

ORIENTALISM IN *THE LORD OF THE RINGS* TRILOGY BY J.R.R. TOLKIEN

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ABSTRACT. *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy by J.R.R. Tolkien, namely *The Fellowship of the Ring* (1954), *The Two Towers* (1954), and *The Return of the King* (1955), comprise an implicit issue of Orientalism. This research consists of a dissection of the geographical aspects and the depictions of the characters' races and what they represent that showcases the Orientalist perspective in a fictional universe. In this case, we will present the stereotypical perspectives of the Eastern people by the Western people in the books with the theory of Orientalism and by scrutinizing the elements of narratology used in the novels. Presenting the stereotypes of the Eastern hemisphere that portray the Othering of the characters and how their lands are known as wild and exotic indicates that Orientalism revolves around the story and perpetuates the stereotypical views of the East. The representation of diversity in the trilogy unveils the distinct perspectives of cultures and morality that reinforce the Orientalist perspective.

Keywords: J.R.R. Tolkien, Narratology, Orientalism, Othering, *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy

ORIENTALISME DALAM TRILOGI *THE LORD OF THE RINGS* KARYA J.R.R. TOLKIEN

ABSTRAK. Trilogi *The Lord of the Rings* karya J.R.R. Tolkien, yaitu *The Fellowship of the Ring* (1954), *The Two Towers* (1954), dan *The Return of the King* (1955), mengandung isu orientalisme yang tersirat. Penelitian ini membedah aspek geografis dan penggambaran ras karakter serta apa yang mereka wakili yang menunjukkan perspektif Orientalis dalam alam semesta fiksi. Dalam hal ini, kami akan menyajikan perspektif stereotip tentang orang-orang Timur oleh orang-orang Barat dalam buku-buku tersebut dengan teori Orientalisme dan dengan meneliti unsur-unsur naratologi yang digunakan dalam novel-novel tersebut. Penyajian stereotip tentang belahan bumi Timur yang menggambarkan pengucilan karakter dan bagaimana daerah yang mereka kenal sebagai tanah yang liar dan eksotis menunjukkan bahwa Orientalisme terhubung di sekitar cerita dan melanggengkan pandangan stereotip tentang Timur. Representasi keragaman dalam trilogi tersebut mengungkap perspektif budaya dan moralitas yang berbeda yang memperkuat perspektif Orientalis.

Kata-kata Kunci: J.R.R. Tolkien, Naratologi, Orientalisme, Pengasingan, Trilogi *The Lord of the Rings*

INTRODUCTION

The Lord of the Rings is a fantasy trilogy written by J. R. R Tolkien, with the novels consisting of *The Fellowship of The Ring* (1948), *The Two Towers* (1954), and *The Return of The King* (1955). It also examines how the trilogy depicts what Edward Said (1978) has coined as Orientalism. Orientalism refers to the imperialistic Western perspective that the East is inferior to the West (Said, 1978). The novels have also been acclaimed critically in the literature world, both by fans and scholars. It has also resulted in adaptations into numerous media forms, such as *The Lord of the Rings* movie trilogy, directed by Peter Jackson in 2001, and the animation of *The Hobbit* in 1977, directed by Jules Bass and Arthur Rankin, Jr. Tolkien's influence in world-building and characters earned particular notice throughout the fantasy genre to the present day.

The setting where the narratives take place is in a part of a fictional world called Middle-earth, which Tolkien himself created along with its maps

depicting the geography of the fictional universe. The issue of Orientalism is presented by the antagonists, particularly in how they are represented as oppressed races and described as lower creatures than the protagonists. On the other hand, the narratives present the benevolent and governing characters as fair-skinned races or creatures that adopt Western cultures and physicality. Most protagonists adopt Western traits, specifically European, based on their physical descriptions and cultural backgrounds, such as the people of Gondor (Gondorrim) and Rohan (Rohirrim). The Elves are also known for their beauty and power and are considered the superior race in Middle-earth. The stereotypical portrayal through the eyes of the West is a common issue in colonial writings, such as the perception of the West as superior and heroic compared to other races. Said (1978: 6) states that Orientalism is a created body of theory and practice that constructs images of the Orient or the East directed toward those in the West. The story setting is in a fictional universe; thus, the

references and adaptations of different cultures create a spectrum within the environment to define the theme and are not strictly divided into East and West. However, as Tolkien was an English writer, the focal perspective of the narrative is through an English lens. Based on the explanation above, this research dissects how Orientalism presents through a post-colonial perspective in a fictional imagination of the cultural identity from the characters and their perspective toward others of a different background.

METHOD

To achieve the purpose of this research, we use the arguments of *Orientalism* (1978) essay by Edward Said regarding the issue of Orientalism. Said (1978) argues that Orientalism indicates Western supremacy over the East. We also refer to *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) by Edward Said, which discusses the topic of imperialism that we use to analyze how Western writers define other races considered lesser than them exclusively through their perspective. This thesis also refer to the arguments of Gerard Genette in *Narrative Discourse* (1980) to analyze the narrative of how the depictions of the antagonists present in the trilogy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The analysis focuses on how *The Lord of the Rings* depicts Orientalism by examining various narrative elements that reflect and perpetuate stereotypical views of the East. This argument contains a detailed look at how medieval and Norse cultural influences and adaptations of Anglo-Saxon traditions in the novels portray Western characters and societies as superior. Several aspects, such as Aragorn in his kingship journey, the resemblance of Gandalf to the Norse god Odin, and the Anglo-Saxon-inspired culture of Rohan, reflect some of the instances. The section also analyzes the idealization of characters from the Western side of Middle-earth, such as the Rohirrim, Arwen, and the High Elves, to illustrate their portrayal as inherently noble and superior. The portrayal of Eastern characters, such as the Haradrim and the Easterlings, requires examinations to highlight their depiction as exotic and barbaric, reinforcing Orientalist stereotypes. The depiction of orcs as inherently evil and deformed also serves as a reflection of the Othering of non-Western peoples. Using the narrative theory of Gérard Genette, the section explored the narrative structures of voice and tense. Tense, as the first structure, includes the components of order, duration, and frequency, in which those components are present in *The Lord of the Rings*. The second

aspect, voice, helps to analyze the narration, thus further demonstrating how these elements contributed to an Orientalist perspective within the text.

The narrative voice in *The Lord of the Rings* is heterodiegetic, meaning the narrator is not a character within the story but an omniscient external presence. This omniscient perspective shapes the readers' perspective towards different cultures within Middle-earth. The narrator often highlights the virtues of Western characters and lands while presenting Eastern realms and their inhabitants in a more negative light. For example, Western characters such as Aragorn, Gandalf, and the Elves retain noble qualities and moral righteousness. In contrast, the inhabitants of the East, such as the Haradrim and Easterlings, are frequently portrayed as exotic, barbaric, and malevolent. This narrative choice subtly guides readers to view Western cultures as superior and Eastern cultures as inferior, a hallmark of Orientalist discourse.

Furthermore, in *The Lord of the Rings*, the concept of order involves arrangements of events in the narrative, including analepsis (flashbacks) and prolepsis (flashforwards). Extensive use of flashbacks provides historical context, particularly emphasizing the noble past of Western cultures. For instance, recounting the ancient history of Gondor and its lineage of kings reinforces the grandeur and legitimacy of Western civilization. These flashbacks often highlight the heroic deeds of Western ancestors, creating a sense of continuity and destiny that elevates Western norms and values. Foreshadowing is another technique that creates anticipation and underscores the destined superiority of Western leadership. Prophecies regarding the return of Aragorn as a king, for example, build a sense of inevitability and righteousness around his ascension. This argument elevates his character and further portrays the restoration of Western order and governance as a preordained and beneficial outcome.

Related to the duration of the narrative, long periods of travel or less critical events in Western lands are often summarized, maintaining a narrative focus on significant, heroic moments. For instance, the lengthy journeys of the Fellowship receive frequent condense to keep the reader's attention on pivotal encounters and battles that highlight the heroism and virtues of the protagonists. Reserved detailed scenes for crucial moments showcase Western cultural achievements and heroics. The coronation of Aragorn is a prime example, where the narrative provides rich, immersive detail to emphasize the significance and grandeur of the event.

Such scenes not only glorify the characters involved but also serve to reinforce the cultural superiority of Western traditions and institutions.

Moreover, key events, such as major battles and significant encounters, are depicted in singular, impactful scenes. These events often glorify Western characters by showcasing their bravery, skill, and moral integrity. The instance in *The Battle of Helm's Deep* highlights the valor and resilience of the Rohirrim and their allies, presenting them as defenders of civilization against barbaric invaders. Besides, Themes of Western heroism and nobility recur throughout the narrative, reinforcing stereotypes of Western superiority. The repeated depiction of Western characters performing noble and heroic deeds solidifies the perception of their inherent goodness and justifies their dominance over other cultures.

The structure of mood provides the narrative perspective that often aligns with Western characters, presenting their viewpoints and justifying their actions. This alignment encourages readers to empathize with Western characters and see their struggles and triumphs as central to the story. Conversely, Eastern characters typically earn a view of suspicion and antagonism, and their motivations and perspectives rarely earn in-depth exploration. Also, the narrative maintains a distance from Eastern characters, often depicting them as faceless enemies. This dehumanization serves to reinforce the dichotomy between the civilized West and the barbaric East. The orcs, for example, are consistently portrayed as monstrous and evil, their individuality and humanity stripped away to present them as a homogeneous mass of antagonism.

The narrative techniques used by Tolkien, including the idealized portrayal of Western cultures and the marginalization of Eastern ones, reflect and perpetuate stereotypical views of the East. This analysis highlights the intricate ways narrative structure can influence cultural perceptions and reinforce existing biases within literature. Tolkien's use of an omniscient narrator, strategic ordering of events, manipulation of narrative duration, thematic repetition, and focalized perspectives all contribute to a portrayal of Middle-earth that elevates Western norms while denigrating Eastern cultures. Through these techniques, *The Lord of the Rings* not only tells a compelling story but also embeds a cultural hierarchy that reflects and perpetuates Orientalist stereotypes, underscoring the formidable role of narrative in shaping cultural attitudes and perceptions.

Therefore, to further discuss the Orientalist perspective in the trilogy, a more detailed examination of diverse depictions of the characters, cultures, and geographies of Middle-earth are necessary for this research.

The portrayal of Western characters in *The Lord of the Rings* reflects a deep-seated idealization that aligns with Orientalist tendencies, presenting them in a light that emphasizes their inherent superiority and noble qualities. This idealization can be seen through various descriptions and narrative choices, reinforcing that Western characters and civilizations are inherently superior to their Eastern counterparts. An instance of this idealization is *The Kingdom of Rohan*, a profound example of Anglo-Saxon cultural and linguistic influence, reflecting the deep appreciation of Tolkien for and scholarly expertise in Old English literature. The horsemen, known as *The Riders of Rohan*, possess those physical descriptions: "The Men that rode them matched them well: tall and long-limbed; their hair, flaxen-pale, flowed under their light helms, and streamed in long braids behind them; their faces were stern and keen." which describes the standard Western physical features of the valiant riders.

The Rohirrim, people of Rohan, are also described in terms that elevate them above ordinary humans, suggesting an almost superhuman quality. with the depictions of "[T]all men and fair women, valiant both alike, golden-haired, bright-eyed, and strong; they remind us of the youth of Men, as they were in the Elder Days." Aside from highlighting their physical beauty and strength, those descriptions also associate them with timeless youth, a time of greater purity and valor. By framing the Rohirrim in such terms, Tolkien creates a clear distinction between the noble, heroic qualities of Western characters and the often darker, more ambiguous traits of others, which I will elaborate on later in the following sub-sub-chapter.

The cultural ethos of the Rohirrim, much like their Anglo-Saxon counterparts, places a strong emphasis on valor, loyalty, and kinship. The code of honor of Rohirrim and fierce loyalty to their leaders and land are akin to the values extolled in Anglo-Saxon literature. Characters such as Éomer and Éowyn exemplify these virtues through their unwavering commitment to their people and their courage in the face of overwhelming odds. The narrative arc of King Theoden, from his initial state of despair to his rejuvenated leadership, parallels the heroic transformations often celebrated in Anglo-Saxon epic poetry, such as *Beowulf*.

The portrayal of the High Elves in *The Lord of the Rings* is a significant element that perpetuates the Orientalist perspective within the narrative. Frequent references of Frodo to the High Elves as "fair people" or "fair folk" emphasize their fairness and almost divine nature, which aligns with the stereotype of the noble and wise Western race. This characterization not only highlights the exceptional qualities of Elves but also reinforces the hierarchical worldview that places Western traits and civilizations at the pinnacle of cultural and moral superiority. The consistent depictions of the High Elves portray them as beings of unparalleled beauty, wisdom, and nobility. The illustration of the High Elves comes in ethereal terms, with phrases that emphasize their otherworldly allure. The characterization of Lady Arwen further exemplifies this idealization. Arwen elucidates her ethereal beauty and perfection through this passage that reads:

"The braids of her dark hair were touched by no frost; her white arms and clear face were flawless and smooth, and the light of stars was in her bright eyes, grey as a cloudless night; yet queenly she looked, and thought and knowledge were in her glance, as of one who has known many things that the years bring." (1954: 296)

This portrayal elevates her to a nearly divine status, emphasizing purity, beauty, and otherworldliness. Moreover, Lord Celeborn and Lady Galadriel, the rulers of Lothlórien, the fairest realm of the Elves remaining in Middle-earth, were portrayed:

"They were clad wholly in white; and the hair of the Lady was of deep gold, and the hair of the Lord Celeborn was of silver long and bright; but no sign of age was upon them, unless it were in the depths of their eyes; for these were keen as lances in the starlight, and yet profound, the wells of deep memory." (1954: 461)

Galadriel earned praises for her extraordinary beauty, particularly for her deep gold hair, which was said to capture the lights of the Two Trees in Valinor, Telperion (The Silver Tree) and Laurelin (The Golden Tree), that brought the sources of light into the land of Valar (or English as Gods). As for Celeborn, his name directly translates into "Silver tree" from the Sindarin language, represented through his hair. Celeborn was also said to be one of the wisest elves in Middle-earth. As elves are immortal beings, their youthfulness is an inseparable

attribute of the elves, also shaping their ripe wisdom and grandeur.

Such descriptions place Western characters on a pedestal, presenting them as paragons of virtue and grace. This pattern of idealization extends beyond physical descriptions to the moral and ethical dimensions of these characters. Aragorn, for instance, embodies the quintessential noble hero. His journey from a ranger to the king of Gondor is portrayed as a rightful ascension, emphasizing his noble lineage and destiny. Furthermore, Aragorn received consistent depictions of bravery, wisdom, and compassion as few of the qualities that set him apart as an ideal leader, such as when he refused to accept the Ring offered to him in the Council of Elrond: "but it has been ordained that you should hold it for a while." (1954: 321) despite knowing the tremendous power it holds for the bearer. He also showed humility upon his coronation as he said: "In token of this I would have the Ring-bearer bring the crown to me, and let Mithrandir set it upon my head, if he will; for he has been the mover of all that has been accomplished, and this is his victory." (1955: 1268). His ability to unite the people of Middle-earth against the forces of evil underscores his role as a savior figure, further reinforcing the narrative of Western superiority.

The Lord of the Rings narrative structure often contrasts these idealized Western characters with their Eastern counterparts. The forces of Sauron and Saruman, interpreted as representing the East, are depicted as corrupt, deceitful, and malevolent. The orcs, who serve these dark lords, are described in grotesque and dehumanizing terms, emphasizing their evil nature. This dichotomy between the virtuous West and the corrupt East mirrors colonial narratives that valorize Western traits and civilizations while demonizing those of the East. The Elves of Middle-earth, particularly those from the Western lands of Lothlórien and Rivendell, are also idealized. They are often known as timeless, wise, and inherently good. Characters like Galadriel and Elrond embody these traits, serving as beacons of light and wisdom in the fight against darkness. Their realms are depicted as idyllic, almost utopian places, untouched by the corruption that plagues other parts of Middle-earth. This portrayal reinforces the notion of Western lands and their inhabitants as superior and morally pure.

In addition to physical and moral idealization, the Western characters in *The Lord of the Rings* also depict cultural superiority. Languages, customs, and histories of Western characters are given significant prominence and detail in the narrative. Tolkien, a philologist, created elaborate

languages for the Elves, such as Quenya and Sindarin, based on Latin and Finnish, respectively. These languages highlight the cultural sophistication and depth of the Western characters and further elevate them above others in the story. The cultural superiority is also evident in the portrayal of Western architecture and art. The cities of Gondor and Rohan, with their grand halls, intricate designs, and monumental structures, are depicted as the pinnacles of civilization. The beauty and grandeur of places like Minas Tirith in Gondor, also called The Tower of Guard, with its sturdy and fair white tall fortress city built atop a mountain (1926: 356) and the lush green land of Edoras in Rohan with its great Hall of Meduseld, which appeared as if made of gold (1954: 661), contrast sharply with the dark, twisted landscapes of Mordor and Isengard. This contrast reinforces the narrative of Western cultural and aesthetic superiority. The idealization of Western characters in *The Lord of the Rings* is consistent across all three novels. Throughout *The Fellowship of the Ring*, *The Two Towers*, and *The Return of the King*, Western characters are the ones portraying hope, light, and civilization. Their struggles and victories are framed as the triumph of good over evil, reinforcing the binary opposition that underpins much of the Orientalist perspective in the story.

The people and lands of the East are often put in a negative image, reflecting Orientalist stereotypes that were prevalent during the creation of the novels. This portrayal of Eastern cultures is evident in characters such as the Haradrim and the Easterlings as exotic and barbaric. This Othering of Eastern cultures is a hallmark of Orientalist narratives, which often depict the East as fundamentally different and inferior to the West. One of the most striking examples of this Orientalist depiction is the portrayal of the Haradrim, also known as the Southrons. These characters possess descriptions of swarthy, cruel, and often associated with darkness and savagery. The Haradrim also mount the Mûmakil, known as Oliphaunts, a creature that resembles elephants in their battles (1954: 845). This association with exotic animals and the emphasis on their warlike nature underscore their perceived barbarism and otherness. The allegiance of the Haradrim to Sauron further cements their role as the antagonistic Other in the narrative. By aligning these Eastern characters with the primary source of evil in the story, Tolkien reinforces the dichotomy between the civilized, noble West and the barbaric, sinister East.

Gollum, in *The Two Towers*, referred to the land of Harad as having a scorching sun, as there are

seldom any clouds, and he refuses to see the land (1954: 838). This portrayal taps into the fear of the unknown, a common theme in orientalist literature. The people of Rhûn, or the Easterlings, are another group that exemplifies this orientalist perspective. Similar to the Haradrim, the depictions of the Easterlings are wild and threatening. They are fierce warriors from predominantly unknown lands and are shrouded in mystery. The mysterious and dangerous nature of the Easterlings underlined the contrast between the familiar, safe West and the exotic, perilous East. Reinforcement of the depiction of Eastern cultures in *The Lord of the Rings* through the language and names used to describe these characters and their lands.

Additionally, the physical descriptions of Eastern characters often emphasize their differences from Western characters. The Haradrim, for example, is described as having dark skin and cruel expressions, while the depiction of Easterlings is fierce and aggressive. The description of a tribe of Far Harad in the south is that they are black men like half-trolls with white eyes and red tongues (1955:1107). Haradrim, as further emphasized by Gollum in *The Two Towers*:

“Dark faces. We have not seen Men like these before, no, Smeagol has not. They are fierce. They have black eyes, and long black hair, and gold rings in their ears; yes, lots of beautiful gold. And some have red paint on their cheeks, and red cloaks; and their flags are red, and the tips of their spears; and they have round shields, yellow and black with big spikes.” (1954: 844)

The Easterlings also noted as the Swarthy Men, possess the description of “These Men were short and broad, long and strong in the arm; their skins were swart or sallow, and their hair was dark as were their eyes. “ (1926: 196), as noted in *The Silmarillion*. These physical characteristics otherize these characters and reinforce stereotypes about Eastern people. By emphasizing these physical differences, Tolkien creates a clear visual and cultural divide between the noble, fair-skinned Western characters and dark, sinister Eastern characters.

The portrayal of Eastern cultures in *The Lord of the Rings* also reflects broader historical and cultural attitudes of the time. During the early to mid-20th century, when Tolkien was writing, Western literature and popular culture were rife with Orientalist depictions of the East. These portrayals often depicted Eastern cultures as exotic, dangerous, and fundamentally different from the West. This

cultural context influenced Tolkien and his depictions of the Haradrim and Easterlings, who embody many of these Orientalist stereotypes. By drawing on these cultural tropes, Tolkien perpetuates the idea that the East is a place of danger and darkness in his works, in contrast to the enlightened and civilized West.

Sauron and Mordor are the embodiments of ultimate evil and corruption. This portrayal is not just a narrative device to create an antagonist but also reflects deeper, underlying orientalist perspectives prevalent in the era during which Tolkien wrote. The geographical and ideological opposition of Mordor to the Western lands of Middle-earth plays a significant role in constructing the dichotomy between the civilized West and the barbaric East. Mordor, the dark land ruled by Sauron, is consistently depicted as a dying volcanic wasteland of desolation; the things that grow there become harsh, twisted, and struggle to live (1955: 1205). This stark, inhospitable environment contrasted with the lush, vibrant landscapes of the Shire, Gondor, and Rohan. The physical desolation of Mordor symbolizes the moral and spiritual corruption of Sauron and his minions. The land itself seems to reflect the malevolent nature of its ruler, reinforcing the idea that evil has an intricate link to the East. The constant imagery of volcanic eruptions, blackened skies, and barren plains creates a setting that embodies dread and decay, further highlighting the stark contrast with the purity and beauty of the Western realms.

Sauron, the Dark Lord of Mordor, is positioned as the ultimate threat to Middle-earth. His association with the East and South of the continent is not coincidental but serves to embed an Orientalist perspective within the narrative. Sauron's forces are composed of various peoples and creatures from these regions, including the Haradrim and Easterlings, known as exotic, fierce, and barbaric. This depiction aligns with Orientalist stereotypes that view Eastern cultures as inherently dangerous and malevolent. The narrative repeatedly emphasizes the exoticism and otherness of these groups, painting them as fundamentally different from and opposed to the noble and civilized peoples of the West. The portrayal of Sauron's armies underscores this dichotomy. The descriptions of orcs, trolls, and other dark creatures that serve Sauron are grotesque and have dehumanizing terms. Their representations are often mindless, brutish, and devoid of redeeming qualities. This characterization heightens the horror and threat of Sauron and reinforces the idea that the East is a source of corruption and evil. The repeated depiction of these forces as relentless and

overwhelming furthers the notion that the East is an ever-present danger to the sanctity of the West.

The further exemplification of ideological opposition between Mordor and the Western lands is present through the symbolism of light and darkness. The Western realms are frequently associated with light, purity, and nobility. Places like Rivendell, Lothlórien, and Minas Tirith are known to be bastions of beauty, wisdom, and civilization. In contrast, Mordor is shrouded in darkness, both literally and figuratively. The perpetual gloom and volcanic ash that cover the land symbolize the oppressive and corrupt nature of Sauron's rule. This use of light and darkness as symbolic elements reinforces the moral and cultural superiority of the West over the East.

The narrative also emphasizes the threat that Mordor poses to the entire world of Middle-earth. Sauron's ambition is not limited to his realm but extends to the conquest and domination of all free peoples. This universal threat serves to unite the diverse characters of the West in a common cause, highlighting their shared values and noble aspirations. The alliances formed between humans, elves, dwarves, and hobbits illustrate the unity and strength of the Western civilizations in the face of Eastern malevolence. This collective struggle against a common enemy further reinforces the orientalist dichotomy by depicting the West as a bastion of virtue and the East as a source of unrelenting evil.

The depiction of Sauron and Mordor also reflects broader historical and cultural attitudes of the early to mid-20th century. During that period, Western literature and popular culture were rife with Orientalist depictions of the East. Tolkien's depiction of Sauron and Mordor draws on these cultural tropes, perpetuating the idea that the East is a place of inherent danger and darkness. By aligning the primary source of evil with the East, Tolkien's narrative reinforces the Orientalist perspective that views Western civilization as inherently superior. The impact of these depictions extends beyond the immediate narrative of *The Lord of the Rings*.

The portrayal of orcs serves as a stark and unsettling representation of the "Other." The depictions of these creatures are inherently evil, brutish, and deformed, often serving as the mindless foot soldiers of the dark forces led by Sauron and Saruman. This characterization is deeply intertwined with orientalist themes, presenting the orcs as a dehumanized enemy, reflective of historical stereotypes that paint non-Western peoples as savage, morally corrupt, and fundamentally inferior. Tolkien described Orcs with grotesque physical features,

including twisted and misshapen bodies, foul odors, and an overall monstrous appearance. This depiction strips them of any semblance of humanity, reinforcing their role as the antagonistic "Other" in the narrative. The visual and behavioral contrast between orcs and the noble characters of the West is stark. While the portrayal of characters like Aragorn, Arwen, and the Rohirrim are with grace, beauty, and virtue, the orcs are depicted as the complete antithesis, embodying chaos, ugliness, and vice. This dichotomy is central to the orientalist discourse, which often relies on such binary oppositions to define and justify the superiority of the West over the East or the "Other."

The behavior of the orcs further reinforces their portrayal as irredeemably evil. The orcs are cruel, treacherous, and driven by base instincts and a lust for destruction. Their loyalty to dark powers such as Sauron and Saruman underscores their role as pawns of evil, devoid of individual will or moral compass. This characterization mirrors historical depictions of non-Western peoples as barbaric and uncivilized, perpetuating the notion that they are inherently predisposed to violence and corruption. The language used to describe the orcs also contributes to their dehumanization. They speak in harsh, guttural tones, and the threats and curses in their dialogue. This manner of speech contrasts sharply with the eloquent and noble language of the protagonists, further emphasizing the cultural and moral divide between the two groups. The orcs' speech patterns and behaviors reflect Orientalist stereotypes that associate non-Western peoples with primitiveness and savagery.

The orcs' role as the expendable minions of dark powers also reflects Orientalist themes. Their descriptions comprise numerous and faceless a horde that threatens the civilized world. This portrayal aligns with colonial-era fears of the "savage masses" overwhelming the orderly societies of the West. The presentation of the orcs as a monolithic and undifferentiated enemy simplifies the narrative conflict into a clear-cut struggle between good and evil, civilization and barbarism. This simplification reinforces the idea that the "Other" is a homogeneous and inherently hostile force that must be subdued or eradicated for order and progress.

Furthermore, the origin and creation of the orcs are steeped through notions of corruption and defilement, as orcs are implied to be the perversions of elves, twisted by dark magic and malice (1926: 47). This origin story suggests that the orcs are inherently evil and a corrupted version of a noble race. This notion of corruption reflects orientalist

ideas that view non-Western peoples as degraded or fallen from a once-pure state, further justifying their subjugation or elimination.

The portrayal of orcs also highlights the virtues of the Western characters by contrast. The bravery, honor, and nobility of characters such as Aragorn, Frodo, and Gandalf accentuate the cowardice, treachery, and savagery of the orcs. This narrative device reinforces the moral superiority of the Western characters and, by extension, the cultures they represent. By positioning the orcs as the ultimate embodiment of evil, the narrative elevates the struggle against them to a righteous cause, aligning it with historical narratives of colonial conquest and the civilizing mission. In addition to their physical and moral depiction, the books also emphasize the orcs' lack of culture and civilization. They live in dark, filthy, and disorganized environments, further contrasting the orderly and beautiful realms of the West. This environmental contrast underscores the Orientalist notion that non-Western peoples are incapable of creating or maintaining civilized societies, reinforcing the perceived need for Western intervention and domination.

The portrayal of orcs in *The Lord of the Rings* thus functions on multiple levels to reinforce Orientalist themes. Their depiction as dehumanized, inherently evil, and culturally inferior serves to highlight the moral and cultural superiority of the Western characters and the societies they represent. This portrayal reflects broader historical and cultural attitudes that view the "Other" as a threat to civilization and progress, justifying their subjugation and eradication. In conclusion, the depiction of orcs in *The Lord of the Rings* is a powerful example of how woven the Orientalist themes are into the fabric of the narrative. Through their grotesque physical appearance, barbaric behavior, and lack of civilization, the orcs embody the dehumanized "Other" that is central to orientalist discourse. This portrayal not only reinforces stereotypes of non-Western peoples as savage and morally corrupt but also elevates the virtues of the Western characters, framing the conflict in terms of a righteous struggle between good and evil, civilization and barbarism. By critically examining this portrayal, readers could gain a deeper understanding of the cultural and ideological underpinnings of Tolkien's work and how it perpetuates existing cultural hierarchies and biases.

This stark dichotomy not only reinforces stereotypes about Eastern cultures but also serves to elevate Western characters and societies by comparison. The landscapes associated with these

Eastern cultures also earned a view in a negative light. The depiction of Mordor as barren, dangerous, and uncivilized further reinforces the Orientalist narrative that the East is a place of darkness and savagery, in contrast to the peaceful, civilized, and fertile Western lands such as the land of the merry Hobbits, The Shire (1954: 1-2). This environmental characterization serves to dehumanize the Eastern characters and perpetuates the idea that they are fundamentally different and inferior to their Western counterparts.

By embedding these orientalist elements within the story, Tolkien's work contributes to the broader cultural perception of the East as a source of malevolence and danger. This perspective has implications for how readers understand and interpret cultural differences, perpetuating stereotypes that continue to influence contemporary attitudes toward Eastern cultures. Tolkien's work is a product of its time as a critical examination of these elements and recognizes their role in shaping cultural perceptions.

In the context of vocalization, vocalization in *The Lord of the Rings* refers to how the characters speak and how their language reflects their cultural and social background. Characters from the Shire, such as Frodo and Sam, often use simple and warm colloquial language, reflecting the simple and familiar character of the society of rural English. Their dialogue is also punctuated with humor and local wisdom, enriching the quiet and peaceful atmosphere in the Shire and indicating their close relationship. The instance where Frodo leaves Sam to head to Mordor alone on a boat and Sam insists on following him onto the river, almost drowning in an attempt to swim until Frodo saves him. Frodo mentions that if the other members of the Fellowship catch him going on his own, he would have to explain himself, to which Sam replies with: "I'll knock holes in all the boats first." (1954: 530) so that the others would not be able to follow them by boat, in which Frodo laughed at the statement. The language used by these hobbits is reminiscent of the dialect and expressions one might encounter in rural English villages, where human relations were proximate as the community was at the center of social life.

In contrast, the characters from Gondor and Rohan use more formal and epic language, reflecting their higher social status and more heroic and aristocratic culture. Their language, full of references to history and heritage, indicates a fierce view of honor and duty. For example, when Aragorn speaks, he often uses majestic and reverent language, reflecting his wisdom and his great responsibility, as

he said during his coronation: "In token of this I would have the Ring-bearer bring the crown to me, and let Mithrandir set it upon my head, if he will; for he has been the mover of all that has been accomplished, and this is his victory." (1955: 1268) Likewise, the soldiers of Rohan use words reminiscent of Anglo-Saxon culture with an emphasis on bravery and loyalty. Their language reflects a society that highly values heroic values and a long lineage.

Then, the names and titles in *The Lord of the Rings* also reflect England's social structure and worldview. Names such as Aragorn, Gandalf, and Legolas contain mythological and heroic overtones, indicating their heritage and status. These names give each character a unique identity and connect them to the substantial traditions and legends of the fictional world. For example, Aragorn has several other names, such as Strider and Elessar, reflecting his journey from a simple ranger to the long-awaited king. Titles such as "Lord of Rivendell" or "King of Gondor" indicate a strict social hierarchy and the importance of genealogy and ancestry in the culture. These titles lend weight and gravitas to the characters who hold them, emphasizing their role in the social and political structure of the world of Middle-earth. These titles also reflect the British worldview of aristocracy and nobility, where social status and responsibilities are passed down through offspring and respected by society. The Eastern names, on the other hand, the Dark Lord Sauron earned many titles such as "The One Enemy" or "The Base Master of Treachery" In this novel, the use of titles and names not only functions as narrative devices but also as a way to reinforce themes of power, inheritance, and identity.

Then, in the context of characterization, the characterization in *The Lord of the Rings* is strongly influenced by the worldview and values of British society. The characters in Middle-earth are often clearly divided between good and evil. Depictions of characters such as Frodo, Aragorn, and Gandalf have high moral qualities, such as courage, wisdom, and self-sacrifice. They represent ideals of honor, courage, and integrity. Frodo, the Ring-bearer, shows extraordinary endurance and courage in the face of temptation and danger. Aragorn, the destined king, displays wise leadership and the ability to inspire others. Gandalf, the wise wizard, shows wisdom and self-sacrifice in guiding the heroes.

On the contrary, the portrayal of antagonists such as Sauron, Saruman, and the Orcs are evil and corrupt. This depiction reflects the dualistic view of morality, viewing the world through a

black-and-white lens, good and evil. The depiction of Sauron as the main antagonist is a source of absolute and merciless evil. Saruman, the corrupted wizard, shows how power and ambition can corrupt. Orcs, as warriors of darkness, symbolize endless cruelty and destruction.

Furthermore, social class is apparent in the characterization of *The Lord of the Rings*. The characters of the Shire, most of whom are hobbits, reflect the English working and lower middle classes. They are hardworking, simple, and full of compassion. For example, Samwise Gamgee, the devoted gardener, shows extraordinary dedication and loyalty towards Frodo. Hobbit life in the Shire is filled with warmth and togetherness, reflecting the traditional values of rural English society.

On the other hand, characters such as Aragorn and Boromir reflect the English aristocracy. They have a long pedigree and high social status. However, the novel also shows that these aristocratic characters must prove their worth and courage through actions, not just offspring. Aragorn had to experience numerous trials and adventures to prove his worth as a rightful leader despite being the rightful heir to the throne. Boromir faced temptation and personal weakness before ultimately finding forgiveness through self-sacrifice despite being a nobility of Gondor.

Culture and traditions also play a crucial role in characterization. For example, the nation of Rohan is heavily influenced by Anglo-Saxon culture, emphasizing war, horses, and honor, as they were depicted as brave and formidable people. Éomer and Éowyn of Rohan showed great courage and fighting spirit in protecting their homeland. The horses they rode and their fighting traditions reflect a strong and honorable warrior culture.

On the other hand, Gondor reflects a complex social structure and a long history of civilization. They are depicted as guardians of ancient wisdom and law, reflecting the British view of the importance of civilization and law in maintaining an orderly society. Denethor, the guardian of Gondor, shows the complexity of responsibility in guarding an ancient civilization, even though he sometimes fails in his duties due to the overwhelming burden and pressure. Boromir and Faramir, as sons of Gondor, show courage and dedication in protecting their homeland from external threats, underscoring the importance of tradition and history in shaping their identity.

Through rich and complex characterization, *The Lord of the Rings* reflects the worldview and values of British society. By combining elements of

morality, social class, culture, and tradition, Tolkien created a world that was not only epic in scale but also profound in its depiction of diverse characters. This novel not only tells a story of heroic adventure but also offers a profound reflection on the values held dear by British society, from honor and courage to the importance of tradition and law in maintaining social order.

CONCLUSION

In analyzing *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* by J.R.R. Tolkien, it can be seen how the depiction of Orientalism and the English worldview closely intertwine in the narrative and characterization of this novel. In conclusion, *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy does not solely tell an epic story about the battle between good and evil but also an extensive reflection on the cultural and social values that shaped the author's worldview. Through his depiction of complex characters and worlds, Tolkien created not only an entertaining work of fiction but also a reflection of the worldview and values of the English society of his time.

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