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RACE AND RACISM IN THE LORD OF THE RINGS

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ABSTRACT

Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is one of the most successful books that have been published in the last century. Translated in over 67[1] languages, it has sold approximately 150 million copies worldwide.[2] A universe of characters, tales, and adventures, that has influenced many people. For this, it has frequently been subject to various debates. One of the most controversial topics regarding *The Lord of the Rings* is that of race, and more specifically for this thesis, racism.

Different opinions regarding this subject have been analyzed in detail. More than often, claims against Tolkien have been made by several critics, and they still continue to fire up the discussion about racism in Tolkien's masterpiece.

Is it possible to find racism or race-related ideas between the lines written on the lands of Middle-earth? This topic will be discussed in detail, including academic theories as well as Tolkien's point of view. Inspired from Yates's article *Tolkien the Anti-totalitarian*, the key goal of this thesis is to underline the influence that *The Lord of the Rings* had on its first readers, as well as the influence that it still has today.

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[1] http://www.elrondslibrary.fr/index.html

[2] https://www.tolkiensociety.org/2017/07/the-fellowship-of-the-ring-published-63-years-ago/

INTRODUCTION

Since its publication, Tolkien's masterpiece *Lord of the Rings* has been discussed countless times. Several critics have suggested different meanings behind the words written on Middle-earth, for every literary work of such importance is not easily excluded from a large amount of scrutiny. Among the suggested findings, the most interesting ones concern race and racism. More specifically, over the years, Tolkien has been criticized that one might find in his writings some ideas that may be linked to racism.

Firstly, to fully investigate possible racial content, one has to conduct a detailed analysis through careful observation of the entire work. No accurate account of Tolkien's work can be done without considering what influenced him on a personal, literal and academic level. Therefore, in the first chapter historical events, scientific beliefs, as well as Tolkien's personal life events will be analyzed. Additionally, one has to take into account the overall British socio-economic situation when *The Lord of the Rings* was written and published.

In the second chapter, in order to fully understand Tolkien's works, *The Lord of the Rings* has been deeply investigated in regards to race and racism. Likewise, *The Hobbit* will be analyzed as well in order to find parallelisms of ideas and influences.

In the third chapter, the different races of Middle-earth throughout Tolkien's works will be analyzed and explained, in particular, those that are considered to be racially charged. Moreover, thanks to Tolkien's letters it is possible to have better insight on his personal points of view; by reason of detailed explanations regarding the major influences that had an impact on Tolkien's writing style.

More specifically, the first chapter will be dedicated to a general analysis of Tolkien's biography. In particular, Tolkien's personal life events will be described, including his academic career at Oxford as well

as his warfare experience in the trenches during World War I. Thanks to Tolkien's letters edited by Humphrey Carpenter and Tolkien's son, Christopher Tolkien, one will find detailed information about what inspired Tolkien's writing. In order to provide the context for the analysis that will be carried over in this thesis, the socio-economic background of Tolkien's times will be briefly introduced and described. In particular, Daniel Grotta's and John Garth's critical evaluations have helped to understand how the Great War influenced Tolkien's imagination.

Furthermore, the second chapter will be focused on the analysis of the high fantasy genre. Therefore, it will be examined and described in terms of literary and historical influence. Moreover, a detailed analysis of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* will be included. Their genesis, their plot and their characters will be examined with a particular focus on race and racism. In this regard, Patrick Curry's and Robert Giddings' findings have proved to be extremely useful in order to understand both books' structure, as well as Tolkien's influences regarding race.

The main chapter of this thesis is the third chapter, that gives a complete analysis of the races described in *The Lord of the Rings*. Every race that appears in *The Lord of The Rings* will be investigated with particular focus on race and racism. Several claims about race-related ideas in *The Lord of The Rings* will be discussed in detail. Paolo Paron's and Dimitra Fimi's findings have proved to be valuable in order to understand and analyze such claims from a critical perspective.

Finally, the conclusion of the thesis will explain how race-related claims in Tolkien's *The Lord of The Rings* have influenced its readers. Furthermore, recent studies on Tolkien works will be described, as well as the influence that Peter Jackson's movies have had after their publication.

CHAPTER 1

1.1 Tolkien's biography

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien was born on 3 January 1892 in Bloemfontein, South Africa. His father, Arthur Reuel Tolkien, was a bank clerk and moved there from England in the beginning 1890s, as he saw a chance for promotion. In 1896, Tolkien's father died and, as a consequence, his mother, Mabel Suffield, saw no alternatives for raising her children and decided to sail back to England.[1] Tolkien spent his childhood between the industrialized conurbation of Birmingham and the rural landscape of Worcestershire. Split between these two areas, Tolkien started his formal education in King's Edward school, where he began to refine his passion for linguistics and languages. Previously the schooling years, his mother had taught him the rudiments of Latin and Greek. He was already an extremely promising child, and by the age of 9, capable of inventing a language of his own.[2] Mabel wanted to raise her two children independently and, therefore, often changed their household due to financial constraints. In 1900, a key event changed the course of Tolkien's childhood: his family entered the Roman Catholic Church. As a result, he was brought up with Catholic beliefs, which remained present through the entire course of his life.

While his family was struggling to rise above the state of poverty, another dramatic circumstance marked Tolkien's early life: his mother died in 1904, leaving him and his brother, Hilary Arthur Reuel, orphans. The parish priest Father Francis Morgan, took care of the two boys' spiritual and material welfare. In those years, Tolkien already showed excellent linguistic abilities. He was already fluent in both Latin and Greek, and afterward, he also acquired Gothic, Welsh and Finnish

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[1] They moved precisely to the West Midlands.

[2] Daniel Grotta, *J.R.R. Tolkien Architect of Middle Earth*, Philadelphia, Running Press, 2002, p. 22

languages. Welsh was to become the linguistic base of the Elvish language,[1] that Tolkien created for *The Lord of the Rings.* At King's Edward school, he developed a close friendship with some fellow students, which would regularly meet under the T.C.B.S.[2] In fact, they kept corresponding and exchanging literary works up until 1916. Throughout this period, Tolkien also came to know his future wife, Edit Bratt. They grew a close friendship that would later form in a fruitful and stable marriage.[3]

As the world was under the shadow of the First World War in 1914, Tolkien achieved his first-class honors in English, Old Icelandic as his special subject, in June 1915.[4] As soon as he discovered that he had to join the British army, he decided to marry his beloved Edith on 22 March 1916.[5] Although Tolkien's time in the trenches was short, it was sufficiently hard, and it took a considerable toll on his personal life. During his recovery time in the hospital, Tolkien began summarizing *The Silmarillion*; a novel, that will be eventually published after his death in 1977. All but one of his friends of the T.C.B.S succumbed while fighting the war. In homage to their memory, Tolkien started to put his stories into shape. After WWI, he returned to Oxford hoping to find an academic job. Thanks to the help of his former tutor William Craigie, he worked as

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[1] D. Grotta, op. cit., p. 27

[2] T.C.B.S. is the acronym for Tea Club, Barrovian Society. J.R.R. Tolkien and his friends at King Edward's School, in Birmingham, met regularly at the Barrow Stores, which is where T.C.B.S. got their name.

[3] Precisely, Father Francis Morgan wanted to find better accommodation for Tolkien; the chosen place was Mrs. Faulkner's house, where Edith lived at the time.

[4] Letter 7, Humphrey Carpenter, & Christopher Tolkien, *The letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, London, Humphrey Carpenter, George Allen & Unwin, 1981, p. 17

[5] D. Grotta, op. cit., p. 50

assistant editor for the *New English Dictionary*.[1] Later in 1921 he was appointed as an English Language Reader at the University of Leeds.[2]

While teaching at Leeds University, Tolkien worked side by side with E.V. Gordon on the scholarly edition of the epic poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.[3] During this time, he kept writing his nonsense fairy language.[4] In 1925, Tolkien went back to Oxford to fill the vacant seat for the Rawlinson and Bosworth Professorship of Anglo-Saxon. Throughout his academic office, Tolkien wrote some scholarly publications, yet very influential, such as his lecture *Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics*.[5] In 1945, he began to work as Merton Professorship of English Language and Literature. Tolkien occupied this position until his retirement day, fourteen years later.[6] His family life was a quiet and simple one, in North Oxford. He got accustomed to telling his children bedtime stories, which were the inspiration for the writing of his first novel, as he believed:

> I had the habit while my children were still young of inventing and telling orally, sometimes of writing down, 'children's stories' for their private amusement - according to the notions I then had, and many still have, of what these should be like in style and attitude. None of these have been published. *The Hobbit* was intended to be one of them.[7]

Moreover, he formed a group with some fellow Oxford friends calling themselves "The Inklings."[8] It included, among others, remarkable

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[1] Michael D.C. Drout, *J.R.R. Tolkien Encyclopedia, Scholarship and Critical Assessment,* New York, London, Routledge, 2007, p. 492

[2] D. Grotta, op. cit., p. 63

[3] Letter 6, H. Carpenter & C. Tolkien, op. cit., p. 16

[4] Letter 4, Ibid. p. 13

[5] In 1936, Tolkien gave a lecture entitled *Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics* on the Old English heroic epic poem *Beowulf*. It firstly appeared in the same year and reprinted in numerous collections ever since.

[6] https://www.tolkiensociety.org/author/biography/

[7] Letter 257, H. Carpenter & C. Tolkien, op. cit., p. 364

[8] The Inklings, which existed between the mid-1930s and 1962, were a highly informal group of Oxford writers and poets who met regularly in college rooms and local pubs to read their works in progress to each other.

personalities such as C.S. Lewis, who became one of Tolkien's closest friends. While observing his academic duties, Tolkien wrote the incipit of one of the most famous stories in the history of fantasy:

> All I remember about the start of *The Hobbit* is sitting correcting School Certificate papers in the everlasting weariness of that annual task forced on impecunious academics with children. On a blank leaf I scrawled: 'In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit.' I did not and do not know why. I did nothing about it, for a long time, and for some years I got no further than the production of Thror's Map. But it became *The Hobbit* in the early 1930s, and was eventually published not because of my own children's enthusiasm (though they liked it well enough).[1]

Then, he handed in a typescript of it to the publishing firm George Allen & Unwin, which in autumn 1937 published it as *The Hobbit or There and Back Again.* At once, the book became popular among readers, and finally, the publisher prompted Tolkien to produce a sequel; in addition, it turned out to be a more significant effort than Tolkien imagined, as he stated: "the writing of *The Lord of the Rings* is laborious, because I have been doing it as well as I know how, and considering every word. The story, too, has (I fondly imagine) some significance".[2]

Eventually, it took the shape of a three-part book under the name of *The Lord of the Rings,* printed between 1954 and 1955.[3] However, before before becoming what we can today define a "cult" of the high fantasy genre, *The Lord of the Rings* had to be published in 1965 in the United States as a paperback version. Accordingly, it was made available for massive book production, consecrating its cult status among millions of enthusiastic readers up until this day.

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[1] Letter 163, H. Carpenter & C. Tolkien, op. cit., p. 227

[2] Letter 35, Ibid., op. cit., p. 51

[3] J.R.R., Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*, London, HarperCollins, 2004, p. xi

J.R.R. Tolkien died on 2 September 1973, leaving a few of his writings unpublished, such as the long-awaited *The Silmarillion,* edited by his son Christopher Tolkien and published in 1977.[1]

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[1] J.R.R., Tolkien, *The Silmarillion,* London, George Allen & Unwin, 1977, p. ii

1.2 Socio-economic background

To have an exact frame of reference about Tolkien's works, it is helpful to understand also the socio-economic background of his times.

At the end of the 19th century, Great Britain was living a brief period of time, the Edwardian age, which tends to be referred as a mediocre period between the greatness of the Victorian age and the catastrophe of the Great War.[1] The reign of Edward VII, who came to the throne in 1901 after the death of Queen Victoria, was accompanied by a consolidation of the nation's economic, industrial and military fortunes.[2] Moreover, this era encouraged political awareness, in particular of the working-class:[3] trade unions started to become mass organizations of workers.[4]

Throughout the WWI, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland joined the fight with France, Russia, and Italy against Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire. The British soldier and population made enormous sacrifices in the name of defending the Empire's enemies. Food was rationed, women were required to work in munitions factories, the cities were blacked out for fear of naval attacks, newspapers were censored.[5] Tolkien fought the Great War in first person in the British army, as a temporary second lieutenant in the 13th Reserve Battalion of the Lancashire Fusiliers.[6] During this period, he experienced the brutalities of the war, which profoundly influenced him:

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[1] R.H.A. Baker, & M. Billinge, *Geographies of England: The North-South Divide, Material and Imagined*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2004, p. 64

[2] Paolo Bertinetti, *English Literature: A Short History*, Turin, Einaudi, 2010, p. 235

[3] Daniel Gorman, *Imperial Citizenship: Empire and the Question of Belonging*, Manchester, Manchester UP, 2006, p. xi

[4] Andrew August, *The British Working Class 1832-1940*, New York, Routledge, Taylor & Francis, 2014, p. 244

[5] D. Grotta, op. cit., p. 49

[6] Ibid., 47

> Then war broke out the next year, while I still had a year to go at college. In those days chaps joined up, or were scorned publicly. It was a nasty cleft to be in, especially for a young man with too much imagination and little physical courage.[1]

It is not a surprise that his vivid imagination, combined with what he faced, produced monsters such as dragons. Tolkien wrote about different monstrous creatures in the *Poetic and Mythologic Words of Eldarissa*. Among these, monsters that resembled snakes and dragons were the result of sorcery that exceeded the confine between mythical monsters and machines, between witchcraft and technology. They were called the iron dragons, which transported Orcs in their hollow bellies, showing similarities with the tanks, as Gart underlines: "The more they differ from the dragons of mythology, however, the more these monsters resemble the tanks of the Somme."[2]

Furthermore, the battlefield of the Somme and its trenches had a significant impact on Tolkien. In fact, it is certain that the representation of the brutalities of the war can be found in many passages of *The Lord of the Rings*. As an example, when Frodo, Sam, and Gollum walk through Dead Marshes and see dead corpses floating in the water:

> On either side and in front wide fens and mires now lay, stretching away southward and eastward into the dim half-light. Mists curled and smoked from dark and noisome pools. The reek of them hung stifling in the still air. Far away, now almost due south, the mountain-walls of Mordor loomed, like a black bar of rugged clouds floating above dangerous fog-bound sea.[3]

A period of peace followed WWI. However, in the next decades, the British economy was somewhat stagnant. Britain showed a distinct sign of being a land at peace with itself. Unfortunately, the situation changed

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[1] Letter 43, H. Carpenter & C. Tolkien, op. cit., p. 59

[2] John Garth, *Tolkien and the Great War: The Threshold of Middle-earth*, London, HarperCollins, 2003, pp. 220-221

[3] J.R.R. Tolkien, *LOTR*, p. 625

abruptly through the external impact of foreign affairs.[1] Shortly after, by the end of 1939, a new conflict was imminent.

During WWII, Tolkien's three sons were committed to joining the British army. He kept with them a correspondence, showing his preoccupations and hopes, often reflecting on his personal warfare experiences, as in the following passage:

> One War is enough for any man. I hope you will be spared a second. Either the bitterness of youth or that of middle-age is enough for a life-time: both is too much. I suffered once what you are going through, if rather differently: because I was very inefficient and unmilitary.[2]

Tolkien carried a strong sense of resentment, expressing a clear point of view regarding the undergoing conflict: "Anyway, I have in this War a burning private grudge – which would probably make me a better soldier at 49 than I was at 22: against that ruddy little ignoramus Adolf Hitler".[3]

The Lord of the Rings is seen by many as an allegory of both world war conflicts. Quite surprisingly, Tolkien's point of view was written in the foreword of *The Lord of the Rings* second edition, that no inner meaning or message is present in the book. It is notoriously known that Tolkien disliked allegories, as he stated:

> I cordially dislike allegory in all its manifestations, and always have done so since I grew old and wary enough to detect its presence. I much prefer history – true or feigned – with its varied applicability to the thought and experience of readers. I think that many confuse applicability with allegory, but the one resides in the freedom of the reader, and the other in the purposed domination of the author.[4]

Undoubtedly, Tolkien was influenced by the Great War and his life as a soldier in the trenches, but he was also influenced by life in general. John Ronald Reuel Tolkien was a genius and one of the most successful authors of the last century. His extraordinary imagination created a

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[1] Kenneth O. Morgan, *The Oxford History of Britain*, Oxford, Oxford UP, 2010, p. 615

[2] Letter 45, H. Carpenter & C. Tolkien, op. cit., p. 64

[3] Ibid., p. 64

[4] J.R.R Tolkien, *LOTR*, pp. xxiii-xxiv

universe that still attracts generation after generation. Tolkien's acclaimed books, *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, are among the most read fantasy books in the world.

CHAPTER 2

2.1 The genre

In the broad universe of modern English literature, a small number of publications have the privilege of being both successful and influential. *The Lord of the Rings* is a widely acclaimed book in the "high fantasy" genre, that is a subgenre of fantasy. The compound expression "high fantasy" evokes many different images, sensations, and meanings. Thus, it requires some clarification in order to present an accurate definition. On the one hand, the term high can relate to style, theme or tone of the literary work. It can apply to the social but also to the moral status of the characters. The term fantasy refers to a narrative plausibility that is confined solely in the author's ability to work with his or her imagination, mastering his or her story-teller skills. Moreover, high fantasy contains in it what Hume calls "departure from consensus reality".[1] In other words, high fantasy stories detach themselves from our common reality by creating new worlds in which the adventures occur.[2]

Despite the fact that secondary worlds described in modern literature have some characteristics with traditional fairy-lands, they largely stand apart from their literary predecessors. In contrast to these past examples, modern secondary worlds describe an alternative world, which is still wonderful and strange. Moreover, it is largely influenced by detailed descriptions of landscapes and characters as well as specific scientific data. However, this requirement alone is not sufficient to create the conditions for a sustainable alternative reality. Indeed, it is the base upon which a secondary world is built. Firstly, for this world to be accepted by readers, it must consistently follow the rules of physical

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[1] Kathryn Hume, *Fantasy and Mimesis: Responses to Reality in Western Literature*, New York, Methuen, 1984, p. 21

[2] C.W. Sullivan III, "High Fantasy", in Peter Hunt (ed.), *International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature,* New York, Routledge, 2004, p. 436

nature and maintain a comprehensible logic throughout. In this regard, Tolkien's Middle-earth holds the most elaborated topography of all secondary worlds. Secondly, secondary worlds must be immersed in their historical dimension, which is directly linked to defining the time period and culture, which the narrative is based upon. Normally, fantasy's authors choose Western Europe as the cultural base, placing their stories in between the Bronze and the Middle Ages. Also in this regard, Tolkien's Middle-earth appears more varied than most of other secondary worlds, and the results can be easily observed in the multifaceted expression of cultures in his writings. For example, one can observe different cultures in Middle-earth: the hobbits are clearly an agricultural and rural community, the Dwarves are miners and builders of underground cities, while the elves are in deep contact with nature. In addition to physical descriptions, other elements must be taken into account for a writer to fully win the reader's approval of the proposed narrative, some of which are geographical and historical. For instance, mountains, valleys and rivers are carefully described; they are similar to some areas of our world, although completely invented by the authors. The inhabitants of Middle-earth have shaped the geography of their land through farming, building and mining. So, writers of secondary world describe these elements either through authentic history or through legend or myth. In Tolkien's works, one can observe that the conflict between Good and Evil is indispensable to delineate Middle-earth's history. Furthermore, inhabitants and arts, religion, philosophy, and belief systems are to be considered. If these elements are well incorporated, the writer of a secondary world fantasy has the chance to convince the readers. For the secondary world to be successful has to maintain a degree of familiarity with the reader, thus considerable amounts of resemblance to the primary world has to exist. Generally, the common basis of the most successful secondary world fantasies are

religious or philosophical views of life. This is particularly useful to introduce metaphysical concepts as well as physical realities.[1]

Some critics have suggested that "secondary world" refers to a static and timeless world in which reality is erased, and the boundaries between diverse entities are revoked, and everything flows into everything through magical spells and wonders.[2] The plausibility of the *storyworld* is what separates science fiction from fantasy within anti-realism. Science fiction is literary genre that poses some categorization issues. Normally science fiction adventures take place in a futuristic society or through travel in time and space. As Roberts explains: "science fiction as a genre or division of literature distinguishes its fictional worlds to one degree or another from the world in which we actually live: a fiction of the imagination rather than observed reality, a fantastic literature".[3] On the other hand, fantasy connects with both mythology and fairytales, where magic and mystery events depict an essential part of the sequence of events. [4] The origin of fantasy could be traced back to Romanticism and its attraction to pastoral fantasies, heroic elements, myths and the exotic, fueled by the publication of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). However, fantasy is a multifaceted genre that, as described before, poses categorization issues. On the one hand, some critics perceive fantasy as the representation of men's inner desires, described through metaphors

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[1] Ann Swinfen, *In Defence of Fantasy: A Study of the Genre in English and American Literature since 1945,* Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1984, pp. 75-99

[2] Viktor Borisovic Sklovskij, *L'arte come procedimento,* in Tzvetan Todorov (ed.), *I formalisti russi. Teoria della* letteratura e metodo critico, Einaudi, Turin, 1968; quoted in Stefano Calabrese, *La comunicazione narrativa*, Milan - Turin, Pearson, 2010, p. 182

[3] Adam Charles Roberts, *Science Fiction*, Routledge, London – New York, 2006, p. 1

[4] Adam Charles Roberts, *Science Fiction,* Routledge, London – New York, 2000; Jahn Herman & Ryan, *ad vocem* "Fantasy", 2005; quoted in S. Calabrese., op. cit., p. 188

of monsters or aliens; on the other hand, others state that the critical element of fantasy is that of describing scientific impossibilities.[1]

High fantasy stories take place in a unique and fictional world that has many shared characteristics with our real world. As Tolkien suggests in his essay *On Fairy* Stories,[2] the readers, in this case, children, need to connect and understand this fictional world:

> Children are capable, of course, of literary belief, when the story-maker's art is good enough to produce it. That state of mind has been called "willing suspension of disbelief." But this does not seem to me a good description of what happens. What really happens is that the story-maker proves a successful sub-creator. He makes a Secondary World which your mind can enter. Inside it, what he relates is "true": it accords with the laws of that world. You therefore believe it, while you are, as it were, inside. The moment disbelief arises, the spell is broken; the magic, or rather art, has failed.[3]

As authors of fantasy novels have illustrated, secondary worlds can be reached using various methods. For example, in C.S. Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia*, the characters use a magical gate as a passage between our world and the secondary world. In J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, the secondary world is within the real world, whereas clear boundaries separate the two worlds.

The following paragraph is to give a more detailed definition of high fantasy, describing some of its main characteristics and features. Firstly, high fantasy stories have a hero, commonly of humble origins, who embarks on an adventure that brings him or her outside his or her environment. The hero explores distant territories and confront terrible enemies, in order to accomplish a quest that generally involves personal development as well. By the end of the journey, the hero is more aware of his or her value and purpose in life. It can be argued that these stories

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[1] S. Calabrese., op. cit., pp. 188-189

[2] "This essay was first delivered at St. Andrew's University in 1939, when Tolkien was struggling with the first chapters of his great work, and first printed by the Oxford UP in 1947 in *"Essays Presented to Charles Williams"*, D. Grotta, op. cit. p. 191

[3] J.R.R. Tolkien, "Sulle fiabe", in *Albero e foglia,* Milan, Bompiani, 2000, p. 53

are easily accepted mostly because they can evoke well-know myths or legends. For instance, in *The Lord of the Rings*, traces of the Norse, Finnish and Middle-English mythology can be recognized.[1] Secondly, a typical feature of high fantasy novels is the presence of a trusted mentor who is often there to help and guide the hero in the course of the adventure. More specifically, the figure of Gandalf comes immediately to mind. Thirdly, the fight between good and evil is one of the most distinctive features of this genre. In *The Lord of the Rings*, for example, this conflict is quite evident. Tolkien develops the concept of the absence of either light and shadow, where light represents purity and fairness, while shadows darkness and despair. Both can be embodied in physical shapes. But also, Tolkien refers to the double nature of evil: one referred to orthodox Christianity, and the other referred to Boethian, as Shippey explains: "the Boethian view is this: there is no such thing as evil. What people identify as evil is only the absence of good".[2] In other words, Tolkien reveals himself to be an author of its times. He puts into his stories the subject of evil, producing an incomparable image of it; he tries also to find the meaning for something that was both deeply felt and rationally inexplicable. His warfare experience has left him with a deep sense that something was terribly wrong and it was left without a satisfactory explanation.[3]

As a matter of fact, one of the major Tolkien's accomplishments was to set the standards of judgment for high fantasy stories; he set the bar for comparison and critical analysis that would have followed the publication of his masterpieces *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of The Rings*. While many new books covers display the compelling message "the next

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[1] Marjorie Burns, *Perilous Realms: Celtic and Norse in Tolkien's Middle-earth,* Toronto, Toronto UP, 2005, pp. 23-25

[2] Tom Shippey, *Tolkien: Author of the Century,* London, HarperCollins, 2000, pp. 129-130

[3] Ibid, pp. 119-121

Tolkien", only a few merit the comparison, since the vast majority, unfortunately, fall far short from being equally compared.[1]

More recently, high fantasy has evolved as a literary genre, and many new features have started to enrich its already vast universe. For example, in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter*, the author depicts a modern world where wizards live among ordinary people, and where technology is introduced as part of the setting. It is also true that the main characters of high fantasy stories have gradually changed; for instance, by proposing more female protagonists through the years. G.R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*[2] series is a perfect example of this ongoing development.[3]

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[1] C.W. Sullivan III, "High Fantasy", in Peter Hunt (ed.), op. cit., p. 444

[2] The first book of the series was published in 1996 and the saga is still not completed yet.

[3] Daenerys Targaryen and Cersei Lannister are good examples of this.

2.2 The Hobbit, or There and Back Again

Published in England in 1937, *The Hobbit, or There and Back Again* is the first high fantasy novel for children written by J.R.R. Tolkien. Until today, it is considered one of the most important books of its genre. Loved by millions of readers from all over the world, it is available in more than 67 languages.[1]

The story narrates the adventures of the respectable hobbit Bilbo Baggins, of the Shire, and his quest to win a share of a treasure guarded by an evil dragon, Smaug. This treasure, that formerly belonged to the Dwarven kingdom under the Lonely Mountain, it is now claimed by its rightful heir, Thorin Oakshield. He is the leader of a group of twelve Dwarves who want to return their usurped treasure to their kin. Gandalf, a powerful wizard, secretly organizes a meeting at Bilbo's house, marking the door with a magical sign. After some discussion, he convinces Thorin and his lot that Bilbo is an extraordinary burglar. Therefore, Bilbo and his companions start their journey together; however they have some noticeable differences. The Dwarves are veteran warriors, and they see Bilbo as a good-for-nothing; moreover, Bilbo is a calm and peaceful person that has never set foot out of the Shire. During their journey, the company meets several creatures such as the mountain trolls, goblins, elves, giant spiders, and eagles who can speak. Bilbo is both fascinated and terrified by everything he sees. Even if Bilbo's capabilities appear to be quite weak, he eventually proves himself to be a pivotal member of the party, rescuing the Dwarves on several occasions. Using his wits and intelligence, Bilbo is able to escape from many dangerous situations, and return home with way more than material treasures, as Tolkien states that "the Quest of the Dragon-gold, the main theme of the actual tale of *The Hobbit,* is to the general cycle quite

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[1] http://www.elrondslibrary.fr/

peripheral and incidental...On return the Hobbit, enlarged in vision and wisdom".[1] Then, it appears that the central theme of *The Hobbit* is Bilbo's personal development rather than the treasure's quest.

As the story moves forward, Bilbo encounters several characters of varying importance. Among these, the most important is named Gollum a creature that lives in an underground lake. As the party is fleeing from the Goblins as they attempt to pass through the Misty Mountains, Gandalf comes to their rescue. In that instance, Bilbo is separated from the group and ends in a cavern under the mountain. Here, he stumbles upon a ring and, and immediately after, encounters Gollum. This lonely creature, that once was a hobbit himself, then engages with Bilbo in a game of riddles. With the help of the ring, and its power to make the wearer invisible, Bilbo eludes the creature and is able to return to the Dwarves. Although Bilbo does not know it yet, the ring is the One Ring, a powerful artifact that will be at the center of Tolkien's classic *The Lord of The Rings* (1954).

After passing through several misadventures, the group eventually arrives at the Lonely Mountain, where they find a secret door that leads to the dragon's lair. Smaug is furious. He deduces that the citizens of a nearby village, Lake-town, have helped the intruders to enter. Enraged, he flees out to burn the town. However, he is slain by the valiant archer Bard, who has been informed by a thrush about a gap in the dragon's armor. In the meantime, Bilbo finds the Arkenstone, the antique relic of Thorin's dynasty. Outside the mountain, both Elves and Humans gather to ask for a reward for their help. Thorin refuses, as more Dwarves have been summoned from the Iron Hills. Bilbo tries to convince the dwarf to avoid an imminent battle. At the same moment, a large host of Goblins arrives, and the Humans, Elves, and Dwarves have to join together to defeat them. The fight against the enemies is desperate. Then, when

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[1] Letter 131, H. Carpenter & C. Tolkien, op. cit., p. 167

finally the Battle of Five Armies ends, Bilbo returns to the Shire where he finds that he is no longer seen as a respectable member in the hobbits' society. By leaving the comfort of the Shire to embark on a perilous adventure, he disrespected the good manners that best characterize his fellow kin. However, this adventure changed him forever and now he does care that much about his place in the Shire's society.

Like in many other children's novels, it is possible to notice in *The Hobbit* some characteristics of the *Bildungsroman*. As noted by Grenby, the heroes of these novels leave their home to discover who they are, and usually, they return having a much clearer sense of identity.[1] Tolkien was an expert in Old English Literature, as well in Old Norse mythology. In 1936, he wrote an essay on the epic tale *Beowulf*. Tolkien studied in detail the poem, writing that it had unconsciously influenced him:

> *Beowulf* is among my most valued sources; though it was not consciously present to the mind in the process of writing, in which the episode of the theft arose naturally (and almost inevitably) from the circumstances. It is difficult to think of any other way of conducting the story at that point. I fancy the author of *Beowulf* would say much the same.[2]

As previously suggested, the outcomes of the relationship between Bilbo and the Dwarves are peculiar. One the one hand, the Dwarves are greedy, selfish, and generally, stuck to their cultural heritage. They do not show any personal development. It appears that Thorin and his kin strive for gold more than anything else. Moreover, they continuously have complaints: specifically, they do not accept Bilbo as a member of the company, and they complain about being shut in barrels to escape from the wood elves. On the other hand, interestingly, Bilbo proves to overcome the early hardships of the journey, and become their leader in the end.

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[1] M.O. Grenby, *Children's Literature,* Edinburgh, Edinburgh UP, 2008, p. 164
[2] Letter 25, H. Carpenter & C. Tolkien, op. cit., p. 39

2.3 The Lord of the Rings

The Lord of the Rings is a complex and yet fascinating book, with an intricate but engaging plot: if we count the index and the various appendixes, it reaches more than 1.000 words. Because of this, a summarized plot would be somewhat insufficient. However, having a general idea of the events would help to underline the most significant parts of the book.

The story begins in the Third Age of Middle-earth – our Earth but, in an imaginary distant era. The main protagonist, Frodo Baggins of the Shire[1], receives a magic ring from his uncle, Bilbo Baggins, who had taken it from another hobbit, Gollum, during the adventure narrated in *The Hobbit*. Gandalf the Grey, a powerful wizard, understands that it is the One Ring, fiercely wanted by its creator, Sauron, the ruler of Mordor, and the most corrupted power in Middle-earth. Consequently, smuggling the Ring into Mordor, and thrusting it in the Furnace of Doom where it was shaped, is the only hope. In fact, the ring has to be destroyed in that way. Despite its power, if anyone attempted to use it against Sauron would merely become the next Dark Lord. Frodo and his loyal friend Sam begin the desperate quest to bring the Ring to its forging-place. In the beginning, they join forces with the Company, that includes the free people of Men, Elves, Dwarves, as well as Gandalf and two other Hobbits, Pippin and Merry. Despite its effort to remain united, the Company is soon divided into two small groups. From this moment on, the reader is immersed into two parallel stories. One where part of the Company is engaged in the War of the Ring, as they strife and strive to keep Sauron occupied and distracted, the other where Frodo and Sam undertake the arduous journey, followed by the deceitful Gollum. Even though Gandalf is the head strategist of the small group, a change in the leadership happens at some point, as the War of the Ring is eventually

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[1] A peaceful land where the Hobbits live.

managed by Aragorn, heir to the thrones of Arnor and Gondor. During the events, the reader visits extraordinary places and encounters extraordinary people. In particular, lady Galadriel, dwelling in the last remaining elven fortress, Lothlorien. Other characters include the furious feudal Riders of Rohan, the Ents (the ancient kin of sentient talking trees), Shelob, which is a malevolent spider-being, the nine Ring-wraiths (Sauron's fearsome and dark lieutenants), and ultimately, Saruman, a wicked wizard. At last, when Frodo arrives at Mordor, he is ultimately mastered by the corrupted power of the Ring, and claims it with all his might. Unexpectedly, Gollum starts a fight for the possession of the Ring, bites off Frodo's finger, but in doing so fails to keep his balance and slips into the Crack of Doom while holding it. Sauron's creation is destroyed, and Frodo and Sam are both saved from the wreck. Lastly, the order is restored, and after a few years, Bilbo is allowed to pass over the Sea together with Gandalf and few of the remaining Elves. Sam comes back to the Shire, marrying his beloved Rosie, and starting a family.[1]

The first excerpts of the book were undoubtedly written as early as 1936, shortly after *The Hobbit* was submitted to its publisher.[2] Several drafts of *The Lord of the Rings* were handed to Tolkien's publisher, George & Allen Unwin, between 1949 and 1953.[3] Tolkien wanted to publish a single book, but he encountered many difficulties that his publisher prompted to remind him. On the one hand, Ryanor Unwin realized immediately that the book required an editor with the skills of a philologist or a mythologist, so little changes would have been made to the original text. On the other hand, the editor wanted to divide the book into three parts, and financially support the publications of the following

[1] Patrick Curry, *Defending Middle-earth, Tolkien: Myth and Modernity,* Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 2004, pp. 4-5

[2] Daniel Grotta, op. cit. p. 107

[3] Ibid., p. 113

parts through sales of the first volume. Unwin chose himself the titles of the three parts: *The Fellowship of the Ring, The Two Towers, The Return of the King.*[1]

Tolkien made some opposition because he believed that the book should be a single, unified work. In addition to that, the large number of names and references, the special characters required for accents, Elvish script and other symbols, posed a huge task to be completed before publishing. In 1954 *The Fellowship of the Ring* was ultimately released, followed up by modest sales. However, general acclaim arrived from readers both from Great Britain, but more importantly, from the United States of America. This urged the small publishing firm to release on short notice the two remaining parts of the trilogy; *The Two Towers* appeared in early 1955 and, only six months later, in the fall of the same year, *The Return of the King.*[2]

Tolkien began to work on his masterpiece well before its actual publication. He was fully aware of the success of *The Hobbit*, and it was also his intention to create a unique world of fantastic scenarios for all the tales that were growing on the back of his mind. Tolkien had to gather all his ideas, and connect all the dots to form a cohesive tale. He wanted to write his version of English mythology because he somehow felt that there was a vacuum to be filled; his stories would have accomplished what other mythologies had accomplished in Greece, Italy, Iceland, and Norway. From the below passage, one can understand Tolkien's will, as he explained:

> I have always been seeking material, things of a certain tone and air, and not simple knowledge. Also – and here I hope I shall not sound absurd – I was from early days grieved by the poverty of my own beloved country: it had no stories of its own (bound up with its tongue and soil), not of the quality that I sought, and found (as an ingredient) in legends of

[1] D. Grotta, op. cit., p. 118

[2] Ibid., pp. 118-121

other lands. There was Greek, and Celtic, and Romance, Germanic, Scandinavian, and Finnish (which greatly affected me); but nothing English.[1]

Tolkien's intention was clear: he wanted to unify all the legends and stories, as a necessary basis for *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*:

> I had a mind to make a body of more or less connected legend, ranging from the large and cosmogonic, to the level of romantic fairy-story the larger founded on the lesser in contact with the earth, the lesser drawing splendour from the vast backcloths – which I could dedicate simply to: to England; to my country.[2]

Tolkien studied intensively ancient Norse and Finnish mythologies. He knew that his vivid and ambitious imagination would not have been sufficient to achieve the goal of writing a "mythology for England"; for this reason, he had to follow the example of the Finnish *Kalevala,* Elias Lönnrot's compilation of Finnish folk songs.[3]

Admittedly, a complex and vast work as *The Lord of the Rings* has risen several critiques throughout the years. Among scholars, Tolkien's work has received balanced judgements, equally divided between praise and disapproval. To begin with, Giddings remarks that: "*The Lord of the Rings* is like climbing Mount Olympus by escalator. It is a vast province, a colony, an empire, which is easily claimed, explored and conquered. You can *possess* it easily".[4] As well as John G. West, Jr. that writes: "*The Lord of the Rings* […] presents a remarkable defense of Western civilization – a defense in these dark times that we sorely need". He also adds that "to read Tolkien is to read more than a thousand years of Western civilization encapsulated into one tale".[5] However, one of the

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[1] Letter 131, H. Carpenter & C. Tolkien, op. cit., p. 144

[2] Letter 131, Ibid., op. cit., p. 167

[3] Jane Chance, *Tolkien and the Invention of a Myth: A Reader,* Kentucky, UP, 2004, p. 13

[4] Robert Giddings, "Introduction", in Robert Giddings (ed.), *J.R.R. Tolkien: This Far Land,* London, Vision and Barnes & Noble, 1983, pp. 8-9

[5] John G. West, *Celebrating Middle-Earth: The Lord of the Rings as a Defense of Western Civilization*, Seattle, Inkling Books, 2002, pp. 15-16

most important reviews of *The Lord of the Rings* is that of C.S. Lewis. He was confident that the book would have been a huge success, stating: "The book is too original and too opulent for any final judgment on a first reading. But we know at once that it has done something to us. We are not quite the same men...".[1]

The friendship between C.S Lewis and Tolkien was more than exceptional: they influenced each other, exchanged opinions and comments on their respective works. Tolkien wrote warm words about his long-friend C.S. Lewis' dedication and support:

> C.S. Lewis is a very old friend and colleague of mine, and indeed I owe to his encouragement the fact that in spite of obstacles (including the 1939 war!) I persevered and eventually finished *The Lord of the Rings.* He heard all of it, bit by bit, read aloud, but never saw it in print till after his trilogy was published.[2]

Interestingly, Yates' article "Tolkien the Anti-totalitarian", published to celebrate the Centenary of the birth of Tolkien is one of the numerous articles that concern Tolkien's stories, in regard to the influence of Middle-earth's adventures on young readers. In particular, this debate shows how political views, especially right-winged ones, could emerge after reading *The Lord of the Rings*. In her article, Yates cites different critic's claims, followed by her counter-arguments and her point of view on the matter. Firstly, Westall argues that "stereotyping in children's fiction, television and cinema, and the danger of influencing young people to stereotype other people whom they might see as enemies, as irredeemably evil". He continues by saying that *The Lord of the Rings* is a novel where "good and evil are separated like oil and water, utterly polarized. From the Dark Lord of Mordor to his humblest orcs, the

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[1] C.S. Lewis, "Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings", in *C.S. Lewis on Stories and Other Essays on Literature*, edited by Hooper, W., New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982, p. 90, quoted in J.G. West, *Celebrating Middle-Earth: The Lord of the Rings as a Defense of Western Civilization*, Seattle, Inkling Books, 2002, p. 9

[2] Letter 227, H. Carpenter & C. Tolkien, op. cit., p. 331

enemies are totally evil". In contrast, however, Philips expresses that "Tolkien symbolises in the orc all mindless crowds who chant slogans and are ready to kill other people because their leader tells them so". Among other scholars, Inglis writes that "novels for children are adult messages, bidding the children farewell into the future". To conclude, Yates gives her reply, stating that "had *The Lord of the Rings* also formed part of Inglis' beloved reading as an adolescent, [...], I think he would have been more enthusiastic about it, and fitted it into his approved reading list of books which appeals to patriotism, courage and the desire for heroism, and which relate to our world as "metaphor of reality".[1]

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[1] Jessica Yates, "Tolkien the Anti-totalitarian", Reynolds, Patricia, and Glen GoodKnight. Proceedings of the J.R.R. Tolkien Centenary Conference, 1992: Proceedings of the Conference Held at Keble College, Oxford, England, 17th-24th August 1992 to Celebrate the Centenary of the Birth of Professor J.R.R. Tolkien, Incorporating the 23rd Mythopoeic Conference (mythcon Xxiii) and Oxonmoot 1992. Milton Keynes: Tolkien Society, 1995, pp. 233-238

CHAPTER 3

3.1 Races of Middle-earth: a allegory of ethnicity

The following section analyzes how the cultural background of Tolkien's time, and how multiple theories, especially those linked to a stereotyped view of the differences between the British people and the people from the English colonies, could have had an impact, although subtle and unintentional, on Tolkien's writings.

In the nineteenth-century century the British Empire was vast and numerous colonies were under its political power and influence. For this reason, many Englishmen and women were convinced, both directly and indirectly, by the Empire's actions and policies regarding colonialism. However, the history of colonialism and imperialism would not have happened without taking into account the dissimilarities and power structures between humans; these elements helped the colonizers to proclaim their superiority against the colonized. As defined by Paul Gilroy: 'Race' was the chief classification that allowed these distinctions, the sum of ideologies and arguments that supported it".[1] 'Race', in fact, is not natural but cultural.

At the time, when Tolkien wrote *The Lord of The Rings*, race theories were perceived differently from today. Racial differences were accepted and supported by scientific findings. For instance, eugenics theories, as the concept of improving the human race through crossbreed between 'best' genetics qualities of different people, would have greatly influenced the absurd Nazi projects.[2]

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[1] Paul Gilroy, "Against Race. Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line", Belknap Press of Hardavrd UP, Cambridge, 2000, in Shaul Bassi, "Oltre la "razza": *race and ethnicity* negli studi postcoloniali", in Shaul Bassi, Andrea Sirotti, *Gli studi postcoloniali. Un'introduzione*, Florence, Le Lettere, 2010, pp. 103-104

[2] S. Bassi, op. cit., p. 108

Moreover, traditional nineteenth-century anthropologists established the idea of racial differences. They claimed that race corresponded to physical reality in nature, being indeed one of the fundamental ideas with which physical anthropologists worked. The term 'race' appeared for the first time in a scientific context in late eighteenth-century, but Goblineau's *Essay on the Inequality of Human Races* (1853) established the idea of racism for future academic studies. Moreover, Social Darwinism helped to divide human races in a kind of hierarchy. Of course, those ideas were criticized by many scientists, such as the American anthropologist Franz Boas, who was convinced that races existed but only in a purely biological sense; he did not accept, however, that this would challenge their mental abilities nor their cultural achievements.[1]

If one excludes historical, imperialistic and scientific reasons that have influenced racial theories in the nineteenth-century, one might find that many critics and scholars have found some instances of racism in the works of J.R.R. Tolkien. These allegations, according to Christine Chism, fall into different categories. She describes the three following groups: those who believe that Tolkien was deliberately racist; those who find him having absorbed passively the racism or Eurocentrism of his time; and those who trace an evolution in Tolkien's writings. The last group see him becoming aware of implicit racism/Eurocentric in his early works and trying to counter it in his later ones. The first group points out that dark-skinned foes, such as Orcs, Easterlings, Southrons, and Haradim, are doomed to be "evil" in contrast to white-skinned people, such as Elves or Hobbits, that are related with "good". According to this view, racism in *The Lord of The Rings* is the base for the battle between good and evil. However, even if the second and the

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[1] Dimitra Fimi, *Tolkien, Race and Cultural History: From Fairies to Hobbits*, Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 132-134

third groups generally agree with the accusation that Tolkien's passively expressed racism, and came to question it in his later works, they also underline that the racial categorization between "good" and "evil" is not enough. For example, they claim that the Rohirrim, and the men of Gondor are white European-looking people, but at the same time, they are villains and traitors. Moreover, they state that Orcs may pose some categorization problems. Even if they are a dark-skinned race devoted to destruction, they are at the same time the result of the corrupted power of Morgoth, Sauron, and Saruman, that has transformed Elves and Men into Orcs.[1]

As stated before, one plausible interpretation of Tolkien's works is that he questioned his implicit racist point of view. Tolkien was wholly aware of the political views that were rising in Germany during the late 1930s, and he made his point of view this matter clear. He was also aware of scientists' stand regarding Nazi's claims on race. One book in particular, that showed how the claims about race in Germany were only pseudoscience, was written by Alfred C. Haddon and Julian Huxley, entitled *We Europeans: A Survey of "Racial" Problems* (1935). But more specifically, a pamphlet published by Huxley alone, called *Race in Europe* (1939), demonstrated, with counter-arguments, that the misinterpretation of the belief in an "Aryan" or "Nordic" race is risky. He stated that a difference exist between the biological sense of race and its cultural perception. In other words, social and cultural factors were more discriminating than biological ones. Moreover, he added that this concept is founded on confusion, and unscientific arguments. So, Tolkien gave the impression to be in agreement with Huxley according to the association of "Nordic" with racial theories, as he stated in one of his letters: "Not *Nordic*, please! A word I personally dislike; it is

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[1] Christine Chism, "Racism,charges of", in Michael D.C. Drout, op. cit., 2007, p. 558

associated, though of French origin, with racialist theories”.[1] As far as the term Aryan is concerned, Huxley affirmed that it is associated with a specific linguistic group (the Indo-Persian sub-group of languages) and not in any case with a race of people.[2] The term Aryan is a Sanskrit word, that is broadly employed by students of language as a synonym for the term Indo-European. However, philology was one of the academic fields that provided an excuse to confuse language with race. From the early stages of development of this field of studies, language was a tool for investigating the history of “human races”. This idea came from the romantic thought of the unity of language and national identity, resulting in a looser term of “race”. Tolkien, as a philologist himself, was a strong supporter of this point of view, as he stated: “Language is the prime differentiator of peoples – not of “races”, whatever that much-misused word may mean in the long-blended history of western-Europe”.[3]

Another interesting aspect to consider is the influence that eugenics theories, that rose during the first decades of the twentieth-century, might have played in Tolkien’s imaginary world. Eugenics is a scientific belief that supports the manipulation of the human race in order to improve its qualities through genetic manipulation. Derived from the Greek, the term was coined by Francis Galton meaning ‘good birth’. He strongly supported his theory by saying that man could manipulate the slow course nature in order to create better human beings, through the manipulation of human reproduction. Those ideas were successful both in Britain and in the United States, and eugenic classes entered the academic field and the scientific community, starting to appear in universities and colleges. Moreover, also the liberal wing of the Christian Church supported those theories.

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[1] Letter 294, H. Carpenter & C. Tolkien, op. cit., p. 407

[2] Julian Huxeley, “‘Race’ in Europe”, Oxford Pamphlets on World Affairs, 5, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1939, p.20, in F. Dimitri, op.cit., p.137

[3] J.R.R. Tolkien, “English and Welsh”, O’Donnel Lectures, 1955, in F. Dimitri, op. cit., pp. 136-138

Tolkien strongly objected these ideas because were an affront to human dignity; the individual reduced as a mere biological process. He tried to portrait an idea of nature against technology and new scientific methods in his fictional Middle-earth. If one observes Tolkien's characters, all of them are both physical and spiritual beings, strongly bound by their nature of being human and connected to the earth. During the War of the Ring one can observe that the clash between the forces of liberty and slavery runs through the entire course of the events. No one is born for slavery and captivity, and Sauron's followers are tied to him out of fear. Although it is possible to see a kind genetic manipulation in the creation of the *Uruk-hai*, Tolkien strongly believes that even the fearful Orcs are represented as rational beings. He explains that even if they are corrupted by the dark powers, they are not so different from many men that one might meet today. Tolkien argued that if man conquered the nature in name of progress, it would be a catastrophe.[1]

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[1] Joseph Loconte, *A Hobbit, A Wardrobe, and a Great War: How J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis Rediscovered Faith, Friendship and Heorism in the Cataclysm of 1914-1918,* Nashville, Nelson Books, 2015, pp. 15-18

3.1.a Hobbits, as English

Hobbits are undoubtedly the main characters of *The Lord of the Rings*: these little folks, who love good food, gardening, nature, and living a simple and peaceful life, are at the center of the imaginary world that Tolkien created. The Hobbits are commonly associated with English rural people and the countryside where Tolkien lived his childhood. Tolkien considered himself one of them too, sharing with them their same quiet lifestyle, as he stated:

> I am in fact a Hobbit (in all but size). I like gardens, trees, and unmechanized farmlands; I smoke a pipe, and like good plain food (unrefrigerated), but detest French cooking; I like, and even dare to wear in these dull days, ornamental waistcoats. I am fond of mushrooms (out of a field); have a very simple sense of humor (which even my appreciative critics find tiresome); I go to bed late and get up late (when possible). I do not travel much.[1]

Tolkien wanted to represent with the Shire[2] his familiar and beloved English countryside. He desired it to be a peaceful, humble and calm place, describing it as follows:

> 'The Shire' is based on rural England and not any other country in the world – least perhaps of any in Europe on Holland, which is topographically wholly dissimilar. (In fact so different is it, that in spite of the affinity of its language, and in many respects of its idiom, which should ease some part of the translator's labour, its *toponymy* is specially unsuitable for the purpose.) The toponymy of *The Shire,* to take the first list, is a 'parody' of that of rural England, in much the same sense as are its inhabitants: they go together and are meant to. After all the book is English, and by an Englishman, and presumably even those who wish its narrative and dialogue turned into an idiom that they understand, will not ask of a translator that he should deliberately attempt to destroy the local colour.[3]

Tolkien underlined the importance that The Shire resembled rural England for two main reasons. First, it must have the same topography as England. Secondly, as it is written by an Englishman for English people, it had to be coherent with the English language.

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[1] Letter 213, H. Carpenter & C. Tolkien, op. cit., p. 303

[2] The fictional area of Middle-earth where the Hobbits live.

[3] Letter 190, H. Carpenter & C. Tolkien, op. cit., p. 267

But who are the Hobbits? Tolkien explains their nature and their history in the prologue of *The Lord of the Rings*, where he writes about their culture, and their importance in the history of Middle-earth:

> Hobbits are an unobtrusive but very ancient people, more numerous formerly than they are today; for they love peace and quiet and good tilled earth: a well-ordered and well-farmed countryside was their favourite haunt. They do not and did not understand or like machines more complicated than a forge-bellows, a water-mill, or a hand-loom, though they were skilful with tools. Even in ancient days they were, as a rule, shy of 'the Big Folk', as they call us, and now they avoid us with dismay and are becoming hard to find. They are quick of hearing and sharp-eyed, and though they are inclined to be fat and do not hurry unnecessarily, they are nonetheless nimble and deft in their movements. They possessed from the first the art of disappearing swiftly and silently, when large folk whom they do not wish to meet come blundering by; and this and they have developed until to Men it may seem magical. But Hobbits have never, in fact, studied magic of any kind, and their elusiveness is due solely to a professional skill that heredity and practice, and a close friendship with the earth, have rendered inimitable by bigger and clumsier races.[1]

He continues writing about the genesis of the Hobbits, and that they were originally divided into three groups, each of them having peculiar characteristics. What is intriguing, it is that one of them, the Harfoots, were black skinned, they had no beards and they usually did not use any kind of footwear. Moreover, this group will be also the one that will constitute the "norm" among future generations of Hobbits, being the most numerous in The Shire. Therefore, the original division of Hobbits' groups was because of size, skin and hair color, or if they preferred to live in the mountainside or the riverside. This reveals that Tolkien wanted to create different groups of Hobbits in his fictional world, as he wrote:

> Before the crossing of the mountains the Hobbits had already become divided into three somewhat different breeds: Harfoots, Stoors, and Fallohides. The Harfoots were browner of skin, smaller, and shorter, and they were beardless and bootless; their hands and feet were neat and nimble; and they preferred highlands and hillsides. The Stoors were broader, heavier in build; their feet and hands were larger, and they preferred flat lands and riversides. The Fallohides were fairer of skin and also of hair, and they were taller and slimmer than the others; they were lovers of trees and of woodlands. The Harfoots had

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[1] J.R.R. Tolkien, *LOTR*, p. 1

much to do with Dwarves in ancient times, and long lived in the foothills of the mountains. They moved westward early, and roamed over Eriador as far as Weather-top while the others were still in the Wilderland. They were the most normal and representative variety of Hobbit, and far the most numerous. They were the most inclined to settle in one place, and longest preserved their ancestral habit of living in tunnels and holes. The Stoors lingered long by the banks of the Great River Anduin, and were less shy of Men. They came west after the Harfoots and followed the course of the Loudwater southwards; and there many of them long dwelt between Tharbad and the borders of Dunland before they moved north again. The Fallohides, the least numerous, were a northerly branch. They were more friendly with Elves than the other Hobbits were, and had more skill in language and song than in handicrafts; and of old they preferred hunting to tilling. They crossed the mountains north of Rivendell and came down the River Hoarwell. In Eriador they soon mingled with the other kinds that had preceded them, but being somewhat bolder and more adventurous, they were often found as leaders or chieftains among clans of Harfoots or Stoors. Even in Bilbo's time the strong Fallohidish strain could still be noted among the greater families, such as the Tooks and the Masters of Buckland.[1]

The Hobbits are pacific and friendly people whose circumstances led them to embark into an adventure that is bigger than everything they have ever done before. In addition, they prove themselves to be tenacious and determined in many crucial moments. Both Bilbo Baggins, who is the leading character of *The Hobbit,* and his cousin, Frodo Baggins, who is the main character of *The Lord of the Rings*, demonstrate to have unexpected qualities for Hobbits. Furthermore, Frodo somehow takes Bilbo's legacy and fight against Sauron, the greatest evil power of Middle-earth. But who are the Hobbits in *The Lord of the Rings*? Along with Frodo Baggins, other Hobbits are mentioned: Sam Gamgee, Frodo's loyal servant, and two other Frodo's cousins, Merry and Pippin.

Frodo Baggins discovers from Gandalf the history of the One Ring, and how it must be destroyed, for the sake of defeating its creator, Sauron. Then, Frodo decides then to face his destiny, by carrying this heavy burden, and to take it to the Crack of Doom. Even if at first could appear as a side character, Sam Gamgee is curious, and furtively listens

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[1] J.R.R. Tolkien, *LOTR*, pp. 3-4

to the conversation between Gandalf and Frodo regarding their quest to destroy the One Ring, as in the following passage:

> Suddenly he stopped as if listening. Frodo became aware that all was very quiet, inside and outside. Gandalf crept to one side of the window. Then with a dart he sprang to the sill, and thrust a long arm out and downwards. There was a squawk, and up came Sam Gamgee's curly head hauled by one ear. 'Well, well, bless my beard!' said Gandalf. 'Sam Gamgee is it? Now what may you be doing?' 'Lord bless you, Mr. Gandalf, sir!' said Sam. 'Nothing! Leastways I was just trimming the grass-border under the window, if you follow me.' He picked up his shears and exhibited them as evidence. 'I don't,' said Gandalf grimly. It is some time since I last heard the sound of your shears. How long have you been eavesdropping?' 'Eavesdropping, sir? I don't follow you, begging your pardon. There ain't no eaves at Bag End, and that's a fact.' 'Don't be a fool! What have you heard, and why did you listen?' Gandalf's eyes flashed and his brows stuck out like bristles. 'Mr. Frodo, sir!' cried Sam quaking. 'Don't let him hurt me, sir! Don't let him turn me into anything unnatural! My old dad would take on so. I meant no harm, on my honour, sir!' 'He won't hurt you,' said Frodo, hardly able to keep from laughing, although he was himself startled and rather puzzled. 'He knows, as well as I do, that you mean no harm. But just you up and answer his questions straight away!' 'Well, sir,' said Sam dithering a little. 'I heard a deal that I didn't rightly understand, about an enemy, and rings, and Mr. Bilbo, sir, and dragons, and a fiery mountain, and – and Elves, sir. I listened because I couldn't help myself, if you know what I mean. Lord bless me, sir, but I do love tales of that sort. And I believe them too, whatever Ted may say. Elves, sir! I would dearly love to see _them._ Couldn't you take me to see Elves, sir, when you go?'[1]

Apparently Sam Gamgee could be seen as a mere side character in *The Lord of the Rings*. However, if one observes what Tolkien stated about this particular Hobbit, it is possible to find a deeper meaning through the depiction of Sam's character: "My 'Sam Gamgee', indeed a reflection of the English soldier, of the privates and batmen I knew in the 1914 War, and recognized as so far superior to myself".[2]

Sam Gamgee is then the fictional representation of the common soldiers that fought side by side with Tolkien during the World War I. He supports his leader and friend, Frodo, through the most dangerous times, and he proves himself to be tenacious and brave, even when the enemies or the danger are far greater than him. Tolkien mirrored with

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[1] J.R.R. Tolkien, *LOTR*, p. 63

[2] J. Loconte, op. cit., p. xvii

Sam the English common soldier and their sense of duty, united with their vigour and commitment that made them the most precious men in wartime.

3.1.b Dwarves, as Jews

The imaginary representation of the Dwarves is today famous in modern literature because of *The Lord of the Rings*: bearded, gruff, stubborn, brave, skilled in forging metals, lovers of the earth, but also grumpy and short legged. Tolkien took his inspiration from old Germanic epic tales to shape his own version of Dwarves. Moreover, he was responsible for naming them as "Dwarves"; Tolkien admitted that the name "Dwarves" was a quite important linguistic error for a philologist, for the right plural form had to be Dwarfs:

> No reviewer (that I have seen), although all have carefully used the correct dwarfs themselves, has commented on the fact (which I only became conscious of through reviews) that I use throughout the 'incorrect' plural dwarves. I am afraid it is just a piece of private bad grammar, rather shocking in a philologist.[1]

Of all the races of *The Lord of the Rings*, the Dwarves are those repeatedly linked to the Jews. As Rebecca Brackmann explains, Tolkien was influenced by several historical, mythological and linguistics characteristics regarding the Jews while he described the Dwarves. He portraits them as "the bearded Dwarves", which is a clear indication that their physical appearance is similar to the medieval Jews; in medieval art Jews were often represented with beards. Moreover, she finds that the Dwarves are linked with some anti-Semitic traits that were common in the early twentieth-century books, such as greediness.[2] The two groups share some similar characteristics: they have been both dispossessed of their homeland living among other people while retaining their own culture and language. For these reasons, some critics have accused Tolkien to be a racist. Unfortunately, this claim appears to be quite

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[1] Letter 17, H. Carpenter & C. Tolkien, op. cit., p. 29

[2] Brackmann, Rebecca, "Dwarves are Not Heroes: Antisemitism and the Dwarves in J.R.R. Tolkien's Writing", Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature, vol. 28, No. 3, Article 7, 2010, pp. 85-106

superficial, because even if one can find similarities between the two groups, it is mostly based on prejudice. Dwarves names are directly influenced by Old Norse mythologies and their superb skill as smiths is based on Germanic mythology. Moreover, Tolkien wrote about the genesis of the Dwarves in *The Silmarillion*:

> Since they were to come in the days of the power of Melkor, Aulë made the Dwarves strong to endure. Therefore they are stone-hard, stubborn, fast in friendship and in enmity, and they suffer toil and hanger and hurt of body more hardily than all other speaking peoples; and they live long, far beyond the span of Men, yet not for ever. Aforetime it was held among the Elves in Middle-earth that dying the Dwarves returned to the earth and the stone of which they were made; yet that is not their own belief. For they say that Aulë the Maker, whom they call Mahal, cares for them, and gathers them to Mandos in halls set apart; and that he declared to their Fathers of old that Ilúvatar will hallow them and give them a place among the Children in the End. Then their part shall be to serve Aulë and to aid him in the remaking of Arda after the Last Battle.[1]

It requires a strong degree of prejudice in order to link the Dwarves to the Jews. The Dwarves can be stubborn and brave, but they can be easily mastered because of their greatest weaknesses: the love for gold and treasures. In *The Hobbit*, the following passage shows how Dwarves have a strong lust for gold:

> But we have never forgotten our stolen treasure. And even now, when I will allow we have a good bit laid by and are not so badly off-here Thorin stroked the gold chain round his neck-"we still mean to get it back, and to bring our curses home to Smaug--if we can".[2]

Interestingly, the Dwarves are portrayed differently in *The Hobbit* and in *The Lord of the Rings*. If one compares the characters of the Dwarves in these two books, one might see a development in their characteristics and actions. On the one hand, in *The Hobbit,* some critics have argued that their behavior could be linked to the stereotypical traits of the Jews.

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[1] J.R.R. Tolkien, *SM*, pp. 41-42

[2] J.R.R. Tolkien, *TH*, p. 24

In contrast to other characters in *The Hobbit*, the Dwarves do not change their behavior through the course of the novel even when they finally take the treasure from Smaug; they remain greedy until the end. Their love for gold and other precocious metals could be associated with the anti-Semitic beliefs that are connected with the Jewish culture.[1] On the other hand, in *The Lord of the Rings*, it is possible to notice a considerable difference. The main Dwarf character, Gimli, is a good example of this. If we analyze his relationship with Legolas or the encounter with Galadriel (both are Elves), it is possible to see that racial differences exist between Dwarves and Elves, but that it is also replaced with friendship and mutual understanding. At first, the relationship with Legolas is based on diffidence, but later it develops into a close friendship. Initially, when the Council of Elrond is set up in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, the news that Gollum has escaped fires up the debate between Elves and Dwarves: "Not through lack of watchfulness," said Legolas; "but perhaps through over-kindliness"; Gloin, father of Gimli, express his resentment about how he was treated by the Elves: "You were less tender to me," said Gloin with a flash of his eyes, as old memories were stirred of his imprisonment in the deep places of the Elven-king's halls".[2] Moreover, if we take into consideration when Gimli has to be blindfolded to enter Lothlórien, diffidence between Elves and Dwarves is noticeable:

> "As was agreed, I shall here blindfold the eyes of Gimli the Dwarf. The others may walk free for a while, until we come nearer to our dwellings, down in Egladil, in the Angle between the waters." This was not at all to the liking of Gimli. "The agreement was made without my consent," he said. "I will not walk blindfold, like a beggar or a prisoner. And I am no spy. My folk have never had dealings with any of the servants of the Enemy. Neither have we done harm to the Elves. I am no more likely to betray you than Legolas, or any other of my companions."[3]

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[1] R. Brackmann, op. cit., pp. 85-106

[2] J.R.R. Tolkien, *LOTR*, p. 255

[3] Ibid., p. 347

He is questioned about his trust, something that he cannot accept; he does not want to be blindfolded as he has never done anything evil against the Elves, and suggests that also Legolas must be blindfolded: "But I will be content, if only Legolas here shares my blindness." Legolas is not happy with Gimli's assumption and replies: "I am an Elf and a kinsman here," said Legolas, becoming angry in his turn." But Aragorn puts the quarrel to an end, making all the Company be blindfolded: "Now let us cry: 'a plague on the stiff necks of Elves!'", said Aragorn. "But the Company shall all fare alike. Come, blind our eyes, Haldir!".[1]

However, as the adventure goes on, and the fight against the evil forces grow stronger and stronger, Gimli and Legolas seem to put their differences apart, stand unite and fight side by side. They put aside their respective sense of diffidence and division, which was carried on from past grudges. Moreover, they create a bond based on mutual understanding. As the following passage demonstrates, Legolas supports Gimli, when the Company, and especially the Dwarf, is questioned by the Riders of Roan:

> "Give me your name, horse-master, and I will give you mine, and more besides," he said. "As for that," said the Rider, staring down at the Dwarf, "the stranger should declare himself first. Yet I am named Eomer son of Eomund, and am called the Third Marshal of Riddermark." "Then Eomer son of Eomund, Third Marshal of Riddermark, let Gimli the Dwarf Gloin's son warn you against foolish words. You speak evil of that which is fair beyond the reach of your thought, and only little wit can excuse you." Eomer's eyes blazed, and the Men of Rohan murmured angrily, and closed in, advancing their spears. "I would cut off your head, beard and all, Master Dwarf, if it stood but a little higher from the ground," said Eomer. "He stands not alone," said Legolas, bending his bow and fitting an arrow with hands that moved quicker than sight. "You would die before your stroke fell".[2]

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[1] J.R.R. Tolkien, *LOTR*, p. 348

[2] Ibid., pp. 432-433

In this passage, Legolas and Gimli join their forces and show a strong sense of comraderie that was unexpected from them. Since their races have been historically divided and distant from each other for many reasons, it is interesting to note how they behave in a perilous situation.

Another good example of how Dwarves are represented differently in *The Lord of the Rings* comes from the passage below, where Gimli puts aside his prejudice towards the Elves, showing respect for them:

> And what gift would a Dwarf ask of the Elves?" said Galadriel, turning to Gimli. "None, Lady," answered Gimli. "It is enough for me to have seen the Lady of the Galadrim, and to have heard her gentle words." "Hear all ye Elves!" she cried to those about her. "Let none say again that Dwarves are grasping and ungracious! Yet surely, Gimli son of Gloin, you desire something that I could give? Name it, I bid you! You shall not be the only guest without a gift." "There is nothing, Lady Galadriel," said Gimli, bowing low and stammering. "Nothing, unless it might be -- unless it is permitted to ask, nay, to name a single strand of your hair, which surpasses the gold of the earth as the stars surpass the gems of the mine. I do not ask for such a gift. But you commanded me to name my desire."[1]

Gimli asks for the most precious gift from an elven lady: a strand of her hair. He is so astonished by Galadriel's beauty that he wants to treasure her hair as the most precious gift that he could have had in life, more precious than all the gems that one Dwarf can find in his mines.

All the above examples are relevant in order to understand that the claim that Tolkien might be a racist is a superficial, and also quite a weak one. Although physical and cultural differences between races exist in *The Lord of the Rings*, the Dwarves are the most resilient, proud and generally stubborn of the races of Middle-earth; in contrast, the Elves are fair, wise and noble. However, also due to their language and general approach towards other races, the Dwarves are the most secretive of them all. Due to this fact, they usually do not use their own true name with strangers. Moreover, they can be both compassionate and ferocious, as well as a tremendous alley in the battlefield, as Aragorn comments

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[1] J.R.R. Tolkien, *LOTR*, p. 376

when he sees Gimli fighting against the Orcs: "Never did I see an axe so wielded".[1]

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[1] J.R.R. Tolkien, *LOTR*, p. 538

3.1.c Orcs, as Mongols

In *The Lord of the Rings* there are many evil human-like creatures, and the Orcs are the representation of the enemy *par excellence*. They are fearsome and ugly creatures who generally show hatred for every other inhabitant of Middle-earth, sometimes including themselves. For this reason, it is commonly believed that Orcs are evil in nature. Orcs are grouped in various tribes or clans, but they all share the same characteristics. They are shorter human-like creatures with long arms that resemble the apes, and generally less intelligent than any other race of *The Lord of the Rings*. Sometimes they can also be called Goblins, as it happens in *The Hobbit*; so, Orcs and Goblins are two terms that describe the same living thing, as Tolkien suggested:

> Orc is not an English word. It occurs in one or two places but is usually translated goblin (or hobgoblin for the larger kinds). Orc is the hobbits' form of the name given at that time to these creatures, and it is not connected at all with our orc, ork, applied to sea-animals of dolphin-kind.[1]

From Tolkien's published books, it is possible to find evidence of the Orcs' genesis. However, Tolkien himself seemed not to be sure about the creation of these creatures, and in fact, several theories exist. Firstly, in *The Silmarillion*, one can learn about how Orcs come to exist in Middle-Earth. The Elves were captured and imprisoned by Melkor, Tolkien's villainous mythological antecedent to Sauron. In his stronghold of Utomno, the Orcs were created:

> By slow arts of cruelty [they] were corrupted and enslaved; and thus did Melkor breed the hideous race of the Orcs in envy and mockery of the Elves, of whom they were afterwards the bitterest foes.[2]

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[1] J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit, or There and Back Again*, in *Author's note*, London, HarperCollins, 2009, p. 15

[2] J.R.R. Tolkien, *SM*, p. 50

Later on, Tolkien suggested that the creation of the Orcs could not have happened from anything. He wrote that they were real beings, corrupted or twisted afterwards from the power of the Dark Lord:

> I have represented at least the Orcs as pre-existing real beings on whom the Dark Lord has exerted the fullness of his power in remodelling and corrupting them, not making them. […] There might be other 'makings' all the same which were more like puppets filled (only at a distance) with their maker's mind and will, or ant-like operating under direction of a queen-centre.[1]

From a linguistic point of view, the Orcs can communicate using their own language, which is an adaptation of various other languages of Middle-earth. The result is a mix of guttural sounds that evokes fear, resembling the sounds of hunting creatures. Their language is, as Tolkien describes it, "perverted to their own liking, and they made only brutal jargons, scarcely sufficient even for their own needs, unless it were for curses and abuse".[2] Indeed, the Orcs are:

> creatures, being filled with malice, hating even their own kind, quickly developed as many barbarous dialects as there were groups or settlements of their race, so that their Orkish speech was of little use to them in intercourse between different tribes.[3]

As explained before, Tolkien was not sure about the genesis of the Orcs. He stated that the Orcs are a corrupted version of a pre-existent being:

> Orcs (the word is as far as I am concerned actually derived from Old English *orc* 'demon', but only because of its phonetic suitability) are nowhere clearly stated to be of any particular origin. But since they are servants of the Dark Power, and later of Sauron, neither of whom could, or would, produce living things, they must be 'corruptions'. They are not based on direct experience of mine; but owe, I suppose, a good deal to the goblin tradition *(goblin is* used as a translation in *The Hobbit,* where orc only occurs once, I think), especially as it appears in George MacDonald, except for the soft feet which I never believed in. The name has the form *orch* (pl. *yrch)* in Sindarin and *uruk* in the Black

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[1] Letter 153, H**.** Carpenter & C. Tolkien, op. cit., p. 210

[2] J.R.R. Tolkien, *LOTR*, p.1131

[3] Ibid., p. 1131

Speech.[1]

Analyzing the Orcs as a race, Tolkien explained that they resemble the Mongol-type in contrast to the Caucasian (mostly European); this is because he probably wanted to represent the barbaric hordes that invaded Europe. Tolkien tried with the Orcs to depict the image of a barbaric horde in order to let us understand how terrible they are, and how they differ from us Europeans on a physical level. The same physical difference that Europeans might have perceived at the time of the barbaric invasion:

> The Orcs are definitely stated to be corruptions of the 'human' form seen in Elves and Men. They are (or were) squat, broad, flat-nosed, sallow-skinned, with wide mouths and slant eyes: in fact degraded and repulsive versions of the (to Europeans) least lovely Mongol-types.[2]

However, this statement does not imply that Tolkien hated them or had racist views regarding the Mongols. On the contrary, Tolkien describes the racial stereotype of the cruel Mongols, as the basis for the Orcs. He gives the impression to identify himself with the European race, which is usually associated with the Caucasoid. He chooses for his villains the opposite type of race, the Mongoloid, which is usually seen as inferior from a western European perspective. This refers to the so-called 'Mongolian idiocy' or 'Mongolism'. It was a popular belief of racial degeneration and mental disability, firstly studied, and then introduced in the scientific field, by John Langdon Down. He categorized his patients into different racial groups, and his description of the 'Mongolian idiots' is strikingly similar to the one of Tolkien's Orcs. Tolkien portrayed the Orcs as a degradation of human beings, full of unfamiliar characteristics that are not so well perceived by Europeans; they seem to evoke some kind of mental disability, that is still linked

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[1] Letter 144, H. Carpenter & C. Tolkien, op. cit., p. 195

[2] Letter 210, Ibid., p. 293

today to prejudice and negative attitude towards those who suffer from this disability.[1]

Tolkien believed that every human being could be either good or evil, depending from which side we look at them. In other words, anyone could be good or bad in nature, but this represents a consequence of one's actions; the perspective that everyone has of something or someone, is the one that reveals the side on which something or someone falls into:

> With regard to *The Lord of the Rings,* I cannot claim to be a sufficient theologian to say whether my notion of orcs is heretical or not. I don't feel under any obligation to make my story fit with formalized Christian theology, though I actually intended it to be consonant with Christian thought and belief, which is asserted somewhere, Book Five, page 190, where Frodo asserts that the orcs are not evil in origin. We believe that, I suppose, of all human kinds and sons and breeds, though some appear, both as individuals and groups to be, by us at any rate, unredeemable.[2]

The Orcs live mostly underground (because they cannot stand the sunlight). Also, they can build tunnels as efficiently as the Dwarves. When they are not fighting against other races, or against themselves, the Orcs can be also laborious, as the following passage shows:

> Now goblins are cruel, wicked, and badhearted. They make no beautiful things, but they make many clever ones. They can tunnel and mine as well as any but the most skilled dwarves, when they take the trouble, though they are usually untidy and dirty. Hammers, axes, swords, daggers, pickaxes, tongs, and also instruments of torture, they make very well, or get other people to make to their design, prisoners and slaves that have to work till they die for want of air and light. It is not unlikely that they invented some of the machines that have since troubled the world, especially the ingenious devices for killing large numbers of people at once, for wheels and engines and explosions always delighted them, and also not working with their own hands more than they could help; but in those days and those wild parts they had not advanced (as it is called) so far. They did not hate dwarves especially, no more than they hated everybody and everything, and particularly the orderly and prosperous; in some parts wicked dwarves had even made alliances with them.[3]

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[1] D. Fimi, op. cit., pp. 156-157

[2] Letter 269, H. Carpenter & C. Tolkien, op. cit., p. 378

[3] J.R.R. Tolkien, *TH*, p. 112

The Orcs of different tribes have different traits, depending on which area of Middle-earth they come from. Apart from the most known Orcs of Mordor and Isengard, other two types exist: the Orcs from the North and from the Misty Mountains. They all are short, with slant-eyes, long arms, and they tend to avoid the sunlight. However, in *The Lord of the Rings*, there is a more powerful breed of Orcs, that was created by Saruman and his sorcery, known as the *Uruk-hai*: they are the result of cross-breeding between Men and Orcs. *Uruk-hai* can walk straight and can withstand the sunlight better than normal Orcs, making them more effective on the battlefield. Thus, these qualities make them the perfect foot soldiers that will be used by Saruman during the War of the Ring in the Third Age. Furthermore, among the Orcs ranks, also lower classes exist: one are called *snagas,* slaves; other are called snufflers. They are a smaller breed of Orcs that can follow a scent, perfectly fit for haunting.

However, as explained before, the Orcs are not evil per se, but rather they are corrupted servitors of a more powerful lord, and so, as Tolkien himself stated through Frodo's words, they could be seen as a mere tool in the hands of Melkor or Sauron.

3.1.d Humans, as Arabs and Asians

> Men have 'fallen' – any legends put in the form of supposed ancient history of this actual world of ours must accept that – but the peoples of the West, the good side are Re-formed. That is they are the descendants of Men that tried to repent and fled Westward from the domination of the Prime Dark Lord, and his false worship, and by contrast with the Elves renewed (and enlarged) their knowledge of the truth and the nature of the World.[1]

In every Tolkien story there is always a fall, an error and then a redemption. Every story has to fall, otherwise it will not happen. Likewise, also every population of Middle-earth has to follow the same path. In the following chapter the human population of Tolkien's works will be analyzed and described. But who are Men for Tolkien? Of course Men are us, or in other words, the entire humanity; or better, every Tolkien's reader.[2] Men were created by the same God that created the Elves, Illúvatar. He created them after the Elves and their history is then secondary in *The Silmarillion*, as Tolkien describes below:

> Its centre of view and interest is not Men but 'Elves'. Men came in inevitably: after all the author is a man, and if he has an audience they will be Men and Men must come in to our tales, as such, and not merely transfigured or partially represented as Elves, Dwarfs, Hobbits, etc. But they remain peripheral – late comers, and however growingly important, not principals.[3]

Men are different from the Elves in many ways. Firstly, they are not bound to the earth or, to put it simply, they are mortal. Men are the population of the Sun; they will substitute the elven race, that is the population of the Stars. As the Elves differ from one another, and the same thing happens for Men.[4] In *The Lord of the Rings*, which is set in the Third Age of the history of Middle-earth, one can observe the

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[1] Letter 156, H. Carpenter & C. Tolkien, op. cit., p. 217

[2] Paolo Paron, *I popoli di Tolkien*, Milan, Bompiani, 2005, pp. 88-89

[3] Letter 131, H. Carpenter & C. Tolkien, op. cit., p. 169

[4] P. Paron, op. cit., pp. 92-96

differences between various human populations. Men can naturally adapt themselves to many different situations and environments, and so do those who live in Tolkien's universe. Physical appearance and cultural traditions are two aspects in which the Men differ from one another.[1] For example, the Easterlings are different if compared to the Edain,[2] who are in turn different within their group.[3]

At some point in Tolkien's mythology a drastic event changed the course of the Men's history. A small part of the Men was granted wisdom and power from the Valar, for they were trustworthy in their eyes. They were called Númenóreans, the Kings among Men. After that, the human race could never be the same. Although they have more wisdom and power than other Men, they are still mortal.[4] Tolkien describes them in one of his letters:

> The highest kind of Men, those of the Three Houses, who aided the Elves in the primal War against the Dark Lord, were rewarded by the gift of the Land of the Star, or Westernesse (= Númenor) which was most westerly of all mortal lands, and almost in sight of Elvenhome (Eldamar) on the shores of the Blessed Realm. There they became the Númenóreans, the Kings of Men. They were given a triple span of life – but not elvish 'immortality' (which is not eternal, but measured by the duration in time of Earth); for the point of view of this mythology is that 'mortality' or a short span, and 'immortality' or an indefinite span was part of what we might call the biological and spiritual *nature* of the Children of God, Men and Elves (the firstborn) respectively, and could *not* be altered by anyone (even a Power or god), and would not be altered by the One, except perhaps by one of those strange exceptions to all rules and ordinances which seem to crop up in the history of the Universe, and show the Finger of God, as the one wholly free Will and Agent.[5]

During the War of the Ring, the Free People of Middle-earth fought against many enemies. Most of them were not humans, as the Orcs or the Goblins, but all of them were allied with Sauron. Among the Men that

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[1] P. Paron, op. cit., p. 110

[2] The Edain, or Atanatári, are a group of Men that came from the Far East in the First Age.

[3] P. Paron, op. cit., p. 110

[4] Ibid., p. 114

[5] Letter 156, H. Carpenter & C. Tolkien, op. cit., p. 218

joined forces with the obscure and powerful Dark Lord it is interesting to note two different groups: Haradrim and Eastelings. These two groups were corrupted by the power of the Ring and fought against the good armies of the Kingdom of Gondor, Elves, and Dwarves. To begin with, the Haradrim is a group of Men that live in Harad, a southern area from Gondor. They were ruled by several lords until Sauron corrupted them and called them to war. The Haradrim are bold, grim, tall, dark-skinned, and they have black hair and eyes. For this reason, they are called Swertings or Swarthy Men by the other populations of Middle-earth. Haradrim's warriors usually wear red robes adorned with golden jewelry. Furthermore, the Haradrim use massive Mûmakil beasts in battle.[1] They build towers on their backs, which are full of Haradrim archers and spearmen. As portrayed in Peter Jackson's movies, those fierce fighters resemble the Arab tribes because of their clothing style, as well as their weapons: they use mainly scimitars.[2] This particular resemblance, and the fact that they are evil warriors, has been underlined by many critics as a form of racism; it appears that almost every evil men in *The Lord of The Rings* is black-skinned.

Secondly, another group of Men has been described many times as an example of racism in Tolkien's works. They are called the Easterlings, or Swarthy Men, and they live in the unmapped land of Rhûn, grouping in huge barbaric hordes. The Easterlings can be tall and sallow-skinned, short, with dark brown and black eyes. One might notice that they resemble Middle Eastern cultures. This caused many controversy, as they were inspired by a variety of Persian cultures. Usually, their boots have upturned toes, suggesting a Mongolic or Persian influence.[3]

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[1] They are like elephants.

[2] http://tolkiengateway.net/wiki/Haradrim

[3] http://tolkiengateway.net/wiki/Easterlings

These groups of Men were often questioned by critics as a form of racism, because they are clearly influenced by non-European cultures. However, it might seem superficial to point out that Tolkien intentionally described them as a stereotyped view of eastern cultures and populations. The fact that they are both evil and dark-skinned demonstrates that Tolkien wanted to describe a type of enemy that would have been distant and exotic from the dominant cultural type of the Free People of Middle-earth, which is mainly of European type. To support this opinion, the following passage in *The Two Towers* demonstrates how enemies are just enemies during wartime despite their physical appearance:

> It was Sam's first view of a battle of Men against Men, and he did not like it much. He was glad that he could not see the dead face. He wondered what the man's name was and where he came from; and if he was really evil of heart, or what lies or threats had led him on the long march from his home; and if he would rather have stayed there in peace. [1]

Sam starts to wonder if their enemies are evil. He observes a dead man and starts to ask himself if he was evil in the heart. This shows how cruel the battle was, and how this devastating experience directly affected Sam. But more importantly, it shows how Tolkien did not want just to associate the darker color of the skin to an evil being *per se*. He is not seen just as an enemy but rather as a dying human being, regardless of his skin colour. This might show that racial claims in Tolkien's works, and especially this one, are inappropriate. As Rosebury argues "critics […] sometimes conflate their expressive imagery of light against darkness with a supposed racial privileging of white over black".[2] Again, the constant battle of light against darkness, good against evil is more of an ideological war, rather than a racial imposition between different groups of people.

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[1] J.R.R. Tolkien, *LOTR*, p. 661

[2] Brian Rosebury, "Race in Tolkien's Films", in Michael D.C. Drout, op. cit., 2007, p. 557

3.1.e Elves

If one reflects on the fairest, noblest and wisest race of Tolkien's imaginary world, no other book is more worth reading than *The Silmarillion*. The novel is set prior to all the events narrated in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. As Tolkien admits, it is essential to understand his works as a whole, but more specifically for this chapter, it is required to understand the Elves:

> What you really require is *The Silmarillion,* which is virtually a history of the Eldalië (or Elves, by a not very accurate translation) from their rise to the Last Alliance, and the first temporary overthrow of Sauron (the Necromancer): that would bring you nearly down to the period of *The Hobbit*. Also desirable would be some maps, chronological tables, and some elementary information about the Eldarin (or Elvish) languages.[1]

The Elves were created by Illúvatar, the one supreme God of Tolkien's Middle-earth. They are tall, beautiful and gifted with eternal life. For this reason, the Elves are generally seen as the fairest and purest of all the races of Middle-earth. Since they have been the first creation of Illúvatar, the Elves have an extended history, and they have had relationships with all the other people of Middle-earth. Timeless, beautiful, and graceful, the Elves are in deep contact with nature; therefore, they master the art of shooting arrows with bows, and they can be nimble, fast and agile while confronting their enemies. Therefore, they can be a very dangerous opponent, when faced on the battlefield. The Elves have one peculiar trait that separates them from the other races: they are immortal and they do not age or die of diseases. However, they can be killed in battle or they can die if they experience

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[1] Letter 114, H. Carpenter & C. Tolkien**,** op. cit., p. 149

extreme emotional pain.[1] Their "doom", in contrast to the one of the Men, is what Tolkien explains stating:

> These are the *First-born,* the Elves; and the *Followers* Men. The doom of the Elves is to be immortal, to love the beauty of the world, to bring it to full flower with their gifts of delicacy and perfection, to last while it lasts, never leaving it even when 'slain', but returning – and yet, when the Followers come, to teach them, and make way for them, to 'fade' as the Followers grow and absorb the life from which both proceed. The Doom (or the Gift) of Men is mortality, freedom from the circles of the world. Since the point of view of the whole cycle is the Elvish, mortality is not explained mythically: it is a mystery of God of which no more is known than that 'what God has purposed for Men is hidden': a grief and an envy to the immortal Elves.[2]

Just like the other races of Middle-earth, the Elves are divided into different groups, or more precisely, into different clans. The reason why different clans of Elves exist is that they once started a journey through Valinor. However, not every Elf followed Oromë. As a result, separate groups of Elves live in different parts of Tolkien's imaginary world. These are the Caliquendi (or Elves of the Light), Moriquendi (or Elves of the Darkness), which are subsequently divided into three smaller groups Amanyar, Umanyar, and Avamanyar. Moreover, these groups are divided again into other groups, named Vanyar, Noldor, and Teleri.[3] The Elven language that appears in *The Lord of the Rings* was invented by Tolkien under the name of *Eldarin.*[4] Tolkien wanted the Elven language to be of "European kind in style and structure" and "specially pleasant". Therefore, the base of the Elven language is Latin, and it includes Finnish and Greek "phonaesthetic pleasure".[5] Furthermore, the Elves tend to use their language in a more formal way in contrast to the Orcs;

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[1] Lisa Coutras, *Tolkien's Theology of Beauty. Majesty, Splendor and Transcendence in Middle-earth*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, p. 71

[2] Letter 131, H. Carpenter & C. Tolkien, op. cit., p. 169

[3] P. Paron, op. cit., p. 17

[4] Two forms of *Eldarin* appears in The Lord of the Rings: *Quenya*, or High-elven, and *Sindarin*, or Grey-elven.

[5] Letter 144, H. Carpenter & C. Tolkien, op. cit., p. 194

when speaking, the Elves use high tone and beautiful sounding words, while the Orcs "spoke as they would, without love of words or things" using guttural sounds and low tone.[1]

As explained before, the Elves are immortal. This rule does not apply to their offspring with other races. This happened three times in the history of the Elves, as Tolkien explains "there were three unions of the Eldar and the Edain: Lúthien and Beren; Idril and Tuor; Arwen and Aragorn. By the last long-sundered branches of the Half-elven were reunited and their line was restored".[2]

Regarding the last of the three unions, one can notice the dangerous tone in Gilraen's words, directed to her son Aragorn, as she warns him that "My son," said Gilraen, "your aim is high, even for the descendant of many kings. For this lady is the noblest and fairest that now walks the earth. And it is not fit that mortal should wed with the Elf-kin."[3]

However, this particular aspect of mixing different races is quite interesting, because it might demonstrate how Tolkien wanted to avoid being accused to be a racist. Many critics has investigated the racial mixing between Elves and Men, that generates Half-Elven.[4] For instance, Shippey notes that "Tolkien's adherence to an old Norse convention shared by the *Beowulf* poet: people are their heredity".[5] He explains that Elves are divided into different groups in regards to their seniority, wisdom and the attachment to the Valar: the Vanyar, Noldor and Teleri. A good example of this is Fëanor, who was born a Noldor, and his two half-brothers. Their relationship is quite exemplifying: his father remarried to a member of the Vanyar; so their sons were immediately

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[1] J.R.R. Tolkien, *LOTR*, p. 1134

[2] Ibid., p. 1034

[3] Ibid., p. 1058

[4] The term Halv-Elven appears in D. Fimi, op. cit., p. 151

[5] T. A. Shippey, *The Road to Middle-earth: Revised Edition*, London, 2005, in D. Fimi, op. cit., p.151

qualified to be superior to him, regardless of talent, or being younger than him.[1] This is quite interesting because it underlines how Tolkien's approach was similar to Norse sagas, as well as an important anthropological interpretation of Tolkien's works. Moreover, it underlines how the influence of the early twentieth-century's anthropologists regarding race was about the inheritance of mental behavior, which strongly influenced the Eugenic movement.[2]

So, mix between races seems to be normal in Tolkien's works; one that demands a further explanation, as Tolkien himself tries to give more clarification, as below:

> I suppose that actually the chief difficulties I have involved myself in are scientific and biological — which worry me just as much as the theological and metaphysical (though you do not seem to mind them so much). Elves and Men are evidently in biological terms one race, or they could not breed and produce fertile offspring – even as a rare event: there are 2 cases only in my legends of such unions, and they are merged in the descendants of *Eärendil.* But since some have held that the rate of longevity is a biological characteristic, within limits of variation, you could not have Elves in a sense 'immortal' – not eternal, but not dying by 'old age' — and Men mortal, more or less as they now seem to be in the Primary World – and yet sufficiently akin. I might answer that this 'biology' is only a theory, that modern 'gerontology', or whatever they call it, finds 'ageing' rather more mysterious, and less clearly inevitable in bodies of human structure. But I should actually answer: I do not care. This is a biological dictum in my imaginary world. […] Elves and Men are represented as biologically akin in this 'history', because Elves are certain aspects of Men and their talents and desires, incarnated in my little world.[3]

Tolkien tried to demonstrate that Elves and Men are two different races, not only because of their different spiritual nature but also because of their different lifespan, as well as physical and mental abilities. This explanation underlines that Tolkien was aware of the anthropological debates and the controversies of his time, which did affect his imaginary

[1] D. Fimi, op. cit., p. 151

[2] Nancy Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain, 1800-1960*, Hamden, Archon Books, 1982, in D. Fimi, op. cit., p. 152

[3] Letter 153, H. Carpenter & C. Tolkien, op. cit., p. 207

world. Furthermore, the Half-Elven seem to be a beneficial enrichment to the racial structure of Tolkien's novels. The union between Elves and Men enrich both races because it can generate powerful offspring as Elrond. The main differences between the two races are more spiritual rather than biological.[1]

To conclude this chapter, it is interesting to note how Elves hate two specific races: the Orcs and the Dwarves. If with the former their hate is strong and irremediable, with the latter it appears to be something that could grow, and change over the course of time. In chapter 3.1b, the relationship between Legolas and Gimli has been taken into consideration from the dwarven point of view. From the elven perspective, however, one can see that mutual understanding and respect on a deeper level. On the one hand, Gimli was named "'Elf-friend' because of the great love that grew between him and Legolas". On the other hand, their friendship was "greater than any that has been between Elf and Dwarf". This is both strange and interesting in two different ways. Firstly, Gimli decides to leave Middle-earth, and set out to the Sea with Legolas, because he wants to see the beauty of Galadriel again and obtain her grace.[2] Secondly, the Sea is longed by any Elf on a deep emotional level, as it has left a permanent sign on every elven soul; the Sea represents peace and greatness for the Valar, and Legolas follows his deepest desires.[3] Tolkien, using the voice of Legolas, expresses this profound sense of longing: "The Sea! Alas! I have not yet beheld it. But deep in the hearts of all my kindred lies the sea-longing, which it is perilous to stir".[4] All Elves deeply feel in their hearts the will to reach the Undying Lands of Valinor in Westernesse; some of them show also extreme feelings of longing. Like Lothlórien, which Tolkien describes

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[1] D. Fimi, op. cit., pp. 152-154

[2] J.R.R. Tolkien, *LOTR*, pp. 1080-1081

[3] P. Paron, op. cit., p. 11

[4] J.R.R. Tolkien, *LOTR*, p. 873

through the eyes of his characters like an earthly paradise, this place is magical and beautiful.[1]

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[1] Matthew Dickerson, Jonathan Evans, *Ents, Elves, and Eriador: The Environmental Vision of J.R.R. Tolkien*, Lexington, Kentucky UP, 2006, pp. 111-112

4. CONCLUSION: Was Tolkien a racist?

Tolkien's works have been discussed and evaluated countless times after their publication, and both admirers and critics have found several ambiguous race-based contents. Some of the possible racist elements might be partially explained after a deep analysis of Tolkien's works as a whole. In this regard, Tolkien's letters have proven to be very useful in order to better understand Tolkien's points of view regarding race-based accusations, as well as his defense against these claims.

As explained in chapter 3.1, Christine Chism points out some racially charged elements and distinguishes them into three separate categories. The first refers to intentional racism in Tolkien's works; the second is related to passive Eurocentrism that Tolkien might have absorbed from the socio-economic context of his times. The third refers to unintentional racism in Tolkien's early works. As Chism suggests, Tolkien tends to reject racist elements in his late works.[1]

In the foreword to the revised edition of *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien expressed his concerns about the searching for undisclosed meaning in his work, and he strongly advises his readers against looking for allegories. Tolkien also clearly denounced Hitler and his Nazi beliefs, and the "race-doctrine", while he praised the Jews, calling them a "gifted people".[2]

If one observes the accusations that have been moved against Tolkien, one will find that they are more a form of generalization and oversimplification than anything else, but a lack of a detailed analysis of Tolkien's texts. For example, in many Western cultures, but also elsewhere, the symbolism of light as good and dark as evil is associated with the dichotomy of good against evil. Tolkien's intention was to write

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[1] C. Chism, "Racism, charges of", in M. D.C. Drout, op. cit., p. 558

[2] Letter 30, H. Carpenter & C. Tolkien, op. cit.**,** p. 46

a mythology for England. Following this choice, the setting of his adventures was undoubtedly limited to North-western Europe.

As said before, Tolkien's letters are probably the best source of investigation to understand his views about race. Here below a selection of the most significant ones:

> I must say that the enclosed letter from Rutten & Loening is a bit stiff. Do I suffer this impertinence because of the possession of a German name, or do their lunatic laws require a certificate of arisch origin from all persons of all countries? ... Personally I should be inclined to refuse to give any Bestätigung (although it happens that I can), and let a German translation go hang. In any case I should object strongly to any such declaration appearing in print. I do not regard the (probable) absence of all Jewish blood as necessarily honourable; and I have many Jewish friends, and should regret giving any colour to the notion that I subscribed to the wholly pernicious and unscientific race-doctrine.[1]

Here Tolkien expresses his doubts regarding a German translation of *The Hobbit* that his publisher, Stanley Unwin, had arranged in 1938; he is questioned whether his surname is of Aryan origin, that apparently was a requirement for printing the book in German-speaking countries.

> Thank you for your letter... I regret that I am not clear as to what you intend by arisch. I am not of Aryan extraction: that is Indo-Iranian; as far as I am aware noone [sic] of my ancestors spoke Hindustani, Persian, Gypsy, or any related dialects. But if I am to understand that you are enquiring whether I am of Jewish origin, I can only reply that I regret that I appear to have no ancestors of that gifted people.[2]

The success of Tolkien's work that one might perceive today was not the same for his early readers. Rather than the literary merit and innovative elements that Tolkien might have added to the English literature, his early popularity was the result of various combined elements, since it touched some of the most "atavistic and ugly impulses of our times", as Johann Hari explained.[3] It might seem that those who accused Tolkien in

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[1] Letter 29, H. Carpenter & C. Tolkien, op. cit., p. 45

[2] Letter 30, Ibid, p. 46

[3] Johann Hari, Sunday Tribune, 14th December 2003, p. 19 in David Kerr, "Racism and Tolkien", in Patrick Harrington, *Tolkien and Politics*, London, Third Way Movement, 2003, p. 10

the first place argued that all the heroes are white-skinned, Nordic, and tall characters against dark-skinned Orcs. Furthermore, as Edward Canfield explains, those who criticized Tolkien wanted also to demonize his works and his anti-modernist point of view.[1]

So, can we consider *The Lord of the Rings* a race-based book? There is not sufficient support to conclude the existence of racial content in Tolkien's masterpiece, and most of the critics raised have no foundations in merit. For example, Hobbits are far more distant from the Nordic stereotype of tall, blue-eyed and blonde-haired Aryan men.

More likely is that Tolkien was not a racist. He knew the racial theories that were popularized in Europe by Gobineau and Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and he strongly rejected them numerous times. Race-based claims against his work seem to fail their purpose, mostly because they confound racial struggle with spiritual struggle.[2] The battle against the forces of Sauron and his loyal servants is more of a battle against the ultimate power of evil; one that corrupts who wants to be corrupted. As explained in chapter 3.1.d, those who fall for the dark powers are bent to Sauron's will, and they are not inherently evil because of their skin color, cultural characteristics or behavior.

More recently, Tolkien's works have been further analyzed due to the growing influence of cultural studies. Firstly, the analysis has been mainly brought forward by two groups of separate critics: those who see Tolkien and his works as racist, and those who see Tolkien celebrating diversity and multiculturalism. Furthermore, Tolkien's works have been studied using either the medievalist or postmodernist approach. As Reid explains, both methods of analysis can reach to equal conclusions regarding race. She also adds that the analysis of race in Tolkien's works is a recent subject, and there is room for further development. The

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[1] Patrick Harrington, TP Bragg (eds.), *Counter Culture, an Anthology*, Black Cat Distribution, 2006, p. 89

[2] P. Harrington, *Tolkien*, op. cit., pp. 10-12

concept of race appeared in European cultures only in modern times; therefore one might argue that the idea of race, gender and class studies are confined to contemporary works, excluding earlier historical periods.[1]

Secondly, after the release of Peter Jackson's movies in the early 2000s, another aspect worth noting is that claims of race-based content in Tolkien's works have been directly influenced by Jackson's films. The reception of Tolkien's works after the release of the movies has been superficial; those who criticize Tolkien do not take into account his texts but only the movies, which can cause possible errors in the analysis.[2]

To conclude, the impact of Tolkien's works on its reader has been enormously important. The imaginary adventures of the characters of *The Lord of the Rings* have had a massive influence on modern literature, while they still continue to be enjoyed by millions of readers. The world that Tolkien created must be seen as a complete work that celebrates his imagination; focusing too much on race-based claims only distracts the reader's attention from actually enjoying a masterpiece of fantasy literature.

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[1] Robin Anne Reid, "Race in Tolkien Studies: A Bibliographic Essay", in Christopher Vaccaro, Yvette Kisor (eds.), *Tolkien and Alterity*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2017, pp. 33-36

[2] Robin Anne Reid, "Race in Tolkien Studies: A Bibliographic Essay", in C. Vaccaro, I. Kisor (eds.), op. cit., p. 39

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