



People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
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**The Psychological Repercussions of the Great War on J. R. R Tolkien's Modern
Fantasy: *The Hobbit* as a Case Study**

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Literature and Civilisation

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2022/2023

Dedication

To my parents, my sisters, and my beloved ones who conquered my life with beauty and love
– those people are the reason I hold on.

“...And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: ‘Hold on!’

...

If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds’ worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that’s in it,
And—which is more—you’ll be a Man, my son!”

IF- Rudyard Kipling

KADRI Yousra

Dedication

Before anything, I thank Allah for giving me the strength and faith in myself. I dedicate this work to me, after the constant self-reassuring that there is nothing, I cannot do. To my family although they didn't know much about my research. And to my dear friends who made my college experience unforgettable.

KERAICHIA Malek

Acknowledgment

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to everyone who supported and believed in us to accomplish this work.

Abstract

The psychological impact of the Great War (WWI) on the world was more than massive destruction and physical wounds; it too injured the memories and the minds of those who survived its horrors. This thesis aims to study the impact of the Great War on the literary productions that came after it, notably the psychological repercussions that the experience of the war had on the British writer J. R. R. Tolkien, as the pioneer of the modern fantasy genre, and his works. This paper examines the traumatic response that remerged in this ex-veteran's literary text, which is manifested through the defence mechanism of escapism and the creation of a virtual world known as "Middle Earth". This dissertation focuses on Tolkien's first work *The Hobbit: or There and Back Again* to prove the traces of the war despite of his denial of its terrifying impact on and relevance to his fantasy. By adopting a psychoanalytical approach, this dissertation investigates the correlation between escapism, the core element of fantasy, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Lastly, this paper seeks to discover the reason why Tolkien's fantasy was different and more preferable by the readers, making it a mass-market and a central literary genre after having been marginalised for a long time.

Keywords: Great War, Post WWI Britain, Fantasy, Tolkien, Psychology, Freud's Structural Theory of the Psyche, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Escapism, Altruism.

Résumé

L'impact psychologique de la Grande Guerre sur le monde était plus que la destruction massive et les blessures physiques; il a également touché la mémoire et l'esprit de ceux qui ont survécu à ses horreurs. Cette thèse vise à étudier l'impact de la Grande Guerre sur les productions littéraires qui l'ont suivie, notamment les répercussions psychologiques que l'expérience de la guerre a eues sur l'écrivain britannique J. R. R. Tolkien, en tant que pionnier du genre littéraire de la fantaisie moderne, et sur ses œuvres. Cet article examine la réponse traumatique qui a ressurgi dans le texte littéraire de cet ancien vétéran, et qui se manifeste à travers le mécanisme de défense de l'évasion et la création d'un univers virtuel nommé "la Terre du Milieu". Cette thèse se concentre sur le premier ouvrage de Tolkien, *The Hobbit: or There and Back Again*, pour démontrer les traces de la guerre malgré son déni de son impact terrifiant et de sa pertinence pour sa fantaisie. En adoptant une approche psychanalytique, cette thèse étudie la corrélation entre l'évasion, l'élément central de la fantaisie, et le trouble de stress post-traumatique (TSPT). Enfin, cet article cherche à découvrir la raison pour laquelle la fantaisie de Tolkien était différente et plus préférée par les lecteurs, en faisant de la fantaisie moderne un genre de marché de masse et un genre littéraire central après avoir été marginalisé pendant longtemps.

Mots-clés : Grande Guerre, La Grande-Bretagne après la première guerre mondiale, Fantaisie, Tolkien, Psychologie, Théorie structurale de la psyché de Freud, Trouble de stress post-traumatique, Évasion, Altruisme.

المخلص

كان التأثير النفسي للحرب العظمى على العالم أكثر من الدمار الجسيم والجروح الجسدية، نلم نسلم كذلك ذكريات وعقول من نجوا من أهوالها. تهدف هذه الرسالة إلى دراسة تأثير الحرب العظمى على الإنتاج الأدبي الذي أعقبها ، وال سيما النعكاسات النفسية التي خلقتها تجربة الحرب على الكاتب البريطاني جي آر آر تولكين ، باعباره رائد النوع الخيالي المعاصر (النانازي)، وعلى أعماله. تبحث هذه الورقة في الاستجابة الصادمة التي ظمرت في هذا النص الأدبي للمحارب السابق، والذي يندجلى من خلال آلية الدفاع المتمثلة في المروب وخلق عالم انتراضي اصطلح عليه "الأرض الوسطى". تركز هذه الأطروحة على أول عمل لتولكين، الموسوم *The Hobbit: There and Back Again*، إل بات آثار الحرب على الرغم من إنكاره لتأثيرها المرعب على أدبه النانازي. من خلال اعتماد نهج التحليل النفسي ، تبحث هذه الأطروحة في العلاقة بين المروب ، وهو العنصر الأساسي للنانازي ، واضطراب ما بعد الصدمة (PTSD). أخيرًا ، تسعى هذه الورقة إلى الكشف السبب الذي يجعل الأدب النانازي لتولكين مثيرًا وأكثر تنضيدًا من قبل الخبراء ، مما جعله الألى على نسويًا

ونوعاً أدبياً مركزياً بعد أن تم فهمه لفترة طويلة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الحرب العظمى، بريطاني بعد الحرب العالمية الأولى، النانازي ، تولكين ، علم النفس ، نظرية نرويد الهيكلية للنفس ، اضطراب ما بعد الصدمة ، المروب ، إل بنار.

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Introduction

World War I raged across Europe in the beginning of the twentieth century. Many young men were called to serve their countries and they answered the call. Those war veterans were too deeply affected psychologically that all their creative productions echoed the malaise they had lived. No wonder that the world witnessed a revolution in the arts and literature after the Great War.

The majority of the war veterans who survived death in action were diagnosed with psychological problems like unconscious traumas and mental diseases such as “shell shock,” which was later called Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Amongst thousands of soldiers who fell sick, J.R.R. Tolkien – the father of modern fantasy – was diagnosed with trench fever and showed symptoms of PTSD too. After the bloody battle of the Somme in which he saw his fellows die and later heard about the death of his best friends whom he considered family, Tolkien started to write about an alternative universe he called "Middle Earth". He simply created an escape for himself and never doubted that many like him needed that. In one powerful instance, he wrote:

Fantasy is escapist and that is its glory. If a soldier is imprisoned by the enemy, don't we consider it his duty to escape? ... If we value the freedom of the mind and soul, if we're partisans of liberty, then it's our plain duty to escape, and to take as many people with us as we can. (Tolkien)

The Great War left a huge imprint on the world of literature. The mood, because of the War, was gloomier and themes revolved around good and evil or life and death. Tolkien denied any claim that the war he had lived had any impact on his writings, but we found it omnipresent in his literature by way of unconscious necessity. Tolkien's works – *The Hobbit* (1937) and *The Lord of the Rings* (1954) in particular – are filled with vivid scenery from the

war in his battles. The fantasy he created was different from the fantasy that had existed before, and that made Tolkien the pioneer of the genre of modern or high fantasy as we know it today. *The Hobbit*, Tolkien's first published novel, and the work that this dissertation will focus upon, gained wide acceptance and popular appeal, proving that people at the time really needed fantasy to escape.

This dissertation endeavours to investigate the psychological impact of the war experience on Tolkien and his literary productions. It attempts to trace the unconscious impact of his trench fever and PTSD on the fantasy world he created, focusing on how he used escapism as an essential element, and how his fantasy is distinguished from the rest of the works of the same genre. Adopting a largely psychoanalytical approach, this study aims to establish and argue for a strong correlation between, on the one hand, Tolkien's trauma and PTSD and, on the other, his escapist fantasy in general and *The Hobbit* in particular.

Tolkien has been widely studied as the pioneering figure of modern fantasy by underscoring his singular style and his mastery of creating an imaginary universe called Middle Earth. In the area of inquiry where Tolkien and his works are studied, there is a number of solid books and articles some of which we used to build the problematic of this dissertation and reinforce its arguments. First, Joseph Loconte's well-known book *A Hobbit, a Wardrobe, and a Great War* (2015) studies the ways in which J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis rediscovered faith, friendship and heroism in the cataclysm of 1914-18. Loconte's work partly paved the way for our work in that it helped build our arguments and realise the massive importance of the war experience Tolkien had along with other writers who adopted fantastic modes after the war. Loconte argues that in the ashes of the most dehumanising events, "extraordinary" literature was born.

Another book that made this dissertation possible is Tom Shippey's *J. R. R. Tolkien: Author of the Century* (2000), which focuses on the fantasy genre and how Tolkien revolutionised it by elevating it from its previous status of marginality to a genre of empty shelves in the bookstores read by all ages. Shippey studies why Tolkien is different and argues that his knowledge of mythology, languages and philology were what made him master what he did. This crucial element informs our argument in this dissertation.

One of the most important and relevant articles to our dissertation is Michel Livingston's "The Shell-Shocked Hobbit: The First World War and Tolkien's Trauma of the Ring." In it, Livingston highlights the psychological challenges Tolkien faced and the extent to which the war wounded the writer's mind. He sheds lights on the major war battle "the Somme," after which Tolkien was diagnosed with trench fever and lost his best friends. As a semi-biographical focus on Tolkien's psychology and war trauma, this perspective is of paramount importance to our dissertation.

In the secondary literature on Tolkien, one notices that *Lord of the Rings* has attracted the most interest since the day of its first publication. Much research in this area is focused, for instance, on the psychoanalytic nature of Frodo Baggins in *Lord of the Rings* and overlook the psychological aspect of Bilbo Baggins in *The Hobbit*, leaving much space for research to explore. For that reason, this dissertation aims to study *The Hobbit* as a case study and seize the fact that it did not get as much attention as *Lord of the Rings*.

The significance of the study lays in enlightening Tolkien's fantasy which has addressed a variety of psychological and political problems. The endeavor to handle politics and psychoanalysis via literature has been tackled via diving further into the nature of the Great War and its repercussions on the citizens. The research also sheds light on the construction of good and evil in a relation to power and the human psyche.

This research depends on an analytical method to investigate thoroughly the psychological effects of war on Tolkien's modern fantasy without a predetermined standpoint. The goal is to answer the research question objectively and present a critical interpretation, consistent with the researchers' comprehension of the topic of study, without negating what had been previously said. The intention is to supply the academic community with a fresh and new reading of the theme of psychological repercussions in *The Hobbit*.

This dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first chapter provides a theoretical and contextual framework, where the literature needed concerning the psychological knowledge and the historical aspects are presented and discussed. Section one of this chapter focuses on the psychological terms and concepts the dissertation will adopt, like the three levels of the mind and PTSD. In section two, an overview of Britain after the Great War is provided; a historical context in which Tolkien's work was produced and welcomed by an audience thirsty, so to speak, for escapism. In section three, the chapter offers an overview of modern fantasy and its essential characteristics.

In the second chapter, the focus narrows to PTSD, escapism and Tolkien's war experience as the origin of his literary work. In the first two sections, emphasis is placed on the psychological effects of the war on Tolkien's fantasy and, in particular, on PTSD, escapism and trauma. The third section is a quasi-biographical study of Tolkien as a war veteran and the influence of this experience on his literary imagination.

The third chapter is dedicated to the case study, *The Hobbit*. It tries to apply what is previously discussed on Tolkien's work. The first section discusses the genre and its general themes. The second delves into the setting of the book, which is the famous Middle Earth, and its major themes. In the third and final part of this chapter, the closure of the case study is analysed along with the author's choice for such an ending.

Finally, we would like to add that this work has been conducted with our modest potentials in research and scholarship, limited by time and our lack of expertise. We must note, nevertheless, that it has been made with a genuine love and respect to literature as a whole and to modern fantasy in particular, in full conviction of the significance and relevance of our chosen topic.

Chapter One: Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Section One: Psychoanalysis

According to Encyclopaedia Britannica,

Psychoanalysis is a method of treating mental disorders, shaped by psychoanalytic theory, which emphasizes unconscious mental processes and is sometimes described as “depth psychology.” The psychoanalytic movement originated in the clinical observations and formulations of Austrian psychiatrist Sigmund Freud, who coined the term *psychoanalysis*. During the 1890s, Freud worked with Austrian physician and physiologist Josef Breuer in studies of neurotic patients under hypnosis. Freud and Breuer observed that, when the sources of patients’ ideas and impulses were brought into consciousness during the hypnotic state, the patients showed improvement.

Psychoanalysis in literature considers the literary text as a clinic, the author/characters as patients and the critic/researcher as a psychoanalyst whose task is to adopt the clinical method/ Freud’s approach in the analysis of the text in order to make a diagnosis and find out the source of the psychological dysfunction(s) or the reason(s) of the production of certain pathological behaviours that manifest themselves through the writing.

1.1. An Overview on Freudian Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis is a medical discipline established by the Austrian neurologist Sigmund Schlomo Freud (6 May 1856- 23 September 1939). The neurologist was conducting research, spending six days a week analysing his patients, trying to help those who suffered

from neurosis or what was called hysteria disorders. Freudian psychoanalytic theories put every production or reaction under the lens to study its origins, effects and end results.

Freud, and later his youngest daughter the psychoanalyst Anna Freud, base their theories on one mutual principle, namely, that individuals are motivated by unconscious desires, fears, needs, and conflicts. Once those buried drives re-emerge to the surface (the conscious sphere), they create disorders or dysfunctions. Thus, psychoanalysis is a method that investigates the relation of conscious and unconscious psychological processes. Its central premise is that our present is shaped by our past. The theory of personality suggests that people can experience ways of distress and relief through confession and catharsis, in order to release and get relief from their hidden complexities.

Freud's contributions to the field of psychological medicine, apart from establishing it, were many landmark studies. Freud was himself suffering from psychological problems; he evidently stated: "The chief patient I am preoccupied with is myself." This was maybe the reason for his insightful works about human psychology. Consequently, he devoted much of his effort to deconstruct the human personality and psyche. (Nikos_Marinos)

Later, Anna Freud dedicated her time to her father's field and developed the psychoanalytic theory and practice. The publication of Anna Freud's *The Ego and Mechanisms of Defence* (1937) gave a strong, new impetus to ego psychology. The principal human defence mechanism, she indicated, is repression. Repression is an unconscious process that develops as the young child learns that some impulses, if acted upon, could prove dangerous to him. Thus, the ego intervenes to push such disturbing or threatening thoughts out of one's consciousness and conceal them in the unconscious. Other mechanisms she described include the projection of one's own feeling into another; directing aggressive impulses against

the self (suicide being the extreme example); identification with an overpowering aggressor; and the divorce of ideas from feelings. (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2012)

1.2. Freud's Three Components of the Psyche

The structural theory of personality places a high value on how the three components of the psyche (the id, the ego, and the superego) are responsible for how our personality is shaped and how we behave. Each part of the psyche holds accountability in an area of a person's life, and the investigation of the roles of each component attempts to make sense of certain behaviours. This theory assumes that the human mind is in constant conflict between what to do and what not to do. These conflicts are mostly unconscious.

1.2.1. The Id, Ego and Superego

In his book *The Ego and the Id* (1923), Freud claimed the three components of the human psyche controlled all processes of personality, behaviours, and traits in a person. To start with the id, it is the most primitive and instinctive part of the mind, which contains sexual and aggressive drives and hidden memories. (15)

The id is the only part of the psyche that is present at birth, unlike the ego and the superego which are acquired with time. It is responsible for our basic, instant urges and needs and is driven by the pleasure principle – that is, it seeks immediate gratification of its desires, compelling the mind to act upon those impulses. The id is the unconscious part of the mind, which does not acknowledge what is allowed and what is forbidden. There is no such thing as moral values or consequences. It represents the animalistic side in human minds. Besides, it is responsible for the instinctual behaviour, which has the same response to food and sex as animals. (20)

Freud considered the id to hold the ability to influence the character and have the access to manipulate human behaviour to manifest blindly its desires. It is not possible to restrain this part of the human mind. The thoughts that we receive from it are uncontrollable; however, it is possible not to act upon them. For example, if you pass by a cliff or any dangerous place, the immediate thought – triggered by the id – is to jump and die. That shows that it has no sense of rationality but acts upon impulses. It seeks the extreme thrill and the high excitement that it would receive from jumping from that cliff, without worrying about the safety of the human organism and without giving much thought to what is right and what is wrong.

The ego is another significant component of the human psyche. The ego is the middle ground between the id and the superego; it is the rational and conscious part of the human mind. It can distinguish whether the demands of the id are reasonable or not, the ability to see the bigger picture. This part of the mind is aware that we have desires that want to come to life and some others that cannot come true because each action has a consequence. It keeps our instincts and desires in check until they have time to process properly, preventing us from becoming overwhelmed. (25)

At the same time, the ego does not overlook reality, how we should behave and respect boundaries and principles. The latter keep societies standing; if not, the temptation of the id would take the lead and ruin the system that has been built to keep humans intact. The ego thinks critically and makes reasonable decisions. It seeks stability and asks us to adapt to reality, to its principles, the principles that we learn throughout childhood and keep for the rest of our lives – because we are not born with them. One has to learn how to be disciplined.

For example, if you pass by the cliff, the ego would try to balance the id and the superego. The ego completely rational and will not jump to satisfy a deadly need, and the id

would feel euphoric from doing so. The ego, furthermore, would choose to jump from something that would be less dangerous and acceptable, such as jumping on the beach where it is not deep enough to drown. In this way, it still satisfies the impulse but in a non-destructive manner.

The superego, the last component of the psyche, is associated with social and moral values; it is also known as the moral conscious. It is the angelic part of the psyche, which is driven by a desire to follow the rules and do the right thing according to society. It also allows us to feel empathy for others, but it does not condone their actions when they are unacceptable. "The superego is seen as the purveyor of rewards (feelings of pride and satisfaction) and punishments (feelings of shame and guilt) depending on which part (the ego-deal or conscious) is activated." (Simply Psychology)

To sum up, the superego and the id are the extreme ends of the human psyche; the one wants to be wild and has no limits and the other wants to be accepted by society and does nothing out of the ordinary. The superego is the opposite of the id. It exists to prevent humans from committing crimes, adultery, suicide, and many other forms of self-harm.

To make reference to the case study, Tolkien was a master of storytelling, and his characters were so well constructed that they had complicated rounded nature and psychology. The characters coped with the Freudian trio of id, ego and superego. In both of his works *Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* appeared the character of Gollum is the incarnation of the id, the mindless desire to possess the ring of power. Tolkien's protagonists Bilbo and Frodo were both a perfect depiction of the ego, balance being made and acting courageously at the same time along with the wise Gandalf. The superego is represented through the wizard Radgast in *The Hobbit* and Samwise in the trilogy *Lord of the Rings*, always acting selfless and seeking the better good of the group.

1.2.2. The Three Levels of the Mind

In her article "Psychodynamic Psychology", Jennifer Walinga presented brief definitions of Freud's three levels of the mind, which are the conscious, the subconscious and the unconscious.

a) The conscious is the first level also known as the conscious state or the stage of the immediate awareness. Its main function is the continuous use or analysis of information input from the senses, which leads to decision making. It consists of what we are aware of at any point in time, including things we are thinking about at the present, whether in the front of our minds or the back. It occupies 10% of the capacity of the mind and is directly connected with the ego.

b) The second level Freud suggests is the subconscious. The subconscious or preconscious is the place where dreams come from, or the fabric of which dreams are made of. It is the place where all remembered experience resides, impressions left on the personality by such experiences or tendencies, and which those impressions, in turn, invoke. The subconscious constitutes a large storehouse of information right under the surface of awareness. In other words, it is regarded as the hard disk of the mind. To retrieve those pieces of information or memories is relatively, but not always, easy.

c) The last level is the unconscious, which is formed of unacceptable thoughts, memories, and instinctual desires buried deep within the mind. It resides far below our conscious and occupies the largest space in the mind. The unconscious memories and information are inaccessible despite their great influence on our conscious and daily behaviours. The unconscious holds within it the childhood unhappy, traumatic memories and experiences. Those shape our beliefs and perception of life along with our fears and insecurities of the present time. However, we cannot recall most of these memories because we develop our

unconscious mind at a very young age through the act of repression. Repression is the expunging/ removal of the conscious mind of all our unhappy psychological events. Our unhappy memories do not disappear in the unconscious mind; rather, they exist as a dynamic entity of unconscious forces that drive our behaviours. One of Freud' s most radical insights was the notion that human beings are motivated by unconscious desires, fears, needs, and conflicts.

1.3. The Unconscious and Defence Mechanisms

Freud believed the three parts of the mind are in constant conflict because each part has a different primary goal. Sometimes, when the conflict is too much for a person to handle, his or her ego may engage in one or many defence mechanisms to protect the individual and to help him stay safe while driving or performing other tasks.

"Defence mechanisms are psychological strategies that are unconsciously used to protect a person from anxiety arising from unacceptable thoughts or feelings. According to Freudian theory, defence mechanisms involve a distortion of reality so that we are better able to cope with a situation." (Mcleod)

The relationship between the unconscious and defence mechanisms is complex, because it is affected by many factors. Defence mechanisms stem from the unconscious, where childhood traumas, insecurities, and feelings are stored and inaccessible. The unconscious determines the way the individual behaves, as it contains everything about a person. Because of that, defence mechanisms take place depending on the type of situation someone lived in and how they used to deal with obstacles growing up.

Dealing with and reacting to matters differs from one person to another. Some use repression to push back any unsettling and alarming experiences out of the conscious, not knowing that they stay hidden in the unconscious, affecting one's behaviour implicitly, such

as childhood abuse. Others tend to be creative, creating a fantasy to avoid external and internal reminders as an escape to a world of theirs, where they get to control how things take place.

Denial is another major defence mechanism that is used frequently when the ego refuses to acknowledge disturbing and overwhelming experiences that were too painful from awareness, acting as if they never happened, such as death. In many of cases, the ego uses avoidance as a mechanism to detach and isolate the incident and becomes obsessed with distractions, so it does not have to deal with the matter. Such a thing is primitive and natural, but it is never permanent until it occurs again, demanding to be dealt with. The unconscious is a black box that includes all the fears and the things we do not want to think about; the role of defence mechanisms is to “protect” us from such things.

The unconscious can be considered a defence mechanism because it allows us to absorb information without processing it. When a person hears a lot of bad news, they would feel numb from hearing it over and over without really thinking about it. In doing so, they do not force themselves to deal with the negative emotions associated with the situation.

Defence mechanisms are mental procedures used to protect the organism against threats or traumas. They are usually designed to get rid of uncomfortable feelings or urges without directly dealing with them. They allow us to avoid pain or discomfort by blocking unwanted thoughts or feelings. This means that if there is something in someone’s head that makes them uncomfortable or feels bad, they use defence mechanisms to keep those thoughts from entering their awareness (Freud 93).

1.4. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Our analysis in this dissertation will be based on Freud’s aforementioned psychological theories and concepts. Yet, another crucial element of the theoretical armature

of this research is PTSD, which was conceptualised after Freud's theories. PTSD stands for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. It can be referred to as combat history, for it is most common amongst war veterans.

Psychiatry, thanks to the PTSD, has gained more efficiency in dealing with war veterans and victims of traumatic experiences, since spotting the problem is half of the solution. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, "PTSDs were known as "shell shock" because they were seen as a reaction to the explosion of artillery shells." The American Psychiatric Association (APA) produces Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). The first DSM was published in the year 1952. Yet the third DSM, where the term PTSD was coined, appeared in 1987.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a mental health disease that can be triggered by experiencing or seeing a horrific event. Flashbacks, nightmares, excruciating anxiety, and uncontrollable thoughts about the incident are just a few possible symptoms. The majority of people who experience traumatic circumstances might initially struggle to adjust and cope, but with time and adequate self-care, they typically get better. The symptoms of PTSD may worsen and its effects can last for weeks, months, or even years, affecting the daily functioning of an individual.

1.4.1. Symptoms of PTSD

The symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder can begin as soon as one month after a stressful experience, but they can also take years to manifest. Significant issues are brought on by these symptoms in social, professional, and romantic interactions. They may also obstruct the ability to conduct simple daily tasks. PTSD is common with war veterans, accident survivors like physical assaults, homicide and every cruel incident that may leave a damaging impact on the person's psyche. Let us take two symptoms of PTSD as an example.

Persistent memories are the first symptom; they are intrusive memories that could manifest themselves as:

- unwelcome and recurrently upsetting memories of the terrible incident;
- reliving the upsetting experience as though it were going to happen again (flashbacks);
- disturbing nightmares or dreams involving the horrific occurrence;
- severe mental discomfort or adverse physical responses to things that bring back terrible memories.

The second symptom is avoidance, which could manifest itself as:

- attempting to avoid reflecting on or discussing the painful incident;
- and avoiding things, people, or situations that make you think of the painful occurrence. (PTSD - Symptoms and Causes)

Section Two: Post WWI Britain

2.1. Britain during the Great War

The First World War had its impact on Britain in several ways. The whole country lived through a war that affected every man, woman and child. Thus, the devastating conflict generated social unrest and cultural shock on an unprecedented scale over a concentrated period. The war took an enormous toll on Britain's economy and its ability to maintain control over the colonies. The scale of death and destruction caused by World War I was phenomenal.

It was not until around 1940 that Britain began to recover economically from the devastation of war. After Europe witnessed the devastation caused by the signing of the Armistice in 1918, a new world was on the horizon, which was itself marred by the Second

World War. A whole generation of young people lived through the horrors of war firsthand, and many struggled with mental and physical traumas. On the other hand, many women experienced independence for the first time. The First World War sparked political and social change across Britain. The war played a key role in the development of women's rights and changing attitudes towards race and ethnicity.

Although most women did not fight on the front lines of World War I, they were still actively involved in the war effort, from nursing and driving ambulances to working in munitions factories. These were not necessarily glamorous jobs, but they provided women with a level of independence, both financially and socially, which proved to be a harbinger of things to come. During World War I, almost all women contributed to the women's suffrage movement, which “proved” the value of women outside the family, becoming a much more important part of society and a labour force. The Representation of the People Act of 1918 extended suffrage to a small percentage of adult women in Britain, while the 1928 Act. extended it to all women over the age of 21 (Women Get the Vote).

During World War I, Britain was the most successful military power on land and sea. It was well-equipped, disciplined, and well-organised. It had advanced weaponry, excellent leadership, a developed economy, a huge colonial empire, and an effective transportation system. Britain's success against Germany in the war was due to its highly efficient industrial base, which produced numerous weapons used in combat. The British had access to more advanced weapons and equipment since it had the ability to mass produce them.

Trade unions were formally created at the end of the 19th century, but World War I proved to be a turning point in their development and importance. World War I required a lot of labour, especially in factories, and full employment prevailed throughout the country. Mass production, long working days, and low wages, combined with often dangerous conditions,

especially in arms and ammunition factories, meant that many workers expressed an interest in joining a union. They needed the umbrella of unions to achieve their goals and continue to earn money and take the profit they deserve.

In return, union cooperation meant that many workplaces achieved a degree of democratisation and social equality after the war. In 1920, union membership peaked and unionisation continued to be a powerful tool for workers' voices. The First World War fundamentally affected the British class structure. War, of course, is indiscriminate; in the trenches, bullets do not distinguish between earldom heirs and farm labourers. The heirs of the English nobility and estates died in large numbers, leaving a kind of vacuum in the question of succession.

2.2. Aftermath: British Collective Trauma

The effects of World War I live on today, and the conflict disrupted the majority of the world. These effects can be seen in the experiments of art and literature. The twentieth century opened with optimism and great expectations that large social and economic problems could be resolved. Then, the war happened and everything radically changed. As Winston Churchill pointed out:

The great war was different from all ancient wars in the immense power of the combatants and their fearful agencies of destructions, and from all modern wars in the utter ruthlessness with which it was fought. All the horrors of all the ages were brought together, and only armies but whole populations were thrust in the midst of them. (291)

The first half of the twentieth century witnessed two major wars; yet, the first (1914-1918) was called The Great War because the horrors seen in it were unprecedented. Churchill's words describe how horrible the Great War was. The Allies believed that they were fighting against militarist great evil coming from Germany. Armageddon is the biblical great battle fought between good and evil at the end of the time, where "all the horrors are brought together." This moral connotation is what gave the First World War its label as great. Britain's entry into the First World War was part of a moral obligation (established under the Treaty of London of 1839).

The war resulted in a collective trauma that was hard to manage and overcome. The trauma was more than just human loss; it was upon Britain as it was upon Europe, raging on every aspect of life. The human loss was in scary large numbers. Britain lost almost one million soldiers; sailor and aviators were killed in action. Almost two million were disabled permanently. These disabled people needed care both medically and financially during the peacetime. Finding work for those ex-soldiers and servicemen alongside the population as whole was challenging for the British government. Hence, Britain suffered terribly from a post war collective trauma and, walking wounded, so to speak, throughout the crisis.

Economically, the war robbed Britain of most of its foreign financial resources. That led Britain to be in a heavy debt, an endless labyrinth of financial problems that stood as an obstacle in the face of fast and easy recovery and evolution.

Additionally, the British society witnessed huge upheavals since not only armies were addressed but whole populations. Many male literary figures took part in the war as war veterans. They produced a new and different artistic and literary sensibility, which explains, at least in part, the holistic changes in arts and literature. Amongst those war veterans are

prominent writers like Ernest Hemingway, C.S. Lewis, Robert Graves and J.R.R Tolkien, to name but a few.

2.3. The Effects of World War I on British Literature

When the First World War broke out, active service was seen as an obligation of the aristocracy and upper bourgeoisie in the United Kingdom. However, the nature and scale of the so-called Great War were different from previous conflicts, and the death rate of soldiers, particularly young officers, was alarmingly high. As such, it fundamentally undermined long-held war narratives in British culture. As the nature of war changed, so do people's attitudes towards it, as well as their cultural and moral values. This was clearly reflected in the field of literature.

The First World War created new genres, styles, and modes of writing, altering the form and content of literature. Most of what was published back then was about war. Writers wrote their works to show their realistic or symbolic pictures of the war. World War I, furthermore, changed people's opinions, tastes and expectations. War was a major theme in English literature. It was a unique event that affected humanity and all walks of life, especially in England.

The atmosphere and aftermath of the war affected the British writers, who were also devastated by it. Modernist pessimist literature was a direct response to the horrors of the war. Many writers and artists attempted to embody the suffering of humanity, the toll of murder, death, and the extent to which war affected society and individuals.

For instance, Paul Nash's well-known painting *The Menin Road* (1919) compellingly and suggestively portrays a war battlefield, becoming, as a result, an iconic piece of art. Women also played an important role in the war. Several women writers volunteered for

military service. Vera Brittain, for example, volunteered as a nurse to serve in the British Army; she recorded her experiences in an essay entitled "A Testament of Youth" (1933), which was considered one of the most autobiographical works of the war (Robinson).

The First World War ended idealism and romanticism in Victorian literature. The shock, trauma, death, and madness because of war were the focus of British novelists who grappled with the events and aftermath of the Great War. Besides, themes of globalisation, industrialisation, and rapid technological development also provided novelists with the inspiration – or anxiety – to create unique literary works.

The most prominent literary technique used by many British novelists during that period was the stream-of-consciousness technique, a new style of Modernist writing. Stream of consciousness is a literary technique that depicts and explores the thoughts and feelings of characters. It was introduced by the philosopher and psychologist William James. He was influenced by Freud's theories about the unconscious, which had a great influence on people at the time.

After World War I, Britain experienced the so-called the Great Depression, the rise of fascism, and British appeasement policies. British writers and intellectuals, then, sought solutions to overcome the situation, especially political ones. John Barth claimed, in his essay "The Literature of Replenishments," that modern writers introduced a variety of literary tactics and devices including the radical disruption of the finest flow of narrative. Like all modernists, he displayed contempt for conventional modes concerning unity and coherence of plot and character and the cause and effect development. Therefore, they deployed instead ironic and ambiguous juxtapositions to call into question the moral and philosophical meaning of literary section. They also adopted a tone of epistemological self-mockery, aimed at naïve

pretensions of bourgeois rationality; the opposition of inward consciousness to rational, public, objective discourse (Qtd in Keep et al 68).

Modern writers are more interested in deeper (unconscious) realities than surface (conscious) realities, which means that art's reflection of external realities is given less weight. Post-war disillusionment shaped most modern literature; Paul Fussell echoes this sentiment when he said: "I find nothing more depressing than optimism." In addition, irony was often deployed to illustrate points about society, as Paul Fussell asserts in *The Great War and Modern Memory*: "Every war is ironic, as every weather worse than expected. Every war represents an irony of the situation because its means are so dramatically disproportionate to its supposed ends."

Modernists believe that there is no absolute truth, they think that things are relative. For modernists, life is disordered and language is multifaceted. The modernist writer saw not progress but the decline of civilisations; they were despaired. Soldiers could never get over it. Prior to the war, most literature had a linear plot, an introduction, conflict, and resolution. However, modernist literature tends to be more of a stream of awareness, an uncensored flow of unconscious thoughts; the narrative differs from before.

Modernist writers did not use plots of sudden climate change and clear decisions. Instead, they used open-ended segments that were not unwrapped. Finally, modernist literature did away with extraordinary characters or so-called heroes. The protagonist of Modernism seems to have lost faith in society, religion, and circumstances, lost all claim to heroic action (Ali 2-3).

2.4. The Emergence of Modern literature

Modern literature rose on the ashes of the ancient world that was set on fire from WWI. Modern literature followed a wave of Modernism that took over the world: "The

modern movement in the arts transformed consciousness and artistic form just as the energies of modernity, scientific, technological, philosophical, political transformed forever separated the nature, the speed, the sensation of human life" (Bradbury and McFarlane 11).

Modernism was, in a sense, the outcome of a revolutionary experience in the world order. "The experience of modernity and modernization was not obscure. It happened in the streets, the homes, factories, in the political and economic system, on the battlefield and in the world order" (Bradbury and McFarlane 11).

The war entailed massive transformation. Europe was sinking in blood and destruction, and that required a fundamental construction. The construction can be attained only by creating a realistic image of life; an image that was called "modernist", and which was shaped by the hands of those who saw their worlds on fire. Literature, as a mirror of society, witnessed on its turn major radical changes.

Considered "avant-garde art," Modernism won the wager and transformed literature from the plain realism of the Victorian Age to the ambiguity and detachment of modernist literature. Those artists, it must be remembered, were from all around the world; Modernism was therefore a collective product from everyone belonging to everywhere. It was not the product of a single nation; in other words, modern literature was, as George Stiner famously called it, "extra-territorial."

The literature of after war was equally diverse, which was not surprising. Two poetic trends that sprang from and responded to Victorian-era poetry at the turn of the 20th century were the Georgians and the Decadent or Aesthetic movements. The poetry of the First World War and the literature that followed it, however, were frequently uncomfortable, disruptive, and focused on new interests and approaches, much as how World War I destroyed many preconceptions about society and humanity. During the two world wars, Imagism and Modernism (as opposed to just modern) blossomed.

The transition denoting the emergence of modern literature was neither “natural” nor smooth. Modern literature rose from turmoil and crisis. T.S Eliot gave modern literature a masterpiece, *The Wasteland* (1922), the modern work of art 'par excellence'. The themes dominating the early modernist literary era were orbiting around loss, death, destruction, crisis and (im)morality.

In his masterpiece, and in especially the opening lines, Eliot subverts the first lines of the General Prologue of *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer. Chaucer wrote about April as a month of restorative effect, beginning of the spring bringing warmth and mending what preceded it: “Whan that Aprille with his shoures soote / The droghte of March hath perced to the roote, / And bathed every veyne in swich licour / Of which vertu engendred is the flour.” Eliot, on the contrary, in the well-known opening lines of *The Waste Land* writes:

April is the cruelest month, breeding
 Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
 Memory and desire, stirring
 Dull roots with spring rain
 Winter kept us warm, covering
 Earth in forgetful snow, feeding (Lines 1-7)

Eliot draws the new image of April against the usual cliché that stood for centuries preceding WWI. This sums up the vision and the tone that dominated literature in the early twentieth century. The war trauma, as mentioned earlier, brought about new literary narrative styles like stream of consciousness, which focuses on captivating the character’s thoughts and monologues.

As far as genre is concerned, the literary field saw a huge wave and use of the fantastic. Fantasy quickly captivated readers and became the major genre to be read around the world. The claim that fantasy became the dominant genre may sound surprising, but if we

look back at the literary field of the twentieth century, the most distinctive and widely read works were those belonging to the fantastic. J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Animal Farm*, William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, and C.S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia* are some of the major and most successful works of the period (Shippy²). This validates our argument that the fantastic served the function of escapism to writers and readers alike after The First World War.

Section three: Modern Fantasy

3.1. Traditional Fantasy versus Modern Fantasy

According to the English author Neil Richard Gaiman, fantasy as a genre is easy to identify, but crucial to define. Still, fantasy is such an integral part of our lives that can show us things we have seen many times presented in a different manner and scope than we are used to seeing it (ii). There is no thought without fantasy, and the faculty of fantasising may well be the evolutionary *raison d'être* of consciousness. Yet, the notion of "fantasy" comes readily tainted with implications of unworthiness, of a failure of some alleged duty of the human mind to concentrate on the realities of existence (Stableford 37).

Human beings tend to imagine and fantasise about anything and everything. This is because they might not be satisfied with what their life has to offer, or it is only something their mind practice that wishes to see the potential and the better image of things. Fantasy, also spelled phantasy, is an imaginative fiction based on the strangeness of the setting and fiction's unlimited possibilities that evoke wonder and contain fundamental and irreducible elements of supernatural or impossible worlds, beings, or objects. In this world, the mortal characters of the story and its readers become at least on partially familiar terms (Manlove 1).

Fantasy as genre is divided into two subgenres: traditional fantasy and modern fantasy. In the popular fantasy genre, modern and traditional approaches differ in many ways. While

both subgenres have many similarities, they also have some significant differences. One of the most famous examples of traditional fantasy is JRR Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. The books draw heavily on Norse and Celtic mythology, creating a world of magic and wonder steeped in tradition and legend.

As Lennart Björk points out, in his book *The Lord of the Rings and the Western Narrative Tradition*, Tolkien's work is "fundamentally rooted in traditional narrative structures." Furthermore, Tolkien not only contributed to fantasy, but also redefined it and laid the groundwork for a very distinct subgenre alongside other mid-20th-century authors. These stories typically take place in medieval-style settings with an emphasis on epic quests and battles between good and evil. Magic is often at the heart of the plot, and characters are usually drawn from typical fantasy races such as elves, dwarves, and dragons.

Modern fantasy, on the other hand, embraces a wider range of works and styles. While some modern fantasy works still rely heavily on traditional fantasy elements, others may be set in contemporary or futuristic settings, or contain elements of science fiction or horror. The characters in modern fantasy can be more diverse and complex than traditional ones, and the themes explored are more subtle and timely.

Modern fantasy typically takes place in contemporary or futuristic settings, and its themes frequently reflect current societal issues. It also includes elements of science fiction and horror. *American Gods* by Neil Gaiman is an example of modern fantasy. It is regarded at its best when it draws inspiration from an established cultural setting, such as a medieval European setting (JRR Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*) or a historical current year (JK Rowling's *Harry Potter* series of novels). Meanwhile, traditional fantasy is characterised by imaginary or entirely imaginary settings; for example, magic in Cooper's fantasy novel *The Last of the Mohicans*.

In both subgenres, readers must give up their scepticism; they may not understand a magical door accurately without learning how it works from an experienced scholar or a fur trader who has lived among Native Americans for many years, without learning how it fits into the medieval environment. Readers accept these elements because they have become part of the fictional world created by the author.

Both genres are fantasy, depicting other worlds, with magical elements, talking animals, and strange characters and objects; they may include a hero's journey, the supernatural, and universal themes of good and evil or right and wrong. Both can be allegorical, spiritual, satirical or political.

Traditional fantasy is derived from oral tradition and typically consists of a collection of stories. The setting is frequently hazy and magical. Characters are merely symbolic and do not evolve or change. In contrast, modern fantasy stories are created by the author. Scenes are detailed, and characters are believable and adaptable (Kurkjian).

3.2. Characteristics of Modern Fantasy

The years following the early twentieth century were known as the modernist period in English literature. Modernity in general, and not just Modernism, is defined by an intense and global break with tradition. This schism involves strong reactions to long-held religious, political, and social beliefs, in the attempt to find new ways to express oneself and reject conventional or traditional ideas and beliefs.

Modern fantasy is a literary genre that emerged in the twentieth century and rose to prominence in the latter half of the twentieth century, with the emergence of authors such as J.R.R. Tolkien, J.K. Rowling, Neil Gaiman, and George R.R. Martin. Magic, mythical

creatures, and supernatural powers are elements that distinguish modern fantasy from other genres.

Modern fantasy's popularity can be attributed to its ability to provide escapism by immersing readers in rich imaginary worlds and exploring complex themes in a non-threatening manner. Modern fantasy frequently addresses contemporary issues and concerns, such as the conflict between technology and nature, environmental degradation, and the search for identity and purpose in an ever-changing world. It frequently explores themes of power, authority, and the struggle between good and evil as characters navigate complex social and political systems.

The modern fantasy literary genre evolved from the traditional fantasy genre. It usually incorporated a contemporary setting, a focus on realistic characters and relationships, and a blurring of lines between reality and fantasy. Modern fantasy tends to place emphasis on character development. In contrast to traditional fantasy, which frequently depicts archetypal heroes and villains, modern fantasy is more likely to depict complex, multifaceted characters with believable motivations and personalities. As William G. Doty points out, "modern fantasy is characterised by its psychological realism, which allows for a more nuanced exploration of character" (87).

Modern fantasy frequently adds ambiguity and uncertainty to the genre's complexity. As John Clute states, "Modern fantasy frequently incorporates elements of the supernatural or the impossible into an otherwise realistic setting, leading to a sense of cognitive dissonance that challenges readers' perceptions of what is real" (145).

The presence of magical creatures such as dragons, unicorns, and wizards is another feature of modern fantasy. These creatures serve as metaphors and symbols for various aspects of human nature and society. As Kathryn Hume (2017) notes, "Fantasy literature is

uniquely suited to examine and critique society by using the symbolic language of myth and fairy tale"(32). Modern fantasy authors frequently create richly detailed worlds with their own histories, cultures, and languages. This world-building is used to immerse the reader and provide a backdrop for the story's magical and supernatural elements.

Overall, the characteristics of modern fantasy reflect its status as a genre that has evolved in response to changing cultural and literary trends. By emphasising realism, character development, and ambiguity, modern fantasy provides readers with a rich and engaging literary experience that pushes the boundaries of the imagination.

3.3. Mythology in Modern Fantasy

Classics such as *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *Hades and Persephone*, *Beowulf*, *Cupid and Psych*, *One Thousand and One Night* or *The Arabian Nights* are books of either folklore or mythology. *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Hobbit*, *Harry Potter*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *Alice in Wonderland*, on the other hand, are books of fantasy. They all fall, however, under the large umbrella that is fantastic fiction. There may be some overlap between the two; yet, they are not the same. Myths and fantasy are interrelated in many ways, but a definition should be provided at first for both terms.

Mythology is not an easy term to define; in fact, no definition could exhaust the particularity and significance of this term. The most expressive definition we found is what follows. According to *Microsoft Student 2009 Encyclopaedia*, Mythology can be defined as

the body of myths of a particular culture, and the study and interpretation of such myths. A myth can be broadly defined, as a narrative through many retelling has become an accepted tradition in a society. By this definition, the term mythology might include all

traditional tales, from creation stories of ancient Egypt to the sagas of Icelandic literature to the American folktale Paul Bunyan.

This definition explains that myth represents a widely accepted tradition in a given society. It may concern gods, heroes, and miracles that they may seem or be taken as true or symbolic. For instance, the Greek mythology was held as religious beliefs and is now considered symbolic or allegorical. Every community has had its share of myths. It does appear to be a fundamental aspect of human culture.

It is challenging to generalise about the nature of myths due to their wide variety. However, it is evident that a people's myths reflect, represent, and explore the people's self-image in both their broad qualities and their particulars. The study of myth is, therefore, crucial to understanding both particular communities and human society as a whole. Myths, most importantly, are widely known as having extensive influence on arts and literature.

The influence of mythology on arts and literature produced many masterpieces up until the modern and contemporary periods. In the modern period, we have *Pygmalion* by George Bernard Shaw, *The Waste Land* by T. S. Eliot, and *Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold* by C. S. Lewis, to name but few. Myth usually starts as oral tradition and develops to become part of the written heritage. The Homeric epics, for example, were both an illustration and an exploration of heroic values, and “the poems became the basis of education in Classical Greece” (Encyclopaedia Britannica. Myth and the Arts).

Myths stand inevitably in an authoritative position due to fact that it is in no need for source verification to doubt or validate their origin because what matters are the values they impart. Gods and Goddesses, semi-gods, fairies, nymphs, deities, flying horses, dragons, titans, cyclops, immortality, superpowers, the mount Olympus, human interaction with the divine – all and more form the basis of myth that makes it irrational. But this irrationality is

beside the point because myths furnish a source of educational value for morality and heroism.

Modern fantasy is no different from other types of arts, yet it had the biggest influence from mythology. The impact and presence of mythology is undeniable in modern fantasy as much as it was in traditional one. The *Cambridge Dictionary* defines the fantasy genre as "a type of story or literature that is set in an imaginary world, often involving traditional myths and magical creatures and sometimes ideas or events from the real world, especially from the mediaeval period of history." In other words, traditional myth is transformed into fantasy.

Authors used myths to enrich the fantastic element and strengthen the escapist niche of their stories. Some fantasy texts were simply a retelling of a myth like *Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold* by C. S. Lewis. As far as possible from reality, fantasy loaded with myth and fantastical elements is the most widely read genre. This is proven by the enormous figures of book selling as well as by the wide audience that consists of all ages.

Fantasy, as we now know it, has created something that is still developing. The vast majority of the highest-grossing movies today are inspired by the fantastical settings of the 1930s, which are still as significant culturally as they are historically. They were not new mythologies clothed in Great Depression-era garb or spin offs of disposable popular culture. They were and still are extraordinarily vibrant literary works that naturally developed from their era and have had a significant impact on ours, turning myths into expanded worlds and reviving them and giving them a new "afterlife" (Parsons 2).

In brief, unlike myths, fantasy stories are created by known and identifiable individuals. Yet, stories from mythology predate the fantasy genre they influence. Myths frequently serve as allegories, can serve as the cornerstone of cultures and faiths, and rarely have just one author. Depending on the size of the culture or location they are from, the

majority have several and ambiguous sources. Fantasy can be based on an inspiration from myth, or can include some mythic elements, yet it is not, most importantly, limited to myth.

3.4. Tolkien's fantasy

In his book *J.R.R. Tolkien, Robert E. Howard and the Birth of Modern Fantasy*, Deke Parsons plainly declared – after a diligent research based on many scholars who were interested in studying the early traces of modern fantasy and Tolkein's works like John Grath and Tom Shippy and many others – that Tolkien is the father of modern fantasy. He asserted that the latter "built the novel upon a detailed fantasy world of his invention and in doing so created the genre of modern fantasy"(1).

John Ronald Ruel Tolkien started publishing his works of early modern fantasy by the 1930s. He had a bit of a complex upbringing. As a young boy, he lost both of his parents. The First World War took the majority of his friends too. He believed that his mother's conversion to Catholicism had resulted in her martyrdom. Tolkien continued to practice his new faith; despite his dissatisfaction with the world, he never gave up to pessimism. He had a passion for philology, of which he became a professor at The University of Oxford. Then, he had a family of his own with his beloved wife Edith Mary and their four children.

Tolkien refused wars and despised the brutal aspects of modernisation. He romanticised old England, the rural environment of fields and woodlands, which he tried to revive via his works. England of the early 20th century, however, was beyond redemption. Tolkien's fantasy was and still is the Godmother of the genre. His longing to revive morality, and his yearning for the landscape before industrialisation, were shown in the mode of his work and in creating the concept of Middle Earth.

Philology, as his specialty, was a support for him to master his craft, not to mention his mastery of many languages. Tolkien was born and raised in harsh times of change and raging wars across Europe and the world. Taking a part in WWI as a war veteran fuelled his creativity because after such a harsh experience, he definitely had a lot to write about it or, as this dissertation argues, a subconscious trauma that required creative expression.

To be fair to the field of literature, the epic fantasy did exist as a genre way before Tolkien's works, for there was a large tradition of English writers who published their works as epic tails and in magazines. As Shippy reminds us, "there was a tradition of English and Irish writers before him [Tolkien], such as E.R. Eddison and Lord Dunsany, and a parallel tradition also of American writers appearing in pulp-magazines such as *Weird Tales* and *Unknown*" (20). However, Tolkien's works were revolutionary to the genre, transforming it from marginalised minor stories to a mass-market genre.

Tolkien's Middle-earth has gained a special place in the British and global culture, in people's minds and associations. It does not just signify the imaginary place where Bilbo and Frodo Baggins venture against evil. It is now more than a setting in a 20th century fantasy tale: "Middle-earth became a cultural phenomenon, a part of many people's mental furniture" (Shippy 21).

Tolkien's interest in creating languages started at the age of a little over thirteen. He is known to have created his first languages (Animalic and Nevbosh), which he continued to think about up until his passing more than sixty years later. Since Tolkien discovered that a language could not be complete without the history of the people who spoke it, and that these people could never be fully realistic if imagined only through the English language and as speaking English, language invention had always been closely linked to the mythology that

Tolkien developed. Tolkien adopted a position different from that of the original author of his writing, adopting, instead, that of a translator and adaptor.

Nevertheless, creating maps and imaginary parallel universes was not enough for Tolkien. Tolkien knew over fifteen languages institutionally and others he learnt alone. The languages he knew include old languages like Latin, Greek, Finnish, Old English, Old Norse and modern ones. His multilingual brain gave birth to the Elvish tongue, the language spoken by the creatures of Middle-earth. Tolkien gave it dialects too; after all, Elves in his perspective were sophisticated elegant creatures who definitely spoke differently from dwarfs. Dwarves were less savage from orcs, who had the most savage dialect. In this respect, Tolkien writes:

What I think is a primary 'fact' about my work, that it is all of a piece, and fundamentally linguistic in inspiration. [...] The invention of languages is the foundation. The 'stories' were made rather to provide a world for the languages than the reverse. To me a name comes first and the story follows [...] It is to me, anyway, largely an essay in 'linguistic aesthetic', as I sometimes say to people who ask me 'what is it all about'. (2)

In short, Tolkien's works, thanks to his multilingualism and imaginative reach, not to mention his experience of the war, resurrected fantasy as a genre, transforming it to the fantasy we know today.

Chapter Two: The Psychological Repercussions of the Great War on Tolkien

In this chapter, the investigation narrows to dissect the origins of Tolkien's peculiar fantasy style, which are traced back to his trauma caused by the Great war. The chapter starts by discussing shell shock or PTSD in modern world literature, providing a general scope for our analysis. Then, it turns to escapism as a core element of the literary genre of fantasy. These two elements combine to comprehend Tolkien's fantasy, which this chapter focuses on in its third section.

Section One: PTSD In Modern Literature

1.1. What is PTSD?

As discussed in Chapter One, post-traumatic stress disorder is a psychological condition that affects people who have been in a traumatic situation or witnessed one. PTSD can manifest itself in a variety of ways. The recurrence of symptoms is its first sign. Recurrent symptoms can include flashbacks or reliving the trauma, as well as physical symptoms like a racing heart or excessive sweating. Nightmares are another symptom that may or may not be related to trauma, which is defined as any situation that causes a person to feel anxious or stressed.

Anxious thoughts are another common symptom. A constant fear of the environment, that bad things will happen no matter how far away, clouded by a haze of anxious feelings are symptoms that can disrupt a person's daily life. The patient's own thoughts and feelings may trigger and exacerbate these symptoms. Words, objects, or situations remembered as events can also serve as triggers (NIMH).

PTSD has been extensively explored in contemporary literature, most notably in Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* and in Kevin Powers works such as *The Yellow Birds*. This literature sheds light on the psychological effects of trauma and the difficulties that

people suffering from PTSD encounter. Norman Bowker, who struggles with guilt and isolation after the war, is a prime example of O'Brien's depiction of PTSD in *The Things They Carried*. O'Brien, in this book, writes about his experiences as a soldier in the Vietnam War. He addresses the physical and emotional burdens that soldiers bear, such as the weight of their equipment and the trauma of what they went through, which leave an almost permanent effect.

O'Brien writes: "He wanted to tell his father everything, but he could not find the words. He could not explain how it was that the things they carried were not just physical but mental too" (135). This passage highlights the internal struggles that people suffering from PTSD face when attempting to communicate their experiences to others who may not fully understand them.

Modernist literature is, in a sense, trauma literature, for it gave form and representation to a psychological condition that psychiatrists would not understand for another fifty years in the 1920s. *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf, for instance, depicts not only the psychological injuries suffered by victims of severe trauma such as war, but also the need for them to give meaning to their suffering in order to recover from the trauma.

The modernist narrative form of Woolf's novels brilliantly mirrors and refracts the mind of a trauma survivor like Septimus. The modernist literary works written in the decade following World War I constitute a trauma literature. Their forms frequently replicate the trauma survivor's damaged psyche, and their contents frequently portray his characteristic disorientation and despair.

Post-war novels, furthermore, reflect the fragmentation of consciousness as well as the disorder and confusion that a victim experiences in the aftermath of a traumatic event. Trauma inevitably undermines the victim's faith in previous assumptions about himself and the world.

It leaves him struggling to find new, more reliable ideologies to provide order and meaning to his post-traumatic life.

Modernist writers, like trauma survivors, lost faith in past ideologies and, in particular, the literary forms that emerged from those ideologies. Virginia Woolf's novels demonstrate the power of the modernist literary form to depict the psyche of a trauma survivor. Her narrative form, unlike more traditional narratives, preserves the psychological chaos caused by trauma rather than reordering it (DeMeester).

1.2. Writers with PTSD

Brilliant creativity is often accompanied or caused by turmoil, and many writers claim to be at their best while suffering from mental illness or great psychological and existential distress. Ernest Hemingway, Virginia Woolf, Edgar Allen Poe, Sylvia Plath, Leo Tolstoy, and Sherman Alexie are some writers who experienced mental issues. Yet, that never kept them from producing beautiful works; in fact their mental disorders may explain their gigantic creative power.

Writers whose suffered from deep-seated traumas include the American poet Sylvia Plath, who struggled with mental illness and experienced trauma throughout her life, including the death of her father, a miscarriage, and her own struggles with cerebral malady. Plath's poem "Daddy" employs vivid and disturbing imagery to explore her complicated relationship with her father as well as her own psychological trauma. She wrote, "I was ten when they buried you. / At twenty I tried to die / And get back, back, back to you. / I thought even the bones would do" (19-22). Plath offers a haunting and deeply personal insight into the long-term effects of trauma through this literary mode.

Another writer who suffered from trauma is Sherman Alexie, a Native American author who has written about his childhood as well as his battle with PTSD. Alexie uses humour and a growth narrative to explore the trauma and resilience of his protagonist, Junior. He writes, for instance: "I realized that, sure, I was a Spokane Indian. I belonged to that tribe. But I also belonged to the tribe of American immigrants. And to the tribe of basketball players. And to the tribe of bookworms" (125). Alexie's portrayal of the complexities of identity and trauma through this literary mode is nuanced and relatable.

A prominent theme in Ernest Hemingway's novel *A Farewell to Arms* is post-traumatic stress disorder. Frederick Henry, the protagonist, was an ambulance driver during World War I and suffered from the psychological effects of wartime trauma, as evidenced by recurring nightmares, emotional numbness, and avoidant behaviour. Hemingway's account of the war was realistic and harsh. He wanted readers to feel as if they were there to witness the events of the novel (Bracken).

Many writers who had to deal with PTSD have used their writings to express their feelings and coping strategies to show the world what they have been through (Emery). "It is more difficult to document psychic trauma or posttraumatic effects than it is to count numbers of dead or wounded" (La Capra). In present days, people have become more familiar with the term "trauma" and its symptoms. In the first half of the twentieth century, it was confusing to decode and understand the psychological challenges traumatic people were facing, especially from the war, which left an indelible scar in their souls to carry for the rest of their lives.

1.3. PTSD in J.R.R Tolkien's Characters

J.R.R. Tolkien, in his writings, explores the theme of PTSD. Several characters are subjected to traumatic events that resulted in PTSD symptoms. In addition, while PTSD is not explicitly mentioned in Tolkien's works, the symptoms displayed by these characters are

consistent with the condition as it is currently understood. Furthermore, Tolkien was a veteran who lived among soldiers suffering from shell shock. No wonder that he portrayed his characters on the basis of his own experience and observation and as a soldier who suffered from PTSD too.

After carrying the One Ring to Mount Doom, in *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo Baggins develops PTSD. Once returning home, he is haunted by the trauma of his journey and the loss of his friends, and he struggles to adjust to life in the Shire. Frodo Baggins is frequently agitated and anxious when he recalls his time in Mordor (Tolkien 899-903).

Farmer, a captain in the Gondor army, also has PTSD, after being kidnapped and tortured by the orcs. Because of his tormented memories, he suffers from anxiety and depression (Tolkien 785-787). Last but not least, the king of Rohan, Théoden, suffers from PTSD as a result of the Battle of Hornburg. After the battle, Théoden struggled to lead his people, haunted by the death and destruction he witnessed (Tolkien 515-520).

J.R.R. Tolkien is known to have drawn on his experiences as a soldier in the First World War to depict the theme of war and its impact on individuals in his writing, which some scholars interpret as a reflection of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms. Nevertheless, Tolkien did not have a clinical diagnosis of PTSD because the condition was not formally recognised during his lifetime (Garth).

1.4. Escapism as a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Symptom

Psychoanalytically speaking, escapism is a defence mechanism that refers to the tendency to seek distraction and relief from unpleasant realities, particularly through entertainment or fantasy. It allows individuals to escape from their current circumstances

mentally or emotionally. It can take many forms, including reading books, watching movies, playing video games, participating in hobbies, and daydreaming.

Escapism is frequently used by the ego to cope with stress, anxiety, or dissatisfaction with one's life and it can provide temporary relief or pleasure. As a result of avoiding unpleasant experiences, a person may become addicted to anger, drugs, or alcohol, and may withdraw into a fantasy world of gaming, internet browsing, or simply daydreaming.

But is escapism an effective solution? Psychoanalysis maintains that emotional avoidance is a common traumatic response. In fact, emotional avoidance is a symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder that allows people with PTSD to avoid painful or difficult emotions. Avoidance refers to any action taken to prevent the occurrence of an unpleasant emotion, such as fear, sadness, or shame. A person, for example, may attempt to evade difficult emotions through substance abuse or dissociation. People suffering from PTSD frequently try to avoid or "push away" their emotions, which are linked to both the traumatic experience and emotions in general.

Furthermore, it has been discovered that attempting to avoid emotions may increase some PTSD symptoms and even lead to the development and exacerbation of PTSD symptoms following a traumatic event. If a person is determined to avoid feeling their emotions, they may eventually resort to more drastic and harmful measures, such as substance abuse. Avoiding emotions requires significant effort as well, and as the emotions are avoided, they become stronger, and more and more effort is required to keep them at bay. As a result, there may be little energy left over for the important things in one's life, like family and friends (Tull).

Emotions serve vital psychological functions. They give information about an individual's identity and the world surrounding them. Also, they communicate and motivate

people to take action. For example, fear indicates that you may be in danger; sadness indicates that you may need some time to care for yourself or seek assistance from others.

The most effective way to begin managing the symptom of avoidance is to develop healthier coping mechanisms that allow people to identify, accept, and process emotions. Therapy can help people express and comprehend their emotions, as well as investigate the sources of those emotions (Tull).

Section Two: Literature of Escapism, Fantasy and WWI

2.1. Literature of Escapism

Escapism, to reiterate, can be defined as a mental mechanism to divert and protect the mind from unpleasant aspects of life or lived circumstances. It also means to escape to a better dimension by reading fiction or daydreaming. The escapist mind deploys imagination by occupying it with what may ease the depressive mode it goes through or sadness. This is the function of fantasy, typical to the function of the ego, according to Tolkien:

Fantasy is escapist, and that is its glory. If a soldier is imprisoned by the enemy, don't we consider it his duty to escape?. . .If we value the freedom of mind and soul, if we're partisans of liberty, then it's our plain duty to escape, and to take as many people with us as we can! ("On Fairy-Stories")

Tolkien considers escapism a duty and an inevitable mind function that may include – according to his words in the quote – the soul too. Escapism also provides freedom of perspective. Freud argues that humans require a certain amount of escape from reality in order to survive. He said in one of his psychology lectures: “they cannot subsist on the scant satisfaction they can extort from reality.”

According to Theodor Fontane, “We simply cannot do without auxiliary constructions.” Freud’s followers saw “rest and wish fulfilment as useful tools in adjusting to traumatic upset” (Otto 554). Moreover, later psychologists highlighted the role of vicarious distractions in shifting unwanted moods, especially anger and sadness (Longeway 18).

Tolkien’s above-mentioned quote, from his essay "On Fairy-Tales", reinforces the assumption that he wrote fantasy as an escape from an unpleasant place in his own mind. That place holds the bad memories and harsh times he went through. Tolkien, unsurprisingly, hated the war in which he had to take part, the war that was in which “all the horrors of all the ages were brought together, and not only armies but whole populations were thrust into the midst of them” (Churchill 191).

By writing fantasy, Tolkien's own ego made use of the defence mechanism of escapism to insure the healthy condition of his traumatised mind. He did escape and provided escapism for his reader, taking as many people with him to Middle-earth, where the rural landscape is untouched with the destruction of factories and the other evils industrialisation brought upon England and Europe. " In 1947, Tolkien wrote a scholarly essay called *On Fairy Stories* that essentially discusses his entire philosophy on fantasy. In it, he coined an interesting term that scholars still reference nowadays: the “secondary world.” (Wright)

There, in Middle-earth, good and bad are two distinct positions with no grey area in between. In spite of that, escapism is relative as long as many realistic aspects followed him even in his fantasy, which allowed a space of applicability from his life on his fantasy works.

Seeking escape in literature is nothing new; it could be traced to a certain point in history. The early studies about it were made by the American political historian and author of *Culture and Politics in the Great Depression*, Alan Brinkley, in the thirties of the last century. Alan wrote about the emergence of escapist fiction in a sort of a trend where people sought

refuge from the hard economic crisis and mass poverty during the Great Depression in America, which seemed to have taken a downturn at the time.

This historian took the magazines of that time as a study material. He demonstrates that nothing about the harsh circumstances was depicted. Pie recipes, vacation recommendations, sports heroes, beauty products and advertisements only existed on the pages of the magazines people read and loved at the time. The media and entertainment industry along with every fictitious book published were diverting the people to be in a better place mentally or “safe” from the dark life they encountered. Escapism, here, was a conscious deliberate method.

As for Heilman, who seems on the same line with Brinkley, the escapist mode in literature gives us access to a world that is easier to manage than the one we bear in real life. Art as an intensifier of life that "pushes readers deeper into human actuality" (Heilman). It either unsettles and irritates you, rejecting closure, or it acts like an opiate that massages and satisfies you. Literature either casts a spell that follows you or acts as a smoother that comforts you. It is obvious where the escapist punch would land.

Despite the fact that escapism is held in a higher position among readers and critics, many literary critics deem it a sub-literary writing. Those academics accuse fantasy, science fiction, thrillers, and fairy tales to mislead readers and divert them from what they consider "real" or “true” literature.

That claim against escapist literature goes as far as calling it a lower-class phenomenon, suggesting that only lower class individuals seek refuge in such literature due to the low quality-life they are living. In his article "Fantasy and our Modern World", Matt Wright asks "why isn't Tolkien (or any serious fantasy literature) studied in academia? Still, after all these years, very few university-level institutions acknowledge fantasy works

like *LOTR* as having any literary, let alone educational, value. It's just marketable entertainment."

The significance of escapism, to counter the above-mentioned argument, relies on the value of myths in our collective consciousness, as resumed in what C.S Lewis said in his review of Tolkien's works, which is worth-quoting at length here:

The value of the myth is that it takes all the things we know and restores to them the rich significance, which has been hidden by "the veil of familiarity." The child enjoys his cold meat, otherwise dull to him, by pretending it is buffalo, just killed with his own bow and arrow. And the child is wise. The real meat comes back to him more savoury for having been dipped in a story; you might say that only then is it real meat. If you are tired of the real landscape, look at it in a mirror. By putting bread, gold, horse, apple, or the very roads into a myth, we do not retreat from reality: we rediscover it. As long as the story lingers in our mind, the real things are more themselves. This book applies the treatment not only to bread or apple but to good and evil, to our endless perils, our anguish and our joys. By dipping them in myth we see them more clearly. I do not think he could have done it any other way. (Quoted in "CS Lewis Response...")

Here, C.S. Lewis reflects the essence of fantasy, escapism and myth, all of which refract our reality in a fantastic mode, rendering the familiar anew in an unfamiliar fashion. Is not that what great literature has always done?

2.2. WWI and Literature of Escapism

The Dawn of the 20th century brought destruction and Great War upon the world that harboured the ugliest crimes humans can ever commit or even think they can commit. The arts that originated during those hard times came from artists who bled on paper, some of whom had bled on the battlefield too. Some artists took part as war veterans and in different positions. Much war poetry and newly birthed literary genres saw their creation in the heart of the crisis.

Those authors gained inspiration from their experiences. They could not help but find themselves profoundly changed by the war they lived through, losing families, friends, morals and even their minds. Winston Churchill who took a major role in the Great War knew that such a world crisis will scar humanity for far too long: "Injuries were wrought to the structure of human society which a century will not efface, and which may conceivably prove fatal to the present civilization" (291).

Literature during those times of War was born from a world crisis and cradled in its darkness, because "[t]he Western front was neither Agincourt, nor the playing fields of ancient public schools, nor the supreme test of valour, but rather, the modern industrial world in miniature, indeed, the modern world at its most horrifying" (Bogacz. Rehman).

A.A. Milne, the future author of *The Stories of Winnie the Pooh*, suffered from the invisible wounds that would haunt him and so many other "shell-shocked" veterans for the rest of their lives during the Battle of the Somme. This is the post-traumatic stress that the recent movie *Goodbye Christopher Robin* did such an excellent job at portraying. Milne saw his best companion, Ernest Push, die in front of him not long after arriving on the Western Front. He later recalled "Just as he was settling down to his tea, a shell came over and blew him [Ernest] to pieces."

This is echoed in a passage by Tolkien, in which he writes:

The gasping pools were choked with ash and crawling muds, sickly white and grey, as if the mountains had vomited the filth of their entrails upon the lands about. High mounds of crushed and powdered rock, great cones of earth fire-blasted and poison-stained, stood like an obscene graveyard in endless rows, slowly revealed in the reluctant light. (*Lord* 631)

The vivid imagery Tolkien used in his fantasy work *The Two Towers* was a scene he never forgot after he lived it as a war veteran. Tolkien tried as much as he could have to run away from the war in his works, yet he found himself coming back into it by writing or recalling, in a new mode, what he had experienced. Even Tolkien's characters reflect that in his first fantasy book *The Hobbit*. Bilbo, who never asked for adventure, found himself into one, holding his sword and slaying the enemy. In *Lord of the Rings*, Samwise, Gamgee's heroic persona, did the same.

Lewis did not manoeuvre around the central fact, declaring the truth about the effect the war experience had on his writings and his friend's too (Tolkien). He openly stated:

...the very quality of the war my generation knew. It is all here: the endless unintelligible movement, the sinister quiet of the front when 'everything is now ready,' the flying civilians, the lively, vivid friendships, the background of something like despair and the merry foreground, and such heaven-sent windfalls as a cache of tobacco salvaged from a ruin. (Quoted in "CS Lewis Response...")

2.3. Escapism in Fantasy

Fantasy, as a genre, is written to be set as far as possible from reality, but reality often haunts it. Writers initially chose to write in such a daunting genre to express what they are not able to express in their real life and to create world orders they wished to have in their reality. The genre's horizon of possibility is wide, allowing a large space of expression and a huge capacity to hold unusual elements that other genres cannot permit.

In relation to Tolkien, Parsons points out:

Tolkien can write a novel with the fate of the world in the balance in which the heroes refuse to use a devastatingly powerful weapon against a horrible evil. *The Lord of the Rings* could not be a thriller: if the "good guys" in any reflection of our world possessed a terrible weapon that could defeat a world-threatening evil, they would use the weapon. In *The Lord of the Rings* the weapon is not used, but destroyed. This goes against the history and logic of our real world in which nuclear weapons were developed and used. This course of action is possible (if not easy) in Middle-earth because it has a different history and operates under different laws than our world. The power of a work of art set in a fantasy world is that it allows the reader or viewer to escape the history, the assumptions, "the way things are." This can lead to questioning "the way things are." This is the true escapism that fantasy worlds can provide. (120)

Tolkien wanted balance, virtuous heroes and morals in rural old England and that led to the creation of his works and Middle-earth. Authors use this genre or romantic myth, in Lee

D. Rossi's words, as “essentially an attempt to liberate themselves from the ugliness and moral impasse of the modern world.” The fantasy-world built by those modern artists afforded an unconscious escape by a generation who grew in the heart of crisis and troubled times. Freud's theories can be useful in this respect: fantasy is not just a hyperactivity of the human fantasy or imagination; it is a defence mechanism, for "we simply cannot do without auxiliary constructions" (Fontane). By “auxiliary construction,” Freud refers to daydreaming, fiction and fantasy.

Escapist fiction offers an alternative world. Both writers and readers of escapist fiction and precisely fantasy seek refuge in the worlds offered in such literature. Modern fantasy and the other sub-branches like Romance novels, detective stories, science fiction, horror and Gothic tales and thrillers are usually set in a different dimension, space, time and conditions than the meantime's, while readers see that as the main privilege or peculiarity of the genre.

The early 20th century saw the emergence of modern fantasy works that created alternative worlds, and this was initiated by J. R. R. Tolkien's Middle-earth. Tolkien was the first to create a whole other world calling it Middle-earth, inspired by the Norse mythologies and old tales. Tolkien, likewise, chose to create a completely new dimension with the features of rural England, where he as a human being wanted to dwell, a place far away from machinery, the destruction of the industrial era, and modernised destroyed landscapes.

Other writers too created such alternative worlds, universes, times, spaces. Nonetheless, in most famous works, one still had to come back to the real world after the end of the adventure, in that their characters end up coming back to the real world in which they live a normal life. As examples of such works, we have C.S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia*, in which the protagonists come back to the real world after they rule their own world. The "other" world in this book is accessible through a Wardrobe. The protagonists are children in

wartime away from their parents; they are rulers in a world where animals, humans, and other mythical creatures coexist.

Earlier than that, Lewis Carroll in 1865 wrote *Alice in Wonderland* as a fantasy literature, where Alice is a young girl who escapes by falling through a hole in the ground to an alternative universe where odd things happen. Eventually, Alice ends up coming back to the real world, following her adventures in the other. All works of fantasy, with their worlds and myths and supernatural fantastic elements, have this escapist nature to them, which immensely appeals to readers.

Section Three: Tolkien, Origin of his PTSD, and the Truth Behind his Escapist Fantasy

3.1. J.R.R. Tolkien: His life and his Experience as War Veteran

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, the English author and scholar, who is best known for his children's book *The Hobbit* (1937) and his immensely imaginative epic fantasy *The Lord of the Rings* (2001), was born on January 3, 1892. Tolkien was a smart young man who was full of passion and a thirst for languages. He lived a difficult childhood, lost his father at the age of four, and his mother when he was eleven years old. He received a good education while attending King Edward's School in Birmingham and then at Oxford. He studied in an atmosphere that allowed him to unlock his academic potential because he was extraordinarily gifted, and surrounded by people who shared his interests.

When Tolkien fought in the Great War, he recognised how terrible the war was and could be since he read about ancient heroic literature that was frank about the war's crimes. Tolkien was willing to give up his life for his country and sacrifice his academic career. He spent the summer and autumn of 1916 on the front lines of the Somme, witnessing its atrocities. When the battle of the Somme began, 20,000 men were killed, 35,000 were

wounded, and 2,000 reported missing. He took part in one of the most terrible conflicts in British army history; the war and its loss were a tragedy for the entire country; cities, towns and villages lost their young men.

One of Tolkien's dearest companions was shot in the middle of no man's land during the war, and he learned of his death two weeks later. The death of his friend rocked him to the core of his beliefs, and it took him a long time to recover. During the war, he endured a great deal of hardships, which had an impact on his mind. He was continuously threatened by the terror of death, as well as the need to fight for his life.

Tolkien emerged from the war with scars that were creatively channelled in his masterpieces *Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* in spite of his frequent claims that the mythology of Middle-earth was unaffected by the events of the two World Wars that consumed most of his life. He stated

Personally I do not think that either war (and of course the atomic bomb) had any influence upon either the plot or the manner of its unfolding. Perhaps in landscape. The Dead Marshes and the approaches to the Morannon owe something to Northern France after the Battle of the Somme (*Letters* 303).

Regardless of Tolkien's denial that his work was an allegory for twentieth-century events, he confessed that an author cannot, of course, stay totally unaffected by his experience. To really comprehend the tyranny of the war, one must first-hand experience it (LIVINGSTON 3-4).

3.2. The Battle of the Somme

The Battle of the Somme was the worst episode of WWI. It decimated the old German army by killing off its greatest officers and men. It also took the lives of many of France's best. The volunteer armies, which were established in 1914 and 1915 fought in the Battle of the Somme, held the best and brightest of Britain's youth. Officers were mostly drawn from public institutions and universities. Over 400,000 of soldiers were killed in this rash battle, and the slaughter among young officers was horrible (Lloyd George 9-10).

The bloodiest battle in human history was the battle of the Somme. The battle was fought between British and French soldiers and Germans. The combat lasted from July 1 to November 13, 1916. The British launched a week-long artillery barrage, attempting to smash German positions and create gaps for the soldiers to march through. German troops, on the other hand, had fortified their positions with deep bunkers and underground shelters that provided protection from shelling. Furthermore, the bombardment forewarned the Germans of the impending invasion, allowing them to strengthen their positions and move their forces to safety (Sheffield).

On July 1, 1916, 11 divisions of the British Fourth Army and five divisions of the French attacked north of the Somme on an 8-mile front. The German defence system lagged behind that of the French. The British had fewer heavy guns than the French. Despite the immense losses, the fight raged on for months, with both sides launching attacks and counterattacks.

The British used innovative tactics, like tanks, although the technology was still in its infancy, and the tanks had little impact on the result of the conflict. The battle also witnessed the first deployment of the "creeping barrage" method, in which artillery bombardment was used to create a protective screen ahead of the advancing infantry. Conversely, this tactic was

not always effective in removing the barbed wire and defences of the German trenches (Keegan).

The combat ended on November 18, 1916, with the Allies making only minor advances. The British and French forces had barely advanced a few kilometres, and the German lines were mostly intact. Both sides suffered an estimated 1.2 million casualties, with over 400,000 killed or missing. The high fatality rate and minimal victories made the Battle of the Somme a slogan of trench warfare's needless carnage and futility during World War I.

3.3. Tolkien's Trench Fever

As a young man who lived through and under the shadows of the war, Tolkien suffered from the effects of war: "An author cannot of course remain wholly unaffected by his experience [...]. One has indeed personally to come under the shadow of war to feel fully its oppression" (Livingston 77). Trench Fever was to follow that experience of the Battle of the Somme.

After four long months in the trenches, Tolkien was diagnosed with a typhus-like condition named the Trench Fever. Caused by the poor hygiene in the trenches, that was the reason for his return to England. Those events were said by the critics to have a great influence on the fantasy world he created later in his books: "he saw voluntary death he also saw and felt extreme terror, he never, as far as we know, described at length what Trench warfare was like but he summed it up in two words, in one of his letters, and this was 'animal horror'" (Grath, "Tolkien's Great War" 19:47).

Trench Fever was discovered in the mid-1915. British physicians studied a great numbers of a similar condition with the same symptoms in the lines of the soldiers. A new

relative of typhoid fever, the physicians called it “Trench Fever” in the summer of 1916 (Holmes).

The appendix [1] includes papers from Tolkien’s army services medical record, which register the various health conditions he suffered from during his service until his promotion to the rank of lieutenant and his handwritten letter to the war office to return to service. As we learn from the archives: “There are numerous reports made by army medical boards between December 1916 and September 1918 on Tolkien's recovery from trench fever - a slow process punctuated by relapses.” (“The National Archive”).

3.4. Tolkien’s Fellowship between Reality and Fantasy

The Tea Club, Burrovian Society, or the T.C.B.S, was an organisation at Barrow Stones at King Edward's School in Birmingham that was founded by Tolkien and his friends. The core members of the "big four" were Tolkien, Geoffrey Bache Smith, Christopher Wiseman, and Robert Gilson. The organisation held regular meetings. It was meant for him and the members to practise their love for literature and knowledge. The young men were caught by war and had to fight in the front.

The battle of the Somme occurred during their service: “The most disastrous day in the history of the British army, and a tragedy for the entire country” (Grath 14:08). Among the many men who were lost in the battle was his friend Robert Gilson. The club lost a member, and the fellowship lost a part. “Tolkien heard about this after his first action on the Somme... he was devastated, it shook him to the foundations of his beliefs. He had as all of the members of the T.C.B.S had built up their group as a fellowship with ideas and spirit” (Grath 4:37).

The other members kept their togetherness alive despite their loss and the raging war. Shortly after the Somme, Tolkien learned from Christopher Wiseman that their good friend Geoffrey Bache Smith was killed by a stray shell. Smith was the first middle-earth fan, as he wrote to him to continue to write and publish. The impact of the war and his friend's loss was afterwards shown in his works. The wars and the battles written by Tolkien were similar to the war he lived; in his works he used descriptions and scenery almost vivid and so true as if he was writing about what WWI looked like.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, there was a fellowship: "It's almost unimaginable that, in writing of the breaking of the fellowship, in *The Lord of the Rings*, that Tolkien wouldn't have been influenced by his own loss during the First World War and the breaking of the T.C.B.S fellowship" (Stacey 26:45). In the book, Frodo and Sam were inseparable friends, an officer and his companion. Tolkien actually said that "my Sam Gamgee is inspired by the privates and batmen I knew in the First World War "(Grath 27:10). Frodo developed symptoms of PTSD, getting enclosed on himself. After the war, he was traumatised and did not conceive the idea that he was a hero. He became withdrawn with limited connections. 'The fellowship', however, in which he shared the content of his adventures with his friends, kept their bond strong.

To conclude, the discussion in this chapter attempted to address the psychological impact the Great War had on Tolkien and his fantastic mode of writing. Tolkien's works are escapist by nature, helping Tolkien to write about his PTSD in a non-conventional way, via fantasy. Tolkien also mirrored many war traumas and experiences like his trench fever, which was the reason for his PTSD, and the loss of his close friends after the battle of the Somme.

Chapter Three: Close Analysis of Tolkien's *The Hobbit*

The final chapter will try to address the following question: what made Tolkien's *The Hobbit* crucial and so radical to fantasy as a literary genre? It will also investigate the creation of Middle-earth and examine the closure Tolkien chose to *the Hobbit* by looking at it from a psychological perspective.

Section One: Genre and Characters

1.1. The Hobbit, an Epic Tale and an Anti-Hero

The Hobbit or *There and Back Again* is a fantasy novel by J.R.R Tolkien first published in 1937. The novel is considered a prequel to the fantasy trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*. Its narrative follows a series of events in which a simple home-loving hobbit unusually goes on an adventure to help dwarves in reclaiming their homeland from the dragon Smug.

The Hobbit started as a bedtime story told to Tolkien's children. It was met with instant fame, selling many million copies and establishing itself as "one of the most influential books of our generation" (*The Times*). Although Tolkien did not intentionally make it an epic, it developed into one. In one of Tolkien's letters written in 1964, he stated: "It had no necessary connexion with 'mythology', but naturally became attracted towards this dominant construction in my mind, causing the tale to become larger and more heroic as it proceeded."

There and Back Again was structured as a classic quest narrative, which is a common feature of epic tales. Epic tales consist of the hero (usually chosen) since "this idea of epic, originally introduced by the Homeric works, presents us to a hero who has superior virtues than the common man" (Gonçalves 44). The epic hero usually sets out on an adventure to achieve a 'divine' aim.

The Hobbit fills all the requirements to be epic narrative-wise. Gandalf the wizard chooses Bilbo for the adventure, over the course of which he accompanies thirteen dwarves led by Thorin Okenshield to reclaim their homeland. The homeland, called 'The Lonely Mountain' or 'Erebor', was taken by the mighty dragon 'Smug' who killed, destroyed and exiled the dwarves from their home. Bilbo finds the ring of power and a powerful sword that gives him enough power to embrace his courage and succeed in the face of challenges all along the adventure.

Among the challenges this group faced were the trolls, giant spiders, Gollum, goblins and Smug. The dwarves at first doubt Gandalf's choice for the "burglar," this hobbit who should sneak into the mountain and steal the Arkenstone, the Great jewel. Bilbo successfully does so, drawing some help from the ring that makes him invisible. Things escalate at the end with the battle of the five armies. The Good eventually wins by uniting their forces. Bilbo goes back to the shire after presumed dead. He is not, however, dead; he continues his life in the shire, preserving that adventure as a life achievement and a core memory. All the above made *The Hobbit* convey the standards of an epic tale of heroic legend.

On the other hand, Bilbo the protagonist that we follow along the course of the novel, was not a conventional hero. Bilbo was simply a hobbit. This is how Tolkien describes hobbits:

What is a hobbit? I suppose hobbits need some description. Nowadays, they are (or were) a little people, about half our height, and smaller than the bearded dwarves. Hobbits have no beards. There is little or no magic about them, except the ordinary everyday sort, which helps them to disappear quietly, and quickly when large stupid folk like you and me come blundering along,

making a noise like elephants, which they can hear a mile off. They are inclined to be fat in the stomach; they dress in bright colours (chiefly green and yellow); wear no shoes, because their feet grow natural leathery soles and thick warm brown hair like the stuff on their heads (which is curly). (*The Hobbit* 4)

This description, provided by Tolkien, seems the least heroic any creature could ever be. Hobbits were the most introverted creature. They had neither magic nor physiological superiority. Bilbo was a typical hobbit. He lived in his hobbit hole peacefully till an unexpected party took place in his home and was told that he was chosen by Gandalf to be the 'burglar'.

The typical heroes of myth, like Achilles, Odysseus, Gilgamesh, Enkidu, were significantly different; they were either supernatural humans or, in some epics, semi-gods. Hobbits were not semi-gods, nor were they "super"; they were not even humans, but little shy people. *The Hobbit* conveys all the characteristics of an epic, still Bilbo lacks the traditional hero standards. Being a timid short hobbit that never left the shire in his fifty years life, he only enjoys the simple pleasure of smoking his tobacco pipe. In fact, our protagonist is closer to an anti-hero than to a hero. That makes *The Hobbit* an epic tale with an anti-hero.

1.2. Bilbo's Psychological Growth and Journey Between a Took and a Baggings

Bilbo's psychological journey between a Took and a Baggins was a journey he had to take throughout the beginning of the novel. The Tookes are his mother's side of the family, and the Bagginses are his father's. Hobbits, in general, do not go on adventures; whoever does amongst them is considered crazy. That is why the Tookes are not as respected as the Bagginses.

Bilbo begins in a middle-class place of comfort. He lives in his family's home, a comfortable, well-kept place. He has inherited a private income and has no need to work, so he devotes his time to writing and entertaining his close friends. He is a little bored with his existence, but he is a sensible hobbit and refuses to admit to it. Shall our protagonist remain stuck in his comfort zone, he would never have developed any further as a person and have reached an arc of growth and change as the story progresses.

For fifty years, Bilbo has been nothing but a typical Baggins. These folks were well respected in the shire as described by Tolkien

The Baggins had lived in the neighbourhood of The Hill for time out of mind, and people considered them very respectable, not only because most of them were rich, but also because they never had any adventures or did anything unexpected: you could tell what a Baggins would say on any question without the bother of asking him. This is a story of how a Baggins had an adventure, and found himself doing and saying altogether unexpected. (*The Hobbit* 3-4)

The last part of the quote is quite telling. It relates how a Baggins found himself adventurous unexpectedly. However, Gandalf chose him for a specific reason, which is his Took side, and the Took side who were "adventurous." Bilbo's mother was Belladonna Took from the Took clan. In Tolkien words: "...there was still something not entirely hobbit like about them, and once in a while members of the Took-clan would go and have adventures. They discreetly disappeared, and the family hushed it up" (4).

Gandalf knew the Took side would re-emerge even if it was with a Baggins. Bilbo's psychological side was aligned with his biological one. The two sides were inside him, but he was only conscious with his Baggins one, the comfortable side who lives in his womb-like

hobbit hole. Tolkien points out that he, "although he looked and behaved exactly like a second edition of his solid and comfortable father, got something a bit queer in his make-up from the Took side, something that only waited for a chance to come out" (5). That chance was Gandalf and the thirteen dwarves who he found him in his hole, offering him something only a Took would go for; offering an adventure.

Bilbo completely refuses the offer of the adventure "Sorry! I don't want any adventures" (7). To this point, after the coming of the dwarves, Bilbo started to consider the idea of the beyond. The subconscious Took side woke up, "Then something Tookish woke up inside him, and he wished to go and see the great mountains..." (16). Thus, he found himself setting out for the adventurous journey "To the end of his days Bilbo could never remember how he found himself outside"(28).

Section Two: Setting and Themes

2.1. The Dichotomy of Good of Evil in *The Hobbit*

In Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, the struggle between good and evil is a recurring theme. Tolkien illustrates the conflict of good versus evil in *The Hobbit* by building a fantastical world complete with locations, monsters, and magic. The plot revolves around Bilbo Baggins, a hobbit who is tasked with retrieving the dwarf kingdom's riches from the dragon Smaug. Throughout the narrative, characters and events are depicted as either good or evil, leaving little room for ambiguity. The characters of Thorin Oakenshield, Smaug, and Bilbo Baggins exemplify this binary conflict.

The dwarves and their leader, Thorin Oakenshield, are one of the most visible illustrations of the theme of good vs. evil. Initially, the dwarves are shown as a greedy and selfish group trying to retrieve their lost treasure from the monster Smaug. They do, however, display a more altruistic side as the tale progresses, such as when they help Bilbo in his quest

to defeat Smaug and eventually battle alongside the other good characters in the Battle of Five Armies.

Thorin Oakenshield, the dwarves' leader, is initially depicted as a noble character seeking to retrieve his lost treasure. However, his desire for the treasure quickly overpowers his moral compass, and he is consumed by greed. This is demonstrated by his refusal to share the treasure with the other characters, even if it meant compromising their safety. This shift in Thorin's personality is clear in his conversation with Bilbo, where he says, "I will not part with a single coin, not one piece of the treasure we have discovered. Not if I'm going to be robbed and starved" (223). The change in character ultimately leads to his death in the battle for the wealth.

On the other side of the dichotomy, there are several examples of evil characters and races. The most prominent of these is the dragon Smaug, who is portrayed as a ruthless and cruel creature, destroying villages and hoarding treasure for his own pleasure. There are also the goblins and wargs, who serve as the primary antagonists in the story and are portrayed as violent and bloodthirsty.

Smaug, the dragon who protects the treasure, is seen as the personification of evil. He is vicious and crafty, and all he wants is to keep the treasure for himself. He threatens and intimidates Bilbo, saying, "My armor is like tenfold shields, my teeth are swords, my claws are spears, the shock of my tail a thunderbolt, my wings a hurricane, and my breath death!" (199). Because Smaug's defeat allows the treasure to be reclaimed and redistributed among the characters, it is viewed as a victory for the forces of good.

The story's protagonist, Bilbo Baggins, is initially portrayed as a hesitant explorer who is more concerned with his creature's comforts than heroic acts. His adventure, however, transforms him, and he becomes a symbol of the strength of goodness in the face of evil. This

is demonstrated in his conversation with Gollum, in which he spares his life and refuses to accept the ring he has earned in their riddle game. This gesture of charity and selflessness ultimately contributes to Smaug's downfall and the recovery of the treasure.

Overall, the theme of good versus evil in *The Hobbit* is a nuanced one, with characters and races falling somewhere along the spectrum between the two extremes. However, it is clear that the story ultimately champions the virtues of altruism, courage, and selflessness over greed and selfishness. A parallel battle is taking place constantly inside one's mind between the contradictory forces of the id, on one hand, and the superego from the other hand. The triumph of altruism in *The Hobbit* means that it is the superego which succeeds, at the end, to take control over the hobbit's behaviour.

2.2. Significance of Middle Earth

Middle-earth is a fictional world created by Tolkien, serving as the setting for many of his famous works. Middle-earth is significant for various reasons, including the fact that it has grabbed the hearts and minds of people all over the world, affected popular culture, and inspired countless works of literature, film, and art.

Primarily, Middle-earth is noteworthy for its rich and immersive world building. Tolkien created an entire universe, with its own history, geography, languages, and cultures. The depth and intricacy of Middle-earth are unique, and readers can easily become immersed in the world for hours. As David Day writes in his book *A Dictionary of Tolkien*, Middle-earth is "a fully realized world, inhabited by a host of beings ranging from the noble and fair to the misshapen and grotesque" (11). This huge amount of details has made Middle-earth feel like a real location to many readers, allowing them to thoroughly immerse themselves in the stories.

In *The Hobbit*, Thrór's map is a significant artifact that plays an important part in the story. Tolkien tells us that "the mapmakers of that time were very thorough, and the

Underworld had been designed with great care... with the result that Thorin's map and Gandalf's marking it with the signs of the wizard's craft proved remarkably accurate" (183). The map is an essential guide to the Lonely Mountain, where the dragon Smaug has taken up home with the stolen dwarves' riches. Thorin's map not only shows the topography of the mountain, but it also contains clues that will assist the dwarves in finding the secret entrance to Smaug's lair.

Middle-Earth is also noted for its themes and messages. Many of Tolkien's characters struggle with internal issues such as power, corruption, and the nature of good and evil, and his works are frequently regarded as a commentary on the human condition and his psychological motives. According to John Garth's book *Tolkien and the Great War*, "*The Lord of the Rings* is a deeply moral work, one that explores what it means to be human and what it takes to resist evil" (10). Tolkien's novels provoke an emotional response from readers of all ages and backgrounds, delivering answers to some of life's most profound questions.

Tolkien served as a lieutenant in the British Army during World War I and witnessed the battle in France first-hand. His wartime experiences influenced his writing, particularly in illustrating the conflict between good and evil, as well as the themes of loss and sacrifice that run throughout his work. *The Lord of the Rings* depicts the terrible consequences of war on Tolkien's era via the characters of Frodo and Sam, who experienced immense suffering and sacrifice to free Middle-earth of evil.

What is more, the war had a significant impact on the English countryside, which played an important role in Tolkien's life and writing. The conflict's devastation, which included the destruction of many ancient buildings and the death of many young lives, had a tremendous impact on the English landscape and society as a whole. Tolkien's image of Middle-earth,

which is sometimes described as a mythological version of England, reflects this sense of loss and yearning (Carpenter).

In general, the significance of Middle-earth in relation to England during World War I lies in its ability to reflect Tolkien's and his generation's experiences and emotions. Tolkien was able to address themes of grief, sacrifice, and hope in a way that resonated emotionally with his readers by constructing a legendary world that is both familiar and exotic. As such, Middle-earth is a strong emblem of World War I's continuing impact on British culture and society (Garth).

The Cover of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* has significance in light of the author's experiences during World War I. Many scholars interpret the cover illustration of a small, hobbit-like figure standing in front of a large mountain range reflecting Tolkien's own experiences as a soldier in the Great War. The mountain range portrayed on the cover of *The Hobbit* is thought to have been inspired by the landscape seen by Tolkien during his time in the battle. "The hobbit himself, in whom I combined an earlier pattern with a later discovery, was not 'invented' until the story had reached Chapter Three," Tolkien wrote in a letter to his son Christopher. "But once he arrived, he evolved both upward and downward, and I constantly changed him..." (*The Hobbit* 28). This demonstrates that the hobbit character was informed by Tolkien's own wartime experiences and personal growth.

In conclusion, the cover of *The Hobbit* was designed by Tolkien himself, showing his artistic abilities and creativity. Tolkien was noted for having a strong affinity to nature and the landscapes of his birthplace, which can be seen in his artwork and writing. The cover of *The Hobbit* symbolises Tolkien's appreciation of the natural environment as well as his desire to build his own world (Carpenter).

Section Three: Hope and Altruism

3.1. Hope and Construction after Dystopia

Tolkien's *The Hobbit* tackles themes of optimism and reconstruction after dystopia via the experiences of the protagonist, Bilbo Baggins, and the other individuals he meets on his quest. The work is set in a world where darkness and despair have taken hold, and the main characters must face a number of obstacles in order to restore hope and reconstruct their society.

Initially, Erebor, the dwarves' homeland, is depicted as a ruined wasteland destroyed by Smaug's attack. The dwarves themselves have been driven from their homes and forced to live in exile. When Bilbo is drawn into the quest, his comfortable life in the Shire is also disrupted. The voyage is dangerous, and the characters suffer several obstacles and failures along the route.

Despite the numerous challenges, the characters remain optimistic about the future. They are motivated by the hope that Erebor can be recovered and their lives can be restored to their former splendour. Thorin Oakenshield, the dwarves' leader, exemplifies this desire when he says: "If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world" (*The Hobbit* 219). This quote claims, from a psychoanalytic perspective, that the id remains the same infantile, primal force throughout life. Thus, it is the development of the ego and superego that allows people to control the id's death instincts of greed, lust and selfishness, and act in ways that are both realistic and socially acceptable in a order to live in a "merrier" world.

The efforts of the dwarves to retrieve their stolen treasure and rebuild their home in the Lonely Mountain represent the concept of rebuilding, and the company of heroes destroys the dragon and reclaims what is rightfully theirs. The dwarves, then, work together to rebuild and

restore their house to its former beauty, symbolising the persistence of the human spirit in the face of hardships and internal temptations.

Tolkien highlights the significance of hope and resilience in the face of adversity through the characters' experiences. He demonstrates that even in the darkest of circumstances, a brighter future is always possible. In the forest and after Bilbo climbs the tree, he is nearly blinded by the sudden and intense sunlight. It takes some time for his eyes to get used to the light, but once they have, Bilbo sees the most wonderful sight. This sudden extreme light is his moment of epiphany and change, which stands in contrast to the dark damp forest below the tree.

Bilbo Baggins is a notable illustration of hope in the story. He is first presented as a peaceful and secure hobbit who is opposed to change and adventure. Throughout the novel, he gradually transforms as he is forced to confront his fears and the challenges that come his way. Bilbo's perseverance and bravery in the face of misfortune serve as a compelling illustration of how hope may be preserved even in the darkest of circumstances (Jason 187-190).

3.2. Conscious Altruism and Responsibility

Bilbo Baggins is the only hobbit in the group that consists of the thirteen dwarves and Gandalf. He discovers his courage and wisdom along the way and saving the Dwarves many times and enabling them to reach their destination. Additionally, Bilbo receives a magic ring that renders him invisible. His ability to serve others made him feel responsible towards them and more, he acted upon altruism. Not just Bilbo, other characters too did act on an altruistic principle.

Altruism, as a defence mechanism, is the act of human voluntary by group of human or individual to help each other without retains. According to Batson in his book of *Altruism in Human* (2011), altruism is described as “a motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing another's welfare” (20). Besides, “what defines altruistic behaviour is that the actor could have done better for himself had he chosen to ignore the effect of his choice on other” (Sufiyandi). Altruistic behaviour comes from people who care so much about everyone's well-being. Many characters in *The Hobbit* act altruistically, especially at the end of the story. Alongside Bilbo the protagonist, we find Gandalf, Bard and others.

Bilbo, as the main character, is an empath hobbit who chooses to go on a journey filled with risk and danger while promised nothing but to see the beyond. Acting with huge responsibility towards the dwarves, he saves them many times from trolls, spiders, Elvenking's prison and the dragon Smaug. Bilbo reaches moments where he faces danger and even death for the sake of saving others. His responsibility towards them comes from his selfless mindset. Those actions were taken consciously with his own free will, gaining everyone's respect. Gandalf said the following, talking about the prophecies that came true thanks to their journey

...and why should not they because you had a hand in bringing them about yourself? You don't really suppose, do you, that all your adventures and escapes were managed by mere luck, just for your sole benefit? You are a very fine person, Mr. Baggins, and I am very fond of you. (276)

The success of their journey is thanks to team-work and collective responsibility that has been taken seriously. Altruism is collective, too, and it manifests itself in characters like Gandalf the wizard, who presents problem-solving. He cares about neither treasures nor glory.

All Gandalf wants is to end the spread of the darkness on Middle-earth. Bard, the simple fisherman from lake town, ends up slaying the dragon Smaug. He only behaves so to push the danger and harm from his town where his home and children are and his people.

In this third and last part of the dissertation, the analytical emphasis was placed on *The Hobbit*. In the first section, the chapter showed the nature of this work as an epic tale with a non-epic hero, emphasising the protagonist's psychological dimensions. The second section tackled settings and themes. It showed how Tolkien's Middle-earth offers an alternative world. It as well foregrounded the nuanced dichotomy of good and evil in *The Hobbit*. The chapter also demonstrated that the ending Tolkien opted for in *The Hobbit*, which is similar to his other works, reveals that this style of endings is not a mere hazard, and that his altruism indicates that his ego made peace with his war experience and took that to his literature too.

Conclusion

To conclude what has been discussed in this dissertation, the tragic events of the Great War (WWI) and the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder it caused to countless people had a major influence on personal life and literary creations of J. R. R. Tolkien. As a world war veteran, Tolkien witnessed first-hand the horrors of the war and suffered the loss of close friends, both of which left a lifelong emotional scar.

The trauma Tolkien experienced during the war, this dissertation has shown, played a significant role in the creation of Middle Earth, the fictional universe in which *The Hobbit* is set. The dark and ominous landscapes of war and the scenes of impending doom are all elements that can be traced back to Tolkien's raw encounters with the brutality of war.

J. R. R. Tolkien, the English writer and scholar, played a significant role in popularising the genre of modern fantasy. Prior to his fantasy, the genre was marginal. It struggled to gain recognition and was often dismissed as mere children literature. However, Tolkien's masterful storytelling and world building broke the barriers between "low" and "high" literature and unveiled the profound depth and artistic potential of the fantasy genre.

Tolkien's works brought modern fantasy into the mainstream and into critical acclaim as well, paving the way for subsequent fantasy authors to emerge. His intricate world-building and epic narrative have all left an undeniable and lasting imprint on the genre. Although he had not brought the genre to existence, his pioneering works made him the figure that revolutionised it, earning him the title father of modern fantasy. His ground-breaking contributions to the genre first emerged with the publication of his first work *the Hobbit*, where he embodied his trauma and need for escapism in his literature.

Escapism, in the novel, to protect the veteran's mind from madness and to prolongate life turns out, later in the story, to be beyond his rather limited urges to evade tragic reality.

The Hobbit closes with Tolkien and Bilbo being reconciled with life, their id irrational drives are concealed, their superego ideals are activated, and their ego opting for the defence mechanism of altruism, in which personal gratification and pleasure can be sought only through the state of selflessness, compassion with others, and concern with the general welfare and wellbeing.

This was Tolkien's and Bilbo's way to surpass trauma, get their salvation and psychological relief, and rise from the apocalypse to construct a merrier universe.

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Appendix

This appendix is the proof on Tolkien's trench fever and his return to England due to health issues and psychological exhaustion

No. 10054 ^{2a}
 2. 5
 A. G. 4c. OFFICE, LONDON, S.W.
 23 NOV 1916

1. Rank and Name	2nd Lt. J. R. R. Tolkien.
2. (a) Regiment and Brigade (or Division) Company (b) If attached to another unit Overseas, the Battalion and name of Regiment must be stated	11th Lancashire Fusiliers. 74th Brigade.
3. Address in United Kingdom	(Temporary) 2 F. E. Milton Rd. Moseley, Bham
4. Date of leaving Unit (Abroad)	31st October 28th 1916
5. Date of Embarkation for England	Thursday, Nov. 9th 1916.
6. Port of Embarkation for England	Le Havre.
7. Port of Disembarkation (England)	Southampton.
8. Date of Arrival in England	Thursday, Nov. 9th 1916.
9. Name of Ship	HMS Asturias
10. Cause of Return	Trench Fever
11. Dates if on leave, from to	
12. Authority	Medical Officer. No. 1 Red Cross Hospital Le Touquet.
13. Whether examined by a Medical Board since return from Continent (Date) <u>Nov 22/1916</u>	no (Signature) J. R. R. Tolkien 9/16

(13 44) W 547-7022 20,000 4/14 (P. 2547) H. 14,905

Transcript

J R R Tolkien: trench fever

(service record and letter)

Catalogue reference: WO 339/34423

No. 100054/2

A.G. 4c.

WAR OFFICE, LONDON, S.W.

(stamp over this) WAR OFFICE received 23 NOV 1916

1. Rank and Name 2nd Lt. J.R.R. Tolkien.

2. (a) Regiment and Brigade (or Division) 11thB. Lancashire Fusilers. 74th Brigade.

2 Corps(b) If attached to another unit Overseas, the Battalion and name of Regiment must be stated

3. Address in United Kingdom (temporary) c/o T.E. Milton Esq Moseley B'ham

4. Date of leaving Unit (Abroad) Sat. October. 28th. 1916

5. Date of Embarkation for England Thursday, Nov. 9th. 1916.

6. Port of Embarkation for England Le Havre.

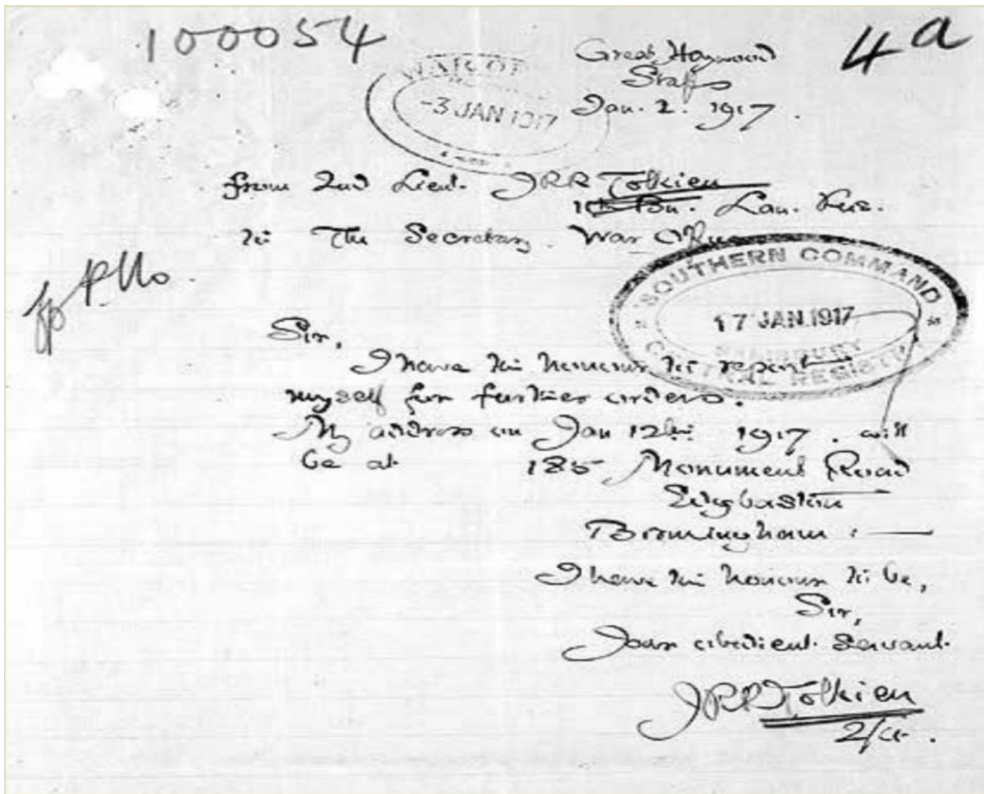
7. Port of Disembarkation (England) Southampton.

8. Date of Arrival in England Thursday, Nov. 9th 1916.

9. Name of Ship HMHS Asturias.

10. Cause of Return : Trench Fever

11. Dates if on leave, fro



Transcript

12. Authority Medical Officer. No. 1 Red Cross Hospital Le Touquet.

13. Whether examined by a Medical Board since return from Continent no (Date) Nov.

22/1916 (Signature) JRR Tolkien

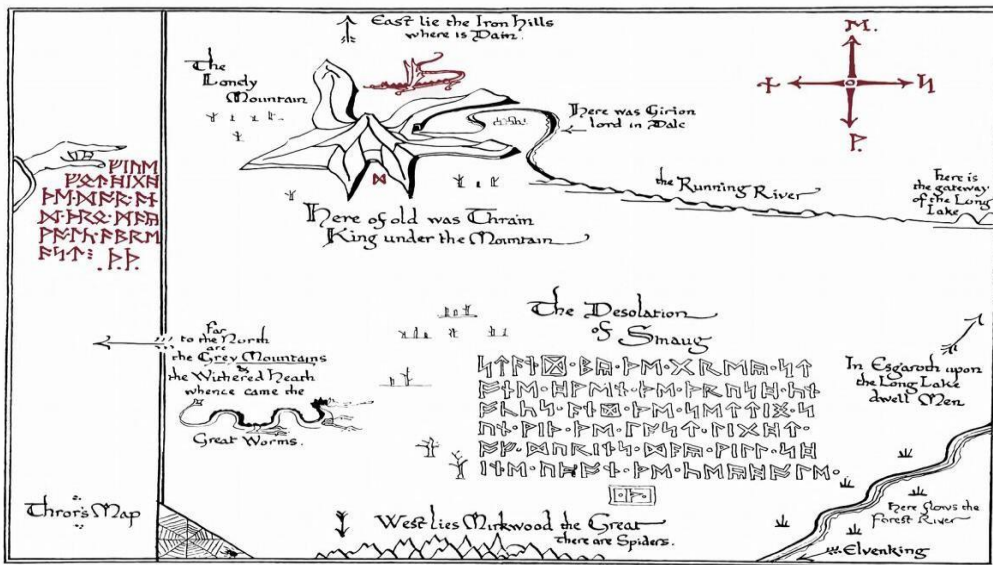
2/Lt Great Haywood Staffs Jan. 2. 1917. (stamp) WAR OFFICE

3 JAN 1917 from 2nd Lieut. JRR Tolkien 11th Bn. Lan. Fus. to

The Secretary. War Office(stamp) SOUTHERN COMMAND 17 JAN 1917

SALISBURY CENTRAL REGISTRY

Thror's Map:



Thror's map a proof on Tolkien's genius not just by creating imaginary universes, but even drawing their maps and creating their languages.