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J. R. R. Tolkien in Fantastic Literature

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ABSTRACT

J.R.R. Tolkien in Fantastic Literature deals with J.R.R. Tolkien's role and influence in what is now known as Modern Fantasy. It explores the evolution of the fantastic throughout the years as well as its characteristic elements and subgenres following the distinction proposed by Tzvetan Todorov and annotations of Rosemary Jackson. Tolkien's works are first analysed as a saga with a common setting and history and secondly as part of the literary tradition of the fantastic. The peculiar features of his writings and their contrast with recent works together with contemporary writer's opinions reinforce his position as the pioneer of Modern Fantasy.

KEY WORDS: *J.R.R. Tolkien, Fantastic Literature, Marvelous, Uncanny, Fairy-Tales, Escapism*

J.R.R. Tolkien in Fantastic Literature aborda el papel y la influencia de J.R.R. Tolkien en lo que hoy se conoce como Fantasía Moderna. Explora la evolución de lo fantástico a lo través de los años así como sus elementos más característicos y subgeneros siguiendo la distinción de Tzvetan Todorov y anotaciones de Rosemary Jackson. En primer lugar las obras de Tolkien son analizadas como una saga con un marco e historia común y posteriormente como parte de la tradición de la literatura fantástica. Las particularidades de sus obras y su contraste con obras más recientes junto con la opinión de escritores contemporáneos refuerzan su posición como el pionero de la Fantasía Moderna.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *J.R.R. Tolkien, Literatura Fantástica, Maravilloso, Sorprendente, Cuento de Hadas, Escapismo*

INTRODUCTION

This final-year dissertation explores fantastic literature focusing on J.R.R Tolkien's writings. I have chosen this author since his main works constitute a huge and unfinished saga which has inspired numerous authors and has been very influential in the history of literary fantasy. I have divided this dissertation in four parts:

1. FANTASTIC LITERATURE

With the essential features to understand what fantastic literature is, its subgenres and its main target.

2. J.R.R TOLKIEN:

An introduction about J.R.R Tolkien's life in order to understand his literature and a general review of the works the dissertation is based on.

3. TOLKIEN'S LITERATURE:

The role of his writings within the fantastic genre and additional elements and weaknesses that can be found in them.

4. POST-TOLKIEN WORKS:

Brief review of the influence of Tolkien in later authors and some significant differences between their works.

*However wild its events, however fantastic or terrible the adventures, it can give to child or man that hears it, when the 'turn' comes, a catch of the breath, a beat and lifting of the heart, near to (or indeed accompanied by) tears, as keen as that given by any form of literary art, and having a peculiar quality.*¹

Definition of 'Fantasy' by
J.R.R Tolkien in *Tales from the Perilous Realm*

1 FANTASTIC LITERATURE

1.1 Concept

Through the years, it has been difficult to define what the word *Fantasy* means. What we commonly understand by it is the existence of fantastic elements or events which would be impossible or improbable in a world ruled by the same laws that rule the world we live in². The Oxford Dictionary defines *fantasy* as:

[MASS NOUN] The faculty or activity of imagining impossible or improbable things

1.1 [COUNT NOUN] A fanciful mental image, typically one on which a person often dwells and which reflects their conscious or unconscious wishes

1.2 [COUNT NOUN] An idea with no basis in reality

1.3 A genre of imaginative fiction involving magic and adventure, especially in a setting other than the real world.

As we can see, each definition incorporates the concepts of *reality* and *imagination*. However, both *reality* and *imagination* are two notions which can also be related to other types of literature: a work based on reality will also have some elements created by the author's imagination such as dialogue or events.

So, why is fantastic literature so different from any other type of literature? In the same way we need to go through the history of a country in order to understand its culture, we need to look at the history of fantastic literature throughout the centuries in order to find the characteristics which distinguish it from the rest of literary forms.

The first known literary works have Greek and Roman origins and they were based on myths and legends which were considered as real in the aforementioned cultures. The main works dated from that period are *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* by Homer and both of them are set in the Trojan War, during or after it. Greek and Roman literature have an oral tradition which means we only keep some fragments of the totality of works that existed. Fragments which have been modified through the years until they were finally written.

After the fall of Rome, Greek and Roman literary styles were mostly discarded and religion became the focus of literary works whose main topic came to be the life of saints and kings. With the First Crusade in 1095 literature is divided into two main branches under the different values and beliefs of the two belligerent cultures: on the one hand, the image of the knight takes on a considerable relevance while, on the other hand, Islamic culture focuses on scientific investigation and preservation of philosophical writings from ancient Greece.

Nevertheless, with the discovery of America in 1492 the way of seeing the world changes, and so does the way of writing. A new form and predecessor of the novel appears with *Utopia* by Thomas More; book in which Thomas More describes an ideal society contrasting its political, economic and cultural aspects with the ones of the society of his time. In that way, he uses the representation of an idealized world in order to criticize the problems of the society of his time as well as a guide to avoid those problems in the future.

It is also in this period –known as the Renaissance– when the ancient Greek and Roman traditions are revived: old genres like comedy and tragedy in drama are represented again, but in this case the moral purpose is left out and they become a way of entertainment. In addition, new forms of literature are developed and spread due to the invention of the printing press, and what is considered as the first novel appears with *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes, a work whose purpose is to parody the classic chivalresque literature.

In the Baroque period, the classic forms used in the Renaissance continue but they take on a pessimistic outlook on the world as well as the allusion to mythological elements. Nevertheless, with the publication of the *Encyclopédie* between 1751 and 1772 in France and its influence on authors like Montesquieu, Rousseau and Voltaire, a change takes place concerning the topics, forms and values which had prevailed in literature so far. This period is called The Age of Enlightenment or Age of Reason: the scientific method is developed as a way of knowing based on reason over imagination, superstition, faith or tradition; and values like tolerance, equality and freedom; and

rejection and opposition to tyranny are promoted. In literature, classic Greek and Roman authors are considered again as a model to follow and rules are created as a guide to writing. Works acquire an instructive purpose making both fantasy and imagination to be considered suspicious, if not to be directly rejected. Those ideas of the Enlightenment will stand behind important social and political events like the French Revolution and the American Declaration of Independence, among others.

However, by the end of the century the Romantic period arises in opposition to those ideas of the Age of Reason. New settings and forms are developed to replace the established models: stories are set in dark and sinister places where fantasy and superstition can take place. In literature, a new form of writing appears –the novel– and it is divided into different variations: historical novel, gothic novel, autobiographical novel, adventure novel, etc.

It is in this period when the concept of fantasy as we know it nowadays has its first outbreak. Gothic literature sets the basis for the use of imagination and fantastic elements as a process of writing. But there are still some differences and subgenres within fantastic literature itself. In the following section I will explore its main characteristics as well as the differences between its subgenres following the analysis proposed by Tzvetan Todorov in his work *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* and some annotations of Rosemary Jackson's *Fantasy: The literature of Subversion*.

1.2 Characteristics of *the fantastic*³

A central aspect of fantastic literature is that it can function only within the realm of fiction. That is, the fantastic narrates events which, even if connected to the real, are unlikely to occur in everyday life and which cannot be explained by the laws of our world since the laws that rule the “other world” are unknown to us.⁴

Another characteristic is that the fantastic is related to the concept of doubt. On the one hand, authors like Dostoevsky defend the idea of the fantastic as a subgenre which “must come so close to the real that you should almost believe in it”⁵. While, on the

other hand, authors like Todorov assert that fantastic texts should be presented as real facts in order to make both the reader and the protagonist hesitate as to whether those facts are truly real or not:

The fantastic requires the fulfilment of three conditions. First, the text must oblige the reader to consider the world of the characters as a world of living persons and to hesitate between a natural and supernatural explanation of the events described. Second, this hesitation may also be experienced by a character; thus the reader's role is entrusted to a character, and at the same time the hesitation is represented, it becomes one of the themes of the work [...]. Third, the reader must adopt a certain attitude with regard to the text: he will reject allegorical as well as 'poetic' interpretations.⁶

The confusion in the protagonist's mind as a result of a contradiction between the two worlds affects the reader in a similar way. However, that hesitation may be resolved with the final identification of the events as real facts or as the fruit of imagination or the result of an illusion, as we will see below.

Regarding fantastic narrative formulas, the one of the defining elements is the narrative voice. Since the fantastic text thrives on hesitation, the narrator could simply be a character inside the story who is lying about the facts he is telling us in order to create that confusion in the reader's mind. Nonetheless, in that case, the reader could just assume events as unreal and the purpose of doubt would not be valid anymore. It is due to that reason that the narrator of the fantastic is usually an impersonal narrator. In other words, he is not a character but an observer or agent of the scenes he is describing. In that way, his "version of history is not questioned and the tale seems to deny the process of its own telling."⁷

Another aspect within the narration is time. Todorov says that "if we know the end of a fantastic narrative before we begin it, its whole functioning is distorted, for the reader can no longer follow the process of identification step by step."⁸ So even if there are flashbacks or flash-forwards in the story, it is important to keep the end of the story hidden until the very end of the text.

As for the characters, they receive the events without being able to change them. That is, protagonists as well as the reader maintain a passive relation to history. Rosemary Jackson explains this bond in a very clear way with the following sentence: “Things ‘happen’, ‘are done to’ protagonists, told to the reader, from a position of omniscience and authority, making the reader unquestioningly passive.”⁹

Furthermore, there are some additional characteristic figures which typically appear in fantastic narrative. Those are: ghosts, vampires, the death personified –usually presented as something negative– werewolves, doubles, monsters or beasts, and inanimate objects which come to life due to magic powers, among others. All of them tend to be surrounded by a dark atmosphere commonly associated to evil.

If we look at the different works which have been considered as fantastic literature throughout the centuries, we can also see how many of them share some elements such as:

- ✓ **The metamorphosis;** by which a man can change his human form into inanimate objects or shadows or/and animate beings like animals. It leads sometimes to the loss of form and to invisibility.
- ✓ **The existence of supernatural beings** which are more powerful than men and consequently, they have power over human destiny.
- ✓ **A generalized determinism;** everything happens for casual reasons which respond to a supernatural order. Commonly, this determinism is known as chance or fortune.
- ✓ **No limit between matter and mind.** As a consequence of that generalized determinism, the barriers which divide the physical and the mental disappear leading to a transition from mind to matter. This process in turns can originate a multiplication of personality.
- ✓ **No frontier between the object and the observer.** Since the subject is no longer separated from the object, communication is made directly, and the whole world participates in a system of generalized communication.¹⁰
- ✓ **Dualism;** as the existence of multiple personalities within the same individual. This source of otherness can be originated:

- In the self: the excessive knowledge, rationality or the mis-application of the human will originate the other.
 - Due to an external source: fear is originated when *the self* suffers an external attack of some sort which makes it part of the other.
- ✓ **Use of the mirror**, as a way of access to that other fantastic world.¹¹

In addition to the elements mentioned above, we can also find other themes which are the result of psychological states –hallucinations, paranoia, madness, dreams – or which are generated by similar unconscious desires. Most of the latter are presented in their excessive form such as incest, homosexuality or the one called *supernumerary* love. Others are simply related to cruelty and violence, or the love for death like necrophilia, cannibalism or life after death.¹²

1.3 Purpose of fantastic literature

As we have just seen, fantastic literature has characteristic features which separate it from the rest of subgenres within literature. Each of those peculiarities has different purposes which together achieve the main target of the fantastic: Escapism. As Jackson states in her book, “Literature of the fantastic has been claimed as ‘transcending’ reality, ‘escaping’ the human condition and constructing superior alternate, ‘secondary’ worlds.”¹³ The fantastic offers to the reader the possibility of seeing his desires represented in that other magic world while making him forget real problems of life: capitalism, injustice, hunger, poverty, sadness and death. It is here where topics such as “the desire to cease ‘to be’” appear as a way of avoiding those difficulties of confrontation.¹⁴

Among other goals of the fantastic we can find –in this case through its narration– a dense organization of the plot, which maintains the suspense; and a tautological function, which allows the repetition of words with a similar meaning in order to describe the fantastic universe. A universe which “has no reality outside language”.¹⁵

1.4 The marvelous and the uncanny¹⁶

Todorov introduces in his book two new genres, the marvelous and the uncanny, as the genres which turn fantastic literature into a subgenre dependent on them. This distinction is showed in a clear way in the development of Gothic literature throughout the 18th and 19th centuries: in it we can distinguish two tendencies: the first one consists on giving a rational explanation of the supernatural events – which corresponds to the uncanny–, while the second one simply accepts those events without responding to logical explanations – the marvelous.

In the first tendency or the *uncanny*, we can split the reasons that explain the supernatural into two groups: in the first one, supernatural events are the result of protagonists' imagination, so they have actually not taken place as such. To this group belong those events whose origins are dreams, the influence of drugs or madness. The second group is formed by events which have actually occurred but may be explained rationally, such as accidents, coincidences, tricks or illusions.

An example of works that belong to this first tendency of Gothic literature or the *uncanny* are Edgar Allan Poe's stories: his tales are full of events which seem supernatural but whose explanation can be found at the end. That is the case of *The Fall of the House of Usher* or *Murders in the Rue Morgue*.

The second tendency or the *marvelous* is the one which is closest to pure fantasy since the supernatural receives no explanation. The events are just considered as the result of magic or supernatural forces that exist in a world whose laws are completely different to ours. As a result, those events do not provoke any particular reaction in the reader nor in the protagonists, who finally accept the supernatural.

It is in this genre where we can locate J.R.R Tolkien's works, which we will explore in the following sections.

2 J.R.R TOLKIEN

2.1 Life

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (1892-1973) was born in South Africa in 1892. His parents were English and when he has three years old, he moved to England with his mother and brother because the weather in Africa was harmful to his health. At the age of twelve, his mother died and he and his brother were educated by Fr. Francis Xavier Morgan, a Catholic priest who provided moral and economic support to Tolkien's mother when she was alive. In the orphanage, John Ronald met and fell in love with Edith Mary Bratt. But as she was three years older than him, Fr. Francis prohibited him from seeing her until he was twenty one. When Tolkien reached that age they became engaged and three years later they got married. After he graduated with honors in English Language from Oxford University in 1915, John Ronald joined the army. When he was out the country because of military reasons, he came down with trench fever. It was in the two months he spent recovering when he started to write some of the tales which lately will result in *The Silmarillion*. After that he was transferred to Yorkshire but because of some relapses in the fever he returned to Oxford in 1917.

In 1925 he became Anglo-Saxon teacher at Oxford University. During his time there, Tolkien started to write *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. He had written some poems and short stories before but this was the first time he published one of his works: in 1937 *The Hobbit*, originally written for his children, was published and he appealed to adults too.

In 1945 John Ronald became the Merton Teacher of English Language and Literature at Oxford, position in which he remained until he retired in 1959. Six years later *The Lord of the Rings* was published and Tolkien, his wife and their children moved to Poole. However, after his wife's death in 1971 Tolkien came back to Oxford, place in which he remained until he died in 1973.

J.R.R Tolkien received many honors for his achievements. Among them, his degrees of Doctor Honoris Causa and his appointment as a Commander of the Order of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II are the most notable.

2.2 Works

J.R.R Tolkien's main works can be divided into four categories such as poems, children's stories, fairytales and stories based mostly on Nordic and English myths and legends. However, even if his writings can be catalogued into specific categories, most of them usually appear in the same work so they cannot be studied separately from the rest of them. In this and the following sections I will not consider those literary pieces which are based on mythology and legends from different cultures like in the case of *The Fall of Arthur* or *Roverandom* but I will focus on those books which have a direct connection with the fantastic and, curiously, are set in the same literary universe. It is also worth noting that some of the books I am going to discuss were not finished nor published by J.R.R Tolkien but by his son Christopher Tolkien, who compiled unfinished annotations and diaries his father was writing before he died. This reason together with the fact that J.R.R Tolkien wrote some of these diaries without the intention of publishing them explain why there are some contradictions in the plots.

The first book is *The Silmarillion*. It narrates the origin of the world and the different creatures which live in it: Eru Ilúvatar, the Supreme Being, created the Valar, eternal spirits with whom, from the music, he created Arda –the fantastic world all the stories are set in. Ilúvatar gave them the chance to govern and manage that new world which, after some time, is inhabited by the elves, the First Born. The book also narrates how humans, dwarves and other creatures like orcs, balrogs and ents appear for first time. Furthermore, it tells us the numerous events and conflicts which result in the division of the world into two separate regions: Valinor, inhabited by immortal creatures like the Valar and elves (and some half-elves and humans exceptionally), area separated from the rest of the world to which only elves have access; and the Earth, where the rest of creatures struggle to survive. The end of the work narrates the creation of the Rings of Power by Sauron –the “chief lieutenant” of the first Dark Lord-and the war that this

causes, called the War of the Last Alliance, which constitute the basis and are the precedents of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*.

The Silmarillion was originally written as annotations and without the objective of being published. It was Christopher Tolkien who compiled those annotations and published them as a set under the title of *The Silmarillion*.

The case of *The Hobbit* is completely different to the one we have just seen. J.R.R Tolkien wrote it as a story for his children and it was the first work he published. As I have just said, it happens after the War of the Last Alliance and it narrates the adventures of a group of dwarves and a hobbit who reclaim the Lonely Mountain and the treasure the dragon Smaug guards. One of the events which occurs in it—the finding of the One Ring by the hobbit who follows the company of dwarves, Bilbo Baggins— is the precedent of *The Lord of the Rings* story.

Unlike *The Silmarillion*, *Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-earth* is a recompilation of J.R.R Tolkien's tales as he wrote them and without any modification. Those are uncompleted stories which provide more information about events, characters or places which appear in *The Lord of the Rings* and also tell new tales which do not appear completely in *The Silmarillion*.

The fourth work is *The Children of Húrin*, and even if it was published as an independent book, the story also appears in *Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-earth* mixed with other events. It narrates the history of Húdir and the curse that determines his life and the life of his children: Húdir and his brother Huor are the only humans who know where the secret city of Gondolin is located. When Húdir is captured by Morgoth, the Dark Lord, after the Battle of Unnumbered Tears and he refused to reveal such location, Morgoth put a curse on him and his descendants. The rest of the book tells us the misfortunes and terrible end of his son Túrin and his daughter Niënor, finishing with Húrin next to the body of his wife, in the same place his children died.

The Lord of the Rings is the most popular novel written by Tolkien. He started to write it in 1937 but due to his extreme perfectionism it took about a decade to finish and even after its publication in 1954, first J.R.R Tolkien and then his son Christopher continued with its numerous revisions and corrections. The book narrates the continuation of one key event which happened in *The Hobbit*: Bilbo Baggins found the One Ring while he was going with the company of dwarves to the Lonely Mountain to recover the treasure the dragon Smaug guarded. Now, Bilbo gives the Ring to his nephew, Frodo Baggins, who will have to keep it safe from the enemy –Sauron and his allies– and take it to the same mountain it was forged in order to definitely destroy not only the Ring but also Sauron himself. The story also includes the defeat of Sauron’s forces by the last alliance of humans and elves in the Battle of the Pelennor Fields, and the end of the Third Age –time period *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* take place in– with the War of the Ring. The last part of the book gives us a brief summary of the organization of the kingdoms after the fall of Sauron while telling us how elves abandon Middle-Earth giving rise to the Age of Men or Fourth Age.

The last of the works I have chosen in order to analyze Tolkien’s literature is *Tales from the Perilous Realm*. It is a compilation of some of his less-known stories, such as *Roverandom*, that are not set in the same fantastic world all of the others are set in. It is due to this reason that I am not going to discuss them. In the same way, there is also a collection of poems which I am not going to include either since, even if they talk about one of the characters who appears in *The Lord of the Rings*, Tom Bombadil, all of them are “produced” by the same character and they do not present an objective or analyzable concept but they simply tell us conversations Tom Bombadil has with different creatures and animals as well as some events that happen to him. All of them narrated by Tom Bombadil himself.

3 TOLKIEN'S LITERATURE

3.1 Tolkien in fantastic literature

Now that we have seen a general overview about the plot of the books which constitute the most famous *saga* written by Tolkien, we can analyze their elements following the characteristics explored when we discussed the fantastic, in order to understand in a better way Tolkien's literature.

Tolkien's literature is considered within the Romance narrative, more specifically within Fairy Tales, whose main difference with Gothic literature is their Happy Ending –which Tolkien referred to as Eucatastrophe, as we will see later. As seen in the previous section, the fantastic is subordinated to the existence of two genres: the marvelous and the uncanny. As I said the uncanny consists on the rational explanation of the supernatural events which appear in the story; while the marvelous simply accepts those fantastic and irrational events without trying to rationally understand them. Tolkien's literature corresponds to the latter subgenre: supernatural events are narrated like real ones and even if the reader and some of the protagonists do not know how they are produced, they do not hesitate about whether they are truly real or not. Tolkien himself stated that “if there is any satire present in the tale, one thing must not be made fun of, the magic itself. That must in that story be taken seriously, neither laughed at nor explained away.”¹⁷ So he defended the principal characteristic of the marvelous: no rational explanation of events. Tolkien also claimed that:

Fantasy is not a lower but a higher form of Art, indeed the most nearly pure form, and so (when achieved) the most potent. [Many people] dislike any meddling with the Primary World, or such small glimpses of it as are familiar to them. They, therefore, stupidly and even maliciously confound Fantasy with Dreaming, in which there is no Art; and with mental disorders, in which there is not even control: with delusion and hallucination.¹⁸

This reinforces the classification of his literature within the marvelous since he refused the idea of the fantastic as a result of dreams, hallucinations, influence of drugs or madness, characteristics we saw in the uncanny.

Regarding the other elements explored when I talked about distinctive features of fantastic literature, the first one I mentioned was the concept of doubt. I said that the fantastic looks for the hesitation in both reader and protagonist's mind and in order to achieve it, the narrator is not a character inside the story but rather an impersonal narrator that makes the reader and the protagonist question if the facts are genuinely real since they are told by an observer of the scenes. However, in Tolkien's literature, and in most of the works which belong to the marvelous, though the events are usually told as real by an impersonal narrator, they are simply considered as a result of supernatural forces and the reader as well as the protagonists simply accept them as such.

The second element is time. As we saw, Todorov claims that the story has to follow a linear development in order for the reader to "follow the process of identification step by step". Tolkien in its works respected this feature by maintaining the end of the story until the very end: the reader and the protagonists have no way to discover what is going to happen until it happens. However, it is worth mentioning that in his stories prophecies usually appear as a clue of what may be occur in the future, but under any circumstance those prophecies discover when or how it is going to be. For instance, at the end of the book of *The Lord of the Rings* we observe one of those prophecies which appeared in *Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-Earth* and how its meaning is not clear until it finally happens:

[...]And thus the words of Glorfindel long before to King Eärnur were fulfilled, that the Witch-king would not fall by the hand of man. For it is said in the songs of the Mark that in this deed Éowyn had the aid of Théoden's esquire, and that he also was not a Man but a Halfling out of a far country.¹⁹

The third characteristic discussed was related to the characters. I said that they, as well as the reader, maintain a passive relation to history receiving the events without being able to change them. In Tolkien's literature this idea of a passive role is directly related to another characteristic element of the fantastic: a generalized determinism. In his books there are a lot of examples of how the characters simply accept their destiny and how everything is organized responding to supernatural forces. Some of them would be:

- The whole story of *The Children of Húrin*: When Húrin is cursed by Morgoth, his descendants cannot escape from the damnation. First, one of his daughters dies because of a plague. Secondly, his son Túrin has to escape from the hidden Elven realm of Doriath when the king's favourite –who hates humans– tries to humiliate him but dies falling in a lake. Túrin, after some years living in the forest and looking for his mother and sister, finally finds his sister. However, since her memory has been erased by the same dragon Túrin attacked once and he did not recognize her due to the fact he left before she was born, they both fall in love, get married and she becomes pregnant. Afterwards, the dragon attacks again and Túrin is badly injured but just before the dragon dies, it confesses that Niënor is Túrin's sister and returns her memory back. Finally, Niënor finds Túrin and thinking that he is dead, she kills herself. When Túrin realized what happens, he kills himself too in the same place she did.

At the end of the story, Húrin appears again: he, whom Morgoth had forced to see everything, finally goes to the same place his children died. And in there, he finds his wife, who after a brief chat with him dies too.

- How the Only Ring *abandons* Gollum ending up in hands of Bilbo Baggins who in turn gives the ring to his nephew Bilbo, the only hobbit able to support the negative influence of the Ring without succumbing to its power. This idea is even defended by Gandalf when he says:” ‘Behind that there was something else at work, beyond any design of the Ring-maker. I can put it no plainer than by saying that Bilbo was meant to find the Ring, and not by its maker. In which case you also were meant to have it.’”²⁰
- The fact that Gollum initially follows Frodo in order to kill him and steal *his* ring and how Frodo, by refusing to kill Gollum when he has the opportunity, finally is able to destroy the Only Ring: Gollum guides him to Mordor, region in where the Ring has to be destroyed, and when the Ring seems to control Frodo's will Gollum attacks him and it is due to that fight that the Ring can be destroyed.
- How Sam, Frodo's gardener and his most loyal friend, finds Frodo just before he abandons the rest of the company to go to Mordor and destroy the Ring. It is in that moment that Frodo says to him “Come along! It is plain that we were meant to go together.”²¹ If Sam would not have been with Frodo when he was attacked

by Shelob, the giant spider which lair is the only secret entrance to Mordor, Sauron's orcs had found the Ring and Sauron had recovered all his power being able to govern Middle-Earth.

- Gandalf and his relation with elves and hobbits: Saruman and Gandalf among others were the wizards that had been sent by the Valar to help Middle-Earth in its struggle against Sauron. While Saruman focuses on humans and the study of the Rings of Power, Gandalf likes to spend his time with elves and hobbits. It is due to this relation with them that he is able to help, first Bilbo and then Frodo, in order to defeat Sauron forever.

We also saw other elements that usually appear in works considered within the fantasy genre and, as we will see now, were used by Tolkien too. Some examples of them are:

- Regarding the metamorphosis the clearest one is the figure of Sauron in *The Lord of the Rings*. He is described as a spirit without shape as can be observed in Appendix A: "Sauron was indeed caught in the wreck of Númenor, so that the bodily form in which he long had walked perished; but he fled back to Middle-Earth, a spirit of hatred borne upon a dark wind. He was unable ever again to assume a form that seemed fair to men[...]" However, there are other characters that change their form or lose it such as Saruman when he dies:

[...] about the body of Saruman a grey mist gathered, and rising slowly to a great height like smoke from a fire, as a pale shrouded figure it loomed over the Hill. For a moment it wavered, looking to the West; but out of the West came a cold wind, and it bent away, and with a sigh dissolved into nothing.²²

And Elwing in *The Silmarillion*, who is turned into a white bird by the Lord of Waters Ulmo, turned back into a human again and finally into a woman with wings.

- Concerning the existence of supernatural beings more powerful than men first there is Eru Ilúvatar, a Supreme Being able to create life and matter; then the Valar, a type of semi gods that can also control nature and life as well as human destiny –as in the case of Morgoth and the curse he put on Húrin and his

descendants—; and finally the Maiar, creatures of the kin of the Valar but with less power and subordinated to them (like Gandalf and Sauron among others).

- The element of no limit between matter and mind is frequently related to the lack of frontier between the object and observer in *The Lord of the Rings*: It can be found in dreams used as a way of communication between the characters—as in the case of Gandalf trying to tell Frodo that he was captured—in people able to communicate in a mental way—Galadriel—, and in the use of objects in order to connect two or more minds—the Palantirs.
- Gollum / Smeagol is the most obvious example of dualism. The existence of his two personalities is originated by the evil influence of the Ring and it usually leads to the dialogue between both parts. Here it is an example of those conversations in which he talks, argues and reaches an agreement with himself:

‘Sméagol promised,’ said the first thought.

‘Yes, yes, my precious,’ came the answer, ‘we promised: to save our Precious, not to let Him have it – never. But it’s going to Him, yes, nearer every step. What’s the hobbit going to do with it, we wonders, yes we wonders.’

‘I don’t know. I can’t help it. Master’s got it. Sméagol promised to help the master.’

‘Yes, yes, to help the master: the master of the Precious. But if we was master, then we could help ourselves, yes, and still keep promises.’

‘But Sméagol said he would be very very good. Nice hobbit! He took cruel rope off Sméagol’s leg. He speaks nicely to me.’

‘Very very good, eh, my precious? Let’s be good, good as fish, sweet one, but to ourselves. Not hurt the nice hobbit, of course, no, no.’

‘But the Precious holds the promise,’ the voice of Sméagol objected.

‘Then take it,’ said the other, ‘and let’s hold it ourselves! Then we shall be master, gollum! Make the other hobbit, the nasty suspicious hobbit, make him crawl, yes, gollum!’

‘But not the nice hobbit?’

‘Oh no, not if it doesn’t please us. Still he’s a Baggins, my precious, yes, a Baggins. A Baggins stole it. He found it and he said nothing, nothing. We hates Bagginses.’

‘No, not this Baggins.’
‘Yes, every Baggins. All peoples that keep the Precious. We must have it!’
‘But He’ll see, He’ll know. He’ll take it from us!’
‘He sees. He knows. He heard us make silly promises – against His orders, yes. Must take it. The Wraiths are searching. Must take it.’
‘Not for Him!’
‘No, sweet one. See, my precious: if we has it, then we can escape, even from Him, eh? Perhaps we grows very strong, stronger than Wraiths. Lord Sméagol? Gollum the Great? The Gollum! Eat fish every day, three times a day, fresh from the sea. Most Precious Gollum! Must have it. We wants it, we wants it, we wants it!’
‘But there’s two of them. They’ll wake too quick and kill us,’ whined Sméagol in a last effort. ‘Not now. Not yet.’
‘We wants it! But’ – and here there was a long pause, as if a new thought had wakened. ‘Not yet, eh? Perhaps not. She might help. She might, yes.’
‘No, no! Not that way!’ wailed Sméagol.
‘Yes! We wants it! We wants it!’ Each time that the second thought spoke, Gollum’s long hand crept out slowly, pawing towards Frodo, and then was drawn back with a jerk as Sméagol spoke again. Finally both arms, with long fingers flexed and twitching, clawed towards his neck.²³

Other characteristic elements of the fantastic that are also used by Tolkien in his literature would be the use of the mirror as a window to protagonists’ subconscious –in *The Lord of the Rings* Galadriel creates a mirror with a basin filled with water and asks Frodo to look inside–; and excessive forms of unconscious desires as incest –*The Children of Húrin* book and the relationship between Arwen and Aragorn– or life after death –elves’ soul coming back to Valinor when elves die –and resurrection – in *The Lord of the Rings*, Gandalf rising from the dead after he dies in the fight against the Balrog of Moria, and the army that Aragorn brings to life when he goes into the Paths of the Dead; and in *The Silmarillion* the story of Beren and Lúthien.

All those characteristics together, as we saw when we explored the fantastic, constitute and achieve the main purpose of the fantastic: to escape and avoid the problems of human life. However, when Tolkien talked about this evasion or escapism as the principal target of Fairy Tales, he rejected the “tone of scorn or pity” that is directly related to the term nowadays. Furthermore, he defended the idea that Fairy-Stories should not be considered as stories for children and therefore “puerile” or naïve since he

assured that adults need more than children the escape and consolation that Fairy-Tales provide. As he said: “In what the misusers of Escape are fond of calling Real Life, Escape is evidently as a rule very practical, and may even be heroic.”²⁴ And which is the oldest and deepest fear human race has always tried to avoid? Death. Daily problems are nothing compared to the fact of ceasing to exist or the loss of a loved person. Stories about elves clearly show this desire to escape from mortality. But in turn, they are used as a lesson to make the reader realize the responsibilities and troubles this implies in order they can accept death as a natural process of life.

So, how else could Fairy-Stories provide that consolation and help the reader to see the real world from a different perspective? Escapism can make us forget our problems, but we need something else that can help us when we *return* to reality. This is achieved with the Consolation of the Happy Ending. Tolkien called it “Eucatastrophe” and he asserted that “The *eucatastrophic* tale is the true form of fairy-tale, and its highest function.”²⁵ However, the Happy Ending does not imply the existence of a perfect world in which nothing bad can happen. Indeed, both sadness and failure need to be presented in the stories since both of them are necessary to “the joy of deliverance”. It is worth notice the description Tolkien gave comparing Cristian life to Fairy-Tales. He stated the following:

I would venture to say that approaching the Christian Story from this direction, it has long been my feeling (a joyous feeling) that God redeemed the corrupt making creatures, men, in a way fitting to this aspect, as to others, of their strange nature. The Gospels contain a fairy-story, or a story of a larger kind which embraces all the essence of fairy-stories. They contain many marvels—peculiarly artistic, beautiful, and moving: ‘mythical’ in their perfect, self-contained significance; and among the marvels is the greatest and most complete conceivable eucatastrophe. [...] The Birth of Christ is the eucatastrophe of Man’s history. The Resurrection is the eucatastrophe of the story of the Incarnation. This story begins and ends in joy. [...] The joy would have exactly the same quality, if not the same degree, as the joy which the ‘turn’ in a fairy-story gives: such joy has the very taste of primary truth. (Otherwise its name would not be joy.) It looks forward (or backward: the direction in this regard is unimportant) to the Great Eucatastrophe. The Christian joy, the *Gloria*, is of the same kind; but it is pre-eminently (infinitely, if our capacity were not finite) high and joyous. Because this story

is supreme; and it is true. Art has been verified. God is the Lord, of angels, and of men—and of elves. Legend and History have met and fused. But in God's kingdom the presence of the greatest does not depress the small. Redeemed Man is still man. Story, fantasy, still go on, and should go on. The Evangelium has not abrogated legends; it has hallowed them, especially the 'happy ending'. The Christian has still to work, with mind as well as body, to suffer, hope, and die; but he may now perceive that all his bents and faculties have a purpose, which can be redeemed. So great is the bounty with which he has been treated that he may now, perhaps, fairly dare to guess that in Fantasy he may actually assist in the effoliation and multiple enrichment of creation. All tales may come true; and yet, at the last, redeemed, they may be as like and as unlike the forms that we give them as Man, finally redeemed, will be like and unlike the fallen that we know.²⁶

In J.R.R Tolkien's stories, the concept of Happy Ending is closely linked to the idea of justice. In most of his works the Happy Ending usually includes not only a good ending for the protagonists but also a fair one. Evil and greedy people are punished by destiny as a consequence of their bad actions while good and honorable people are rewarded. For instance, in *The Hobbit* we have three examples:

- ❖ The Master, who only cares about money and power while his people live in poor conditions. His end is described in the following way: "The old Master had come to a bad end. Bard had given him much gold for the help of the Lake-people, but being of the kind that easily catches such disease he fell under the dragon-sickness, and took most of the gold and fled with it, and died of starvation in the Waste, deserted by his companions."²⁷
- ❖ Thorin's family. Thorin and his nephews Fili and Kili die: Thorin is the main character who wants to recover the treasure dragon Smaug guarded. However, when he and his company get it and people from Lake-Town ask for a part to repair the damage caused by Smaug after the dwarves woke it up, he refuses to share it. This situation leads to a battle in which Thorin, Fili and Kili die and the greed and selfishness of his family –the result of a Sauron's curse– disappear with them.

- ❖ Bard, who killed the dragon and helped in the deal with Thorin about the treasure. About him the book narrates how he “had rebuilt the town in Dale and men had gathered to him from the Lake and from South and West, and all the valley had become tilled again and rich, and the desolation was now filled with birds and blossoms in spring and fruit and feasting in autumn. And Lake-town was refounded and was more prosperous than ever, and much wealth went up and down the Running River; and there was friendship in those parts between elves and dwarves and men.”²⁸

In *The Lord of the Rings* the fair and happy end occurs with the end of the enmity between Bilbo and the the Bracegirdles of Hardbottle –Lotho dies and his mother Lobelia gives Bag End back to Frodo and goes to live with her own people. Later, when she dies, she gives all her money to help hobbits who lost their house because of the troubles– and with a perfect year for the hobbits:

Altogether 1420 in the Shire was a marvellous year. Not only was there wonderful sunshine and delicious rain, in due times and perfect measure, but there seemed something more: an air of richness and growth, and a gleam of a beauty beyond that of mortal summers that flicker and pass upon this Middle-earth. All the children born or begotten in that year, and there were many, were fair to see and strong, and most of them had a rich golden hair that had before been rare among hobbits. The fruit was so plentiful that young hobbits very nearly bathed in strawberries and cream; and later they sat on the lawns under the plum-trees and ate, until they had made piles of stones like small pyramids or the heaped skulls of a conqueror, and then they moved on. And no one was ill, and everyone was pleased, except those who had to mow the grass.²⁹

3.2 Tolkienian elements

Apart from the characteristic features of the fantastic, Tolkien’s writings present other important elements which lend his literature a personal and unique style and have been used as a model for other authors. On the one hand there are classical concepts such as the Eternal Fight between Good and Evil, which constitute the prototypical example of Fairy-Tale plots and is connected to the idea of light vs darkness: light represents good and security, a weapon against dark forces like the Star-Glass Frodo and Sam use

against the giant spider Shelob; while darkness contains evil and cruel creatures which serve dark forces. For instance, when Sauron sends his army against Minas Tirith, he creates artificial fumes in order to cover sunlight and help his forces in the battle. On the other hand there are new elements introduced by Tolkien and variations of the fantastic characteristics we already saw. For example, the existence of alternative worlds within the fantastic world the story is set in as is the case of Lórien and Mordor. These areas have their own laws of time which do not correspond to the ones that rule the rest of the world. Mordor is described as “a land of darkness where the days of the world seemed forgotten, and where all who entered were forgotten too”³⁰ while Lórien is presented as a realm with “no stain” where time does not pass, as is understood from the dialogue between Sam and Frodo:

Sam sat tapping the hilt of his sword as if he were counting on his fingers, and looking up at the sky. ‘It’s very strange,’ he murmured. ‘The Moon’s the same in the Shire and in Wilderland, or it ought to be. But either it’s out of its running, or I’m all wrong in my reckoning. You’ll remember, Mr. Frodo, the Moon was waning as we lay on the flet up in that tree: a week from the full, I reckon. And we’d been a week on the way last night, when up pops a New Moon as thin as a nail-paring, as if we had never stayed no time in the Elvish country.

‘Well, I can remember three nights there for certain, and I seem to remember several more, but I would take my oath it was never a whole month. Anyone would think that time did not count in there!’

‘And perhaps that was the way of it,’ said Frodo. ‘In that land, maybe, we were in a time that has elsewhere long gone by. It was not, I think, until Silverlode bore us back to Anduin that we returned to the time that flows through mortal lands to the Great Sea. And I don’t remember any moon, either new or old, in Caras Galadhon: only stars by night and sun by day.’³¹

Furthermore, Tolkien played with the concept of the fear of the unknown. In a world full of magic and fantastic creatures the simplest people are afraid of things they cannot rationally understand. Hobbits live and work modestly without interfering in Men business. They and their world practically constitute a Utopia. They have the best of the three main races: hard-working and small like dwarves, “quick of hearing and sharp-eyed” and “nimble and deft in their movements” as elves, and in their origin, relatives



of humans: “Of old they spoke the languages of Men, after their own fashion, and liked and disliked much the same things as Men did.” Hobbits are a simple, humble, hard-working, generous and calm race that lives without problems. They do not need police or government since “families for the most part managed their own affairs”³². Most of them are illiterate since they give more importance to learning how to cook rather than writing or reading (which most of them never learn). But they do not mind. They live happily in their world. It is due to this that when something they cannot understand occurs, they consider it dangerous and try to stand apart from it. For instance, when Frodo is singing in the Inn of the Prancing Pony in Bree and accidentally uses the Ring and disappears, after coming visible again the hobbits in the room look at him with suspicion and they do not talk to the company again. This situation remains along the year and when they come back to the Inn at the end of the book and a boy asks them for a song, people in the room tell him to shut up to avoid strange events to happen again. Furthermore, Tolkien played in his works with different contrasts in order to present both weaknesses and strengths of races and main characters such as Gandalf and Aragorn. He does it as shown in the scheme below:


Men as weak and corrupts	VS	Men as honorable beings
Hobbits as insignificant and useless people	VS	Hobbits as brave saviors
Gandalf as an old person	VS	Gandalf as a powerful individual
Aragorn as a vagabond	VS	Aragorn as a king

It is also noteworthy the importance Tolkien gave to names. As a scholar of Anglo Saxon language, he invented an alphabet and language for his works –the elvish. In each and every one of his writings names have a meaning. And not only names for places but also for people. Thus, Aragorn is known by names as The Dúnadan ("Man of the West or Númenórean"), Wingfoot, Envinyatar ("the renewer"), Longshanks, Telcontar ("Strider" in Quenya), Estel ("hope"), Strider, Elessar Telcontar ("Elfstone Strider") and Thorongil ("Eagle of the Star"); and Lórien as Lindórinand ("Valley of the Land of the Singers"), Lórinand ("Valley of Gold"), Laurelindórenan("Valley of Singing Gold"), Lothlórien ("The Dreamflower"), Dwimordene in Rohirric, The Golden Wood in Westron and Laurenandë in Quenya.

3.3 Tolkien's works weaknesses

Even if there are a lot of features which make Tolkien's literature a masterpiece, there are others that leave much to be desired since they do not completely achieve the main purpose of fantastic literature and put his world very close to reality. The first element that makes the reader return to reality appears in the very beginning of *The Silmarillion*. In *Tales from the Perilous Realm* Tolkien described fantastic literature as a literary writing in which "Man becomes a Sub-creator". In this way, in *The Silmarillion* he used the same narrative style used in the Bible to narrate how God created the Universe. Moreover, Tolkien presented semi gods –the Valar– that as shown in the table below, clearly remind of Greek gods.

VALAR	GREEK GOD
<p>Manwë (King of the Valar and Lord of air, wind and clouds)</p>  <p>Varda (Lady of the Stars)</p>	<p>Zeus (Father of Gods and men and god of sky)</p>  <p>Hera (Goddess of women and marriage)</p>

<p>Ulmo (Second in Power and Lord of Waters)</p> <p>NO WIFE</p>	<p>Poseidon (God of the Sea)</p> <p>NO WIFE</p>
<p>Aulë (Lord of matter)</p>	<p>Hefesto (God of blacksmiths, craftsmen, artisans, sculptors, metals, metallurgy, fire and volcanoes)</p>
<p>Vána (The Ever-young and Queen of Blossoming Flowers)</p>	<p>Aphrodite (Goddess of love and beauty)</p>
<p>Mandos (Keeper of the Houses of the Dead, and Doomsman of the Valar)</p>  <p>Vairë (The Weaver)</p>	<p>Hades (God of underworld)</p> <p>&</p> <p>The Moirai (Controllers of the thread of life of every mortal from birth to death)</p>
<p>Irmo (Master of visions and dreams)</p>	<p>Morpheus (God of dreams)</p>
<p>Tulkas (The greatest in strength and deeds of prowess)</p>	<p>Ares (God of War)</p>

Secondly, although Tolkien is the pioneer of medieval fantasy literature and fights and battles are the most common event of his books, he avoided a direct narration of the facts and rather used a technique that consists of *knocking-out* the character through whose eyes the story is told. For instance, the final battle in *The Hobbit* has the same

development as the one in *The Lord of the Rings: the Return of the King*. The characters who ‘tell’ the story are Bilbo and Pippin and both of them lose consciousness so the reader is unaware of what is happening until they wake up. Instead, the battle is summarized by another character when they are awake again.

Furthermore, by structuring a society based on the feudal system and Middle Ages, Tolkien deprives some people of the Escapism his literature tries to achieve. The protagonists of his stories belong to the upper class and, in the case of Human royalty, those in power are only allowed to get married to someone with the same royal bloodline. Thus, *The Silmarillion* tells the story of gods and lord of men and elves; *The Hobbit*, of a company led by the grandson of the last King of Durin’s Folk and a hobbit whose family is rich and very respectable; *Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-Earth* narrates the fall of Númenor –the greatest realm of men– and the history of its kings and people; and in *The Lord of the Rings* the two main characters are the nephew of the rich and respectable Bilbo, Frodo, and a king in exile. It should be noted the relationship that Frodo has with his most loyal ‘friend’ Sam. Sam, like his father, is a simple gardener in the Shire. However, he does not only act like a gardener, but also like a servant. Sam calls Frodo “Master” and serves him throughout the novel. On one occasion, he even sleeps on Frodo’s feet and at the end of the book when both of them return to the Shire, Sam gets married and he and his wife go to live with Frodo.

The second sub-group of society which is affected in Tolkien’s literature is women. None of his works contains any important female character. Women remain in a passive role and barely do anything important. There are only two occasions in which a woman becomes significant. The first one appears in *Unfinished Tales of Númenor* and she is the first queen in the history of Men. However, this situation only occurs because she was the only child of the king, who enacted a new law in order to make this possible. And although there is no record of any other king repealing it, there are just a few more queens in the 3000 years of Human history. The second example is Eowyn in the Battle of Pelennor Fields in which dressed in men clothes, she kills the Lord of the Nazgûl together with the hobbit Merry. Nevertheless, she has to impersonate a man to join the army.

Finally, Tolkien's works show indirectly his possible ideology and the organization of the real society when he talked about the desires of Men and elves and the distribution of the areas in his novels. Firstly, Tolkien described Sauron's Men as dark-skinner from eastern Middle-Earth and used the term "pale" when orcs refer to elves and men who are enemies of Sauron. This suggests the idea of white race as good people and defenders of justice and black one as bad and servants of evil. Secondly, there is a constant opposition between the West and the East that reflects Western-Eastern division of the real world. Here are some examples of how this contrast is maintained throughout each of the Tolkien's works:

From *The Silmarillion*:

Then Turgon pondered long the counsel of Ulmo, and there came into his mind the words that were spoken to him in Vinyamar: ' [...] and remember that the true hope of the Noldor lieth in the West, and cometh from the Sea.'

And:

And after the victory of the Lords of the West those of the evil Men who were not destroyed fled back into the east, where many of their race were still wandering in the unharvested lands, wild and lawless, refusing alike the summons of the Valar and of Morgoth.³³

In *The Hobbit* Bilbo constantly mentions the differences between his beloved homeland in the West, and the East as a land full of evil creatures and dangers.

'Bother burgling and everything to do with it! I wish I was at home in my nice hole by the fire, with the kettle just beginning to sing!' It was not the last time that he wished that!³⁴

In *Unfinished Tales* this idea is presented in the introduction of two new people: The folk of Haleth, who "had wandered west seeking a land where they could be hidden and have peace", and the 'Púkel-men', "who hated all invaders from the East."³⁵

Lastly, *The Lord of the Rings* narrates how first, most of the people of Cardolan and then, the king, all his children and great numbers of the people of Gondor died due to

two deadly plagues from the East. Here is also another example of how the East is discounted in the book.

Then slowly he began to sing:

Through Rohan over fen and field where the long grass grows

The West Wind comes walking, and about the walls it goes.

'What news from the West, O wandering wind, do you bring to me tonight?

[...]

The North Wind may have heard the horn of the son of Denethor.'

'O Boromir! From the high walls westward I looked afar,

But you came not from the empty lands where no men are.'

Then Legolas sang:

[...]

'What news from the South, O sighing wind, do you bring to me at eve?

Where now is Boromir the Fair? He tarries and I grieve.'

'Ask not of me where he doth dwell – so many bones there lie

[...]

Ask of the North Wind news of them the North Wind sends to me!'

[...]

So they ended. Then they turned their boat and drove it with all the speed they could against the stream back to Parth Galen.

'You left the East Wind to me,' said Gimli, 'but I will say naught of it.'

'That is as it should be,' said Aragorn. 'In Minas Tirith they endure the East Wind, but they do not ask it for tidings.'³⁶

3.4 Tolkien nowadays

As we saw in the section below, Tolkien introduced new elements in his works that have been used by many authors within the fantasy genre. His first and more important contribution to literature was the solidification of what is known as "races" and their characteristics. His descriptions of Men, elves, dwarves, goblins, trolls and wizards among other races remain in later literary writings as well as the new language he created. Furthermore, medieval fantasy, a genre which he pioneered, has become the favourite setting not only in literature but also in the film and video game industry.

Authors like George R.R. Martin, one of the most famous authors at the moment because of the great success of his works known by the television series adaptation named *Game of Thrones*, admits Tolkien's influence in his writings. G.R.R. Martin states:

I admire Tolkien greatly. His books had enormous influence on me. And the trope that he sort of established –the idea of the Dark Lord and his Evil Minions– in the hands of lesser writers over the years and decades has not served the genre well. It has been beaten to death. The battle of good and evil is a great subject for any book and certainly for a fantasy book, but I think ultimately the battle between good and evil is weighed within the individual human heart and not necessarily between an army of people dressed in white and an army of people dressed in black. When I look at the world, I see that most real living breathing human beings are grey.³⁷

Another author, R.A Salvatore, in this case well-known in the role-playing video games industry for the creation of characters which were featured by the tabletop role-playing game *Dungeons and Dragons*, also recognizes Tolkien as the biggest inspiration for his fantasy. However, in spite of his books containing a very similar setting and plot to Tolkien's and even if they even seem a copy in some occasions, there are significant differences that show the evolution of fantasy from Tolkien's time to the present. At the beginning of his *The Dark Elf* trilogy appears the main variation from Tolkien's writings: a matriarchal society in which women have absolute power to make decisions without prior consultation with men. Later in the saga, it can be observed how a female wizard constitutes one of the most powerful individuals of that world as well as the governor of the capital of the region. In addition, there are not social classes that determine the protagonists: an orphan girl can become a princess and a thief the regent of a kingdom. Furthermore, there are other dissimilarities between the two authors. In Tolkien's literature we saw a possible aversion for black race and a continuous contrast between the West and the East. Now with R.A Salvatore that aversion disappears with the main protagonist Drizzt Do'Urden, a Dark Elf, and a balanced distribution of good-bad areas in the world.

In short, despite the differences and variations from the elements and concepts introduced by Tolkien in his literature throughout the evolution of the fantasy genre to the present day, there is no doubt Tolkienian literature constitutes a before and an after in the history of the fantastic since it occupies a central position in the literary canon and Tolkien himself has been considered by most of the authors who deal with this literary genre, either as scholars or professional writers, as the father of Modern Fantasy Literature.

4 NOTES

- ¹ J.R.R Tolkien. *Tales from the Perilous Realm* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009) Kindle edition, 529
- ² Tzvetan Todorov, *A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 25
- ³ *The Fantastic* is the term used to refer to *fantastic genre* by Todorov in his book *A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*.
- ⁴ Todorov, *A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 20-60
- ⁵ Scanlan, James. Dostoevsky the Thinker. Cornell University Press; 1 edition (March 7, 2002), 133
- ⁶ Tzvetan Todorov, *A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 33, 83
- ⁷ Rosemary Jackson. *Fantasy: the literature of subversion* (London: Routledge, 1988), 33
- ⁸ Todorov, *A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 89
- ⁹ Rosemary Jackson. *Fantasy: the literature of subversion* (London: Routledge, 1988), 154
- ¹⁰ Elements taken from the *Themes of the Self* in Tzvetan Todorov, *A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), Chap. 7
- ¹¹ Rosemary Jackson. *Fantasy: the literature of subversion* (London: Routledge, 1988), 58, 59, 87
- ¹² Elements taken from the *Themes of the Other* in Todorov Tzvetan, *A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), Chap. 8
- ¹³ Rosemary Jackson. *Fantasy: the literature of subversion* (London: Routledge, 1988), 2
- ¹⁴ Rosemary Jackson. *Fantasy: the literature of subversion* (London: Routledge, 1988), 156
- ¹⁵ Tzvetan Todorov. *A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 92
- ¹⁶ *The Uncanny and the Marvelous* by Todorov in his *A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*
- ¹⁷ J.R.R Tolkien. *Tales from the Perilous Realm* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009) Kindle edition, 43
- ¹⁸ J.R.R Tolkien. *Tales from the Perilous Realm* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009) Kindle edition, 493
- ¹⁹ J.R.R Tolkien. *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2011) Kindle edition, 1187
- ²⁰ J.R.R Tolkien. *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2011) Kindle edition, 182
- ²¹ J.R.R Tolkien. *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2011) Kindle edition, 1050
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²³ J.R.R Tolkien. *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2011) Kindle edition, 544

²⁴ J.R.R Tolkien. *Tales from the Perilous Realm* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009) Kindle edition, 513

²⁵ J.R.R Tolkien. *Tales from the Perilous Realm* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009) Kindle edition, 525

²⁶ J.R.R Tolkien. *Tales from the Perilous Realm* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009) Kindle edition, Epilogue

²⁷ J.R.R Tolkien. *The Hobbit* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2011) Kindle edition, 532

²⁸ J.R.R Tolkien. *The Hobbit* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2011) Kindle edition, 529

²⁹ J.R.R Tolkien. *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2011) Kindle edition, 719

³⁰ J.R.R Tolkien. *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2011) Kindle edition, 395

³¹ J.R.R Tolkien. *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2011) Kindle edition, 1002

³² J.R.R Tolkien. *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2011) Kindle edition, Prologue, 1.Concerning Hobbits

³³ Tolkien, J.R.R, *The Silmarillion* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2011) Kindle edition, 118, 127

³⁴ J.R.R Tolkien. *The Hobbit* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2011) Kindle edition, 67

³⁵ Tolkien, J.R.R., *Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-Earth* Edited by Christopher Tolkien (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2006) Kindle edition 977,979

³⁶ J.R.R Tolkien. *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2011) Kindle edition, 24-26

³⁷In the interview to G.R.R Martin by the Detroit Free Press.

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