

FANTASY FILMS AS A POSTMODERN

PHENOMENON

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ABSTRACT

FANTASY FILMS AS A POSTMODERN PHENOMENON

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The aim of this research is to analyze the fantasy fiction genre films as a postmodern phenomenon. With various ways of looking into the texts, the study focuses on the narrative structure of the fantasy formations with a postmodern perspective. This thesis firstly investigates the fantasy genre films as a whole by conducting a research on the fantasy films database. From this point, the boundary of the definition for fantasy genre is argued. With using psychoanalysis along with Tolkienian and mystic way of looking into texts, this thesis finds connections to the postmodern features of these narrative structures. In this context the film *Lord of the Rings* (2001, Peter Jackson) is analyzed through these ways of looking into texts. Specifically the notions of time, historicism and subject were examined through postmodern theory. Thus, the features of the narrative structure indicate postmodern tendencies.

Keywords: Fantasy Fiction, Fantasy, Lord of the Rings, Cinema, Film.

ÖZET

POSTMODERN BİR FENOMEN OLARAK FANTAZİ FİLMLERİ

İclal Alev Değim

Medya ve Görsel Çalışmalar
Yüksek Lisans
Tez Yöneticisi: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Ahmet Gürata

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Bu çalışmanın amacı fantastik kurgu filmlerini postmodern bir fenomen olarak ele alıp tartışmaktır. Bu tezin odağı, fantasti metinlerinin öykü yapısını farklı bakış yollarıyla incelemektir. Bu çalışma fantasti filmleri veritabanı üzerinden yapılan araştırmayla öncelikle fantasti kavramını tanımlayarak başlamıştır. Bu doğrultuda fantasti türü filmlerin sınırları sorgulanmıştır. Psikanaliz yöntemine ek olarak metne Tolkienci ve mistik bakış yolları tartışılmıştır. Bu bağlamda *Yüzüklerin Efendisi* (2001, Peter Jackson) filmi analize alınmış ve metne bakış yolları ile incelenmiştir. Özellikle, postmodern teoride var olan tarihselcilik, zaman ve özne kavramları üzerine yoğunlaşmıştır. Öykü yapısının özelliklerinin postmodern eğilimler gösterdiği bu analizlerin sonucunda ortaya çıkmıştır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Fantastik Kurgu, Fantazi, *Yüzüklerin Efendisi*,
Sinema, Film.

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1. INTRODUCTION

With the recent augmentation of the fantasy fiction genre films in Hollywood and World Cinema, the emphasis of the unknown and magical phenomena has increased. The question concerning the reason of the recent augmentation of fantasy fiction genre films are the first focus of the analysis, through the genre's context and the narrative structure relating it to the social conjuncture of the era that we are currently experiencing. With this question in mind, the investigation of the genre furthered into an analysis of how the fantasy genre has been analyzed in previous examples of its literary frontiers and thus focuses on the intertextual quality of these texts. The structure will follow the line of addressing the characteristics of the specific genre, looking into sub-genre's and relating the questions at hand to the Postmodernist theory in relation to the contextual status and concluding with the possible readings of the films. The analysis of the films are important in understanding the situation in which these films posses as an example of the postmodern tendency in the film industry.

This questioning of the reasons behind the production of such films might stem from the changing understanding both in the aesthetics of the questioned films and its fantastical worlds created in the

postmodern world that will be analyzed thoroughly as Saga Fantasy Films. The focus of the argument will be on specific films in the fantasy fiction genre. IMDB (Internet Movie Database) has not made any further classifications for the fantasy genre, leaving it open to a cluster of different sub-genres co-existing in the same space. To define the sub-genres will not only help categorize the whole cluster of films and define them more clearly but also provide a deeper understanding of these films as they share common traits with each other. This is important since many mythological based films, fantasy love stories and many other children fantasy films belong to the same category. To highlight the chaos: “*Toy Story 3*” (2010) directed by Lee Unkrich, which is a children’s animation, is in the same category as *Twilight* Series (2008-2011) which is basically a Vampire love story. Thus to define a sub-genre becomes crucial in the process of analysis in order to make clear definitions and provide a better understanding.

The first research parameter was to find whether fantasy films indeed had increased over the recent years or not. In order to perform the analysis the largest database on the Internet was searched for the title fantasy genre: Internet Movie Database (imdb.com). The results showed that (Figure 1), it was a quantitative fact that fantasy genre has been increasing in enormous numbers since the year 2000.

Number of Fantasy Genre Films, Videos and Tv Shows Produced over the years

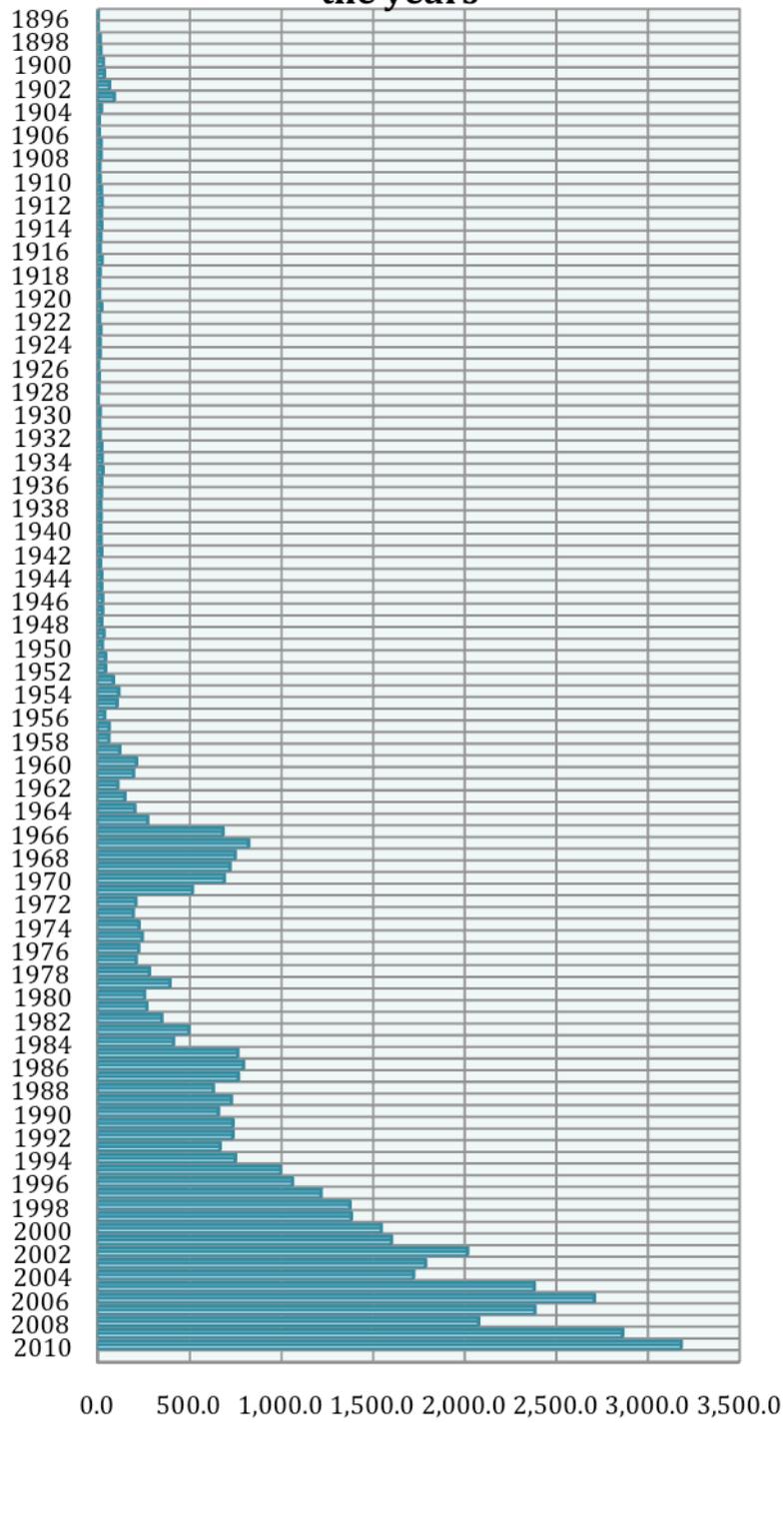


Figure 1- based on the data imdb.com 04.0 1.2011 with 0.18 deviation.

After this finding, the analysis moves on to define the sets of films that will be mentioned throughout the research. These vast numbers in the genre itself and the variety amongst the sub-genre, made it hard to mention all the films belonging to this category. Therefore certain films that are crucial to the genre were taken as examples to be analyzed. *Lord of the Rings* was chosen as the primary example for the analysis to provide comparison between various ways of looking and activating the narrative structure. The reason for this choice is to include a film that helps define the boundaries of the sub-genre, Saga Fantasy fiction.

Starting from this point, since there was such a tendency towards the genre it should be viewed from a more textual point of view considering the specifications of the era itself along with possible implications that fantasy genre films might actually be a very post modern phenomena, even though it was founded quite early.¹

As the analysis continues the search for possible criticisms of the fantasy genre films continues and the narrative structure becomes a focal point. Looking into film texts and narrative structure, it was soon evident that nearly all the films in this genre were adapted to the screen from literary works. This intertextual structure can also be traced to many other mediums such as video games. The analyses

¹ Figure 1 shows that the first example was made in 1896, Georges Méliés *The House of the Devil*.

that were previously conducted also showed no sign to acknowledge this fact in their explorations. In order to address this narrative component, a different type of method had to be used. This cultivated interest into drawing a larger picture by combining various ways to activate and explore these texts. This way, the textual analysis would not simply hail one part or portion of the genre films but it would also shed light on a part that was seemingly un-assumed. This way, it became possible to view these narratives and texts from various points-of-view and look into different parts of the same text with a new perspective.

While this decision needed deep analysis of the literary criticisms of the genre, it also helped find the path to the film analysis that focuses primarily on the narrative structure. Finding this missing link between these texts, there appeared a dialogue among various theories. While exploring these literary ways of looking into texts it soon became apparent that the tendencies in the narrative structure actually found its way into films as well. The literary theory posed helpful in providing a guideline to look into different parts of the structure and also arouse questions of the possible discussions among the genre.

In order to make a thorough analysis of the subject, the first thing considered was to define the boundaries of the research. In order to do this, the list of the group of films to be analyzed in the fantasy

genre had to be narrowed down. This not only enabled a more focused research it also helped define a sub-genre that has common grounds as mentioned in the first chapter. After this definition was in place, the analysis moved on to defining the theoretical framework. This was done in two main parts, combining different theories and perspectives.

1.1. Methodology:

The main aim of this thesis is to analyze the fantasy fiction genre films and find out whether or not they are postmodern in terms of the narrative components. In order to do so a theoretical basis should be established for the analysis to function. In the process of the analysis of the fantasy fiction genre theory in terms of films, the narrative analysis plays a key role in identifying the postmodern features. Since the specific genre requires a deeper attention for leading the way to the questions of its functions and understanding in terms of postmodernism, I will borrow specific terms and notions from the literary criticisms of the fantasy genre studies to emphasize the intertextuality. The three literary approaches to the fantasy genre all have weaknesses and strengths of their own and therefore I will not simply take one approach to address the whole issue. In order to have a broader sense of the films certain terms will be borrowed that are crucial to the analysis of the genre. Amongst these, also lies the question of handling these approaches. Thus the term “approach” will not be used for the reasons that it not only confuses the terms usage but also has structural problems when applied with the term as used in the article of Greg Bechtel (2004) titled “*There and Back Again: Progress in the Discourse of Todorovian, Tolkienian and Mystic Fantasy Theory*”. This problem specifically is that of a critical nature and needs to be defined clearly before it is placed under the application of the

fantasy narratives. To clarify the problem we should consider the meaning of “approach”.

Approach, is “the attitude of the writer as it can be inferred from the writing...” (In *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2011). Here the confusion in the usage of the term by Bechtel’s article is clear when applied to such a notion. Bechtel uses the term to identify different positions the literary critiques make rather than the author’s attitude. This does not to state however that critiques cannot possess a certain approach while looking at these texts. Yet, such a categorization leads to a path where the criticisms are generalized and homogenized within themselves, excluding any variations and individualities that are quite important in the analysis. He himself points out that:

“I have named each of these three approaches for a central, formative text. Thus, the Todorovians take their approach from Todorov’s writing, the Tolkienians from Tolkien’s writing, and the Mystics from the mystic tradition. However, Todorov would probably not agree with much of what I call “Todorovian” theory, and Tolkien could be more accurately characterized as a Mystic than a ‘Tolkienian’.” (2004, p. 141)

Even though this seems to be an over generalization of the literary tendencies, it is mandatory to look at the literary ways of looking into and activating these fantasy texts and identifying the important elements, that have the typical narrative structure each literary piece amongst the genre possesses. Here therefore, the analysis will include the activating methods of Psychoanalysis, combined with Todorov’s work, Tolkien’s introduction of a new way of exploring the narrative

structures and the Eastern Mystic tendency that can easily be traced to Ursula Le Guinn along with Tolkien's own fantasy worlds.

To paint a frame for the analysis, we should first identify these ways of activating texts. The Todorovian way of activating the text finds importance in the exploration of postmodern subject in the analysis of the fantasy genre in the narrative. The uncanny however is used to refer to the natural phenomena as opposed to the marvelous appearing as the supernatural. Rather than adopting this notion, the emphasis will be on the themes of the Self and the Other. With Tolkien's unique way of viewing the fantastic worlds, the term Magic and its understanding along with his general notion of the fantasy worlds will be taken granted, along with Brian Attebery's myth will be borrowed with the notion presented earlier. From the Mystic way of activating the texts, the notion of intuition and the hint for a "more" will be taken and analyzed in terms of the mythical nature of the Saga Fantasy Fiction Genre films. From a combination of these ways of looking into texts, it will be necessary to derive the questions and explore the realm with the light that is shed by these theories.

1.2. Postmodernism and Fantasy Fiction Genre

Within this context, the second part of the analysis will combine the textual investigation with Frederic Jameson's notions of "Historicism", "Nostalgia", "Present Time" in post-modernity and the subject in

relation to the post-modern world in terms of saga fantasy fiction genre films.

Jameson (1991) argues that 'historicism' now effaces History and that "this situation evidently determines what the architecture historians call 'historicism', namely the random cannibalization of all the styles of the past, the play of random stylistic allusion..." (p. 66) In the post-modern world, History is taken over by the stylistic representation of history in which the new spatial logic of the simulacrum can now be expected to have a momentous effect on what used to be historical time. (Jameson, 1991, p. 66) This process inevitably begins to wither the boundaries of chronological time and we begin to linger into a time notion in which we are surrounded by only the representations of history in stylistic forms. This idea is similar to the discussion on Myth. The stories in Saga Fantasy Fiction films will be analyzed keeping these parameters in mind further during the research.

When talking about time, Jameson (2003) suggests that time was the obsession modernist as space is the obsession of the post-modernists (p. 699). Jameson (2003) further argues that the claim space took the place of time is promising in viewing the death of time. (p. 699). Time has become infinitely temporal, encapsulating the past, present and the future. Indeed Jameson suggests in his article "The End of Temporality" that such a thing cannot be presented because it is just like the drive in psychoanalysis, ultimately never re-presentable as

such. (Jameson, 2003, p. 699). This notion of time Jameson defines is similar to that of the questions of time-space in fantasy fiction genre criticisms. This is especially apparent in the discussion of Magic being the most important element in fantasy fiction genre films and it is the core of the subversion in time and space. This notion can also refer to Heidegger's notion of an Authentic Time as opposed to the Vulgar Time, and this exploration will be carried forward in the analysis of particular films and scenes of Saga Fantasy Fiction.

The concept of the post-modern subject in Jameson's argument is of value in examining the Saga Fantasy Fiction Genre films. Jameson defines the subject with possessing a fragmented notion of the surrounding world. Jameson (2003) suggests that:

“Cultural production is thereby driven back inside a mental space which is no longer that of the old monadic subject, but rather that of some degraded collective ‘objective spirit’: it can no longer gaze directly on some putative real world, at some reconstruction of a past history which was once itself a present; rather, as in Plato's cave, it must trace our mental images of that past upon its confining walls.”
(p. 717)

The monadic subject, the windowless being defined by Jameson, has lost its relation to matter in life and is in search of both its history and matter inside its own cell. The contextual and narrative analysis, thus will involve the combination of the two theoretical backdrops.

With the basic foundations of the genre theory the analysis will include a synthesis of the genre theory, along with the various ways

of activating the films texts that indicates the postmodern features of these films. From this combination of several different elements of approaches to the genre films, the understanding of the reasons behind the augmentation of the genre films in recent years might be illuminated alongside an exploration of the functions and the structures of fantasy fiction genre. This exploration might light a way to the understanding of time and space in its entirety within the context and follow the theoretical thought of post-modernist approaches while framing the overall analysis.

Chapter one discusses the definition of the fantasy genre and questions the nature of the fantastic in terms defined by and for its own not relating and bounding it to certain aspects of reality. By this definition it can clearly be seen how the cluster of films among the genre come to a mutual ground under the sub-genre, making it accessible.

Chapter two discusses the multiple ways in which the sub-genre films can be analyzed. The analysis thus takes the example of Lord of the Rings in all three cases for the focal point making it easier to compare between the different ways of activating the texts. The first way of activating the fantasy narrative is the application of psychoanalysis, more specifically focusing on certain aspects that are relevant with the screen narrative. The second way of activating the narrative is with a different way of looking into fantasy texts. As the

definition of fantasy becomes clear in the first chapter, it is then analyzed through the notions of Tolkien and his way of looking into these texts that are put on to display. The third way of activating the texts appear as the Mysticism, in which the texts are activated with a certain understanding of the fantasy worlds, specifically looking into time, helps identify the difference of the narrative structure as well as refining the boundaries of the definition of the sub-genre.

Chapter three discusses the possible ways in which fantasy narratives can be seen as a postmodern phenomenon, where the certain tendencies among the genre itself highlights the possibility for multiple ways of looking into these texts. These identify the aspects of the Past and the notion of Historicism at its center.

2. DEFINING SAGA FANTASY GENRE

The main aim of this thesis is to explore fantasy fiction genre films and to understand the fantastic world's in the postmodern era. In doing so, we must first place our focus on the genre theory itself and then consider the evolution of fantasy fiction genre specifically, borrowing broadly from literary theory. Combining these two approaches, it would be possible to analyze a set of films in the genre on theoretical basis and lead a path to the question of time and space in these films. With the theoretical framework of the genre theory combined with the various ways to activate the fantasy texts that will be analyzed through films relating to postmodernism. In the process, a sub-genre, Saga Fantasy, will be defined in order to set the border for the range of films that would be analyzed within the specified context.

This chapter explores the boundaries of fantasy genre, at the same time raising the question of how fantasy should and can be defined. A definition for the sub-genre (Saga Fantasy Fiction Genre) along with the reasons for defining and exploring these fantasy worlds will be provided.

2.1. What is Genre?

Beginning the discussion of the fantasy fiction genre, a special emphasis must be placed on the word “genre”. Films are categorized according to their genres and this affair is important in understanding the need for sub-genres and to define a group of films. The importance of genre in film is explained as follows: “A film genre is thus based on a set of conventions that influence both the production of individual works within that genre and audience expectations and experiences.” (Gomery, 2001, p. 5640) An element that has such effects on the film and its experience must be traced back to its etymological meanings to understand its full functionality. “Genre” was used to refer to scenes of everyday life² in oil painting as used by the French critic Quatremère de Quincy in 1791, however the original meaning in French stands for “kind” or “type” and it has been used in the later meaning in films and literature criticisms. It was first used to indicate different groups of paintings and then applied to other areas such as architecture and film. This shows the variety in the usage of the word and explains the importance for artists, thinkers and viewers.

² "genre" *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Art Terms*. by Michael Clarke and Deborah Clarke. Oxford University Press Inc. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. Bilkent University Library. 11 January 2011 <<http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t4.e774>>

Genre theory has been debated over the past 30 years, beginning most notably with Tzvetan Todorov (1970) who defined a distinction in literary genre theory between theoretical genres, which was identified by criticism and theory, and historical genres, which are actively used by critics and readers. (Gomery, 2001, p. 5642) this definition is quite general and hard to define when relating to specific examples. Later in 1980 Steve Naele defined screen theory by combining ideological and semiotic-esthetic aspects, expanding it to the social and institutional angle, where the audience has certain systematic set of expectations (Gomery, 2001, p. 5642). Rick Altman enlarges this definition by adding the ideological and ritual approaches and affixes that genre has a language or grammar (Gomery, 2001, p. 5642). Gomery (2001) examines this specific interval and states that in both Naele and Altman the emphasis on the interplay of genre as a kind of game “between critics, producers and audiences” is very strong. (p. 5643).

However finely defined the elements of the descriptions might be, genre is an ambiguous and fluid matter, where the interpretations of the audience, producers or critics might shape its understanding. This attribute is not a negative one, nor can it be defined as positive. It might help the audience in forming their expectations or it might weaken the film experience. On the terms of this notion, it is highly expected that genre is a way of putting categories to our way of thought, as a hint of guidance. It might help anchor the plot into a

specific space and provides flexibility and ease for naming the film. Here naming is not simply giving a name, or a title to the film but to give it a “worldly” view: to name an aesthetic structure composed of many elements that might seem apart from each other. It provides intactness to the way things are formed in the film. To clarify the point, the example from the film *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) directed by Stanley Kubrick, might be given. The film is categorized under the genres of Mystery, Adventure and Science Fiction.³ The opening scene is with ape like creatures living their lives on an isolated planet. We quickly understand that they are primeval creatures and that they are living in tribes and they have no means of technology. With the arrival of a mythical monolith, the sequence describes a war between two tribes over a small pond of water. The film then moves to a whole different narration, in which, the human race has evolved in technology and is now traveling in outer space. From the genres defined for the film, we are expecting a story that might take place in the space but what about the first part? Since it is a Science Fiction movie, it is quite possible to put these two different kinds of stories together however bold it might be. So in a sense it anchors and guides the expectations and the experience of the film.

Genre theory has been defined by many academicians in the past providing several formulae to define the parts and structures of the

³ Internet Movie Database. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0062622/>

films. Most remarkably, Sigfried Kracauer in 1960 has defined two basic types of films: narrative films (story films) and nonnarrative films (nonstory films) (Gomery, 2001, p. 5644). This definition was then refined by several other thinkers such as A. Williams in 1984 in his article, "Is a radical genre criticism possible?", D. Bordwell in 1985 with the book "Narration in the Fiction Film", all the way to S. Naele and his article published first in 1990 "Questions of Genre".

2.2. Fantasy Fiction Genre

Following the path of criticism in literature, the attempts to analyze the fantasy genre begins with three main approaches identified by Greg Bechtel (2004) in his article "There and Back Again": Progress in the Discourse of Todorovian, Tolkienian and Mystic Fantasy Theory." In his article Bechtel clearly highlights the evolution in the literary criticism and points to the aspects of interwoven academic approaches to the genre. As discussed earlier, since the usage of the term "approach" brings along limitations and generalizations, the texts will be explored as a basis for opening a debate to investigate fantasy texts in various ways.

The whole discussion of "reality" is trying to be addressed in all the approaches and all the criticisms so far. But the question is not on defining "fantasy" in terms, or on the ground of "reality." Fantasy has

its existence independent of reality and trying to ground the term with “reality” is missing the important point. It has been most undermined within the context of Modern thought, going all the way back to Aristotle and the basic hierarchy placed over reality and fantasy. Reality has been praised and taken into serious account over fantasy and this is the reason why even the critics, writers or readers of fantasy is trying to define it over the term “reality” and associate it to escapism. This is only understandable thinking the evolution of human thought over the years, however, it is quite disturbing to witness this desperate attempt even with the most adequate people that are indulged in the fantasy genre. Fantasy should be defined in its own terms; meaning its elements and its features without making an evaluation with “reality.” The reason for this is simply that it limits our perception of what fantasy is and how it might function.

One of the major problems of fantasy fiction genre is that it is not taken “seriously” by the academic world. “... for many, the reading of fantasy is often characterized as a guilty pleasure or indulgence, carrying an implicit stigma (Bechtel 2004, p. 140). This has been such a burden for many readers as well as writers that Ursula Le Guin names this phenomenon the “genrefication” of fantasy, a process by which genre becomes not a neutral descriptive term, but rather a label applied only to those types of literature that are other-than-serious (Behctel 2004, p. 140). This process led to a slow accession in the literary criticism however determined it might be.

The three approaches to the fantasy genre defined, has its roots to early works of the literary world. Tzvetan Todorov's original work has deep parallels with Freudian Psychoanalysis. Todorovian way of activating fantasy works, defines most elaborately the distinction between the themes of Self and the themes of the Other and makes a general definition of the fantasy genre as "a hesitation between an "uncanny" (natural) and a "marvelous" (supernatural) explanation of narrative events (Bechtel 2004, p. 143). Stemming from this theoretical background the literary critics followed this path to analyzing the works and the post-modernist theoreticians adopted this view into their approaches. Eric Rabkin suggested that "the fantastic does more than extend experience; the fantastic contradicts perspectives" (as cited in Bechtel 2004, p. 144). Taking into account such a view Lance Olsen suggested that post-modern fantasy has become the literary equivalent of deconstructionism, for it interrogates all we take for granted about language and experience, giving these no more than a shifting and provisional status (Bechtel 2004, p. 145). With such a notion of fantasy, these critics did not even consider Tolkien's work as one of the most noteworthy literary pieces in the genre because Tolkien was far too "modernist" in his stories. There were no contradictions in the plot but in the contrary Tolkien's worlds were very classical in the sense of both the narrative and the characters. Bechtel (2004) explains this as follows:

"Tolkien is embarrassingly conservative, embarrassingly patriarchal, embarrassingly Christian, embarrassingly anti-technology, and embarrassingly transcendentalist. If

fantasy is to be taken “seriously”, then the postmodernist critic cannot allow Tolkien to be included within a “serious” definition of fantasy” (p. 146)

The very definition of such a fantasy genre did not allow Tolkien to be included as well. For the supernatural description put upon us in this theoretical framework is a “special perception” of the world. Therefore there is a process of cleansing of the supernatural from fantasy. Bechtel argues that this hardly comes as a surprise in such “...an implicitly hyper-objective, hyper-scientized discourse” (Bechtel, 2004, p. 146)

If we consider Tolkien’s own way of looking to the fantasy fiction genre, we will come to a totally different definition of fantasy. In his book “On Fairy Stories” Tolkien (1977) explains how he himself perceives the faerie worlds. Tolkien had studied Philology and has been fascinated by the “old,” he has claimed that it should be the story that people should evaluate to its fullest and not consider the writers biography and try to find similarities with his life and his works. Following from his footsteps, the Tolkienian way of activating narratives involves evaluating the story in its intactness. Tolkien believed that the storyteller was a sub-creator, smaller than the Creator, but never the less functional in explaining and bringing forth a world that was hidden to us. The influence of his spiritual beliefs has a major impact on his work however it would be unwise to say that Tolkien was trying to build a way to Christianity. In the contrary

he was trying to build up a new world in which all the beliefs of this world would be understood differently. Tolkien argued that “stories about Fairy, that is Faerie, the realm or state in which fairies have their being.” (Bechtel, 2004, p. 150), opposed to being simple stories about fairies. These fantasy worlds are referred to as “Secondary Worlds” in Tolkien’s writings and Tolkien “...rejects the willing suspension of disbelief as a poor substitute for the proper function of what he calls “Secondary Belief,” a fully engaged belief in the narrative...”(Bechtel, 2004, p. 150). For Tolkien what makes a story is this belief in the plot and following the line of thought of the author. It is not domination but for Tolkien it is the perquisite of the reader to believe in the “truth” of magic and the unexplainable in terms of the “real life” cause and effect formulas. For “Magic, in this context, is central to the fairy-story, and, although the story teller may use the techniques of satire, there is one proviso: if there is any satire present in the tale, one thing must not be made fun of, the magic itself” (Tolkien, 1975, p. 17-19). Magic, indeed is the very core of fantasy fiction and it is the one most important element that effects the perception of time and space. It is through this element that we are faced with a different notion of time and space. Here we are introduced to the element of “wonder.” Wonder is the effect that the author tries to induce in the reader by the counter playing of the reader in the Secondary belief. If the reader makes fun of the Magic in the tale, the effect of “wonder” cannot be achieved. So it is the most crucial element in the story and thus, I believe the very fabric of

the fantasy worlds itself. A story of fantasy fiction cannot be said to belong to the genre unless it has the element of Magic or the Unexplainable. Thus I will borrow this element from Tolkien and use it in analyzing the films of the genre.

Brian Attebery follows the path of Tolkien's definitions and presents the text on itself examining it through its own ground. Attebery tries to apply the notion of Tolkien to fantasy text therefore adopting the word "fantasy" over the "supernatural" unlike the Todorovian approach. Attebery also analyzes the gender issue in fantasy genre in his book "Gender and Science Fiction" (2002), however his definition of the genre is not specifically fantasy or science fiction making it hard to distinguish between the two different genres. Leaving this discussion and going back to reality and definition of fantasy, it is to a certain limit where Bechtel argues that: "... if Attebery were to suggest that the reality of the fantasy might be as real as -or even more real than- everyday, consensual reality, he would undermine his own credibility as a literary critic" (Bechtel 2004, p. 155). However one the most important points Attebery makes is the *myth*. He argues that "...myth unifies the discourse of 'history' and 'story', reflecting 'a time when the division, between story and history, did not exist or seemed unimportant'." (Bechtel, 2004, p. 153). Here, I think that Bechtel refers to a crucial point, which Bechtel (2004) seems to criticize with heavy words, suggesting that:

“Attebery seems to suggest that, somewhere in an unspecified past, mythic discourse was indistinguishable from everyday or “historical” discourse. The assertion of such a former lack-of-distinction implies two antecedent assumptions: first, that human cultures have only recently learned to distinguish between different forms of discourse; second, that any recognizable, distinct form of discourse must be ultimately distinguishable as either real or unreal.” (p. 158).

Attebery seems to be referring to the time period in which the fantasy genre is apparent *in* and tries to make a socio-cultural relevance to the text, which Bechtel is arguing against. However this line of thought opens up a new possibility of reading fantasy texts. If we omit the part of Attebery’s thought of “reflecting a time,” meaning leaving out the part where he refers to the social context, it might be possible to understand a specific mode of perception in fantasy fiction, which is distinct to the genre. The experience of the fantastic worlds both in literature and in films have such a notion of time and space that it cannot be measured nor experienced in terms of the way we are currently receiving. This suggests a mode of perception both within the *story* and in the *experience of the reader*, which finds its way into a different realm, where the ambiguity of the plots reference to the elements of “story” and “history” creates the *myth* effect.

Taking the example of *The Lord of the Rings*, it is hard to distinguish for the reader or the audience to make a differentiation between the “story” and the “history.” The story is told first by the voice of Galadriel and than from Frodo Baggins point of view, we see counter

narratives intertwined together, each having its own course of events in a different time and place. We see Sauron giving the rings to the Elven Kings and then we see Bilbo Baggins traveling through the land then we witness Frodo's story. This interplay between different times and heroic stories all combined told in a mixture of forms –memory, story, history- is the very experience that creates the effect of myth. This element of the fantasy fiction genre is a unique way of representing the plot as well as the unique experience that Tolkien calls “wonder.” This is one of the most important elements in fantasy fiction genre.

The Mystic way of activating the narratives where, fantasy genre is defined as follows: “fantasy... may best be thought of as a fiction that elicits wonder through elements of the supernatural or impossible. It consciously breaks free from mundane reality” (Bechtel, 2004, p. 157). Here the critics adopt a notion of Eastern Mysticism defining a circular flow within the story of the fantasy fiction. In this approach the fantasy worlds have an impact of manifesting a background reality where unexplainable phenomena awaits. In explaining this view:

“...the inadequacy of language to accurately reflect reality, the arbitrary construction of human meaning-making systems, and the tendency of rationalized discourses to suppress a reality that exceeds the grasp of the rational mind. In this sense, the mystic perspective may represent a major element of the “unseen and unsaid culture”...”(Bechtel, 2004, p. 158).

It is the intuitive capacity of the text that we are to focus on in this approach. The “reality” that is presented to us on the plain of linguistics is a matter of debate on its own. However this notion points to the importance of the “more” that is hinted among the fantasy fiction genre. There is a world that you cannot see; you cannot go, that is the “real” before your eyes sealed by a shadow of the world in you everyday life. There is always a hint of the promise inside the fantasy worlds.

2.3. Fantasy and Saga Fantasy Genre

The films that I would like to take into consideration during the analysis require a certain definition of their own. The definition of fantasy as taken by many critics or writers still depend heavily on the term “reality” or the distinction between the real and non-real. This puts a heavy burden on the process of analysis since it depends on identifying what “reality” is. In order to make a suitable definition of the fantasy fiction genre that does not rely on another definition, it is a must that we point out the important elements of fantasy fiction genre.

The fantasy world is non-existing. This means it does not exist in our world as it is (in its fullest sense) yet it has an existence of its own. This non-existence is not the same as non-being. The fantastic world

“is” in the filmic world (or the literary world) but it is non-existent in our world. It is not our world, yet at the same time it is in our world and becomes our world in the filmic experience. So it touches a far world from within our world and showing this world to us from a small window. The definition that will be followed and applied will thus be this one and this very notion of fantasy fiction worlds is freed from “reality” or any such debate.

Since the genre incubates quite a large variety of films, I will focus on the group of films that are particularly of interest to the matter at hand. Within the fantasy genre there might be defined a lot of sub-genres. Since the question is on the reasons of the recent augmentation of the fantasy fiction films and how they function, a group of films, which will help the matter will have to be selected among the vast variety of films in the genre. Most specifically the interest is on the notion of Myth along with Time and Space. These features can best be found in saga, heroic fantasy fiction genre films with a mythological base to the story, that are either trilogies (or sometimes they might even consist of 8 films as in the case of *Harry Potter*). These features can be found in films such as *Harry Potter*, *the Lord of the Rings*, *Percy Jackson and Olympians*, *Twilight Saga* and *Narnia Chronicles*. These films, namely Saga Fantasy Fiction Genre films will be analyzed throughout the thesis.

To be more specific, Saga Fantasy Genre Films are the films in which a mythological back story is told along with a heroic story in order for a quest or journey to take place in which the characters are defined in terms of the fantastical structure unique to the world of creation, where a different notion of time and place is experienced with the introduction of magic. This is important since the existence of magic changes the way the world is understood. The reasoning of events are not based on the cause and effect relationship, there is the agent of magic which effects this bridge in between. Thus the issue will be further analyzed in the chapter relating to Tolkienian way of activating the narrative.

3. ACTIVATING FANTASY TEXTS WITH DIFFERENT WAYS OF LOOKING INTO NARRATIVES

Fantasy worlds that are produced in the films have the basic features parallel to that of its literary formers. The saga fantasy films have a world construction concerned mostly with a mythological, heroic story. The first element, thus, to be considered is the “fantastic worlds”, in order to understand the dynamics within the structure of the genre films. In order to find possible ways of activating the narratives, this chapter will mainly focus on the example of *Lord of the Rings* and activate the text with various different ways of looking. This will not only provide a vessel to search these narratives from various dimensions, furnishing it with different angles, it will also highlight the activeness of these texts in terms of research, highlighting the possibility of a postmodern discourse integrated amongst the elements and features.

3.1 The Fantasy Worlds

The fantasy world's construction is crucial in understanding the realm of the myth and how it functions. The first notion that the Saga fantasy films have in common is the element of Mythology. In all the examples of the sub-genre it is easy to view the myth behind the plot as the story progresses. In the case of *The Lord of the Rings* the mythological story is of Tolkien's creation of the Middle-earth. Tolkien wrote a story in his book *Silmarilion* (1977) about the beginning of the world. There are several God's and Goddesses who rule the Middle-earth before the creation of man or any other race. It is a mythological story that borrows widely from Greek Mythology in its tone and stories. However it seems that Tolkien does not go into detail about the Mythology in the books of "Lord of the Rings". The same thing is true for the film trilogy. The films hardly mention anything about a mythology behind the story. We only know that there are greater beings with power but we are not shown or even hinted about them. We are aware of a power since we see great Wizards, or Elves with great Magical powers. These are the beings that we see in terms of this mythological story. The Halflings or the Hobbits are described as having magical abilities if very weak in the books such as *The Hobbit* (2009). The hobbits are told to possess magic that can make them very secretive among the big folk. They can move about in the forest with utmost silence and can hide very

easily. This feature of *Hobbit's* is not even mentioned in the films. So how is it that we are introduced to the mythological story in *Lord of the Rings* trilogy films? It is through the narrative structure that we witness a few of the mythical parts of the story. The very presence of Magic changes our notion of the films.

How is Magic and Mythology related in this case? Magic becomes the vessel of understanding the fantasy worlds. It is important because accepting the existence of Magic in the filmic world is also acknowledging the Mythology behind it to a degree. So with the introduction of Magic we are also introduced to the story behind the story. The laws of Physics do not apply in this world. There are other sets of rules that we are or will be shown throughout the films. Tolkien (1975) explains this with pointing to the fact that Magic should not be taken lightly and in terms of Satire. (p.10)

The first element being Magic, we move along to the second element of fantasy worlds, the notion of time and space in relation to the layered structure. With the acceptance of Magic a new order of world is established. This applies in great effect to our perception or experience of time and space in the Fantasy Genre. Time is not flowing in a linear fashion in terms of the fantasy world. Here the distinction between the narrative time and the fantasy world's time should be distinguished from each other. The narrative time, in which the plot is shaped and developed, occurs mostly in a linear

fashion, closely resembling the style of classic narrative structure. Further on during the argument this notion will be discussed in depth on its implications in terms of Postmodernism. The fantasy world's time on the other hand has a totally different structure from that of the narrative time.

To understand the notion of time itself before delving into the fantasy world's notion of time, we should firstly consider how time is perceived and understood in our world today.

3.2. Activating *Lord of the Rings* With Psychoanalysis

Fantasy Fiction appears in the "Imaginary" as defined in Psychoanalytical terms. It is in the realm and the "... Lacanian reading of Otherness..." (Armit, 1996, p.25) that fantasy texts are revealed. "This is indeed the realm of the Imaginary; a point that profoundly challenges the belief that 'fairy tales' do not... open up space without/outside cultural order'." (Armit, 1996, p.25) Since fantasy deals with the supernatural and the mythic, this is very reasonable to read it with Jacques Lacan's theory of psychoanalysis, mostly referring to the hidden nature of characters and the story. "Here we are dealing with the always/already unknown and the

unknowable, the world of alien beings who will always be ‘other’...” (Armit, 1996, p.25) Indeed, these psychoanalytical features can be seen in Vladimir Propp’s (1968) analysis of the folk tales even though they are not explicitly addressed, it is easy to read “lack” as a key feature in defining the character and the functions. Propp does not define these features yet “ ... Propp’s work proves interesting because they demonstrate what Propp ignores, rather than what he exposes.” (Armit, 1996, p. 22) A similar case is actually true for Tolkien’s way of exploring fantasy texts. Tolkien (1975) refers to the “Secondary World” and the “sub-creator” which are all hints for a hidden or latent content within the narrative line and the fantastic world.

“Propp’s schematic analysis of the tale, the function of the lack explicitly dominates functions 46-51 (concerned with villainy and avarice), functions 98-101 (concerning the appearance of the princess as the object of quest) and functions 114-19 (concerning the fulfillment/resolution of this perceived lack).” (Armit, 1996, p. 23)

Inevitably, while analyzing fantasy texts and narratives this aspect of the matter at hand should be taken into consideration. Tzevetan Todorov (1975) does exactly this in his book and lights a path for further analysis of the matter.

Looking at the genre to explore how the themes of the narratives examine the Psychoanalytic tendency towards these fantasy worlds, fulfilling and acknowledging the desires in fantasies. Todorov defines two main categories for analysis; the themes of the Self and the themes of the Other.

3.2.1. The Themes of the Self

3.2.1.1. Metamorphosis

Tzvetan Todorov (1975) explains, in his book *The Fantastic, A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, the category of the themes of the self by giving examples from the tales of “The Arabian Night’s.” In the story, the first important element, in defining the story as “fantasy,” stands out as “Metamorphosis.”

“In the face of apparent thematic variety, we are at first perplexed. How to describe it? Yet, if we isolate the supernatural elements, we shall see that it is possible to divide them into groups. The first is that of metamorphosis.”
(p. 109)

In the story Todorov gives as an example, the genie turns into an old man and makes the prince a monkey and than It is easy to trace the similar pattern in the fantasy films. The characters are transformed into different animals, people or beings.

In the film *Lord of The Rings*, we see a different transformation of the antagonist. The Dark Lord Sauron, transforms his soul into the One Ring. So he has a bond with the ring that cannot be broken by ordinary means. When the ring is taken from him, he disappears and thought to be destroyed by many however, he exists in a different form, as a lid-less eye, filled with fire, always watching, searching for the Ring to become whole again. His existence however is not entirely

in this physical world, but rather in an in between world. Here we have two metamorphoses, the first one being the Ring and the other the Eye.

The metamorphosis in the examples given above, differs from the one Todorov provides in one way. The transformation of the physical form of the character comes with death, or rather the cheating of death. Here these people destroy the natural order and so the balance of the World is changed. It is this instability that the protagonist has to face as the antagonists followers try to take over the World.

The antagonists try to hold on to the physical world and this causes a chaotic situation, leaving them without bodies. In which case they are stuck in a place, in the Void, and are in both planes at the same time. This does not only cause the in-balance in the World in terms of the number of Good followers vs. the Evils, it also brings upon a change in the very fabric of the natural order, which results in an saga structure of heroism in the narrative. The normal, natural order of the world is presented by the Good's while the unnatural and the abnormal is presented by the Evil side. This can easily be seen in *Lord of the Rings* first movie, where Saruman the White, brings back to Earth the Goblin's and the Orc's to build an army for Sauron. These two races can be characterized as having broad chins, differing skin colors, bad looking teeth, lack of intelligence, lust, greed and physical strength. They look similar to that of the human or Elven

race however, they are physically distorted and have bodily saliva all over, making them look more like monsters. The Good side however consists of the Human's, Elves and Dwarves, which are presented as the supreme examples of Normality, Physical beauty and intelligence. So the Good and the Bad are different in terms of their physical appearance.

The metamorphosis of the Antagonists also brings about a different kind of fear in the story. We are shown this by the behaviors of other characters towards the Villain when their names are mentioned. The amount of fear that these characters are facing is towards the unknown surveillance that the Villain's possess. Both the characters are able to see and know things that are physically impossible to achieve, but since they are in the Void it is accessible to them.

3.2.1.2. The Existence of Supernatural Beings

Todorov gives the second feature of the fantasy genre as the very existence of supernatural beings and their power over human destiny. What might have been seen as pure chance in other genres appears as intentional power exercised over natural laws. This feature of the fantasy genre is crucial for understanding its very means of existing. The supernatural beings and the existence of magic is the prerequisite for accepting the fantasy worlds. Tolkien (1975) makes a very important remark on the subject. He says that in

order to understand the faerie and enter its world, the person should accept the existence and function of magic within this world (Tolkien, 1975).

“An atom may ruin all, an atom may ransom all” (Todorov, 1975, p. 112). There is a similar pattern in the *Lord of the Rings*, *Harry Potter*, *Sorcerer’s Apprentice*, *Percy Jackson* and *Twilight*. The protagonist of the story is a person of little abilities and can be generalized as having an average life before the “event.” However when faced with the obstacles, they are capable of becoming great heroes. This can best be seen in *Lord of the Rings*, where Frodo, a Halfling sets on a journey that carries the destiny of all races and the future world. Elrond, in the Council, emphasizes this, as the fate of the ring is debated among the big Folk.

In this particular scene, we witness for the first time, all races – except Orcs and Goblins- gathering together to decide upon the evil that has come before them. The One Ring is brought before them and they are warned by its polluting capacity. The Ring has the ability to do great evil and it can turn any good man into a very bad one. However a quarrel takes place as some argue that the ring can be used against the Dark Lord. As the debate continues Frodo volunteers to carry the Ring to Mordor and destroy it. This is not only very surprising for the council it is also a very dangerous task. Boromir points out the irony in the situation by saying: “You carry

the fate of us all, little one...” (*Fellowship of the Ring*, film, 1:44:36)
On another occasion Boromir, lured by the Ring’s call, grabs it from the floor and says: “It is a strange fate that we should suffer so much fear and doubt over so small a thing.” (*Fellowship of the Ring*, film, 1:53:36)

Todorov (1975) points out that in such stories “...everything corresponds to everything else...”(p. 112). The narrative is woven in such a way that even the very small and unimportant detail changes the course of events. Indeed the story of Harry Potter is based on an ancient spell defeating the Dark Lord, known only to a few. In particular, the elements and objects in the movie, add one by one and build the whole narrative pointing to the big picture in the fantastic world. Harry accidentally finds a mirror in a hidden room, he discovers how it works and this small detail becomes the agent for him to solve the mystery and conspiracy planned out by Voldemort, the antagonist. The general line of the narrative evolves this way in all seven of the films, thus creating an anticipation of a “more” or a hidden meaning.

Todorov also highlights this feature: “Pan-determinism has a natural consequence what we may call “pan-signification”: since relations exist on all levels, among all elements of the world, this world becomes highly significant.” (1975, p. 112) This very element provides the story with an intricate, detail oriented plot, that is highly

supported by visuals. Even in the book's the details are described in depth to catch the attention of the audience. The films, however, seem to fail in this respect in placing this emphasis.

The emphasis is placed on the action part of the quest rather than the part that requires thinking on the meaning of the symbols. This choice is understandable since the pace of the movie will be reduced dramatically if the scene were to be longer than it is. However the effect of "wonder" Tolkien places so much importance on is created mainly by the details in the story combined with other elements. The lack of this ingredient changes the experience of the film all together. The narrative not only changes toward a more action-oriented story, the characters and the plot loses a dimension becoming harder to relate to and identify with.

Another important point is, the relation between subject and object that changes dramatically in these fantasy worlds. "... the transition from mind to matter has become possible.." (Todorov, 1975, p. 114) In the *Lord of the Rings* first film, we witness Lady Galadriel speaking to every member of the fellowship with psychic powers. In Harry Potter, we witness Harry having visions and dreams about what Voldemort is saying or doing. Harry actually experiences his feelings and emotions as well. In Twilight series, we see Edward, feeling Bella's feelings and rushing to help her whenever she is in trouble.

These features apply to any number of films among the sub-genre and this explains how “magic” operates in these fantastic worlds.

A common subject that is brought up in most of the examples of the genre, is that of the protagonists relation with its past. Here we are reminded of the bloodline that is often emphasized in a characters overall behavior. Todorov provides the example of Aurelia, “...the walls of the room had opened onto infinite prospects, I seemed to see an uninterrupted chain of men and women whom I existed and who existed within me.” (1975, p. 115) In *The Sorcerer’s Apprentice*, we witness the protagonist’s heritage as the key event for his transformation into a wizard. He is the ancestor of Merlin, and the only one who can use the magical ring. In *Harry Potter*, Harry is always reminded of his parent’s successes and how he resembles them in many ways, with his noble character and appearance. In *Lord of The Rings*, all the characters have very strong bonds with their bloodline. Aragorn, becomes the King of his people, although he has denied the throne many times, Frodo finds himself in an adventure just like his uncle Bilbo and even his adventure resembles that of his uncle’s.

3.2.2. Themes of The Other

The themes of the Other as described in Todorov’s book, finds itself in desire. Todorov points out that it is commonly seen in the form of a

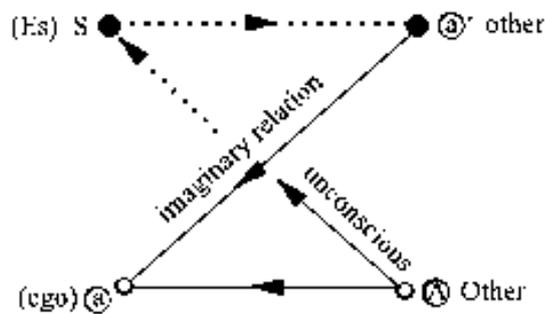
Devil. In order to understand how desire work's in the Saga Fantasy Genre films, the example of *Lord of the Rings* will be taken into account. In the film it is apparent how the Object-petit-a shifts from character to character, mainly focusing on the desire to possess the ring as an object of power and how the Ring has its own desire.

The Devil as in the form of the Other can be seen in the figure of Dark Lord Sauron in the film. He is defined with a lidless eye that can see all. This ultimate power is emphasized by his death in the battle where the ring is cut off from his finger, killing him instantly. This death however is not an ultimate end but rather the very beginning of the story as he encapsulates a part of his soul into the ring and therefore becoming immortal.

To view the narrative structure of the ring, at first sight, it looks like an ordinary golden ring but when it is placed in fire, it displays magical writings which reads: "*One Ring to rule them all. One Ring to find them, One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them*" (Tolkien, 2002, p. 70) The ring has dark magical powers that would enable the person possessing it to rule the world. Sauron put a part of his soul; his malice, his cruelty into the ring so that the ring and Sauron is one. When put, the ring reveals its true nature and we witness this through the story of Gollum he became corrupt because of the ring.

Desire, being closely related with Lack, plays an important role in fantasy film narratives. In order to explain this, we must first consider the term Desire and how it is defined by Jacques Lacan (2006). In Lacanian analysis, Desire is in close relation with the Other, Phantasy (not confusing the term with the usage in film genre) and Need.

Lacan's notion of phantasy is the desire of the Other, represented by



the barred O: \bar{O} . To explain how the Other functions Lacan provides an illustration with the

Figure 2, Schema L.
Schema L.

mathème he formulates in

The schema illustrates Lacan's notion of the psyche as divided into Real, Imaginary and Symbolic (opposed to Freud's id/ego/superego).

In explaining the Schema

“Two diagonals intersect, while the imaginary rapport links a (the ego) to a' (the other), the line going from S (the subject, the Freudian id) to A (the Other) is interrupted by the first one. The Other is difficult to define: it is the place of language where subjectivity is constituted; it is the place of primal speech linked to the Father; it is the place of the absolute Other, the mother in the demand. The Other makes the subject without him knowing it.”
(<http://www.lacan.com/seminars1a.htm>, 2011)

The subject defines itself with relation to the other (a'), which is linked with the ego at the same time unconsciously being defined by

the Other. The place of phantasy in this schema is in the intersecting two diagonal lines as well as the dotted line between S and a'. The dotted line represents how the subject creates a phantasy related with the loop over the other (a'), whereas in building such a phantasy the subject acknowledges the other's relation with the ego (a), which is all defined in the final analysis by the absolute Other, A.

Central to Lacan's theory, phantasy is understood as a defense mechanism of the person. "This concept is at the root both of Lacan's idea of phantasy and of his notion of clinical structure; both are conceived of as a relatively stable way of defending oneself against castration, against the lack in the Other." (Evans, 1996, p. 61) At this point Lacan differs from Freud significantly. Freud believed that phantasy was only a depiction of desire.

"Freud uses the term 'phantasy', then, to denote a scene which is presented to the imagination and which stages an unconscious desire. The subject invariably plays a part in this scene, even when this is not immediately apparent. The fantasized scene may be conscious or unconscious." (Evans, 1996, p. 61)

While trying to define the position of phantasy, we should examine the position of the Real. For Lacan the Real is never achievable, since it is out of Language, the Real is that which cannot be put into words. We might encounter Real in situations like, what Lacan calls *Jouissance*. Without going into detail of the term, *Jouissance* stands for an excessive enjoyment. It is the one thing that the person keeps

for itself while going through the passage from Imaginary to Symbolic order. But at this point *Jouissance* differs from Freud's Pleasure Principle. The Pleasure principle seeks immediate satisfaction of the need yet it is related with discharging energy that has been bottled up. It is not an excessive enjoyment. *Jouissance* on the other hand, is an excessive enjoyment that is somewhat dangerous. As the subject is defining and defined by the Other, it faces the Oedipal stage.

“In the Oedipal phase, though, the real *jouissance* or the body are integrated in the symbolic order. From then on, the subject's relation to *jouissance* is mediated by the symbolic-imaginary construction Lacan calls the fundamental phantasy (which is constructed with Oedipal signifiers). Once symbolized, the subject can now either enjoy its drives (now that they're symbolized, they aren't traumatic any more) or repress them.” (Declercq, 2004, p. 242)

This fundamental phantasy also constitutes the Reality (since Reality consists of three stages: the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real, where Real is defined as the thing that is neither Imaginary nor Symbolic). “As he describes it, primary phantasy is the agency that regulates and conducts everything that has to do with *jouissance*. And as we saw, symptoms do not only come down to signifiers but to a mode of *jouissance* as well.” (Declercq, 2004, p. 247) *Jouissance* being connected to Reality is controlled by the phantasy. So the subject views Reality through *Jouissance*, which is in fact the phantasy itself. In Lacan

“While the various formulas of phantasy indicate the common features of the fantasies of those who share the same clinical structure, the analyst must also attend to the unique features which characterize each patient's particular fantasmatic scenario. These unique features express the

subject's particular mode of *JOUISSANCE*, though in a distorted way." (Evans, 1996, p. 61)

The fundamental phantasy is the basic, one unconscious phantasy other than that which appears in a distorted way in dreams.

At this point we reach the traversing, the "going through the phantasy" stage. As for the neuroses "symptoms do not only come down to signifiers but to a mode of jouissance as well. This laying bare of the drive related aspect of symptoms passes via what Lacan calls the traversal (or crossing) of the fundamental phantasy." (Declercq, 2004, p. 247) This is, in clinical analysis, making the subject realize that there is nothing to do with the reality they have experienced but with the way they fantasize the reality. So the Reality is strongly connected with phantasy. Reality would not function without the phantasy: Reality is the way we fantasize about it.

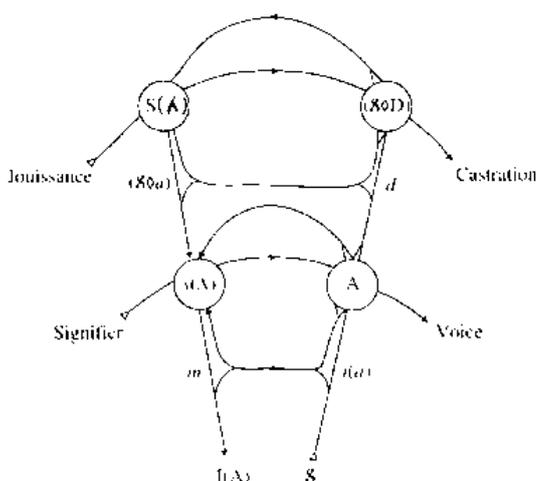


Figure 3, Graph of Desire.

Phantasy is also closely related with desire in both Freud and Lacan. The desire mentioned in Freud's theory is mostly related with the Oedipal desires which than constructs the primal

fantasies. Where as Lacan explains the dynamics of desire in a different way. In the graph of desire (*graphe du désir*) desire is in relation with Jouissance and the other.

The barred S: \$ symbolizes the split In the illustration the (\$ <> a) refers to the phantasy, which in the graph is the line between s(A) and s(A') between the absolute other and the Other. “The rhomboid (<>) symbolizes a relation between the two symbols, which includes the relations of ‘envelopment-development-conjunction-disjunction” (Evans, 1996, p. 111) It can be clearly seen in this model that the desire (\$ <> D) and phantasy is linked with each other and Jouissance. “...the pervert ‘defends himself in his desire’, since ‘desire is a defence (*défense*), a prohibition (*défense*) against going beyond a certain limit in *jouissance*’. (Evans, 1996, p. 34) The pervert inverts the phantasy and makes it (a<>\$). But Lacan explains that the symbols used in the graphs might have many meanings at the same time.

“They are constructed to resist any attempt to reduce them to one univocal signification, and to prevent the reader from an intuitive or imaginary understanding of psychoanalytic concepts; the mathemes are not to be understood but to be used.” (Evans, 1996, p. 111)

For this reason the concern of the topic is the (\$ <> a) and its significance. This graph explains the neurotic phantasy, yet it also demonstrates the dynamics of the enigma of the desire of the Other and the answer the subject might give to *Che Vuoi?* Phantasy plays the role of an answer in this paradigm. To conclude how Lacanian theory defines phantasy, it is how reality and phantasy are coined to each other. As mentioned earlier, phantasy is the defense mechanism for the subject and it is the way Reality is viewed.

In order to relate it to the film Lord of the Rings, we should consider how the hero is portrayed in the film. The protagonist, Frodo, is on a quest to destroy the ring that arouses the desire to possess it. Here if we consider his position, he is “Lacking power of the Phallus (in this case the ring), only by wrenching it back from larger male opposers can he once again function as fully formed...” (Armit, 1996, p. 23) Yet, he has a punishment that is to destroy his desire and be incomplete, become a “...victimized hero, feminized through being kidnapped or punished... exists as the threatening presence of the castrated male.” (Armit, 1996, p. 23) The ring becomes both the blessing and the curse for the protagonist in this sense.

So what is the nature of the desire Frodo feels towards the ring? Frodo wants to be like Bilbo, adventurous and masculine, he wants this so that Bilbo and other people will admire him, the ring therefore symbolizes the lack for Frodo. Possessing it would dissolve the problem, however the ring is evil, so his wish can never come true without him being corrupt. He has a demand for love different than this lack. When he is given the chance to have the ring, he sees that he can prove himself as a hero and he can wear the ring therefore possess its so called powers until its destroyed. This will give him mastery over his desire.

The One Ring is the desired object throughout the film. People desire to have this ring into their possession. This desire felt for the ring is similar to a desire experienced after a healthy resolution of the Oedipal complex if that is ever possible. In such a desire when the desired object or goal is achieved the person realizes that actually the reason for desiring is empty because it actually does not give any attribute to the person as it is claimed before hand. The ring, as a desire object, has the same falseness to its powers and the arousal of desire ends up to be an empty attempt. In Freudian terms the first desire of a person, is an Oedipal desire. It helps form an identity of the person. He explains that, to an ever-increasing extent, the Oedipus complex reveals its importance as the central phenomena of the sexual period of early childhood. (Evans, 1996, p. 61) Indeed, in the film we can see the very traces of these complexes as a central piece to the story.

Freud argues that if the boy achieves to resolve the Oedipus complex in a healthy way, he accepts the name of the father or the law of the father and begins to desire other objects and people different from his mother. In this period, he can desire a number of things with differing attributes. This constant desire circle is described as the Eros Drive in Freud's theory. "The 'drive' becomes desire for satisfaction that always exceeds itself, making dissatisfaction the lot of humans; the unconscious is the desire that governs the soul's archaic discourse..."(Ragland, 1995, p. 4) But this is such a process

that the desire once fulfilled aims at another object of desire and this continues on and on. As stated above, when the person reaches the desire, although fulfilled by reaching the object, there is dissatisfaction. So, the fulfillment of the desire is accompanied by a disappointment too. The same thing happens with the One Ring in the film. We never actually see the ring perform any magical acts that it is said to do. It serves more as a placebo pill that enhances the ability of people by giving them a false belief that they are capable of doing anything they want. We are never shown in the film that someone performs an act by using the ring. Indeed the Gollum possesses the ring for 500 years yet does not become a Dark Lord himself. This shows actually that the ring only has the power of transporting people into another realm of being (The Void, mentioned below in detail) and this is the only effect it has on people.

Frodo's wish is to possess the ring for himself. If we look at his character he is not a strong, masculine character and since it is the nature of Hobbits he is like a child. He is adopted by his uncle Bilbo after the death of his father and mother and is raised by him. So he has already resolved the Oedipal complex by accepting the role of the father through his uncle. He admires his uncle and wants to be adventurous like him, the demand for love. So he is experiencing the Eros drive, desiring other objects and the demand for love. He never has the chance to show his masculinity or prove it to his uncle and himself before the ring comes to him. When he sees the ring he

desires it because it is a chance for him to prove his masculinity to the world. By possessing the ring and wearing it he fulfills this desire but all the glory it promised is lacking. It only puts him into another hallucinatory world where both his dreams and nightmares come true.

The journey Frodo goes to is a classical heroic journey that would prove the world how he becomes a man. Here for the character Frodo there are a lot of father figures in the film. Mainly the two important ones are the evil father figure: Sauron and the good father figure: Gandalf. They both tell him what he should do in order for him to become a real man. In the journey, he has obstacles on his path and he should choose the honorable way to defeat the enemy. On this road, two father figures that tell him to do two different things that guides him along the way. He has two paths, therefore, before him; Gandalf tells him that in order for him to be an honorable man he should carry the burden of the ring, not use it and destroy it but also fail to satisfy his desire while Sauron tells him that the ring is his and that he should bring it back to him and gain power alongside him. He has to choose between being an evil yet powerful like Sauron or honorable yet a feminine hero somewhat similar to Gandalf. In the end we see that Frodo chooses the path Gandalf shows him, destroying the ring to save the world, and he declares himself to be a real man at the end of the journey, by making a hard choice to let go of his desire, mastering the lack.

As in the example of Frodo, Gandalf tells him that he should never wear the ring, no matter what, but he eventually wears it a few days after the conversation and is immediately faced with the consequences; he steps into the Void and the Nazgul arrives and begins to search for him, he cannot resist his desire to overcome the lack. The evil father, Sauron, is always watching for the ring and is very furious since its loss and therefore it is the ultimate punishment mechanism we face in this world (the name of the father-the law of the father). So Frodo decides to take Gandalf's path after this event. The purpose for him in wanting to journey and have the ring was only to prove his masculinity.

The split between the good father and the evil father might be to eliminate the want to kill the "name of the father."

"The little boy who longs to be the sole possessor of his mother must face the elimination of his beloved male "ideal" and protector. In myth this often takes the form of an "enemy"-often related to the father in some way- having murdered the father, and of the now "fearless" son has many narrow confrontations and escapes, becomes a mighty warrior..." (Trupp, 2000, p. 46).

This shows the process of how Frodo becomes a masculine hero through the journey, by killing or destroying the soul of the Evil father. Once the Oedipal desire is not healthily resolved if it can ever be, the Death Drive appears. Freud explains this term as; "...where repetition compulsion equals death drive- arguing that the idea of a

death drive contradicts the biological principles they describe as a thrust toward life” (Ragland, 1995, p. 84). Opposite to the Eros Drive, this state happens where a father figure is lacking. Males form a bonding within themselves and they put their own laws instead of the father’s law. This creates a state for the male where he is not bothered by any physical pain and even yearns for it. This state can be seen in the film in other characters. Orc’s yearn for blood and pain and they do not have a father or a mother because they are bred in the roots of trees, under the earth. They are born from the earth as we see when Saruman the White decides to serve for Sauron and makes an army of Orc’s. We see scenes where they eat each other and disobey their own commanders.

Frodo experiences a desire towards the ring and this desire is actually to become a man. The journey he goes through is a heroic journey that, by following his good father figure Gandalf, he can prove himself as an honorable hero to the world. By achieving this he can be admired by others and achieve his demand for love. Since he has fulfilled a healthy relationship with a father figure, Bilbo, he can have his approval by being like him.

One of the powerful features of the ring is that it makes people invisible when it is worn. In other words, it takes the person into another level of the world (or another level of being) that is not visible to most of the creatures, referred to as the *Void* in the film. This world

is experienced like an illusion. So we can say that the world is actually divided into two parts; the one visible and the one invisible, the Void. This is similar to the division of the human psyche. “The division of the psychical into what is conscious and what is unconscious is the fundamental premise of psychoanalysis” (Freud, 1986, p. 440). The conscious is the world we perceive normally and the Void is the unconscious. The ring is a physical object of the conscious that allows access to an unconscious state or being. The Ring Wraiths (the dead soul of the old ring wearers) are in this world and Sauron can also see this world. But this is not a phantom world or the underworld; it is another dimension so to speak of the Middle-Earth. It is frequently told by the old ring wearers that the temptation of the ring is to wear it. The person close to the ring cannot help himself but put on the ring.⁴

The world that the ring allows access to is similar to a stage of hallucination, an act of the unconscious state of mind. This world is hidden from the ordinary beings and away from daily life. Throughout the film we are faced with the fact that everybody wants to have the ring because it has magical powers, but we are not shown what these powers are. We are only told that it is evil and very powerful. We know it causes wars and therefore we are expected to make a combination between the two: the ring and war. But it is also told

⁴ It is also referred to as the “call of the ring”.

that all this wars and deaths are because of greed and selfishness. So the actual desire of the person wishing to possess the ring is to have access to this hallucinatory world (as long as the person wears it, they should be in that world). This case is similar to Sigmund Freud's studies on Hysteria. He tells that hysterics creates a fantasy world to avoid the stress of the real world. Although the act of cinema going is similar to this, the putting on the ring is also a way of avoiding the daily stress and this is very valuable for people in the film since a lot of people died trying to possess it.

The Void does not provide any comfort for those who wear it. "...There are no 'indications of reality' in the unconscious; as in our dreams, its wishes (and nightmare) do come true" (Masson, 1985, p. 264) The same thing happens to Frodo. While he is attacked by the Nazgul, he wears the ring to escape from them, escape from the stress of reality, yet he is faced by a greater stress when he sees that Nazgul's can see him in Void better than in the real world. His wish and nightmare comes true; he escapes from the real world falling into the hands of the Nazgul.

The ring's only attribute that actually attracts attention is the ability to make people go into another state of being. This state is similar to a hallucinatory state where dreams and nightmare come true.

The characters can be analyzed similar to the stages of identity.

Characters that can be associated with id are the Hobbits, Orc's and Gollum. Hobbits are the most childish race within the middle earth. They try to eat in every occasion they find, for example; in the film Merry and Pippin are arguing about what to eat on breakfast. Aragorn turns to them and tells that there will not be any of that. This childlike nature of Hobbits makes them ideal for the id category since they pursue basic and naïve desires of life. For Orc's it's a similar story; they desire to kill and destroy. They are not bounded with any moral values, the only moral value they have is to have no value at all. So they are also ideal for this category. Gollum is a different character that will be analyzed under a special topic as well. He is a former Hobbit until he comes across the One Ring. He then becomes addicted to it, living with it over 500 years. We see that his only desire, only aim is to take back his precious once more. He does not follow any values, he does not even wear clothes and this primeval life makes him perfect for the id category.

As it is stated in the film many times, Hobbits' ambition is towards things that grow and more importantly for food. The first need of any being is for food and therefore it is one of the first and basic desires of a person. Food is not only vital for survival but it also gives pleasure. The very first thing babies do in the world is express their need (hunger) for food and be satisfied by the mother. "At the heart of The Interpretation of Dreams is an infant: screaming and helpless, driven by a desire for satisfaction. Let us call it 'The Story of the Hungry

Baby” (Lebeau, 2001, p. 36). Indeed this first desire for food is the basis for the person’s identity later in life. This childish desire towards food is one part that makes Hobbits the id characters. They are physically like children too. They are small and have little or no contact with the outer world. They do not care about power or relations as much as other races do. They have a naïve way of desire; they simply want to live and eat. These features are the reasons why Frodo is being chosen as the ring bearer. It is not important who carries the ring but that it is carried safely. It is hard to find someone that would not want the ring’s power but Hobbits do not really care about it so it is less risky to let Frodo carry the ring rather than any other. Elrond tells this to Gandalf in the following way: “...the Hobbit has shown extraordinary resilience to its evil...” So we know that Hobbits are not affected by the rings evil powers as other races do and the reason for this is their naïve nature. They only desire simple pleasures of life. Merry and Pippin are the characters that are typical of this category. They are like children, funny and courageous at times most unexpected.

Orc’s are the opposite of Hobbits in terms of desire. They desire the darkest things and they do what ever it takes to get it. They seek death and pain. These desires are basic to humans as well. It is told in the film that Orcs were once Elves that sought dark powers. When we think that Elves are the race that has the highest moral values, this transformation becomes even more interesting. Elves live

according to their traditions, possess great power both magical and military and are influential in the political arena. We know all this from the film where we see Frodo arrive at Rivendell. Since Elves suppress all desires that are not parallel with the traditions and morals, they suppress all these feelings. If that is true Orcs become the id of Elves not suppressed. The example for this is in the scene where Boromir is shot by a Hybrid Orc that Saruman makes as the head of the Orc army. Aragorn comes for help and cuts the Orc's arm off and then stabs him from his stomach but the Orc is so thirsty for blood that he leaks his own blood off the blade and pulls the blade deeper inside his stomach. Aragorn has to cut his head off to stop him. These creatures do not fear death or pain, in contrary are yearning for it. It does not matter whether it is them who are suffering or others. The Orcs in general are, therefore, the example of this category.

Gollum is a very interesting and important character in the film. The film starts with Gollum finding the ring. When he comes across the ring in the river, he is on a boat with his friend. His real name is Smeagol at that time. When he sees the ring he dives for it and grabs it but his friend claims the ring too and therefore he murders him. With his precious (the name he found for the ring) he travels deep into the Misty Mountains and lives there like an animal, eating fish, for 500 years. He is then named Gollum because of the coughing sound he makes. The interesting thing about him is that we never see or are

told through out the story that he actually wears the ring. The reason for this is because the ring does not actually possess the attributes it is said to. It serves like a placebo pill that motivates the person to think he is capable of everything. Yet Gollum is faced with a trouble he has a divided personality. The evil side of him thinks that the ring has magical powers and its very valuable while his good side Smeagol, tells him he likes the ring because its shinny. So the rings effect does not work on him fully as it works on others. This basic desire of wanting the ring for him makes him eligible for the id category.

The id category characters are, therefore; Hobbits, most characterized with Merry and Pippin, the Orc's General and the Gollum. They all represent the pure desire without boundaries or limits. Either naïve or dark they all desire something and do not follow any moral values or beliefs.

The ego characters are the ones that we perceive as possessing a moral value but not obeying it too strictly. Dwarves, Humans and Arwen are the ones that fit into this category. Dwarves live by mining. They build mines under the ground and dig up precious stones and gems. They have moral codes of their own and like feasts. They are known to be fierce but they follow a system of moral values. Humans are regarded, as he most untrustworthy race of all by Elves and the reason for this is that Isildur, the King that defeated Dark Lord

Sauron, did not destroy the ring when they had the chance. We see this when Elrond, the ruler of Elves is speaking to Gandalf of what to do with the ring: “Gandalf: It is in men that we must place our hope. Elrond: Men? Men are weak. The race of men is failing. The blood of Numenor is all but spent, its pride and dignity forgotten. It is because of men the ring survives...” The human race is regarded as such but they actually follow moral values and codes. We see the example of this in Boromir. He is the heir of the ruler of the human race at that time. He wants the ring very much and thinks that using it against Lord Sauron will help them defeat him. But Elrond points out to the weakness of the human race telling that with using the ring they will only have another person crowned as the Dark Lord. So the human race follows moral codes and suppresses certain desires yet cannot suppress some. Boromir is the example for the ego category with these features. With wanting the ring and protecting it for honor at the same time. Arwen is an elf but she falls in love with Aragorn and this is an impossible love because it’s against the Elfish tradition. Yet she gave her immortality to Aragorn as a sign of her love. We do not see her break any other rules of her race so she falls into the category of the ego characters.

The Dwarves follow certain moral codes yet they allow some desires to be satisfied as well. They are known for their love for metals and gems. They value these most of anything in life. We know they like feasts from the scene where Gimli says the following: “... My cousin

Balin would give us a royal welcome... Soon, Master Elf, you will enjoy the fabled hospitality of the dwarves. Roaring fires, malt beer, ripe meat off the bone!" So we understand from these sentences that Dwarves are hospitable which means they follow a moral value and yet they also enjoy pleasures. This makes Gimli stand in the category of the ego characters.

Arwen is also another character of the ego. Although she is an elf she chooses to follow her love for a human. Elves live with high moral values and therefore they suppress feelings. Arwen however chooses to be mortal just to be with Aragorn. Since she is an elf, we do not see her do anything else that is not beyond the boundaries of Elfish morals. That is why she fits into this ego category.

The Dwarf Gimli, Boromir and Arwen represent the ego characters in the film. They have moral values, suppressing some desires yet allowing some to slip past the suppression.

The super-ego characters are Aragon, Elves: Elrond and Galadriel and Gandalf. These characters have very high moral values. They follow these values very strictly.

Aragon is the heir of King Isildur and therefore can claim his right for the throne. But he is not ready to face the reality that his ancestor has betrayed everyone just for the ring. He fears that he has the

weakness inside him as well. We see all this when he travels to Rivendell and visits his mother's tomb. Although he has fears he is strongly tied to his values. He is honest and respectful. He even does not want Arwen to give up her immortality for her love, even though he loves her. He is loyal to his duty of protecting the ring and the ring bearer and he does exactly as he says. He even tries to protect Frodo from Boromir. He never wants the ring for himself and does not care about glory or wealth. We know this because he refuses the throne. He serves as a hero figure for Frodo and the other Hobbits. He never shows his desires, always suppresses them and this is the reason why he is the perfect example for the super-ego category.

The elves we see through out the film are always suppressing their desires very well. We see Elrond in a flashback where he is telling Isildur to destroy the ring and not wanting it for himself. He never expresses any desire or hatred. Lady Galadriel is another Elf we see in the film. She has a ring of power herself yet she does not use it for evil. She expresses her desire once when Frodo offers her the ring. She refuses but she turns into a monster before she does thinking of what her life would be like with the ring. She then tells Frodo she has passed the test and will live as Lady Galadriel from then on. She never again expresses her desire towards the ring or anything for that matter. She even succeeds to suppress the desire for the ring and does not take it. So she is an example for the super-ego category along with Elrond.

Gandalf the Grey is another character that succeeds to suppress his desires. He is offered the ring more than once yet never turned into a monster or wanted the ring. He refuses it and never expressed a desire to have it. He is like a father figure for Frodo who shows him the right way. He tells Frodo what is right and what is wrong. When he is forced by Saruman the White to join him, he refuses and even then does not give in to his desires. He is trapped in a ceiling and still does not show any desire for power or a life allied with evil. He finds a butterfly and escapes from the tower and fights against evil. He never turns from his thoughts, he never doubts it, even though other people tell him its impossible to defeat Sauron he does not give up. This is the reason why he is in the category of super-ego.

Aragorn, Elrond, Galadriel and Gandalf are the characters, who fit into the category of super-ego. These characters do not give up their morals values no matter what happens. This shows that for Frodo they represent the ideal people that he should follow and indeed he follows the road Gandalf tells him to.

Frodo is asked to look into a mirror while he is in the forest of Lady Galadriel. The lady pours water into a silver bowl where Frodo is faced for the first time with his own image. He is faced with his double for a few minutes before he sees some other images. Lacan explains that the mirror plays an important role in the formation of

the identity. He tells about the baby that first comes across a mirror. The baby identifies with the image in the mirror, understanding that this image is himself. "We have only to understand the mirror stage as an identification, in the full sense that analysis gives to the term: namely, the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image" (Lebeau, 2001, p. 51). Frodo looks into the mirror and firstly sees himself with the ring. He identifies with this image and assumes he is a hero, carrying the ring to its destruction. But then the mirror shows him images of his failure. He becomes aware at this very moment that being a hero is not just the image he had associated all the glory with but the suffering and the death. He then understands the true road that lies ahead of him becoming a hero.

With this second identification in the mirror of himself being slaved by the Orcs and all his friends turning away from him is that he realizes the real him. He sees his not glorified image, which he saw in the first place but an image he most feared. This second identification makes him aware of other sides of himself that he was not aware of before. He understands how much he values his friends, when he sees them turn away from him in the mirror. He understands for the first time that the true path to becoming a hero is not easy and full of glory as his uncle Bilbo has once told him. He realizes that in order for him to become a hero he should suffer and put his life at risk to destroy the ring. Until that realization he always thinks that being a hero is a glorious act and easy in a way. We see after this event he

alienates himself from the group and decides to go alone. This change in his attitude shows how he perceived the journey before the mirror and after the mirror. When Sam sees him walk away he follows him and was about to drawn when Frodo saved him and they continued the journey together. Frodo once again understood the meaning of friendship and heroism through the help of the identification process in the mirror.

The mirror helped show Frodo who he really was and what he wanted to become. He understood that he had to suffer a lot to become a hero. He was not the glorified hero he wanted to be. There were no such heroes in the world. He identified with the real hero character and abandoned the others in order to protect them. He became miserable and alone at the end of the film.

In the film we see that the One Ring has a power of its own. This is suggested in the film many times; "...And the ring of power has a will of its own," "...The ring abandoned the Gollum," "...Something happened than the ring did not intend...". To think that the ring has a power of its own also tells us that it has a personality of its own too. It can think and act according to its will. An example for this is when Frodo is looking at the mirror in Galadriel's forest. He sees the "ever watching eye" and the ring suddenly becomes heavier and wants to get close to its master. Also, the ring can change its shape, when Sauron is killed by Isildur, it shrinks to the size of a normal ring. It

than abandons Isildur and makes him visible to the Orcs so they kill him. The ring has evil magical powers, a power of its own and is willing to return to its master Sauron. Since the ring has a personality, it can be treated like a character in the film. Since this is true, the ring should have an identity that can be explained in Freudian terms.

If we assume that the ring is a person than it should have the layers of id, ego and superego. Freud explains (1986):

“ego and id as follows: “the ego seeks to bring the influence of the external world to bear upon the id and its tendencies, and endeavors to substitute the reality principle for the pleasure principle which reigns unrestrictedly in the id. For the ego, perception plays the part, which in the id falls to instinct. The ego represents what may be called reason and common sense, in contrast to the id, which contains the passions.” (Freud, 1986, p. 450).

The id is the passions, the desires we have. So the id part of the ring, the passion of the ring, is to return to its master. Its only aim is to find him. But to do so, it has to tempt others and trick them into returning the ring. The ring only shows this passion, the id side, when a person wears it. It visualizes the master to the ring wearer and shows and lives its passion of being close to him. When Frodo first wears the ring by accident, we see that the Eye comes closer and closer until the whole world is filled with it. Frodo is frightened and barely takes the ring off of his finger. This is the ultimate passion of the ring.

The ego is the common sense or reason, which, for the ring is the state where it only shows the writings on it. This state can be reached only when it's put on fire. The ring shows the world not its passions or desires but a hint of what it is capable of. By suppressing its passion it lures people to be tempted by its power. It tries to act like a normal ring but still shows the difference it hides inside.

Freud also tells that there is yet another level; the super-ego:

“But now that we have embarked upon the analysis of the ego we can give an answer to all those whose moral sense has been shocked and who have complained that there must be a higher nature in man 'Very true,' we can say, 'and here we have that higher nature, in this ego ideal or super-ego, the representative of our relation to our parents. When we were little children we knew these higher natures, we admired them and feared them; and later we took them into ourselves.’” (Freud, 1986, p. 459)

If we assume that there is a higher value among the rings, than that should probably be not to show off your abilities and this is where the One Ring is very successful. The ring acts in normal conditions, as if it's a simple golden ring. It still has a power that drives people to it but it does not show any sign of the power it has inside.

In the film the ring is connected to the Dark Lord and with this connection he can control it. We are shown throughout the film that the Dark Lord is the main person and is the one that made the ring. But interestingly enough when Isildur cuts his finger and when he is separated from the ring he turns into dust! The ring survives but he

dies from a finger cut. We can say from this assumption that the Dark Lord is the ring's illusion. Meaning that the ring is producing an illusory image of a Dark Lord for to have power on nations. We are told that the Dark Lord forged the ring to rule them all, and maybe the ring forged the Dark Lord to rule the others. The ring having a personality shows this too.

So the id of the ring, the passion is to reach to the father but is in contrast to its super-ego where all the passion is repressed. The ring represses its desire and hides all clues of its intention from the outer world. It only shows to the world its physical side, what it is expected of it to show. Since we can talk about the personality of the ring maybe it might be possible to assume that the ring produced an illusion to control the other nations.

3.3. Activating *Lord of the Rings* With Tolkien

Starting to analyze the genre with a Tolkienian perspective, we should consider the differences between Tolkien and Todorov first to understand the variety fantasy texts are able to produce. Todorov tries to analyze the text with a structuralist approach and as the example above shows, it uses a model of psychoanalysis.

“On the surface, the reason for the Todorovian critics’ dismissal of Tolkien seems self-evident: Tolkien doesn’t fit the Todorovian definition of “fantasy.” However, it seems strange that critics with such an outspokenly “objective” and “non-evaluative” approach to literature must so vehemently expel this particular type of writing with a negative value-judgment. Tolkien must be expelled from the critical discourse of “fantasy,” not only because he does not fit the proposed definition, but because he is—in a postmodernist critical milieu—embarrassing. Tolkien is embarrassingly conservative, embarrassingly patriarchal, embarrassingly Christian, embarrassingly anti-technology, and embarrassingly transcendentalist.” (Betchel, 2004, p. 146)

From such a view, I would like to continue with Tolkien’s definition of Fantasy, “stories about Fairy, that is *Faërie*, the realm or state in which fairies have their being” (Betchel, 2004, p. 150) The being of fairies inside the realm of the story points to Tolkien’s understanding of the fantasy worlds he creates. It is discussed in the previous chapter, how Tolkien perceives the fantasy worlds as living things that come to find the author. So the story is a living thing not only in terms of the narrative but also in its existential capacity. This means

that it is organic and open to change in itself as well as being a whole. And Fairy is a part of the living organism, and is a being itself.

What this implies is the very notion of fantasy and its components as a form of reflecting agent of such realms. So the books or the films are not the only medium, but the fantasy genre is also a medium in which the story, as a living thing finds a host and thus is reflected by the film or the book medium in the very end level. Fantasy explores this realm; it searches for the story, to reflect upon the screen.

Magic is a crucial element in this way of viewing the texts. However there is no satire of such Magical worlds by making a comparison between them. As Tolkien explains:

“I will say only this: a ‘fairy-story’ is one which touches on or uses Faerie, whatever its own main purpose may be: satire, adventure, morality, fantasy. Faerie itself may perhaps most nearly be translated by Magic - but it is magic of a peculiar mood and power, at the furthest pole from the vulgar devices of the laborious, scientific, magician. There is one proviso: if there is any satire present in the tale, one thing must not be made fun of, the magic itself. That must in that story be taken seriously, neither laughed at nor explained away.” (1977, p. 10-11)

So the magic as experienced in the story is not that of a different nature but rather in complete harmony within the realm we live in. The twist in the plot is very clever in terms of its features and how it functions in both realities, namely; the mythical and the real. Here we should explore Tolkien’s perspective as is it becomes crucial for

understanding the Fantastic world as a whole. One interesting perspective is derived from Tolkien's own theory of fairytales, as explained in his 1937 essay "On Fairy-Stories" (which has come to be considered a cornerstone in the growing corpus of research conducted in the field of fantasy literature). Such an approach is taken by Jessica Burke and Antony Burdge, in their article "The Maker's Will ... fulfilled?". Here, Burke and Burdge examine how the process of "sub-creation". A term Tolkien used to express his underlying assumption that the fairy story, articulates a transcendent contact between a higher reality and the earthly reality. (Gilete, R. M., 2008, p. 1)

To define Tolkien's approach more accurately, we should look at Steve Walker's (2010) "The Power of Tolkien's Prose: Middle Earth's Magical Style". Here Walker examines Tolkien's own works with a Tolkienian attitude where the analysis focuses on the soup not the bones.

"So with regard to fairy stories, I feel that it is more interesting, and also in its way more difficult, to consider what they are, what they have become for us, and what values the long alchemic processes of time have produced in them. In Dasent's words I would say: "We must be satisfied with the soup that is set before us, and not desire to see the bones of the ox out of which it has been boiled." Though, oddly enough, Dasent by "the soup" meant a mishmash of bogus pre-history founded on the early surmises of Comparative Philology; and by "desire to see the bones" he meant a demand to see the workings and the proofs that led to these theories. By "the soup" I mean the story as it is served up by its author or teller, and by "the bones" its sources or material—even when (by rare luck) those can be with certainty discovered. But I do not, of course, forbid criticism of the soup as soup." (Tolkien, 1975, p. 23)

The first thing than, to be considered, is the Ubi Sunt's in the *Lord of the Rings* narrative. To first define what Ubi Sunt is:

“ a verse form in which the poem or its stanzas begin with the Latin words *ubi sunt* (“where are ...”) or their equivalent in another language and which has as a principal theme the transitory nature of all things. A well-known example is François Villon's “Ballade des dames du temps jadis” (“Ballade of the Ladies of Bygone Times”), with its refrain “Mais où sont les neiges d'antan?” (“But where are the snows of yesteryear?”).” (ubi sunt. (2011) In *Encyclopædia Britannica*)

The example of this Ubi Sunt can be seen through out film. In the opening scene of the film we hear Lady Galadriel speaking, the very phrases that are examples of the Ubi Sunt. “The world is changed. I feel it in the water. I feel it in the earth. I smell it in the air. Much that once was, is lost. For none now live who remember it.” (*Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring*. 00:00:33)

Ubi Sunt can also be seen in the aesthetic style of the film. There is a longing for a mythical past or a lost past in the story and we also witness that the films are made in a style that resembles such a notion. The yearning for such a past can be felt in the beginning words cited above, along with the sadness of the voice that narrates it. If we look at the style of the film, although *Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring* is shot in 2001, where there are multiple styles to embrace among, the film possesses a classical narrative style along with long establishing shots of the places that we are introduced in

the Middle Earth. (Such as The Shire, Lady Galadriel's house, Rivendell) We can see this by looking at the average shot lengths of the film. In recent years we are confronted with a past faced editing that not only builds up high levels of action but also has a very high rhythm. The Bourne Ultimatum (2007) directed by Paul Greengrass, has an Average Shot Length of 1.7 seconds. (http://www.cinemetrics.lv/movie.php?movie_ID=2758) This is an action movie however Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring is nearly three times slower than this film. (Figure 4)

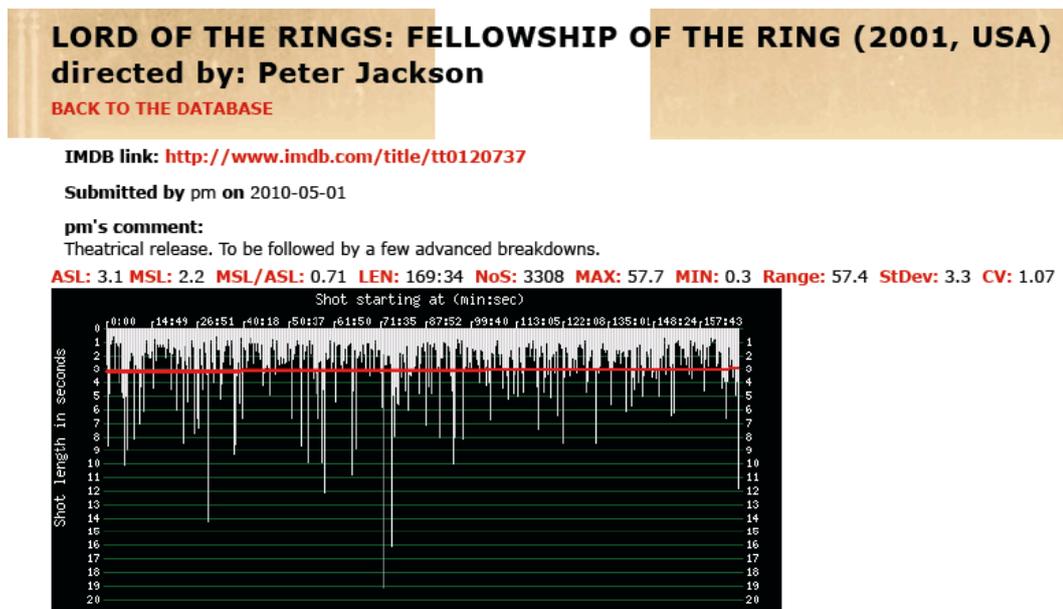


Figure 4. ASL= Average Shot Length in Seconds. Cinemetrics.com. 2011.

This shows that with longer shots and a classical narrative style, this movie has a Ubi Sunt tendency by referring to the old classical style and hailing its certain aspects.

When we examine the plot we see a similar tendency: even along the journey the characters yearn for their past, pleasant times at their home. For in this sense, The Shire, for Hobbit's are the one place that is peaceful and heaven like. We witness the protagonist in a Ubi Sunt situation, where he always looks at his past, that may or may not actually exist. This can be seen in the Mirros Scene where Frodo looks at he mirror and see his future, present and past. He sees Shire being destroyed and his friends abandoning him. He immediately begins to yearn for the time that he did not posses the ring. However, before he goes on to this adventure, we see him yearning for such an occation. This, we learn as he meets his Unlce Bilbo at Rivendell and tells him how much he wanted to go on a journey/adventure just like him yet now that he has the opportunity, he does not wishes it to happen. Moreover, Frodo's secret demand for love and approval becomes apparent when he chooses to continue the journey when he is given a choice. So this Ubi Sunt is of a stylistic nature and presented as a part of being a hero in the narrative. It is a sort of conscious as opposed to performing a selfish quest, showing the characters as morally right hero's. It is a sort of justifying mechanism, maybe to cloak the desire for power and become a masculine hero.

Allusion is one other dimension of the Middle Earth. This is created with the very introduction of the elements of Myth, Magic and the Supernatural. It "... fosters an aura of expectancy that encourages the reader to find in its statements the ripples of expensive implicit meaning." (Walker, 2009, p. 119) This is evident in the very nature of the Middle Earth. In the scene where we are introduced to Arwen, we witness her in a state as the protagonist falls ill and is fading to the Void. From the Void he sees her surrounded in a very bright light, giving her an angelic quality. We are told that she is an Elf, a supernatural being. With these information we being to think that she must be different than other Elves since we are previously introduced to Lady Galadriel, who is also an Elf. Yet she was delineated in a darker manner. We saw her transform into an Evil Queen as she faced the ring. We are also told before hand that she could read and manipulate minds. Therefore when her eyes are shown in an extreme close up, the conclusion derived is that she is using her powers of mind control. However, afterwards the characters or the story does not mention such an event. Similarly Arwen is portrayed as a beautiful, holly being where as Legolas, being an Elf also is not portrayed as such. Myths and stories are told about certain places the characters ventures to, yet again not being confirmed along the story or the narrative in general. This shows how the effect of "wonder" works in the film. We are shown certain elements that might be very mundane and ordinary in other contexts but these become mystical elements when surrounded with the

notions of magic and myth. The best example is the ring itself. It is an ordinary object that suddenly turns into a symbolic entity when entered into the world of fantasy. It is thus the element of Allusion along with the context of the myth and magic that creates this effect of the fantastic in the film.

Another feature the *Lord of the Rings* possesses is “the larger than life epic values coming down to essentially lifelike dimensions.” (Walker, 2009, p. 118) This element becomes important in addressing the issue of “wonder” however in very specific terms. The nature of the narrative is Bildungsroman⁵ since it explores Frodo’s adventure of becoming a man and this makes it wrapped under the cloak of familiarity. The Epic heroic story of a hero is not depicted as such but the story of a young boy trying to find his way in the world, makes a warm story that helps create a connection to the fantasy world. The film depicts this in several scenes where Frodo makes wrong choices and wears the ring, exposing their location to the Nazgul. In this scene Aragorn emerges from the shadows, rescuing their lives. The

⁵ Bildungsroman [**bil**-duungz-raw-mahn] (plural *-ane*), a kind of novel that follows the development of the hero or heroine from childhood or adolescence into adulthood, through a troubled quest for identity. The term (‘formation-novel’) comes from Germany, where Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795–6) set the pattern for later *Bildungsromane*. Many outstanding novels of the 19th and early 20th centuries follow this pattern of personal growth: Dickens’s *David Copperfield* (1849–50), for example. When the novel describes the formation of a young artist, as in Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), it may also be called a Künstlerroman. For a fuller account, consult Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World* (1987).

Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms.

<http://www.answers.com/topic/bildungsroman>

glorious hero, is usually Aragon in many cases and we see his journey as an epic back story where he fights to find his destiny and eventually marries Arwen and becomes the King, that he was destined to be. The young and frightful Frodo is the protagonist of the narrative and therefore offers a familiar portrait with his mistakes and weaknesses. However he does not fail in his quest and becomes a hero himself at the very end of the story. Although this twist in the story undercuts the epic nature of the narrative, it brings a well-known and easy to adapt way of entering the Middle Earth.

Tolkien's way of storytelling is not quite addressed in the films in terms of details. This seems to be the only differing element along the narrative structure of the films. The near obsession of details in the novel is left to the grand story and events. The details that are chosen to be shown are to create the effect of wonder once again. The close-ups of the Ring and the Arwen's necklace are among these. As well as the scene of Rivendell is depicted in detail with Howard Shore's enchanting score in order to emphasize the atmosphere and create the effect of "wonder." However, the door of Moria which has a large place in terms of detail in the novel is placed by the action scene of the octopus like creature's attack. So, the details that are used are again to stress the "wonder" by also providing a deeper sense of the fantasy worlds.

3.4. Activating Lord of The Rings with Mysticism

In the Mystic way of looking at the fantasy genre, we witness a few changes in terms of the influence of the authors upon the text they create. It is at this point that Richard Matthews, talks about the “post-modern fantasy” by limiting it to the Todorovian way of viewing texts that explores the fantastic worlds structurally. (Bechtel, 2004) There are other problems that needs to be pointed out: “Todorov[s]... look leads him toward a narrow critical definition with criteria that fall under the general rubric of “reader response””. (Mathews, 1997, p. 170) However, Mathews explains in another chapter, about the Eastern Mythic tradition in Ursula Le Guinn’s literary work. In pointing to the differences between Le Guinn and Tolkein, Mathews states “Le Guinn’s novels philosophically are rooted in Eastern as well as Western traditions and have an individual psychology of revelation... (1997, p. 138)

These roots are so similar to Tolkien’s world creation in *Lord of the Rings* that it is inevitable to point out these identical formations. This can be seen both Le Guinn’s mythological base story that is so similar to Tolkien’s that the world begins with word *Ea*. The same Allusion technique is used in Le Guinn’s work as well. (Mathews, 1997, p. 137)

The Mystic way of activating the text includes largely the aspect of understanding the greater picture that might be incomprehensible in human terms. This here is somewhat like Lacan's Real, that cannot be reached or put into language.

"Tolkien describes the "eucatastrophe" essential to fairystories, he describes it in clearly mystical terms: "the peculiar quality of 'joy' in successful Fantasy can thus be explained as a sudden glimpse of the underlying reality or truth.... In the 'eucatastrophe' we see in a brief vision that the answer may be greater—it may be a far off gleam of *evangelium* in the real world" (70)." (Behctel, 2004, p. 160)

What the element of allusion along with the psychoanalytical perspective, it is clear that the concept underlying the fantasy worlds are a sort of quest for a truth, that might happen to be glimpsed through these fantastical worlds. This can best be defined through the concept and the notion of time since it is the very logical entity that connects rational.

"...the reality itself exists in a non-rational, extra-linguistic state that can never be fully expressed in rational, linguistic terms. The "basic or central event" of the mystic experience is the direct, intuitive experience of "union or unity" with the inexpressible real (Jaën 106), and this experience of union with the real has two logical consequences: "the dissolution of the individual or personal self into the union," and "the fusion or union of the self with that which is not the self." In each case, the mystical experience of union dissolves "the mental categories that rule everyday life, such as time and space and the laws of cause and effect," since "there are no causes and no effects where everything is in everything else; every cause is in every effect..." (Bechtel, 2004, p. 159)

In order to fully understand this relation it is wise to search the notion of time in the narrative structure of the fantasy realms.

3.4.1. Defining Time:

In trying to understand what time is, Aristotle gives the following definition: “It is clear, ..., that time is 'number of movement in respect of the before and after', and is continuous since it is an attribute of what is continuous.” (Coope, 2005, p. 85) This definition guides the way to a linear understanding of time, where there is a past, present and future and that there is a continuity through this scale, where we can only experience the “now” or present while as we move along, the “now” becomes past. Similarly, Galileo introduces the notion of Absolute time. This commonly used definition in scientific research changes after Einstein’s introduction of relativity, the understanding of Absolute time (where time is same for all observers in the world and can be measured to be the same), along came a four-dimensional space-time light cone, which is still used

today by scientists to define the notion of time. As it can be seen in the picture at the right, the upper cone represents the future where as the lower part is the past light-cone. (The Einstein-Minkowski Spacetime) This is a spatial representation of time. Nonetheless, the

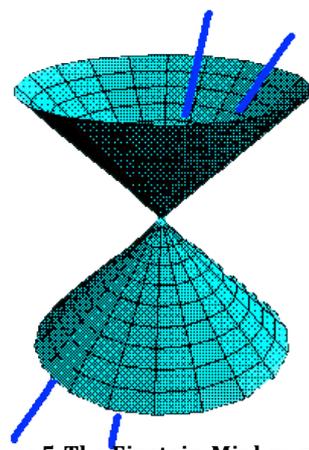


Figure 5-The Einstein-Minkowski Spacetime.

notion of time is still linear and constitutes of the three parts that Aristotle mentions.

Heidegger brings a new way of understanding to this notion by his interpretation of time. He does not ask the question what is time rather asks how do we have time. For Heidegger, past, present and future are (as Heidegger calls is Ecstasies of time) “although temporal concepts, not themselves ordered in time, i.e. ‘[t]he future is not later than the having-been, and the having-been is not earlier than the present’ . Rather, they are aspects, or modes, of our temporalizing that reflect time’s underlying structural unity. Considering each mode individually, we find that it contains elements of both of the others.” (Heidegger and the Phenomenology of Time, 2011) Opposed to this notion is the Vulgar Time, which is the everyday practiced time. This notion acknowledges the scientific model in a different way. By defining the time with the three elements, we are temporalizing it. Heidegger than combines this notion with the inevitable death of the Da sein. So time does not exist on it’s own, independent from the Da sein. Without going into detail about the authentic and inauthentic views of temporality, the question raised here is, whatever time may be, a vulgar time or in itself, how do we have the present? And more importantly is a present even possible? Also is it possible to make a reading of the having-of-time in the media, specifically the news, in regards to his article “Question Concerning Technology” (1977)?

The present comes as a mere aspect of temporalizing the time in Heidegger. This attempt to temporalize the time, as the previous models of time have taken on, is an outcome of trying to make time familiar. “This making-present, which interprets itself-in other words, that which has been interpreted and is addressed in the ‘now’- is what we call ‘time’. This simply makes known to us that temporality- which as ecstatically open, is recognizable- is familiar...”(Heidegger, 1962, p. 460) But Heidegger points out that this “...temporalizes itself in that temporality.” So this attempt to temporalize time finds itself in a vicious cycle. Than if time is not this temporalized thing, than how do we have time? We have it in the significance of the shift from *Zuhandenheit* (to-handedness) to *Vorhandenheit* (objective presence), when for example an object is broken. Just like this distinction time has also two parts, one that is vulgar like the *Zuhandenheit* and the other as *Vorhandenheit*. From this point of view Heidegger tells that past, present and future are bound together, one cannot be separate from the other and they are incomplete. “Consequently, for Heidegger, the past, present and future describe only isolated aspects of this temporal unity, and are necessarily derivative and incomplete” (Heidegger and the Phenomenology of Time). So the one that is claimed to be experienced by the previous theories was the present. The similar approach can be seen in the light-cone model. The very place where the two opposite cone’s meet is the present. Leaving Heidegger’s philosophy to one side and considering the physical laws,

we all live in the past. To explain this remark, the light travels in a certain speed and for a being to perceive or see the world around it, it needs light. Light bounces off the surface's of objects and travels to the eye and after several physiological functions, the being perceives what it sees. But there is always a delay in this perception, since it is impossible for the light to come to the eye without delay. Even if it does, it takes time for the nervous system to deliver the electromagnetic message to the brain, which means that it is simply impossible to talk about a present or now, let alone talk about an absolute past or future, since both extends its effects to each other. Heidegger tells that the notion of time cannot be thought separately from the Da Sein. The perception of the time or the having of time, is only possible with defining the essence of time with regard to the essence of being.

“For Heidegger, all being is temporal and ‘stretched along’ in time, as opposed to being reducible to a series of point-like instants or ‘nows’.” (Heidegger and the Phenomenology of Time, 2011) With this statement it becomes clear that Heidegger view time as continuous and therefore, the past, present or future have no relevance in this sense since an event is stretched out to both the past and the future. Heidegger tells that the essence of being is the openness to being. From this point of view the authentic time is like an inner temporal time notion of the Da sein. As long as the Da Sein is aware of the temporality of time, it can act on an authentic manner with care

(Sorge). From this point, the Da Sein has to be open to time. The experience of time only lies in its decaying the Da Sein and that is why it must be aware of it. There is a similar argument about the enframing in the essay Question Concerning Technology. He says that we are always late to catch up with the enframing. Just like time we can never grasp it.

Moving along to the postmodernist approach to Time, it is realized that the experience has changed since the time of Modernism. The experience of time has become fragmented in every sense that we face a new era where with the Internet and the developments in technology, humans perform many tasks at the same time. The time notion is that of an absolute present in a way that includes in itself the past and the present.

In viewing the fantasy narratives, we can easily claim that they have a very classical tendency and therefore might stand apart from the notion of postmodernism where the narratives are generally multi layered and overlapping. However true this might be this is one of the elements that seems to be unimportant compared to the whole structure of these films. They are adapted from literature works, which means that they have not a single layer of narrative but more than one, namely the literary version and the screen play version. These layers are so apparent for the audience of these films that, especially fans are always comparing the differences within the two

stories, as mentioned in the previous chapters. Keeping this in mind, the reason for Saga Fantasy Genre Films to be counted as postmodern works, there is always a hidden narrative, which has its own roots in literature. This not only creates a different story but it also creates a new dimension for “time” to exist within the same narrative. We can distinguish between the screen time, the plot time and the story time, each combined in the film. Along with this view, the story itself has different times, combining ancient and the present, myth and future. To clarify the point, an example of the genre films should be taken into account. In Lord of the Rings, we are aware that Frodo is actually living a very similar adventure his uncle Bilbo, has lived, Aragorn stepping the path his father and his father before that has followed. All these remarks point to a very interesting notion of time within the story itself. A similar path is taken in the film Sorcerer’s Apprentice, where the protagonist is an ancestor of Merlin, the great wizard. So the ancient bloodline and faith that had once come to play happens with small differences to the main characters and this infinite structure is similar to that of Robert Jordan’s “Wheel of Time” Series (1990). In these novels, the author constructs a world just like the one’s mentioned above and says that the “The Wheel of Time turns, and Ages come and pass, leaving memories that become legend. Legend fades to myth, and even myth is long forgotten when the Age that gave it birth comes again.” (Jordan, 1990, p. 1). The pattern of such behavior is evident in many

of the examples of the genre both in literature and in films, creating a more complex relation with the notion of time.

The notion of time in the Saga Fantasy films seem as a whole that consists of many blocks against the fragmented narrative creating a confusing time understanding. However non-fragmented the time might seem in these type of narratives the complexity and the multi-layered approach finds its way to a similar experience of the films. This is the second most important similarity Fantasy Fiction Films have with the Postmodernist theory.

Time is thus of crucial concern for fantasy genre. As we view the fantasy films texts we experience a different sort of time in which even though the narrative is of a classical nature and does not provide any obstacles for the viewer to confuse their understanding of the narrative time, since the Saga fantasy worlds are referring to a mythical past, a past that never was and never will be, it is unwise to associate earthly values to it. We see the day and the night coming and passing as it is in our world yet we are unaware of any difference that which might be posed upon this fantastical universe. Comparing the narrative structure to complex narrative films, we can easily distinguish the notion of time, however incomparable it might be since fantasy worlds are like “neverlands”. If we consider for example, *Memento (2000)* Christopher Nolan or *Lola Rent (1998)* Tom Tykwer, we are faced with a twist in the chronological order of the plot which

confuses the viewer yet there is still a chronological order of scenes if put together. In David Lynch's films however the situation is totally different. The narrative is fragmented into so many parts of time that it is impossible to make a linear, chronological order of the story. Compared to the *Lord of the Rings*, we see the chronological order of the events that takes place however the notion of time is different. It is not of our world. This quality of the narrative makes it unique in terms of the very experience of time. Since we cannot talk about the "reality" of the events in a logical, cause-effect relation it is therefore impossible to talk about chronological time in terms of itself. In this case, time becomes a part of the truth that is said to be glimpsed in the fantasy stories. As Tolkien points out: "Such stories... open a door on Other Time, and if we pass through, though only for a moment, we stand outside our own time, outside Time itself..." (Armit, 1996, p. 25)

4. Fantasy Genre Films As Postmodernist Phenomenon

The discussions in the previous chapters showed clearly that fantasy texts can be activated in many ways using various mechanisms. This is the indicator that Saga fantasy genre films are of postmodern nature and that they demonstrate certain postmodern features. Thus far the analysis of the Saga Fantasy Films have exposed such elements of the genre that are quite uniquely distinguishable as postmodernist. These elements will be linked further in the analysis to expose these Saga Fantasy Films as the style and aesthetics form the bond to a postmodern understanding of viewing these films.

4.1. Nostalgia and the Past

Fredric Jameson explains in his book “Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism” that the notion of time through Nostalgia films. He suggests that with the arrival of the Television and the shows about small-town American Middle Class, implied a “false” happiness while secretly creating a gap between the big city and

small towns. “Something had happened – perhaps something as simple as television and the other media- to remove the pain and sting of absence from the center, from the metropolis.” (Jameson, 1999, p. 281) This changed after the postwar period for the American’s and an imperceptible thickening in a continuum of identical products and standardized spaces came into play. It was no longer the ideal small-town films or TV series that promoted the American life style. However Nostalgia films told them about their past, but not a past that actually existed but of a mythical past that comes to be in an aesthetic set of systems. Here Jameson provides two possible ways of looking at our past, at our History; first that there is a kind of false consciousness of History or second that there is No History to talk about at all.

“...although one does not confuse a person with what he or she thinks of himself/herself, such self-images are surely relevant indeed and constitute an essential part of the more objective description or definition... But this speculation which presupposes the possibility that at an outer limit, the sense people have of themselves and their own moment in history may ultimately have nothing whatsoever to do with its reality: that the existential may be absolutely distinct, as some ultimate “false consciousness”...”(Jameson, 1999, p. 281)

And the second position towards our understanding of History, from a Nietzschean position, he claims, “there are no such things as “periods” nor have there ever been. And he continues to say that in that case, there is no such thing as “history” either. Jameson further

continues to address this issue and tells that “we no longer experience our history at all.” (Jameson, 1999, p. 283). So what is history for us today? A lost case? A dream or maybe an idea?

“Historicity is, in fact, neither a representation of the past nor a representation of the future: it can first and foremost be defined as a perception of the present as history: that is, as a relationship to the present which somehow defamiliarizes it and allows us that distance from immediacy which is at length characterized as a historical perspective.” (Jameson, 1999, p. 286)

So we have a perspective towards time that only has space for the present however this perspective enables us to categorize the present as a historical incentive. And in fact, the defamiliarization is a mere aesthetic effect and a lie.

As mentioned earlier, the Saga Fantasy genre was always debated for its longing or yearning for a mythical or lost past. If we think this statement in the light of Jameson’s arguments it is easy to see the similarities between the two. While Jameson argues that the aesthetic past presenting us with the historical viewpoint where as also sticks us at the present, the fantasy becomes a vessel in which this notion finds its example. As we watch the Saga Fantasy Film at the present we are also informed of the historical background and the specific implication of the historical event, taking place in the screen in front of us. The quest that the protagonist faces is that of the importance to save the mythical world from evil. We witness an overlapping time,

in which the future, present and the past has come to collide in this one single event in the story and that the outcome of this event will also effect the three fold structure of time. Since we are experiencing the adventure in the present, in terms of narrative time, we therefore experience the longing for the old days the characters mention. The example for such a case can be when Frodo, in “The Lord of The Rings; The Return of the King” (2003), as his journey nears its end, Frodo becomes weary and frustrated. Sam his travel mate, keeps him going by telling him how the weather would be if they were in Shire, how the trees will bend slightly with the breeze and stories as such. As he tells these to Frodo, we also feel the yearning to see such a place rather than the doomed land of Mordor. Also one element not mentioned in the film is the ending of the quest. Frodo and his friends turn back to their home, the Shire that they remember as filled with green grass and all wonders of nature however what they find is big chimneys puffing smokes to the air. The frustration the characters feel in this part of the story also emphasizes this longing. However omitted this part might be in the film we still feel that longing for the old days even inside the Middle-Earth. And this is somewhat a mythical or a lost past as well since the stories that are told about the old days are never actually seen in the movie.

Fantasy forms a path to such a historical perspective, but it does so by providing a fictional one. Since we are aware of the fact that it is fictional, the history presented to us is not taken for granted as true

however this does not mean that it is not real. It is every bit treated as real both in the story and outside the story. Fan communities talk about the long lasting wars and historical events in on-line forums. So it is treated as real knowing it is not true to our world which makes it as aesthetically important as that of the Nostalgia films mentioned in the Postmodern world. This provides the first and most important similarity of the Saga Fantasy Genre Films with postmodernism and helps us define it as a postmodern phenomenon. The concept of time therefore is quite different than those that were defined in the previous chapter. This notion will be further analyzed in the next topic.

4.2. The Subject of Fantasy as a Postmodern Phenomenon

Jameson explains the subject's position in the postmodern world as such:

“...Such terms inevitably recall one of the more fashionable themes in contemporary theory, that of the “death” of the subject itself – the end of the autonomous bourgeois monad or ego or individual- and the accompanying stress, whether as some new moral ideal or as empirical description, on the decentering of that formerly centered subject or psyche. (Of the possible formulations of this notion – the historicist one that a once-existing centered subject, in the period of classical capitalism and nuclear family, has today in the world of organizational bureaucracy dissolved; and the more radical poststructuralist position, for which such a subject never

existed in the first place but constituted something like and ideological mirage- I obviously incline toward the former; the later must in any case take into account something like a “reality of the appearance.”). (Jameson, 1999, p. 15)

As Jameson states, the subject is more likely to be declined from such a centered position melting into the one of the Monad, a closed being that reflects the world upon others by varying degrees. It is interesting to look into the way postmodernism defines the new subject in such a way, since the Monad concept was that of Leibniz, who lived in the 17th Century.

If we look at Jameson’s definition of the Monad in general and comparing it to that of the fantasy genre characters and the way they create a relationship between the story and the audience or the characters, the similarity lies where the suggestion of the world in which the subject lives in. The fantastic worlds that are created in the novels than transformed for the white screen, has the element of a unitary subject understanding. The closed subject defined in postmodernism is struggling to express itself and the fantastic stories and narratives have the similar tendency. Since they are worlds that do not exist, the narrative should first introduce the audience to these worlds in a proper way, they simply cannot start where the action starts they have to make clear defined boundaries and tell the rules of these fantastic worlds clearly. In terms of the postmodern approach to the genre itself, we can also talk about the closed stories

revealing themselves to the world before us. The similarity between Munch's painting are thus stressed in Jameson's book however if we view this category comparing it to the fantasy genre films, we conclude with a parallel notion.

“... it shows us that expression requires the category of the individual monad, but it also shows us the heavy price to be paid for the precondition, dramatizing the unhappy paradox that when you constitute your individual subjectivity as a self-sufficient field and a closed realm, you thereby shut yourself off from everything else and condemn yourself to the mindless solitude of the monad, buried alive and condemned to a prison cell without egress.” (1999, p. 15)

This has been the very case from the beginning of the analysis, where all the theoreticians to some degree tried to compare the fantasy genre and fantasy worlds to some extent, to the reality, to our world. However it is not the case anymore where it is not a matter of comparing or understanding these fantasy realms through our current location. The question and the main concern of this endless struggle to define fantasy in terms of this world is, thus, the subject's being. These desperate attempts to define the genre in our world fail because of the position of the monadic subject. The monadic subject loses its bond with the outer world when they express and build up the fantastic worlds for others to see and experience. It becomes the cell of their imagination, yet extending to infinity of possibilities yet in another realm and in terms of itself. When the film starts to play, from that moment on the outer world or other realities are no longer

the problem, it is an isolated place to enjoy its unique ways of being. The problem of defining and trying to bound the fantasy worlds to our daily world thus fails because of this reason, it explains a part of what it is, yet fails to draw a full picture. This is the third and the most important relation Saga Fantasy films have with postmodernism.

To explain the condition of the fantasy narratives in the conjecture of postmodernism, it should be stated that the possible positioning of these texts could be identified as “imbrications.” To explain this further, we should consider first the meaning in which the term is used and has been used in the context of postmodernism.

“imbricate - overlapping at the edges. Sometimes this means, making category boundaries more fuzzy. Postmodern authors recognize the natural fuzziness of language and distinguish fuzziness from unclarity... This is a point made by Ludwig Wittgenstein in the Philosophical Investigations.”

(<http://users.sfo.com/~rathbone/local4.htm>, 2011)

The very nature of these fantasy texts has proven to be as such, “imbricated”, as discussed earlier. The intertextual nature along with other features induced within the narrative line produces this effect of “imbrication.” The vague nature here is not on the boundaries of the definition but on the very element of understanding these realms as a part of the postmodern world. This understanding along with the openness of these texts for various possible ways of analysis form a path for such a complex, interwoven structure. The various ways of

looking into these texts has pointed out that with the implications of postmodern features, it has many other layers within its formation that enables such various ways of looking into the texts. These various coats of the texts, provides a richness to the narrative structure and a multi-layered form that makes it possible to connect to different beds of looking into these texts. This quality of the narrative structure of fantasy texts, thus becomes important in highlighting the features of its various thicknesses in both meaning and interpretation. This feature alone stands at the core of the fantasy narratives forming a nucleus for the analysis of various layers making it an “imbricated” composition of various patterns. This feature is evident with the previous analysis that helped form this interwoven nature of the fantasy texts. It lights the way for possible different readings and interpretations that help form the multi-floored form of the narratives. The overlapping of the various ways of looking into these texts can be found along the analysis of the narrative structures various tendencies as an open, intertextual text. The imbricated formation of the narratives thus point to the various links between the different ways of looking into the text that are previously discussed.

This structure as a whole can be seen in the various ways in which the fantasy narratives follow the path of open and amenable texts that enable this imbricated formation to coat the narratives. It is thus this imbricated pattern that the various ways of exploring the texts that the analysis before hand followed. It is evident that such a motif can

be traced to the narratives various layers with these ways of looking. The vagueness is thus not on the definition of saga fantasy genre but on the structural boundaries of the fantasy genre as a whole as defined in the very beginning of the research. The fuzziness in the fantasy genre is reflected in the variety of films clustered under the same genre, yet this is also displayed upon the intertextual nature of the fantasy narratives as well as saga fantasy films. This fuzziness therefore comes from the intertextuality of the fantasy texts. Since they are open and amenable, these various elements that belong in the fantasy texts seem fuzzy and hard to define at first sight. There are so many different elements that are vague and hard to define, such as space and time (chronological, narrative, logical, etc.) as well as the subject in the narrative, along with many others. This is the very nature of fantasy texts, the vagueness. This is evident in nearly all the fantasy texts, and it can also be seen in Tolkien.

“Tolkien’s prose has been deliberately crafted to *evoke*, not merely provoke, a kind of meaningful ambiguity. Thereby readers are encouraged to become as involved in the process of generating meaning as the author ultimately is.” (<http://aussierebel.wordpress.com/2010/06/19/the-power-of-tolkiens-prose/>, 2011)

So the texts do not point to certain clarifications in fantasy narrative within their stories, it is expected from the participator, reader or audience to create their own and engage with the text this way. The vagueness, ambiguity or fuzziness can be viewed in the fantasy texts and this helps the imbricated structure to form around it, as a cloak. So the vagueness is not only in the nature of the variety of films

mentioned but also in their very content. This shows the multi-layered structure of these fantasy texts that are imbricated forms of narratives.

It should be considered that the fantasy films are amenable and open intertextual texts that have multi-layers of forms and content that shapes the genre as a whole. It is important to understand and highlight this quality of the fantasy texts since it becomes vital for the analysis to be meaningful. The research followed this notion in order to address the multi-layered structure of these texts and show the attributes of the various different elements by ways of looking into the fantasy texts and concentrated on the imbricated formation of these texts.

5. CONCLUSION

The aim of the thesis evolved around the question of fantasy narratives and its definition as a postmodern phenomenon. The analysis followed the path of first defining the genre and the sub-genre, namely Saga fantasy fiction and questioned how these texts can be looked into. The research then focused on the open and amenable nature of these texts and discussed the various possible ways of looking into these texts. It was further discussed how fantasy genre films might relate to the postmodern world with its various elements. The analysis then looked into the structure of these narratives and how they might relate to an imbricated formation in terms of this amenable qualities.

The findings of the research shows that saga fantasy genre is indeed a postmodern phenomenon, borrowing from the elements that construct the structure of narrative, imagery and the stylistic features. The most important ingredients in support of this argument are the notions of Time, Subject and the understanding of Historicism. These elements become the founding blocks of the genre and the sub-genre specifically when analyzed through the various ways of looking into

these texts.

The narrative structure of the films along with the cinematographic features of the style with a yearning for a lost or mythical history, helps define the boundaries of the sub-genre, and sheds light on the intertextual quality of the texts. This amplifies the understanding of the fantasy genre in general by helping name the different yet coherent nature of the various mediums combined in one. The very nature of the films in terms of the script and the characters with its structural components are made visible through the analysis and points out to the imbrication of the fantasy texts.

It became clear that Saga Fantasy films had various different elements that make them unique both within the genre and among the outer genres. The features that finds ground in this type of films, stands out as having tendencies towards a different world, namely a fantastical world, where the key element becomes the existence of supernatural phenomena along with magic. By looking at this point it became evident that this very struggle was because of a confusion to define the genre. When defined in terms of its own existence amongst the plain of other genre's and films, it finds solid ground to produce meaning and story in a postmodern sense.

With Fredric Jameson's postmodernism critique, Saga Fantasy genre highlights the perception of certain notions defined by the previous

narrative analysis. The very notion of Time, Subject and Historicism eludes the strict definitions of the previous ages (as mentioned in terms of the perception of Time in Aristotle, Einstein, etc.), and liberates the experience from the boundaries of the previous definitions of the fantasy genre.

The imbricated structure of the fantasy texts reveal their openness as well as its ambiguous nature that cannot simply be coined to a certain cause and effect logical pattern. The fantasy texts also invite interpretations and different layers of meaning which forms the basis for the imbricated nature when put under analysis. This imbrication can be seen as a way of looking at the fantasy narratives as a whole that helps define the flowing way in which the stories and fantasy realms are shaped. It can be stated that the imbrication among these texts also point to its open and amenable nature that includes many ingredients.

The postmodern fantasy texts and narratives are investigated throughout the research. The structure of the texts follow a pattern of imbrication that also suggests its postmodern feature, along with other elements such as subject, historicism and time. The various ways of looking into these fantasy texts, it became evident that these texts are amenable and open with different elements and ingredients. The vague and ambiguous tone emphasized in the narrative, also encourages the audience to actively participate in the meaning making

process. All these features combined together show how these fantasy texts exist as a postmodern phenomenon.

Feature research topics on Fantasy Genre might include but are not limited to: the analysis of time specifically in fantasy films, how the sub-genre can be defined in terms of other notions such as reception by conducting an ethnographic study, how the genre evolved after the introduction of Internet technology and fan studies.

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