created by the culture of translators and readers. Studying them may help us answer questions such as how did translators go about translating the riddles? Did they prefer certain strategies? Did they prioritize any aspect of the riddles?

Inventing and translating riddles required creativity. Given the challenge of translating their hidden meaning, it makes sense to focus on their stylistic features, in other words, on the strategies of language used to conceal meaning, and how translators transferred them into the target language.

The analysis in the next chapter will dive into the riddles of chapter five in *The Hobbit* and the variances found in its four translations. Aiming to discover how spectrums may have yielded a prismatic effect, the analysis could shed some light on the poetics of the time when each translation was published, or on something in the life of the translator that created a conscious or unconscious refraction.

Chapter 5: Stylistic features in the riddle exchange and their translations

As stated previously, the riddle exchange between Bilbo and Gollum takes place in chapter five of *The Hobbit*. The chapter begins with Bilbo waking up in complete darkness after being separated from his group of friends: the dwarves and Gandalf, the Wizard. The last thing he remembers is that they were all in a goblin cave under a mountain and they were attacked by them. Bilbo had bumped his head on a hard rock. At first Bilbo is unsure whether he has actually opened his eyes due to the darkness surrounding him. He is in great distress because he does not know what happened or where he is. He is also in pain on the cold, hard floor. Next, he decides to crawl for a while and suddenly his hand feels a tiny ring of cold metal. He puts it in his pocket without much thought. He continues to crawl until giving “himself up to complete miserableness, for a long while” (Tolkien 1995,81).

He reminisces about being at home frying eggs and bacon, but the idea of missed meals only makes him more miserable. He reaches for his pipe and is happy to find that he still has it as well as some tobacco. Unfortunately, he doesn’t have matches but as he slaps his pockets, he grabs the hilt of his sword. He takes it out and feels relieved to still be in possession of the magical elven sword that glows when trolls or goblins are nearby. The sword’s light is dim, meaning that enemies must not be too far but not too close either.

At this point in the storyline, readers are reminded of certain characteristics and qualities of hobbits. Even though Bilbo is in tight quarters, he is smaller than humans and can move around quickly and undetected. This area of the cave under the mountain is dark and narrow but Bilbo has experience navigating tunnels since he lives in a hole under the ground with passages, though “not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a

dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort (Tolkien 1995, 3). He is recovering from his head injury but hobbits “recover wonderfully from falls and bruises” (Tolkien 1995, 83).

His courage is also made evident by decisions taken under these difficult circumstances: “‘Go back?’ he thought. ‘No good at all! Go sideways? Impossible! Go forward? Only thing to do! On we go!’” (Tolkien 1995, 82). Lastly, his luck becomes obvious because at least he has his sword, and also, being a hobbit means that he has a “fund of wisdom and wise sayings that men have mostly never heard or have forgotten long ago” (Tolkien 1995, 83). As we will see very soon, this wisdom may or may not literally save his life.

His feet unexpectedly come into contact with splashing water and he realizes he has come upon a small lake:

Deep down here by the dark water lived old Gollum, a small slimy creature. I don’t know where he came from nor what he was. He was Gollum – as dark as darkness, except for two big round pale eyes in his thin face. He had a little boat, and he rowed about quite quietly on the lake; for lake it was, wide and deep and deadly cold [...] He was looking out of his pale lamp-like eyes for blind fish, which he grabbed with his long fingers as quick as thinking. He liked meat too (Tolkien 1995, 84-85).

Shortly after, Gollum gets in his little boat and leaves his small island, making his way towards Bilbo who is sitting by the shore. Luckily for Bilbo, Gollum wasn’t particularly hungry at that moment, only curious, so the creature begins to whisper and hiss at him wondering what kind of meal the hobbit is. Bilbo draws his sword and introduces himself. He explains his current situation and expresses his desperate need to find the exit. Seeing Bilbo’s sword, Gollum suggests a riddle contest to pass time while he determines whether Bilbo is alone, threatening, or if he is any good to eat:

“Praps ye sits here and chats with it a bitsy, my preciousss. It likes riddles, praps it does, does it?” [...] Riddles were all he could think of. Asking them, and sometimes guessing them had been the only game he had ever played with other funny creatures sitting in

their holes in the long, long ago, before he lost all his friends and was driven away, alone, and crept down, down, into the dark under the mountains (Tolkien 1995, 86-87).

Bilbo agrees and invites Gollum to ask the first riddle while he thinks of one. We know

that hobbits are fond of wisdom and of long forgotten wise sayings. “Bilbo’s riddle exchange with Gollum falls mostly into the latter category, of things forgotten, for the whole idea of testing by riddles, and some of the actual riddles, come from the ancient and aristocratic literature of the Northern world rediscovered in the nineteenth century by Tolkien’s professional predecessors” (Shippey 2001, 23-24). The contest begins with Gollum asking the first one and Bilbo the second one. They take turns asking each other a total of ten riddles. Although, as we will see, the last riddle asked by Bilbo becomes the subject of much commotion and debate as to whether it actually qualifies as a riddle.

To analyze the riddles and their translations, a table was created. The first column contains the riddles from the original novel published in 1937, in the source language, English. The second column has the riddles in the first target language, Spanish, published in 1964. Spanish is listed before French because this translation was published before the first French translation. The third column lists the riddles from the second translation in Spanish published in 1982. In the fourth column are the ones in the second target language, French, published in 1969, and in the fifth column, the ones from the second French translation, published in 2012.

Displaying the riddles and their translations side-by-side and organizing them according to the target language and year of publication provides a bird’s-eye view to facilitate the recognition of stylistic features. Riddles contain characteristic features or recurring devices to disguise the solutions. In “What has it got in its pocket? Or, what makes a riddle a riddle?” Christine Luz emphasized:

More notably, the means of disguise that the riddles apply follow a set of recognizable patterns (e.g. most notable is the use of figurative expressions and a tendency to contrary-

to-common-sense statements); we find characteristic ways of thinking and speaking which are specific to riddles. These characteristic features give them the particular shape which marks or identifies them as riddles and distinguishes them from other kinds of questions (Luz 2013, 98).

The initial step of this analysis is to identify the stylistic features in each riddle in the source language. Afterwards, a study of the translated riddles will determine if the same stylistic features are also present in each target language. The answers will then be revealed and a description of the context in the storyline will follow. Finally, a few observations on the results will close the chapter and lead to their discussion in chapter six.

5.1 Riddle 1 asked by Gollum

EN Tolkien 1937	ES Sánchez Cuevas 1964	ES Figueroa 1982	FR Ledoux 1969	FR Lauzon 2012
What has roots as nobody sees, Is taller than trees, Up, up it goes, And yet never grows?	¿Qué es lo que tiene raíces que nadie ve, es más alto que los árboles, y sube y sube, y sin embargo nunca crece?	Las raíces no se ven, y es más alta que un árbol. Arriba y arriba sube, y sin embargo no crece.	Qu'est-ce qui a des racines que personne ne voit, Qui est plus grand que les arbres, Qui monte, qui monte, Et pourtant ne pousse jamais ?	Elle a des racines que personne ne voit, Dépasse tous les arbres du bois. Jamais elle ne cesse de monter, Jamais on ne la voit pousser.

In this riddle, there is a repetition of the word “up”. This repetition creates an impression that the action is being continuous; in this case, going in a specific direction, upwards. This line also constitutes an anastrophe, meaning that there is an inversion of the usual syntactical order of words (*MWD*, s.v. “anastrophe”). In this case, they were inverted with the adverbial phrase “up, up” coming before the subject and the verb. Anastrophes are used in poetry to create depth or to maintain a rhyme. Since the last word of the riddle is “grows”, we can see that placing “goes” at the end of the line creates a rhyme.

The comparison in the second line “is taller than trees” creates a paradox: after reading the whole riddle, readers, and probably Bilbo, know that the answer cannot be a tree, even if whatever the answer is has roots and is able to go up. It is uncertain whether it’s a person, an animal, or a thing, going up, trying to get to the top. A paradox is a statement or expression so surprisingly self-contradictory as to provoke us into seeking another sense or context in which it would be true (*ODLT*, s.v. “paradox”). The statements seem self-contradictory since logically, something with roots would only be able to go up by growing, and the last line says that this does not grow. Upon investigation, it is evident that the answer is not a living thing, therefore it cannot “grow” like a plant or animal would. Instead, it is caused by tectonic plates coming into contact causing the earth’s crust to go up forming it. Although it sounds odd for it to have roots, according to Adam Roberts (2013, 58), the line describing roots “as nobody sees” could be interpreted as “not existing”. Since nobody sees them, these roots simply do not exist.

5.1.1 Identifying stylistic features in Spanish

Correspondingly to the source text, Teresa Sánchez Cuevas (TSC) translates this riddle in the form of a question while Manuel Figueroa (MF) translates it as a declarative statement. The repetition of “up” is maintained in both Spanish translations. TSC opts to repeat the verb *sube* while MF opts to repeat the adverb *arriba*. The anastrophe disappears in TSC’s translation since there is no adverbial phrase, though perhaps it is not necessary since *subir* means to go up. On the other hand, MF writes the adverbial phrase, though it is redundant in Spanish to say *subir arriba*, the redundancy allows the words to be out of their normal order, and like in the source text, to capture the rhyme in the last two lines of the riddle.

It is noteworthy that the English text maintains a paradox by describing the answer to the riddle using the neutral pronoun “it”. TSC also maintains the paradox by concealing the gender of the subject. However, MF gives away that the subject is feminine. The translator uses the feminine adjective *alta*, thus hinting about a feminine subject and making it slightly easier for the reader to figure out the answer to the riddle, than it would be if this information were kept unknown.

5.1.2 Identifying stylistic features in French

Like TSC, Francis Ledoux (FL) translates the riddle in the form of a question while Daniel Lauzon (DL) translates it as a declarative statement, similarly to MF in Spanish. Repetitions are maintained in both French translations. FL keeps the repetition of “up” by opting to repeat the relative pronoun *qui* and the verb *monte*. The translator adds repetitions by starting lines of the riddle using the interrogative phrases and pronouns such as *qu’est-ce qui* and *qui*.

On the other hand, DL creates repetition in his translation by introducing a rhyming parallelism in the last two lines. Parallelism is the arrangement of similarly constructed clauses, sentences, or verse lines in a pairing or other sequence suggesting some correspondence between them. The effect of parallelism is usually one of balanced arrangement achieved through repetition of the same syntactic forms (*ODLT*, s.v. “parallelism”). Each line begins with the word *jamais* and is a sentence in the negative form. It is noteworthy that DL also introduced an addition of *du bois*. While the English text doesn’t mention the woods, this addition could have been inserted to maintain the rhyme in the first two lines, since the source text is also written in an aabb rhyming scheme.

As previously said, the English text maintains a paradox by describing the answer to the riddle using the neutral pronoun “it”. FL also maintains the paradox by concealing the gender of the subject. However, DL gives away that the subject is feminine. The translator uses the feminine pronouns *elle* and *la*.

5.1.3 Context description and answer

Being the one suggesting the riddle contest, Gollum asks the first one. “Gollum’s riddles, unlike Bilbo’s, tend to be ancient ones (Shippey 2001, 24). It must be remembered that when we were introduced to Gollum, we learned that he had been living in the cave under the mountain for a very long time and that for him, riddling was the only activity he would engage in with other creatures “long, long ago” (Tolkien 1995, 86). With this in mind, it is not surprising that the first riddle he asks relates to the place he has been in for so long. For this reason, and given that Bilbo is a hobbit, which means that he is very wise and able to recall wise sayings that most have forgotten, he is able to come up with the answer very quickly:

Mountain	La montaña	Una montaña	Une montagne	Une montagne
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Consequently, Gollum accepts his answer and it is Bilbo’s turn to ask.

5.2 Riddle 2 asked by Bilbo

EN Tolkien 1937	ES Sánchez Cuevas 1964	ES Figueroa 1982	FR Ledoux 1969	FR Lauzon 2012
Thirty white horses on a red hill, First they champ, Then they stamp, Then they stand still.	Treinta caballos blancos en una colina roja, primero muerden, después golpean, después se quedan quietos.	Treinta caballos blancos en una sierra bermeja. Primero mordisquean, y luego machacan, y luego descansan.	Trente chevaux sur une colline rouge ; D'abord ils mâchonnent, Puis ils frappent leur marque ⁵ Ensuite ils restent immobiles.	Trente chevaux blancs sur une colline rouge : D'abord, ils mâchonnent, Puis, ils pilonnent, Puis, aucun ne bouge.
⁵ <i>To stamp</i> signifie en même temps « frapper du pied » et « frapper une marque ».				

In riddle 2, there is a repetition of the words “then they”. This repetition introduces a gradation, that is a series forming successive stages (*MWD*, s.v. “gradation”). Interestingly, the gradation ends with an action, standing still, that is the complete opposite to the rest of the actions, champing and stamping. This line stating that the horses stand still seems contradictory with the rest of the riddle because the other lines describe horses acting like typical horses would, moving and eating. As a result, the last line creates confusion as readers, and Gollum, are left wondering why the horses suddenly become still.

This paradox could be resolved upon investigation of two metaphors in the riddle. The first one involves the white horses and the second one involves the red hill. Paying special attention to the colours will also help to solve this riddle.

5.2.1 Identifying stylistic features in Spanish

Both Spanish translations include the repetition of “then they” and the gradation of the horses’ actions. It is important to note that the pronoun “they” disappears in the Spanish translations, but this is not an omission since the conjugation of the verb gives away the subject.

TSC opts to repeat the word *después* while MF opts to repeat *y luego* while creating a rhyming parallelism of the last two lines.

5.2.2 Identifying stylistic features in French

Although the gradation of the horses' actions is present in both French translations, there is no repetition in FL's translation. This version includes a footnote, which is a translation note indicating what the verb "to stamp" means in French. Also, it is important to point out the omission of the horses' colour in this translation. I argue that the colour white is a crucial hint for readers to solve the riddle. On the other hand, DL maintains the repetition of "then they" by repeating *puis* but *ils* isn't repeated because the structure of the last line of the riddle doesn't require it since it is in the negative form with *aucun* as a subject. DL's translation also has the aabb rhyme of the source text.

5.2.3 Context description and answer

Probably triggered by the idea of being eaten, Bilbo's fear inspired him to ask this riddle. It becomes evident that the hobbit is very skilled not only answering riddles, but also asking them, "though his riddles are significantly different in their sources and their nature. Three of them, [...] come from traditional nursery rhyme" (Shippey 2001, 25). Gollum expresses recognition of the riddle by hissing "Chestnuts, chestnuts" (Tolkien 1995, 88), which is "slang, meaning an old, well-known joke or tale, which this particular riddle is" (Anderson 2002, 122). The creature then provides his answer very quickly and also adds that he only has six teeth:

Teeth	Los dientes	Los dientes	Les dents	Des dents
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To explain the metaphors, first, teeth are compared to white horses. Indeed, teeth are used when eating and they hit each other when biting, but they stay still since they're rooted into gums, assuming they are healthy teeth. The white colour horses is an important clue in the riddle since teeth are also white. Then, gums compared to a "red hill" is the second metaphor.

It is now Gollum's turn to ask.

5.3 Riddle 3 asked by Gollum

EN Tolkien 1937	ES Sánchez Cuevas 1964	ES Figueroa 1982	FR Ledoux 1969	FR Lauzon 2012
Voiceless it cries, Wingless flutters, Toothless, bites, Mouthless mutters.	Grita sin voz, aletea sin alas, muerde sin dientes, murmura sin boca.	Canta sin voz, vuela sin alas, sin dientes muerde, sin boca habla.	Sans voix, il crie; Sans ailes, il voltige; Sans dents, il mord; Sans bouche, il murmure.	Sans voix, il crie, Sans jambes se lève, Sans dents, il mord, Murmure sans lèvres.

In riddle 3, only the first line contains a pronoun to indicate the subject of the riddle (it). Although the pronoun is missing in the remaining three lines, it is still understood by the reader that they are referring to the same "it". The omission of one or more words that are obviously understood but that must be supplied to make a construction grammatically complete is known as an ellipsis (*MWD*, s.v. "ellipsis"). We see that there is an inversion of the usual order of words in each line. As previously stated, this stylistic feature is an anastrophe. The adverb appears before the verb in each sentence. The adverbs preceding verbs in the last three lines constitute oxymorons (wingless-flutters, toothless-bites, mouthless-mutters). An oxymoron is a combination of contradictory or incongruous words (*MWD*, s.v. "oxymoron"). The repetition of the suffix "less" creates confusion and at the same time, it highlights the oxymorons. Since all

three lines follow the same grammatical structure (adverb + verb), the riddle contains parallelism.

We also see that the similar “s” and “ss” sounds in proximity generate a consonance, that is the repetition of identical or similar consonants in neighbouring words whose vowel sounds are different (*ODLT* s.v. “consonance”). Additionally, “cries” and “bites” are assonances while “flutters” and “mutters” are rhymes. An assonance is the repetition of identical or similar vowel sounds in the stressed syllables, and sometimes in the following unstressed syllables, of neighbouring words; it is distinct from rhyme in that the consonants differ although the vowels or diphthongs match (*ODLT* s.v. “assonance”).

In addition, every line contains a paradox because the statements are self-contradictory. It would be absurd to believe that someone or something could cry without a voice, flutter without wings, bite without teeth, and mutter without a mouth. Upon investigation, we find out that the statements in each line are indeed possible through personification, that it is, the attribution of human form, nature, or characteristics to something; the representation of a thing or abstraction as a person (*OED* s.v. “personification”). That is to say, it is possible to solve the riddle by attributing the characteristics listed in the riddle – crying without a voice, fluttering without wings, biting without teeth, and muttering without a mouth – to the answer.

5.3.1 Identifying stylistic features in Spanish

None of the Spanish translations contain a pronoun, however, as previously mentioned, a missing pronoun in Spanish does not constitute an ellipsis since the conjugation of the verb indicates the subject. On the other hand, both translations contain transpositions. To transpose means to change the relative place or normal order of something (*MWD*, s.v. “transpose”). In this

case, words were moved from one grammatical category to another without altering the meaning of the text. The transposition was necessary because unlike in English, in Spanish we cannot use “less” as a suffix to indicate “without”, thus creating a necessary addition and as a result, a repetition of the word *sin*. It is noteworthy that MF opted to split the parallelism (verb + preposition + noun) by introducing a new grammatical order to the last half of his translation (preposition + noun + verb). Interestingly, in the last two lines of the riddle, the verbs follow the nouns as in the source text.

The first line is worth considering further as it contains an adaptation of the source “Voiceless it cries”. I believe it is an adaptation because even though crying is replaced by singing, *Canta sin voz* retains the imagery of sadness by alluding to a voiceless song. MF’s verb choice “to sing”, *cantar* over “to whistle” *silbar*, a collocation with the wind (*viento*) in Spanish, may represent an effort to transfer the “c” sound of “crying” to the target text.

Furthermore, the English text maintains a paradox by describing the answer to the riddle using the neutral pronoun “it”. The Spanish translators also maintained the paradox by refraining from the use of pronouns.

5.3.2 Identifying stylistic features in French

The French translations also contain transpositions and it is also necessary to add and repeat the word *sans*. Both translations follow the same grammatical order as the source text, with the exception of the last line in DL’s translated riddle. Here, the translator opted to change the grammatical order from the source text (adverb + verb) to the target text (verb + preposition + noun). This shift was done to maintain a rhyme with the second line of the riddle *sans jambes se lève*. This line is worth considering further because it is an adaptation of the source “Wingless

flutters”. I believe it is an adaptation because even though it refers to other body parts, it retains the imagery of movement. As a matter of fact, the translator may be offering a hint by employing the verb *se lever* because in French, the answer to the riddle has this verb as a possible collocation.

In addition, the English text maintains a paradox by describing the answer to the riddle using the neutral pronoun “it”. Both French translators give away that the subject is masculine by using the pronoun *il*. As previously stated, I argue that hinting about a masculine subject might make it slightly easier to figure out the answer to the riddle, than it would be if this information were kept unknown.

5.3.3 Context description and answer

Gollum’s way of speaking is probably his most defining characteristic. His first line in the story is “Bless us and splash us, my precioussss! [...] (Tolkien 1995, 86). We can imagine that Gollum’s whispering and hissing sounds while enunciating this riddle must have instilled additional fear in Bilbo, since he was already worried about being eaten. Bilbo had heard a similar riddle before, after all, “traditional [...] riddles often contain variations of phrase on the elements of ‘flying without wings’ and ‘speaking without a mouth’” (Anderson 2002,122). Soon, he is able to come up with the answer:

Wind	El viento	El viento	Le vent	Le vent
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He is so delighted that he is able to think of the next riddle on the spot.

5.4 Riddle 4 asked by Bilbo

EN Tolkien 1937	ES Sánchez Cuevas 1964	ES Figueroa 1982	FR Ledoux 1969	FR Lauzon 2012
An eye in a blue face Saw an eye in a green face. “That eye is like to this eye” Said the first eye, “But in low place Not in high place.”	Un ojo en un rostro azul vio un ojo en un rostro verde. “Ese ojo se parece a este ojo”, dijo el primer ojo, “pero en un lugar bajo, no en un lugar alto.”	Un ojo en la cara azul vio un ojo en la cara verde. «Ese ojo es como este ojo», dijo el ojo primero, «pero en lugares bajos, y no en lugares altos. »	Un oeil dans un visage bleu Vit un oeil dans un visage vert. « Cet oeil-là ressemble à cet oeil-ci, dit le premier oeil, Mais en un lieu bas, Non pas en un lieu haut. »	Un œil dans un visage bleu Vit un œil dans un visage vert. « Cet œil-là me ressemble un peu, Dit le premier œil, il est similaire, Non pas dans les cieux, Mais bien sur la terre. »

In riddle 4, the repetition of the word “eye” plus the word “high” create an assonance. The words “face” and “place” are also repeated. These repetitions are used to create rhymes in the riddle but also, if spoken quickly, it is likely that they could baffle Gollum, who is trying to elucidate it.

The word “eye” is a catachresis. A catachresis occurs when there is an extension of a word’s meaning in a surprising but strictly illogical metaphor (*ODLT*, s.v. “catachresis”). In the riddle, the fact that there are two eyes speaking to one another is illogical, thus creating a paradox. The absurdity increases with the mention that each eye is located on a different coloured face: one that is blue and another that is green. To add another layer of confusion, the faces are also in different places: one is in a high place while the other is in a low place.

Upon investigation, the eye metaphors can be solved by considering personifications. As previously explained, we can attribute the ability to speak to the eyes applying this stylistic device. “Low place”, “high place”, “blue face”, and “green face” are periphrases, meaning that

the author employed a roundabout way of referring to something by means of several words instead of naming it directly in a single word or phrase (*ODLT* s.v. “periphrasis”). I believe that this was done to mystify Gollum and as a result, hide the answers to the riddle. Knowing that the periphrases are in fact metaphors could allow the creature to then determine what an eye in the blue face and an eye in a green face are.

Overall, this riddle is particularly difficult, but the storyline and the characters’ personal history could serve as clues to help find the solutions.

5.4.1 Identifying stylistic features in Spanish

In the Spanish translations, the repetition of the word “eye”, *ojo*, creates an assonance of the “o” sound. The rhyme created in English with the repetition of the words “face” and “place” is lost in Spanish since a transposition is necessary to list adjectives after nouns, unlike English where the adjectives “blue, green, high, and low” would have to be listed before the noun. It is worth noting that MF pluralized the places in the last two lines of the riddles by rendering “in low place” as *en lugares bajos* and “in high place” as *en lugares altos*.

5.4.2 Identifying characteristic features in French

The French translations also contain repetitions of the word “eye”, *œil*. Like in Spanish, the rhyme created in English with the repetition of the words “face” and “place” is lost in French since a transposition is necessary in these particular cases to list adjectives after nouns. It is important to highlight the adaptations from DL. The first is of the line “that eye is like to this eye” into two lines: « *Cet œil-là me ressemble un peu* » and later in the following line « *il est similaire* ». The second adaptation is of the last two lines of the riddle “But in low place / Not in

high place” to « *Non pas dans les cieux, / Mais bien sur la terre* ». Rhymes are created here with *terre* and *vert*. These adaptations were done to maintain a rhyme scheme even though it was different from the source text (ababab instead of aabbaa). On the other hand, the paradox behind what is meant by a low place and a high place is lost in this translation. DL opted to reveal this answer perhaps making the riddle easier to solve.

5.4.3 Context description and answer

Bilbo is convinced that he will be able to puzzle Gollum with this riddle since the answer reflects the bright, outside world. As we know, Gollum has spent a long time underground in the cold, dark cave. After much hissing and thinking, “Gollum brought up memories of ages and ages and ages before” (Tolkien 1995, 88-89) and he is then able to solve the riddle.

As revealed by one of the French translators (DL), the blue face is a metaphor for the sky, and the green face is a metaphor for the grass. Therefore, the eye in the sky is the sun. The moon would not apply in this case since a blue sky refers to daytime and the moon is usually invisible during the day. The eye in the grass is a flower, in particular a daisy. Why a daisy?

This riddle cleverly expresses the etymology of the word *daisy* in riddle form. The flower name comes from the Anglo-Saxon *dæges éage* (‘day’s eye’), which alludes to the flower’s petals opening in the morning (revealing the yellow center) and closing in the evening. Hence, it is the ‘eye of day’ or ‘day’s eye’- the modern daisy (Anderson 2002, 122).

Moreover, according to Adam Roberts, “The ‘day’s eye’ finds a parallel for itself in the humble flower; but this riddle takes on added resonance when *The Hobbit* is put in the context of *The Lord of the Rings*, and the lidless eye of Sauron- an eye, we might say, in a black face, nighty rather than daisy in nature” (Roberts 2013, 63).

Gollum remembers a period when he lived with his grandmother in a hole by the river, probably surrounded by daisies, and he finds the answer to the riddle:

Sun on the daisies	El sol sobre las margaritas	El sol sobre las margaritas	Le soleil sur les marguerites	Le soleil sur les marguerites
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Nevertheless, riddles reflecting life above ground such as this one were difficult for him because they reminded him of a past long gone when his life was very different. This riddle ultimately puts him in a bad mood and makes him hungry. As a result, he opts for a disturbing riddle for Bilbo in hopes that the hobbit will not solve it.

5.5 Riddle 5 asked by Gollum

EN Tolkien 1937	ES Sánchez Cuevas 1964	ES Figueroa 1982	FR Ledoux 1969	FR Lauzon 2012
It cannot be seen, cannot be felt, Cannot be heard, cannot be smelt. It lies behind the stars and under hills, And empty holes it fills. It comes first and follows after, Ends life, kills laughter.	No puede verse, no puede sentirse, no puede oírse, no puede olerse. Está debajo de las estrellas y bajo las montañas, y llena los agujeros vacíos. Está al comienzo, y está después, termina la vida, mata la risa.	No puedes verla ni sentirla, y ocupa todos los huecos; no puedes olerla ni oírla, está detrás de los astros, y está al pie de las colinas, llega primero, y se queda; mata risas y acaba vidas.	On ne peut la voir, on ne peut la sentir, On ne peut l'entendre, on ne peut la respirer. Elle s'étend derrière les étoiles et sous les collines, Elle remplit les trous vides. Elle vient d'abord et suit après. Elle termine la vie, tue le rire.	Elle ne peut être vue ni être touchée, Ni être entendue ni même respirée. Elle gît derrière les étoiles et sous les collines, Remplit les trous vides sous les racines. Elle vient d'abord et pour finir, Termine la vie, tue le rire.

In riddle 5, there is an enumeration of four human senses that cannot be used to find the answer to the riddle. They are listed after a repetition of the verb in the negative form “cannot”.

The grammatical order (pronoun + verb in negative form + direct object) is also repeated

throughout the riddle, as a result, parallelism is present. In the fourth line, there is an inversion of the usual order of words (conjunction + adjective + noun + pronoun + verb), creating an anastrophe. Thus, this order inversion creates a rhyme with the last word of the previous line “fills” producing an aabbcc rhyme (“felt, smelt; hills, fills; after, laughter) throughout the entire riddle. By the same token, this rhythmic pattern creates a homoeoptoton, a rhetorical figure consisting in the use of a series of words in the same case or with the same inflection (*OED*, s.v. “homoeoptoton”).

Also, in the last line, the omission of the pronoun “it” constitutes an ellipsis. This ellipsis here exists to establish an ominous conclusion of the riddle, which reflects not only its answer but also the character saying it, Gollum. In effect, the last line acts as an epiphonema, or in other words, an exclamatory sentence or striking reflection, which sums up or concludes a discourse or a passage in the discourse (*OED*, s.v. “epiphonema”). I believe that the epiphonema was employed to add drama to the end of the riddle and as a result, scare Bilbo.

As can be seen, this riddle is filled with paradoxes. All statements are absurd and contradictory. They claim that the answer is something that cannot be identified through the human senses of sight, touch, hearing and smell. The answer also has the ability to reach the stars up in the sky and hide down low under hills. Perhaps the most absurd line is that it fills empty holes since an “empty hole” is redundant. Stating that something can come first and after is self-contradicting since generally, things that take the first place cannot also take the second place.

Finally, the last line stating that it ends life and kills laughter seems very ominous. I think that the last line provides the biggest clue. As it is so ominous, it makes the riddle dark. Upon investigation, laughter (and anything a human does) ends if the human loses his/her life,

therefore the laughter can “be killed” when the human is killed. In the end Bilbo manages to find the answer because he is surrounded by it.

5.5.1 Identifying stylistic features in Spanish

In the Spanish translations, the enumerations are also present and as a result, so is the repetition of the negative verb “cannot”. TSC repeats *no puede* as each of the senses, sight, touch, hearing and smell, is enumerated. On the other hand, MF also enumerates the senses, but he only repeats *no puedes* twice by employing the conjunction “nor” *ni*. MF scrambles the order of lines two to five of the riddle. For example, line four “And empty holes it fills” becomes line two in his translation *y ocupa todos los huecos*, but it is also important to point out that the word “empty” was omitted. As previously stated, even though I believe that “empty hole” is a bit redundant, I believe that MF’s changes may have been introduced as an effort to maintain a rhyme.

Once again, the English text hides the gender of the subject by using the neutral pronoun “it”. While TSC manages to keep this information hidden by refraining from using pronouns, MF gives away that the subject is a feminine noun by employing the feminine suffix *la* at the end of verbs such as *sentirla* and *oirla*.

5.5.2 Identifying stylistic features in French

Like TSC and the source text, FL also employs the repetition *on ne peut* to enumerate the four senses. On the other hand, DL’s translation also includes the enumeration but there is no repetition. While the repetition is avoided, DL adapts his translation by introducing some additions. The first one is on line two where he adds *même*: “Cannot be heard, cannot be smelt”

becomes *ni être entendue ni même respirée*. Another addition is *sous les racines* in line four: “And empty holes it fills” becomes *Remplit les trous vides sous les racines*. Like MF in Spanish, I believe that DL employed these additions in an effort to maintain a rhyme in the riddle.

Lastly, we can see that the feminine gender of the answer to this riddle, is revealed in both French texts as the translators opted to make use of the feminine pronoun *elle*.

5.5.3 Context description and answer

It is important to notice the contrast between this riddle and the preceding one, Bilbo’s riddle about the sun. As previously stated, Bilbo’s riddles seem to relate more to the bright, outside world. After all, hobbits are known to be courageous, wise, and to value everyday things such as food, cheer, and song. In contrast, Gollum has been underground in the cold, dark cave for a long time, experiencing hardships such as struggling to find food and trying hard to remain unseen by goblins to stay alive. Gollum’s “cruel and gloomy” (Shippey 2001, 25) riddles appear to reflect his own experience. Still, both characters seem to be on a fairly even playing field because they are both very familiar with ancient wise sayings. While Bilbo’s main stake in the riddle contest is to be eaten, he is armed with a sword, and as we find out later, there is much more to the ring he inserted in his pocket earlier on.

Regrettably for Gollum in this case, Bilbo is once again familiar with the riddle and he is able to answer it in a heartbeat. As a matter of fact, the answer is all around him in the dark cave:

Dark	La oscuridad	La oscuridad	L’obscurité	L’obscurité
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Very quickly, Bilbo decides to ask the next riddle.

5.6 Riddle 6 asked by Bilbo

EN Tolkien 1937	ES Sánchez Cuevas 1964	ES Figueroa 1982	FR Ledoux 1969	FR Lauzon 2012
A box without hinges, key, or lid, Yet golden treasure inside is hid,	Una caja sin bisagras, llave ni tapa, y sin embargo guarda un tesoro.	Caja sin llave, tapa o bisagras, pero dentro un tesoro dorado guarda.	Une boîte sans charnière, sans clef, sans couvercle : Pourtant à l'intérieur est caché un trésor doré,	Un coffre sans charnières, ni couvercle, ni clef, Qui pourtant renferme un trésor doré.

In riddle 6, the words “lid” and “hid” create a rhyme. An enumeration of different aspects of the box is used to describe it. This description creates a paradox as there is a contradiction when it says that a treasure exists inside a box that supposedly has no way in or out. It is absurd because it is difficult to conceive that a golden treasure could exist inside a box since nobody could have put it there, as the box remains inaccessible. Upon investigation, considering the box as a metaphor solves the riddle. We see that it is possible for something to contain a golden treasure inside without a way in or out.

5.6.1 Identifying stylistic features in Spanish

TSC enumerates the different aspects of the box in the same order as the English text. However, when translating the second line of the riddle “Yet golden treasure inside is hid” as *y sin embargo guarda un tesoro*, two omissions are worth pointing out. The first is the omission of the colour of the treasure and the second is the omission of the word “inside”. While the word “inside” may not be as important to include in the translation since the verb *guardar* probably implies inside the box in this context, the colour is a relevant piece of information because it helps to solve the riddle. We know that the colour describes the “treasure” in the box, therefore,

without the hint about the colour, it might make it more difficult for Gollum to find the answer. On the other hand, the word “treasure” may convey the colour of gold anyway.

MF changes the order in which the different aspects of the box are listed. He leaves the word *bisagras* last in what I think is an effort to maintain a rhyme with the last word of the riddle *guarda*. There are no omissions in MF’s rendering.

5.6.2 Identifying characteristic features in French

FL enumerates the different aspects of the box in the same order as the English text. On the contrary, DL, like MF in Spanish, opts to enumerate the items in a different order. The reasoning behind this choice may have been to keep the rhyme since the word *clef* rhymes with the last word of the riddle *doré*. A transposition is also evident in this line as the translator employs the verb *renfermer* to translate “inside is hid”. This switch from the passive voice in English to the active voice in French may have been done to maintain the rhyme just mentioned.

5.6.3 Context description and answer

After stating the riddle, Bilbo is concerned that it may have been too easy. Although he didn’t use the “usual words” (Tolkien 1995, 89) to ask it, he felt rushed to speak so he could think of a better riddle. To the hobbit’s surprise, Gollum struggles with it and starts hissing and spluttering. At this point in the riddle contest, humour is introduced as Bilbo gets impatient and makes fun of Gollum’s sounds: “‘Well, what is it?’ he said. ‘The answer’s not a kettle boiling over, as you seem to think from the noise you are making’ (Tolkien 1995, 89-90). To which Gollum responds: “‘Give us a chance; let it give us a chance, my preciousss-ss-ss.’” (Tolkien 1995, 90). After another long while, Gollum’s memories once again help him solve the riddle.

Eventually, he recalls a time when he used to steal from nests and teach his grandmother to suck eggs. Given this point, the box mentioned in Bilbo’s riddle is a metaphor for an egg. Even though there is no way in or out, the golden treasure inside, another metaphor, refers to the egg yolk.

To return to the translation analysis, we can see that Gollum’s idiosyncrasy regarding his speech was lost in the earlier translations. In the source text his answer is “eggses”, highlighting Gollum’s typical hissing sibilance. In Spanish, TSC’s answer is simply rendered as *huevos* while in MF’s translation it appears as *huevoss*. Similarly, in French, FL’s translation of the answer is *des oeufs*, but Gollum’s style is preserved in DL’s text as he translates the answer as *des oeufffs*:

Eggses	Huevos	Huevoss	Des oeufs	Des oeufffs
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It is Gollum’s turn to ask.

5.7 Riddle 7 asked by Gollum

EN Tolkien 1937	ES Sánchez Cuevas 1964	ES Figueroa 1982	FR Ledoux 1969	FR Lauzon 2012
Alive without breath, As cold as death; Never thirsty, ever drinking, All in mail never clinking.	Vivo sin aliento, frío como la muerte; nunca sediento, nunca bebiendo; envuelto en su cota de malla, pero sin un solo tintineo.	Todos viven sin aliento; y fríos como los muertos, nunca con sed, siempre bebiendo, todos en mallas, siempre en silencio.	Vivant sans souffle, Froid comme la mort, Jamais assoiffé, toujours buvant, En cotte de mailles, jamais cliquetant.	Vivant sans souffle, mortellement froid; Jamais n’a soif, toujours il boit, En cotte de mailles, ne cliquette pas.

In riddle 7, the pronouns are missing, creating an ellipsis. This may have been done to convey an eerie effect. There are also oppositions and contrasts of ideas expressed by the parallelism of words that are the opposites of each other: “alive without breath – cold as death”,

“never thirsty – ever drinking”, “all in mail – never clinking”. These oppositions are referred to as antitheses and they were used to emphasize contrasts, to draw Bilbo’s attention and most importantly, to confuse him. The repetition of the word “never” and also including the word “ever” add to the poetry of the riddle by contributing to the rhyme and thus adding more confusion.

Seeing the riddle as a personification may not help to solve this riddle. A personification would be contradictory because the statements don’t apply to humans. Humans cannot live without breathing and they probably wouldn’t last very long if they were cold as death. This hyperbole, meaning “an exaggerated or extravagant statement, used to express strong feeling or produce a strong impression, and not intended to be understood literally” (*OED*, s.v. “hyperbole”) is also a simile. To say that death is cold is a reference to the temperature drop humans experience when they die. The hyperbole and simile contribute to the scary feel and mysterious darkness found in this riddle. Upon investigation, thinking of an animal instead of a human will help to solve the riddle.

5.7.1 Identifying stylistic features in Spanish

The eerie effect was transferred to TSC’s text as she also refrained from using pronouns. While most of the oppositions are also present in this translation, due to a mistranslation, an opposition was translated as an accord, thus creating a repetition. The third line of the riddle “Never thirsty, ever drinking,” becomes *nunca sediento, nunca bebiendo*. This mistranslation removes an aspect of the paradox, and as a result, it takes away from the point of the riddle itself which is to confuse.

On the other hand, MF maintains a rhyme in his text through the use of a transposition in the last line: “all in mail never clinking” becomes *todos en mallas, siempre en silencio*. MF uses the opposite of “clinking” an onomatopoeia of the English language of metal crashing that would not work in Spanish. He opts for *en silencio* to render the meaning of “never clinking”.

5.7.2 Identifying stylistic features in French

DL also maintains a rhyme in his text through a transposition. The second line “As cold as death” becomes *mortellement froid*. The transposition of the word “death” from a noun to an adverb allows for the assonance among the words *froid*, *soif*, and *boit*.

5.7.3 Context description and answer

Similarly to Bilbo’s feelings towards his own riddle, Gollum feels that his might be too easy. After all, he had a hard time guessing the egg riddle, which makes him flustered and extra hungry. Then again, Bilbo’s mind struggles to resolve this riddle as it is highly preoccupied by the danger of being eaten. The hobbit takes a long time, making Gollum excited about the prospect of eating. As Gollum starts to wonder how tasty the hobbit might be, he begins to climb out of his little boat to get closer to his victim. As luck would have it, Gollum’s webby foot in the water causes a fish to jump out and land on Bilbo’s foot. Although Bilbo is initially disgusted and horrified by the fish, he is quick to identify the answer.

Upon consideration, we realize that a fish in fact does not breathe the way humans do, it is probably never thirsty because it is constantly submerged in water, and the mail is a metaphor for its scales. In addition, the mail metaphor can be explained by considering “a medieval poem from Worcestershire which Tolkien admired, *Layamon’s Brut*: in this[,] dead warriors lying in

a river in their mail are seen as strange fish” (Shippey 2001, 25). As previously noted, Gollum’s riddles tend to be of a darker nature, and so it is not surprising that he uses eerie imagery to scare Bilbo. Thus, the answer to the riddle is:

Fish	Pez	Un pez	Un poisson	Un poisson
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It is the hobbit’s turn to ask the next one.

5.8 Riddle 8 asked by Bilbo

EN Tolkien 1937	ES Sánchez Cuevas 1964	ES Figueroa 1982	FR Ledoux 1969	FR Lauzon 2012
No-legs lay on one-leg, two-legs sat near on three-legs, four-legs got some.	Sin-patas yace en una-pata, dos-patas estaba cerca en tres-patas, a cuatro-patas le tocó algo.	Sin-piernas se apoya en una pierna; dos-piernas se sienta cerca, sobre tres-piernas, y cuatro-piernas consiguió algo.	Sans-jambes repose sur une-jambe, deux-jambes s'assirent sur trois-jambes, quatre-jambes en eut un peu.	Sans-jambes posé sur une-jambe, deux-jambes assis non loin sur trois-jambes, quatre-jambes en reçut un peu.

In riddle 8, the words “leg” and “legs” are repeated several times. There is also another word beginning with the letter “l”, the word “lay”. As a result, the riddle contains an alliteration of the letter “l”. A gradation is also there because the riddle begins a scale of successive changes by adding one leg, from no-legs, to one-leg until four-legs. Using numbers to create confusion is a common trend when it comes to riddles. Adam Roberts states that “there are many riddles that have a similar form to this one [...] in the sense that they stack up numbers in the service of trying to baffle the listener” (Roberts 2013, 64).

Therefore, the confusion arising from the mention of many legs creates a paradox. It seems highly absurd for an animal or a person to have so many legs. Upon investigation, we can

decipher that perhaps each set of number of the legs belongs to a different species or thing and the number of legs is used to represent them. Considering a synecdoche, that is a figure of speech by which a part is put for the whole, the whole for the part (*MWD*, s.v. “synecdoche”) will aid to find the solution to this riddle.

5.8.1 Identifying stylistic features in Spanish

The repetition of the word “legs” is also present in both Spanish translations. TSC opted for the word *pata* which is normally reserved for the legs of animals or things. In contrast, MF opted for the word *pierna* reserved specifically for the legs of humans.

5.8.2 Identifying stylistic features in French

Equally, the repetition of the word “legs” is present in both French translations and both translators opted for the same word *jambe* instead of *patte*. It is important to point out the omission in FL’s translation of the word “near” in the line “two-legs sat near on three-legs” which becomes *deux-jambes s’assirent sur trois-jambes*. I believe that the word “near” is necessary in the riddle as it is the connecting word with the previous line. Once the riddle is solved, we learn that all legged things connect to create a scene that becomes the answer to the riddle.

5.8.3 Context description and answer

Seeing Gollum approaching in the little boat, Bilbo asks his riddle as fast as possible to deter the creature from coming any closer. The hobbit is disappointed to have used this riddle in that particular moment because the answer to the previous riddle (asked by Gollum) given a few

moments before, will undoubtedly help Gollum to solve this one. As we can see, timing is an important factor when coming up with riddles, since it is better to avoid asking riddles whose answers may be similar or identical to those mentioned not long before. Not to mention that time is not on Bilbo's side as he finds himself in a frightening situation under the mountain, while in mortal danger.

It doesn't take very long for Gollum to discover that no-legs is a fish. Fish was the answer to the riddle he had just asked and the information was fresh on his mind. After that breakthrough, the rest comes easily to him. One-leg is a small table, two-legs is a man, three-legs is a stool, and four-legs is a cat:

Fish on a little table, man at table sitting on a stool, the cat has the bones.	Pescado en una mesita, un hombre sentado a la mesa en taburete, al gato le tocan las espinas.	Un pez sobre una mesa pequeña, un hombre sentado a la mesa en un taburete, y el gato que consigue las espinas.	Du poisson sur un guéridon, un homme à côté assis sur un tabouret, le chat reçoit les arêtes.	Du poisson sur une petite table, un homme assis à côté sur un tabouret, le chat reçoit les arêtes.
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Knowing that it's his turn to come up with a riddle, he decides that "the time had come to ask something hard and horrible" (Tolkien 1995, 91).

5.9 Riddle 9 asked by Gollum

EN Tolkien 1937	ES Sánchez Cuevas 1964	ES Figueroa 1982	FR Ledoux 1969	FR Lauzon 2012
This thing all things devours: Birds, beasts, trees, flowers; Gnaws iron, bites steel; Grinds hard stones to meal; Slays kings, ruins town, And beats high mountain down.	Esta cosa devora a todas las cosas; pájaros, bestias, árboles, flores; roe el hierro, muerde el acero, muele las piedras, mata al rey, arruina a la ciudad y derrumba a la alta montaña.	Devora todas las cosas: aves, bestias, plantas y flores; roe el hierro, muerde el acero, y pulveriza la peña compacta; mata reyes, arruina ciudades y derriba las altas montañas.	Cette chose toutes choses dévore : Oiseaux, bêtes, arbres, fleurs ; Elle ronge le fer, mord l'acier ; Réduit les dures pierres en poudre ; Met à mort les rois, détruit les villes Et rabat les hautes montagnes.	Cette chose toutes les choses dévore : Oiseaux, bêtes, arbres, flore ; Elle mord l'acier, ronge le fer, Réduit la pierre en poussière ; Elle tue les rois, sème la ruine, Abat les montagnes et collines.

In Riddle 9, there is an enumeration of everything that can be destroyed by the thing we are trying to identify. Most of the lines in the riddle have the same grammatical structure (verb + direct object), therefore creating parallelism. This riddle might be an allusion to a large creature well-known to Bilbo through old stories, and to Tolkien readers, Smaug, the dragon. I believe it is an allusion because Smaug destroyed the city of Dale and killed many men, he also killed many dwarves living in the Lonely Mountain. The paradox lies in the difficulty finding something powerful enough to cause so much destruction and to bring an entire mountain down. Upon investigation, Bilbo finds the answer as a fluke as he begs for more time to think.

5.9.1 Identifying stylistic features in Spanish

The enumeration of everything that can be destroyed by the subject of this riddle is also present in the Spanish translations. Although TSC lists these things in the same order as the

English text, two omissions are identified later on in the riddle. Line four “Grinds hard stones to meal” becomes *muele las piedras*. TSC doesn’t translate the adjective “hard” nor the adverbial phrase “to meal”. In this case, meal is referring to the powdery substance made by grinding. In addition, the kings mentioned in line five of the riddle become a single king in TSC’s translation. The aabbcc rhyme from the source text is lost in this particular translation.

On the other hand, MF maintains the plural kings, but he also pluralizes the town and the mountain: “slays kings, ruins town” becomes *mata reyes, arruina ciudades* and “and beats high mountain down” becomes *y derriba las altas montañas*. Still, MF maintains a rhyme in the riddle with these adaptations, though it’s a different rhyme from English.

5.9.2 Identifying stylistic features in French

The French translators both keep a rhyme in their translated riddles. DL makes certain choices to actually have the same type of rhyme as the English text aabbcc. For example, he employs the word *flore* instead of *fleurs* to translate “flowers”. He also introduces a transposition in line five by translating “ruins town” as *sème la ruine*, thus allowing this line to rhyme with the following line thanks to the addition of *et collines* at the end of the riddle.

5.9.3 Context description and answer

After hearing the riddle, Bilbo sits in the dark terrified thinking of all the scary creatures that could do such things. Due to all the fear, the answer simply does not come to him. Gollum is delighted and begins to get out of his little boat. The hobbit can only see the creature’s eyes coming closer and closer and, in his mind, he wants to shout out to be given more time, but in his panic, he only manages to shout “Time! Time!” (Tolkien 1995, 92) which is of course the

answer. We can see that Gollum’s riddles are spooky while Bilbo’s are more lighthearted. Above all, Bilbo seems to constantly attract luck and be saved by it. So the answer is:

Time	Tiempo	Tiempo	Le temps	Le temps
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At this point Gollum has lost all patience and is incredibly hungry and angry. He positions himself very close to Bilbo and begs for another riddle. The hobbit is terrified having the slimy creature so close to him and he simply cannot think of a riddle. Gollum is very persistent and even begins to touch and poke him. Bilbo becomes so frightened that he starts to pinch and slap himself, but his mind remains blank. In a panic, he feels for his sword and then he touches his pocket prompting the last question of the riddle contest.

5.10 “Riddle” 10 the non-riddle asked by Bilbo

EN Tolkien 1937	ES Sánchez Cuevas 1964	ES Figueroa 1982	FR Ledoux 1969	FR Lauzon 2012
What have I got in my pocket?	¿Qué tengo en mi bolsillo?	¿Qué tengo en el bolsillo?	Qu'ai-je dans ma poche?	Qu'est-ce qu'il y a dans ma poche?

Since this “riddle” doesn’t contain any stylistic features, I believe that it is merely a question and does not qualify as a riddle. As a matter of fact, in the article mentioned at the beginning of this chapter Christine Luz states:

Bilbo’s last “riddle” is of a very different kind: it does not use any of the devices the others do, and its solution is transient, a personal circumstance of this particular moment and known only to Bilbo himself; it could, in fact, be anything that he has in his- to speak Gollum- pocketses (Luz 2013, 98-99).

Still, it is worth analyzing how it was rendered in translation.

5.10.1 Comment on the translations into Spanish

The two Spanish translations vary by one word. TSC opts for a literal word by word translation while MF doesn't use the possessive pronoun "my" *mi*. Instead he opts for the article "the" *el*, which is a more natural way of asking the question.

5.10.2 Comment on the translations into French

Like TSC, DF opts for a literal word by word translation while DL employs the more commonly used interrogative phrase *Qu'est-ce qu'il y a?*

5.10.3 Context description and answer

When Bilbo first asks this question, he is actually thinking to himself while feeling his pocket, but Gollum believes it to be the next riddle. He gets very upset and expresses the unfairness of it. Since Bilbo is still afraid and under a lot of pressure, he decides to stand by his word. Gollum then demands to be allowed three guesses, Bilbo agrees, but ultimately the slimy creature is unable to guess correctly. Deeming the riddle contest over, Bilbo gets to his feet and draws his sword:

He knew, of course, that the riddle-game was sacred and of immense antiquity, and even wicked creatures were afraid to cheat when they played at it. But he felt he could not trust this slimy thing to keep any promise at a pinch. Any excuse would do for him to slide out of it. And after all that last question had not been a genuine riddle according to the ancient laws (Tolkien 1995,94).

Circling back to the beginning of chapter five, before meeting Gollum, Bilbo was crawling in the dark when he felt something cold on the floor that he put in his pocket. As we know, the object he picked up, the answer to "What have I got in my pocket?" ends up being the most important item of them all. As learned in chapter two, aside from being precious to the

characters, the ring was also precious to Tolkien, becoming the foundation of *The Hobbit* sequel *The Lord of the Rings* and thus connecting *The Hobbit* to the Middle-earth universe.

5.11 After the riddle exchange

After the riddle exchange Gollum does not attack Bilbo. The hobbit demands that he fulfill his promise to show him the way out and Gollum creates a delay: “But it must wait, yes it must. We can’t go up the tunnels so hasty. We must go and get some things first, yes, things to help us” (Tolkien 1995, 94). For a while Bilbo believes this is Gollum’s excuse to get away, and he feels relieved to have gotten rid of the creature.

In fact, Gollum had gone searching for his birthday present, a ring: “He wanted it because it was a ring of power, and if you slipped that ring on your finger, you were invisible; only in the full sunlight could you be seen, and then only by your shadow, and that would be shaky and faint (Tolkien 1995, 95). The creature had been in possession of the ring for a very long time, “it was the only thing he had ever cared for, his precious” (Tolkien 1995, 102). He kept it hidden in a hole in the rock on his island and used it to hunt down goblins to eat, and for protection since it allowed him to remain undetected.

At that moment, he is feeling extra hungry, therefore still wishing to eat Bilbo. In fact, he is hoping the ring will help him to accomplish this, but he soon realizes that the ring is missing. Following much screeching and weeping, Gollum becomes suspicious of Bilbo and insists that he reveals the contents of his pocket. Gollum’s suspicion increases after Bilbo refuses to tell him and now, Gollum gets closer and closer to the hobbit. Terrified, Bilbo puts his hand in his pocket and slips on the ring.

Gollum starts arguing with himself, wondering where Bilbo has gone. He reaches the conclusion that the hobbit must have headed towards the way out of the cave and decides to rush there. In the meantime, invisible thanks to the ring, the hobbit follows Gollum who finds him sitting by the exit blocking it. Bilbo briefly considers killing him, but after a moment of pity, he decides against it as it would not be a fair fight since Gollum is unarmed. Instead, he takes a big leap over Gollum and manages to get closer to the exit. As he's running, Gollum's screams attract the attention of goblins and they see Bilbo (at some point the ring had slipped off). Bilbo manages to slip on the ring again and squeeze out of the very tight opening that is the exit, losing his vest buttons but still managing to escape.

5.11.1 After the translations

Tolkien's chapter five "Riddles in the dark" as edited in 1951 made Gollum's character change by becoming more treacherous. The idiosyncrasy of his speech did not change significantly from 1937, but there were variations of its rendering in translation.

Gollum's sibilance for example, was not detected in some translations of his answer to the egg riddle while it was made evident in other translations. Other variances include several text adaptations through additions. In most cases additions were used as a strategy to prioritize the poetic rhyme of the riddles over a more literal translation. Omissions were also identified, sometimes increasing the challenge of riddles (by omitting colours), and sometimes decreasing it (by revealing whether the answer was masculine or feminine when using pronouns, adjectives and verb conjugations). The form of the riddles also varied in the target texts. Some were written as verse while others were written in prose. Diving deeper into the results of the analysis, the next chapter provides a space for a discussion on the translations from a prismatic point of view.

Chapter 6: Translation as Provisional Cultural Mediation

The riddles were more than a word game since their point was to disguise the answer as much as possible in order to win the contest. Providing solutions which are as difficult to find as possible was not the goal, instead, answers often turned out to be well-known objects, animals or natural phenomena. To transform them into Spanish and French, translators worked with two different systems of language and culture. Certain preferences and strategies were revealed through the analysis of their stylistic features. A prismatic approach to translation showed that these choices represented refractions, signs of their involvement in the process of interlingual transfer.

6.1 Translating and Retranslating Literature

A translation takes place at a particular point in time, in a particular place. It “proposes only a provisional solution; there is no such thing as a perfect and definitive translation” (Turner 2003, 5). Literary translators present the text at the time it is published and these are either accepted or rejected by the audience. Translations may be rejected if they do not align with the current “poetics” or code behaviour of the receiving culture. For example, a translation may be rejected if its terminology is deemed inappropriate or no longer in use. They also become outdated if they fail to express what the author intended to say, the meaning and purpose of the source text.

Retranslations may become necessary as the author’s status changes in the receiving culture. As noted, through the Tolkien phenomenon, J.R.R. Tolkien’s status went from professor to writer of children’s books, to writer of epics that generated enough interest in society to be

translated all over the world. His status also increased after the release of Peter Jackson's film adaptations generating a new fanbase in the 2000's.

This was the case for the translations of *The Hobbit* by Teresa Sánchez Cuevas and Francis Ledoux, they became outdated and for this reason, new translations by Manuel Figueroa and Daniel Lauzon were published.

My analysis revealed that riddles contained many stylistic features. The most common were paradoxes, followed by comparisons. Comparisons include metaphors, similes, and personifications. Next were repetitions and parallelisms. Lastly, although not as common but still very persuasive, were enumerations, hyperboles, periphrasis, synecdoche, ellipses and others.

6.2 A Shift in Translation

As if reading the source text through different lenses, the Spanish and French translators of *The Hobbit* formed their own perceptions of the riddles in chapter five through reading, before translating them. The prismatic approach considers refractions in translation studies as representatives of the variances resulting from those perceptions. Refractions identified in the analysis of stylistic features resulted in a very important finding: a shift was identified from the translators in the 1960s opting for more literal translations, to the most recent translators opting for more free ones, emphasizing the poetics of the genre. To discuss this finding, refractions found in the translations of different aspects of the text have been categorized into three main groups. First, the refractions related to the form of riddles will be discussed. Second, those affecting the tone, including the use of additions and omissions, and third, the idiosyncrasy of speech. The chapter will end with a discussion on the important link between language and culture by emphasizing the riddling talk.

6.2.1 Form

In the source text the riddles are presented in italics and like poetry, in verse. Only riddle eight is presented in prose. This riddle also had the longest answer: “fish on a little table, man at table sitting on a stool, the cat has the bones”. Except for the first Spanish translation, the form of the riddles was maintained in the other three translated texts. *El Hobito* by Sánchez Cuevas also presents them in italics, but the riddles become part of a prose dialogue in the narrative. It is possible that this strategy from the translator was an effort to prioritize a literal understanding of the words in the riddles as opposed to their mysterious tone.

Her translation of the first riddle supports this assumption as she translated it in its original form of a question. Similarly, Francis Ledoux also translated the riddle as a question, while the other two, Manuel Figueroa and Daniel Lauzon, changed the riddle from an interrogative to a declarative statement. Behind this translation shift could be a choice made by the most recent translators to render the original riddle’s poetic form, its rhyme and rhythm, to the target language. There seems to have been a greater sensitiveness of the second-generation translators to the poetic value of Tolkien’s riddles.

6.2.2 Tone

This shift in translation from literal to poetic happened in both target languages. Prioritizing the words of the riddles over their tone, the strategies of the earlier translators were different from those used by the most recent ones. For example, Francis Ledoux was the only one to use footnotes in his translation. There is a note in riddle two, the teeth riddle, explaining his translation of the verb “to stamp”. Using footnotes, translators anticipate readers to require clarification on their choices. When asked about the strategy used by Ledoux, Daniel Lauzon

confirmed that he did not use it: « *J'ai évité ce genre de notes ; je trouve qu'elles gênent la lecture, en général*¹² » (Tolkiendil 2012).

Nevertheless, the most recent translators made use of different strategies. These included transposition and adaptation. They were mainly used to conserve the riddle's tone at the cost of sacrificing some of the original words. These were achieved through omissions and additions.

6.2.2.1 Omissions

Omissions were identified in all four translations, though omissions of pronouns were expected in Spanish and French since the ending of verb conjugations and adjectives gives away the subject of a sentence. Still, certain details that could have provided clues to answer the riddles, such as colours, were omitted in the translations by Teresa Sánchez Cuevas and Francis Ledoux. For example, in riddle number six, the egg riddle, the Spanish translation omits the colour of the treasure, which could have helped in finding the solution. However, a treasure is often gold, so perhaps the translator did not deem making the colour explicit necessary. In a similar fashion, Ledoux omits the colour of horses in riddle two, the teeth riddle. This hint could have been useful to solve the riddle since teeth are white. It is possible that this riddle proved challenging in translation since he also felt the need to include a footnote in his work.

An example of omission by the second-generation translators was found in riddle number five, the dark riddle. Manuel Figueroa's line *y ocupa todos los huecos*; omits the word "empty" from Tolkien's "And empty holes it fills".

¹² "I avoided this type of notes; I find that in general, they interfere with reading."

6.2.2.2 Additions

Figueroa's (Francisco Porrúa's) adaptation of this riddle also illustrates the shift towards more free translations, aiming to illustrate the poetry of the riddles for the target audience. In his translation he changed the order of the verses to create a rhyme. He also added an extra line to the riddle by splitting the original line "it lies behind the stars and under hills" (Tolkien 1995,89) into *está detrás de los astros,/ y está al pie de las colinas*, (Tolkien 2018, 78). Based on this strategy it can be concluded that conveying the rhyme of riddles in his translation was important to him.

Noting that "Manuel Figueroa" was not listed as the pseudonym for his best nor his second-best translator, we must wonder the reasons behind that. Did he find translating *The Hobbit* challenging? His translations of *The Lord of the Rings* were published under Luis Domènech, the pseudonym for the translator he considered second-best.

Still, the findings of this research confirmed Porrúa's perception centered on the target language and therefore, the audience, in translation. He was willing to adapt the text of the riddles as necessary to transfer their general meaning and tone rather than individual words.

Also translating with the audience in mind, Daniel Lauzon's work included the use of additions. Examples of these additions include *du bois* in the first riddle, *même* and *sous les racines* in the fifth riddle, *et collines* in the ninth riddle. Also, the adaptation in his translation of "high places" and "low places" to *les cieux* and *la terre*, added a hint for French readers.

The findings of this research are consistent with a statement he made during the interview with *Tolkiendil* in 2012:

C'est en m'y essayant que j'ai déterminé ce que je serais en mesure de faire. [...] Il était donc important pour moi de les traduire comme on traduit la poésie c'est-à-dire en mettant un peu de côté la lettre (par nécessité) pour se concentrer sur les qualités

poétiques. J'ai suivi la métrique tolkienienne autant que faire se peut. Il utilise souvent des vers octosyllabiques et vous en trouverez dans ma traduction¹³ (Tolkiendil, 2012).

6.2.3 Idiosyncrasies of speech

Lauzon attested to treating riddles like poetry. Translating their aesthetic and rhythmic qualities of language must have certainly proved difficult. In chapter five the riddles were nested in a specific context. The context – that is the situation the characters were in: where they were (in a dark cave), their emotional and physical states (afraid, hungry, cold) and the consequences of the riddle contest (freedom or death), – was also of utmost importance in translation.

Another finding of the analysis of stylistic features was that some translators did not convey Gollum's sibilance in his answer to riddle number six, the egg riddle. Translating idiosyncrasies of language, like Gollum's speech, contributes to the reader's recognition of characters and how they are reacting in a specific context. The “esss” at the end of the word “eggs” added a certain humoristic quality during a tense moment of the riddle contest. The translators from the 1960s rendered his answer as *huevos* and *des œufs* while the most recent translators added letters to the word eggs: *huevoss* and *des oeufffs*.

This finding arises more questions because *El Hobito* by Sánchez Cuevas included Gollum's sibilance in other parts of his dialogue: «—*Tiene que hacernos una pregunta, precioso mio, si, sssi, ssssi. Nada más que una adivinanza, ssssi, ssssi...— dijo Gollum.*» (Tolkien 1964, 79) and the same occurrence took place in *Bilbo le hobbit* by Ledoux: «*Par ex-s-s-semble, que je s-sois tout éclabous-s-sé, mon très-s-sor ! A c-c-ce que je vois, voici un fes-s-stin*

¹³ I determined what I was able to do by trying it. [...] So it was important for me to translate them the way one translates poetry, that is by putting aside the words (out of necessity) to concentrate on the poetic qualities. I followed Tolkien's metric as much as possible. He often uses octosyllabic verses and you will find some in my translation.

de choix ; au moins un morceau s-s-savoureux, gollum ! » (Tolkien 2006, 38). Why not translate the sibilance in his answer to riddle six?

6.2.4 Language and Culture in Riddling Talk

Character recognition is an important aspect in translation. In translation readers come to know the same characters, witness the same events, with the identical outcome as those from the source text. Translators try their best to capture the voice of another author and transfer it to another language, but signs of their involvement in the process can still be detected through a prismatic approach to translation.

Language is at the core of culture and translators of *The Hobbit* produced unique renditions, even when working with the same language pair. They translated at different times, reflecting the poetics of their time. Using their individual viewpoint, each translator created a spectrum, thus yielding different refractions.

Characters were written by Tolkien as though they were familiar with riddling talk. “Tolkien himself declared that *The Hobbit* was derived from ‘previously digested’ epic, mythology, and fairy story” (Anderson 2002, 5). In this research we learned that the riddles themselves were the author’s own refractions of Norse mythology. Mythologies reflect culture. The word mythology comes from the Greek *mythos* meaning “tale” or “story”, and *logos*, as we learned with the word “philologist”, means “word” or “speech”.

Mythologies are first passed on by word of mouth. After centuries, when a culture has acquired writing, its mythology can be gathered into documents; the compilers may be more or less strenuous in their efforts to straighten out inconsistencies [...] Myths tell of many things: the cosmos; the world, its elements, its creatures; mankind; gods; beginning; ending (Webster Rogers & Rogers 1966, 28-290).

Two key documents of Norse mythology were written in Iceland in the thirteenth century: The *Elder (Poetic) Edda* and the *Younger (Prose) Edda*. The *Elder Edda* is a collection of poems “probably collected in writing not far from 1200 A.D. Few of the poems are narrative: most expand on one point in a story, assuming the reader knows the story. But the *Prose Edda*, a three-part work, [...] is a guide for younger poets, lest they forget Iceland’s old lore and old, polished style of poetry” (Webster Rogers & Rogers 1966, 30). The author of the *Prose Edda* is Snorri Sturluson.

From the beginning of the Tolkien’s novel, readers are introduced to the riddling tradition in a conversation between Gandalf the Wizard and Bilbo:

Good Morning! said Bilbo, and he meant it. The sun was shining, and the grass was very green. But Gandalf looked at him from under long bushy eyebrows that stuck out farther than the brim of his shady hat.
“What do you mean? he said. “Do you wish me a good morning, or mean that it is a good morning whether I want it or not; or that you feel good this morning; or that it is a morning to be good on?”
“All of them at once,” said Bilbo. [...]
“Good morning! he said at last. “We don’t want any adventures here, thank you! [...] By this he meant that the conversation was at an end.
“What a lot of things you do use *Good morning* for!” said Gandalf. “Now you mean that you want to get rid of me, and that it won’t be good till I move off.” (Tolkien 2005, 7)

In the middle of the novel we meet other characters that are also well versed in riddle talk such as Gollum, based on the riddle exchange. Riddle talk is also deemed the way to talk to other creatures such as dragons. When Bilbo encounters Smaug towards the end of his adventure, he introduces himself: “[...] I come from under the hill, and under the hills and over the hills my path has led. And through the air. I am he that walks unseen” (Tolkien 2005, 258). Of course under the hill is where he lived in the Shire, his path is the journey he has been on throughout the novel to the Lonely Mountain, and he can walk through the air unseen because he has the magical ring.

As shown, language plays an important role in shaping characters. Even characters in fiction have their own culture, making the link between culture and language the more important. Translators try to transfer the English language as depicted in the original work, but their understanding of it is unique.

In 1940, on the preface to his essay “On Translating *Beowulf*” J.R.R. Tolkien stated that “The effort to translate, or to improve a translation, is valuable, not so much for the version it produces, as for the understanding of the original which it awakes” (quoted by Ferré, Lauzon, Riggs 2003, 66). These words elude to the fact that many understandings are possible. In this research we learned that translators are readers first and foremost. Their perception of the texts they read is shaped by their culture and the time in which they live. Their creativity also plays an important role when translating. Language is the expression of their culture, representing a reality tied up to literary traditions and context.

Conclusion

Inspired by a prismatic approach to translation, the analysis in this research identified and studied refractions found in translations of the riddles from chapter five of *The Hobbit* by studying their stylistic features. As if reading through their own lens, each translator formed an individual interpretation of the source text, and made use of different strategies. A shift was detected over time as certain translation strategies became more or less preferable. Previously, translators remained more faithful to the source text prioritizing the words of the riddles while recent translators opted for strategies transferring the poetry of the riddles, and striving to include rhymes.

The close link between language and culture was also studied. Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere's approach placed culture as the unit of translation. The concepts of poetics and refractions in translation allowed a study of variances in target texts seeing them not as mistakes, but as potential strategies. Refractions in a prism were used as a metaphor for the method to study variances in translation: a prismatic approach. Translators create their own spectrum based on their reading and interpretation of the source text, which are influenced by their own culture and the time in which they live. Their creativity also plays an important role when determining translation strategies.

Riddling talk was a tradition refracted by J.R.R. Tolkien from Norse mythology in *The Hobbit*. The tradition was known and used by different characters in the novel. Characters also had their own culture, expressed through idiosyncrasies of language. Riddles and other peculiarities of language produced many challenges for literary translators. They also faced the challenge of transferring aspects of the novel's literary genre, the Marvellous, which was not initially well-known to target audiences.

The Tolkien phenomenon spread through translation and Tolkien's works did not sink into oblivion. His status as an author changed over time, and as a result, retranslations of his works were published. The study on translations of his works continues to this day. Should a similar collaborative project to Reynolds' "Prismatic Jane Eyre" be conducted on the translations of Tolkien's riddles, the corpus for this research and its findings would be useful.

They may also be useful in comparative literature projects seeking to study variances between two translations into either Spanish or French. Comparative Media Studies may also benefit from this research by comparing the adaptations of riddles into other forms such as cartoons, TV shows, operas, and films.

Challenges in this research included the lack of accessible information on translators. They are, as Lawrence Venuti insisted, invisible, and, "[...] like ninjas, the only time you notice them is when they're not good" (Etgar Keret quoted by Chaffee, 2016). Some also use pseudonyms, making the research process of their personal and professional information nearly impossible, especially when they translated before the Internet. Their records get lost in time.

The choice to analyse four texts brought on other difficulties such as maintaining consistency in the way information was presented. I tackled the issue by presenting the translators and my findings in Spanish before the French only because the translation of *The Hobbit* was published in Spanish first. Lastly, the biggest challenge was that I too am a reader, and as I conducted this research, my findings were certainly read through my own lens of culture, my languages, and the poetics of 2020. They are the result of my own prismatic reading: a reading at a certain time, in a certain mood, that may well change as my life changes, in the future.

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