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Abstract

The thesis will explore how J.R.R Tolkien's experiences of war, and interest in medieval literature, specifically from "Beowulf" impacted characters and places in his work "The Lord of the Rings". The aim of this thesis is to understand how an author's own experiences of the world ends up showing through their writing. This is done through explaining the significance on two key characters, and how they become a reflection of soldiers in World War 1. Another perspective is how the placement of a key location can cause issues when a country feels as though they are portrayed through "The Lord of the Rings" as the place of great evil. Then showing how Tolkien's interest in Beowulf also affected the portrayal of soldiers and the significance of this.

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Introduction

The journey to Middle-Earth following the experiences of the protagonist Frodo and his friends in their quest to destroy the “One Ring” is a journey many readers have taken since the publishing of “The Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring” by J.R.R Tolkien in 1954. This was the first volume out of three in Tolkien’s epic fantasy series. It’s an incredibly influential series that saw a massive increase in popularity leading to a trilogy of movies being made with a more recent television series being adapted. The story of Middle-Earth originally began in the book published in 1937 called “The Hobbit”. The three volumes of “The Lord of the Rings” that came after are a direct continuation of that story. Whilst “The Hobbit” is considered a children’s book focusing on lighter themes suitable for children, “The Lord of the Rings” touches on far deeper and serious subjects intended for a more mature audience.

The volumes of “The Lord of the Rings” were written after World War 1, in which Tolkien himself took part in the war as a soldier, but also during the time World War 2 broke out. In the foreword to the second edition in the first book “The Fellowship of the Ring” Tolkien comments on the many questions and queries about hidden meanings and allegories (Tolkien, 2012, xxi). He states that he did not intend for there to be any, but one can argue that it’s possible to see the evident impact these wars had on his writing (Croft, 4). Similarly, the work shows clear evidence that Tolkien drew heavy influence from the medieval period and its literature as well. One example of this can be seen in the fact that during the many years Tolkien worked as a professor of literature focused on the Anglo-Saxons he worked on his own translation of “Beowulf”, but never had it published. This translation was later edited by his son Christopher Tolkien, and published posthumously in 2014, forty-one years after his father’s death.

This thesis will analyze and argue the influences that reveal themselves through various allegories of key characters and key places in “The Lord of The Rings”, and what the impact it has had on the story. This will be done by focusing on Tolkien’s translation of the medieval poem “Beowulf” and the analysis of his work “The Lord of the Rings.”. The first two volumes “The Fellowship of the Ring” and “The Two Towers” will be the primary focus of the thesis with a few inputs from the final book “The Return of the King”.

J.R.R Tolkien’s Contradictions in His Letters

When discussing “The Lord of the Rings” and the allegories within them, it is important to again note how Tolkien in “The Fellowship of the Ring” stated that he didn’t

intend for his work to come across as a hidden allegory, although he does mention that a few modifications were made to the text following the outbreak of World War II (Tolkien, 2012, xxii). Tolkien goes on to say, “as for any inner meaning or ‘message’, it has in the intention of the author none. It is neither allegorical nor topical.” (Tolkien, 2012, xxi). By merely relying on the foreword it could make for a difficult discussion when the author had explicitly stated that there are no inner meaning or message hidden throughout his work.

Still, in a letter that J.R.R Tolkien sends in 1953 to his friend, Father Robert Murray. It’s in this letter where he writes that “The Lord of the Rings” is “a fundamentally religious and catholic work.” (Pearce, 2015, chapter 1). The question this pose is how his work can remain free of allegories as he claims it is, when it in his own words reflects both religious and catholic beliefs. A similar contradiction occurs in his response to a letter asking if his work was intended to be an allegory to atomic power, to which he responds that “The Lord of the Rings” is an allegory of power (Pearce, 2015, chapter 1). On one hand it is possible to agree with Tolkien’s foreword and say that there are no hidden meanings or allegories and experience the story without searching for these. On the other hand, one can also take the contradictions into account and realize that an author, such as J.R.R Tolkien, might indeed be influenced by outside factors and experiences that end up showing through the story.

“The Lord of the Rings” as a literary work, is not immune to being criticized or scrutinized. With its popularity there will be voices arguing in favor of Tolkien’s views as they were written in the foreword, as well as voices arguing for there being allegories in the books due to the contradictions found in the letters. Tolkien as the author envisioned his story one way, but in the hands of a reader they can and most likely will see and interpret the story in unique ways that will differ from the author’s original intention. It’s important to note that Tolkien’s words, even though they hold a certain weight when interpreting them, are not held to the same importance as that of a holy writ (Hallam, 24). It’s possible to still place an importance on Tolkien’s words and opinions but at the same time remain critical to his work. An author’s attempt to be completely unbiased when writing their fictional work can happen, but as briefly mentioned before, it could arguably be an author’s own bias, their own experiences through life, that help shape the stories they wish to convey to the readers. Without such a bias or without one’s own experiences it would be difficult without the human experience of what we do and create. It’s precisely these life experiences that can help breathe life to the story, invoke strong feelings to captivate and keep the readers reading. “The Lord of the Rings” could perhaps have ended up entirely different without the influences of the wars and from “Beowulf”.

Tolkien might have viewed allegories in his work as a bad thing, but allegories aren't inherently a bad idea to use, and readers will continue to argue and discuss their own theories based on their own experiences and interpretations. It's these theories that can lead to the reader unraveling allegories that they will use in their arguments. In the end, Tolkien's contradiction arguably opens his work to a more detailed analysis when it comes to "The Lord of the Rings.". This lets the reader look deeper into the text to find said allegories, symbolism, influences, or possible hidden meanings.

Two Important Characters Inspired by J.R.R Tolkien's Experience from War

A Brief Plot Introduction

The first part of the thesis will examine two important characters: Frodo Baggins as the protagonist and Samwise Gamgee as his close friend. The two friends are hobbits, a fictional race created by Tolkien, who lives in the Shire in the fictional land of Middle-Earth. Frodo is given the "One Ring" by his cousin Bilbo who had attained the ring back on his adventure detailed in the book "The Hobbit". The ring was crafted by the villain Sauron, who had previously also crafted several rings given to elves, dwarves, and humans inhabiting Middle-Earth. The One Ring was intended to be used by Sauron to control those who possessed the other rings. After Gandalf, a powerful wizard and friend to Frodo, learns that Sauron knows the ring is in the shire, he tells Frodo that he must undertake this perilous journey to destroy the one ring to defeat evil and bring peace to Middle-Earth (Tolkien, 2012).

Frodo Baggins & Samwise Gamgee

Frodo Baggins and Samwise Gamgee are two characters that can arguably both represent a reflection of British soldiers from World War 1. "But this is terrible!" cried Frodo. 'Far worse than the worst that I imagined from your hints and warnings. O Gandalf, best of friends, what am I to do? For now I am really afraid. What am I to do?'" (Tolkien, 2012, 59) Such is the reaction of Frodo when Gandalf tells him that Sauron knows of the hobbits and their home, the Shire. Frodo is understandably frightened because all he's known so far is the safety of his home. He has already begun to hear the murmurs of what's happening outside the Shire (Tolkien, 2012, 33). Elves and dwarves passing through the Shire from their own homelands to seek refuge in the west would pass on information to Frodo (Tolkien, 2012, 43). They would speak to him about the enemy and the dark Land of Mordor in the east. This can mimic what villages in England would hear murmurs about in the years

that would lead up to the First World War (Humphries and Van Emden, 2017, Chapter 1). Where a young girl's earliest recollections were hearing the talks of the country going to war and how people were whispering about a Kaiser (Humphries and Van Emden, 2017, Chapter 1), who at the time is presumed to be Kaiser Wilhelm II.

Previously it was hinted at by Bilbo to Gandalf that even though Frodo might hesitate, there's a part of him that craves adventure. "But he does not really want to, yet. I want to see the wild country again before I die, and the Mountains; but he is still in love with the Shire, with woods and fields and little rivers." (Tolkien, 2012, 33). Initially, Frodo ends up staying in the Shire for years, as part of him isn't willing to let go of the peacefulness of his home. He gathers information as he awaits the return of Gandalf and the information he would bring. Even though he seemed frightened at first, as this journey would throw him into great turmoil, there's a desire to follow after Bilbo and his adventures (Tolkien, 2012, 62). This sense of adventure effectively overpowers Frodo's initial fear of the quest, and so he finally decides to leave the Shire for his grand adventure. With this, it's again possible to draw a line to how young British men actually found war to be exciting rather than be fearful of it (Humphries and Van Emden, 2017, Chapter 1). The threat of new enemies and patriotism as well as personal sacrifice and team spirit were frequently taught to men from a very young age from various sources like papers, magazines, and their parents (Humphries and Van Emden, 2017, Chapter 1).

The notion of team spirit applies to "The Lord of the Rings" too, as Frodo is not alone during the journey. He is joined by his best friend Samwise Gamgee after Samwise decides to eavesdrop on the conversation happening between Frodo and Gandalf. It's with the introduction of Samwise's character and his development throughout the three volumes that it's possible to argue the influence that Tolkien brought with him from his time in the First World War. A reflection of the British soldiers who had to leave their homes and their very lives behind to fight in a war where there was no guarantee that they would return home alive. This influence Tolkien later also acknowledged: "My 'Sam Gamgee' is indeed a reflexion of the English soldier, of the privates and batmen I knew in the 1914 war, and recognized as so far superior to myself" (Carpenter, 1977, 81). It shows how Tolkien respected the soldiers he served with, and by creating Samwise, wanted to honor them in a respectful way through that character. In doing so, Tolkien also creates a timeless character that will forever remain in the books for readers for both new and old to experience.

The powerful emotion and connection written into the character comes to a pivotal point in the second volume "The Two Towers" after Frodo got caught by the enemy orcs

working under Sauron and is presumed to be dead by the time Samwise arrives to save him. Samwise calls out to Frodo in a desperate attempt to get his friend to wake up and at one point says: “Don’t leave me here alone!” (Tolkien, 2012, 730), “Don’t go where I can’t follow!” (Tolkien, 2012, 730). When that fails and Samwise comes to the realization that Frodo might be dead, it spurs him to continue the journey they began together. Samwise actively chooses a personal sacrifice to finish the task, knowing it will still be dangerous and there’s the possibility he might also die.

Samwise might be the one who is explicitly stated to be the reflection of the English soldier, but some of the same influence can be found in Frodo as well. They both exhibit an attitude of wanting to see the journey through no matter what “...an attitude common enough among first-hand accounts of soldiers in the trenches.” (Croft, 2002, 8). The two hobbits exhibit a camaraderie that exists before the events of the first volume eventually forces them to leave the Shire behind, but the same camaraderie is further strengthened through the ordeals and battles that they go through. This is not unlike how bonds were forged between soldiers during the war, which again might be why Tolkien decided to write Samwise as a reflection of what he saw the soldiers go through during the time he served.

Tolkien, who found himself serving in World War 1, would have seen firsthand what soldiers went through and experienced during their battles. Soldiers being thrust into battle and now having to kill. Regardless of how prepared they were to defend their country, there were different emotions and reactions to experiencing such a world altering event. Many soldiers began to detail their experiences by writing it down in diaries or letters during the downtime when they weren’t fighting (Jones, 2006, 233). Many soldiers surprisingly took great joy and found excitement battling and killing during the war (Jones, 2006, 233), but a great number of soldiers also found the act of killing or watching their brothers in arms dying in front of them that it sent them into shellshock, a psychological injury rather than physical. (Winter, 2000, 7).

“The Lord of the Rings” were written after World War 1 but also during World War 2, it’s here where one can argue that the volumes were influenced and written as a response to the trauma a lot of soldiers experienced on the battlefield. The volumes detail this epic but harrowing journey of inexperienced hobbits thrown into the chaos of war. They experience trauma and hardships, forge strong friendships with allies, most importantly they emerge victorious over the villain in the end, but even after the victory their lives are forever changed by what they have gone through.

Overall Frodo Baggins and Samwise Gamgee show many similarities and ties to that of the British soldier during World War 1. Although Tolkien explicitly told the Samwise was the reflection, it's the camaraderie between Frodo and Samwise that also ties into the same camaraderie and team-spirit that happens during the war. They are both willing to do what it takes to finish the mission to the end.

Mordor's Placement in the East as An Allegory to Russia

Sauron's place of operation was a location in the east of Middle-Earth known as Mordor, and posed a great threat to the kingdoms in the west. The placement of the evil land of Mordor in the east could arguably represent the feelings Tolkien held for Russia at the time of World War 2, and it can tie into modern conflicts such as the recent war between Russia and Ukraine. "Alas! Mordor draws all wicked things, and the Dark Power was bending all its will to gather them here... And all folk were whispering then of the new Shadow in the South, and its hatred of the West." (Tolkien, 2012, 58-59). Mordor, known as the place of evil in Middle-Earth and the seat of power for Sauron. It was placed East of the most prominent kingdom of Men, Gondor. In the quote it's stated that the inhabitants of Mordor hold a hatred for the west. At the time when Tolkien was writing "The Lord of the Rings" and decided on its name, it was roughly at the same time as the Munich agreement was developing in 1938 (Carpenter, 1977, 189), right at the precipice of what would become World War 2 in just a year. There is always the possibility that the placement of Mordor in the east was merely a coincidence, but the building tensions with Russia and Germany likely did affect Tolkien and his opinion. Although he was skeptical of both Germany and Russia's intentions, he by far loathed the idea of being on any of the sides that would potentially ally with Russia (Carpenter, 1977, 189). Tolkien even said: "One fancies that Russia is probably ultimately far more responsible for the present crisis and choice of moment than Hitler." (Carpenter, 1977, 189). Considering that statement it could almost seem that Mordor, being the seat of evil, symbolizes the view Tolkien had of Russia before the outbreak of war.

It seemed that this idea of Mordor in the east versus the good guys in the west was something quite a few readers noticed, as Tolkien again had to write that he wasn't writing "The Lord of the Rings" to be a hidden reference to world politics for the readers (Carpenter, 1977, 189). Placing Mordor in the east of Gondor in Middle-Earth seemed only natural to him during his writing process. However, there was a particular country that didn't believe Tolkien's statement that the volumes were free of allegories. Russia itself didn't take kindly to

the volumes and tried to keep them away from the Russian public's eyes (Markova and Hooker, 2004, 163).

Attempts were made to publish the volumes, but none of the translations were approved by the censorship and so "The Lord of the Rings" continued to be barred from the Russian public (Markova and Hooker, 2004, 163). The volumes were only first published in 1990 when the USSR was quickly dissolving (Markova and Hooker, 2004, 164). The reasoning behind the books not being published beforehand was due to what commentators said was a hidden allegory pointing to Russia being the villain. They saw it as an allegory "...of the conflict between the individualist West and the totalitarian, Communist East." (Markova and Hooker, 2004, 165), which from a Russian point of view could be understandable when reading about Mordor's hatred of the west in the books and how it's considered the seat of evil. The first officially approved Russian translation was also published a few years later in 1992. One of the translators from this, Vladimir Murav'ev, added a preface of his own before the book where he wrote that the magical world of Middle-Earth wasn't so magical after all (Markova and Hooker, 2004, 165). To Murav'ev, the world that Tolkien had created through his penmanship, came across as an allegory to the real world (Markova and Hooker, 2004, 165). By interpreting it this way, the volumes were seen as someone's personal battle with Russia, which one can argue ties into Tolkien's views of Russia at the time he was writing the story.

The previous commentators in Russia also concluded that: "The Lord of the Rings is – among other things – a political pamphlet in which Tolkien included an encoded description of the conflict of the political darkness of the East and the freedom of the West, and a prediction of the inevitable fall of Mordor and its analogy on the real earth, the Soviet Union." (Markova and Hooker, 2004, 165). Perhaps a reader from the west discovering the volumes wouldn't think too much over the placement, but with tensions between the west and Russia remaining from the second world war and lasting through the cold war, it becomes clear why Russians come view the "The Lord of the Rings" as thinly veiled political allegory deliberately written against them.

"In the black abyss there appeared a single Eye that slowly grew, until it filled nearly all the Mirror. So terrible was it that Frodo stood rooted, unable to cry out or to withdraw his gaze. The Eye was rimmed with fire, but was itself glazed, yellow as a cat's, watchful and intent, and the black slit of its pupil opened on a pit, a window into nothing." (Tolkien, 2012, 364). Another thread that can be tied to Russia is the portrayal of the Eye of Sauron. In the book it's described as this terrible entity and comes across as Sauron practically having

omniscience because he is always watching through the Eye. From this it's possible to draw on the similarities to the modern Russia's authoritative regime under Putin. Although the Russian constitution allows for freedom of speech there have been severe attempts at restricting it, and the government actively goes in to manipulate the public agenda (Alyukov, 2022, 337). People who live in a country as restrictive to the freedom of speech might find themselves fearful of uttering their own truthful opinions because they fear the punishment should Putin's government's watchful eyes receive a report of the views that don't fall in line with their agenda (Kizilova and Norris, 2022, 3).

Because Mordor at the time it was written could possibly be attributed to Tolkien's feelings about Russia during a tumultuous time right before and during the time of World War 2, it also presents another perspective where one can draw on parallels to modern conflicts as they happen in the present. The placement of Mordor, and its description, can be argued to tie into present day conflicts as well. Especially if one considers the on-going war between Russia and Ukraine, where it has again turned into west versus east. It's Putin's Russia in the east, invading Ukraine where the western leaders then come to Ukraine's aid. Tolkien's apparent distaste for Russia, whether he intended for it or not to appear in the volumes, continues to bleed through even into modern times as the tension between west and east is again growing due to the war in Ukraine.

Consequently "The Lord of the Rings" can come across as a hidden political allegory, even though he expressed that it was never his intention to do so. It's especially for the ones who begin to pick apart his descriptions of Sauron and Mordor where it becomes evident. Combine this with his strong opinions on Russia right before World War 2, and already having experience from one war himself, it's certainly plausible that he let his opinions influence the way that he wrote Sauron and Mordor into becoming an allegory to Russia. It's plausible because earlier in the thesis it's shown that he contradicts himself and also admits to Samwise being a reflection of the British soldiers serving under him.

Beowulf and the Impact It Had on Lord of the Rings

A large part of the influence in "The Lord of the Rings" did come from Tolkien's experience of war, but this experience would also show through the influence he brought with him from "Beowulf", an epic poem from the Middle Ages. Tolkien was influenced in large part by the medieval literary period and "Beowulf", and this influence can be seen in all three of the volumes and especially when reading about the kingdom of Rohan in "The Two

Towers”. Before becoming a world-renowned writer due to his publication of “The Lord of the Rings”, Tolkien worked as a professor. As a professor he taught early forms of English, Norse, and Welsh, and was considered a specialist in ancient languages (Carruthers, 2019, 1). He was particularly interested in medieval texts and would prepare scholarly editions of various texts from this period (Carruthers, 2019, 1). There was one poem from this period that Tolkien placed a special importance upon, and that was the old English poem of “Beowulf”. While it’s difficult to know the exact date of writing for the poem, many would argue that it was written around the 8th century (Carruthers, 2019, 1).

This love for language and medieval literature could be traced back to Tolkien’s own introduction to the epic poem when he was just a teenager (Carruthers, 2019, 1). He was so fascinated with the symbolism and the language that the poem consisted of, and it’s namely this fascination that ends up flowing over to his writing of “The Lord of the Rings.” (Carruthers, 2019, 1). It was after reading the poem in the old English language that he wanted to attempt his own translation of it into more modernized English, perhaps in a way to make the poem which he loved more accessible to readers who might otherwise struggle to understand its original old English script. Although his work on translating the poem began early on in his teaching career, around 1926, it was only published posthumously in 2014 after being edited by his son, Christopher Tolkien (Carruthers, 2019, 1).

By reading into the translation Tolkien did of “Beowulf”, it becomes clear that he took inspiration from names, characters, various words, and bigger scenes into his own writing. The king of the kingdom of Rohan, Théoden has his name derived from the Anglo-Saxon word meaning “lord” or “protector” (Kightley, 2006, 120). As Tolkien had been a student of Anglo-Saxon himself, this would have been no mere coincidence on his part by naming a character with such a meaning to the name. He often worked with more subtle meanings from his inspiration from “Beowulf” so it would make sense that characters would derive meanings from the Anglo-Saxon (Kightley, 2006, 120).

In the volume “The Two Towers” there is a moment when the heroes are approaching Rohan that Gandalf tells the group about the place that they are now approaching. “‘Edoras those courts are called,’ said Gandalf, ‘and Meduseld is that golden hall. There dwells Théoden son of Thengel, King of the Mark of Rohan.’” (Tolkien, 2012, 507) Edoras and Meduseld are two words also belonging to the Anglo-Saxon language, inviting the reader to view Rohan from another perspective, particularly the Anglo-Saxon perspective. It can also be discussed that it ties “Beowulf” into Rohan, as the word Meduseld is a word one can find

directly from the original translation of the poem and in modern terms means “mead-hall” (Kightley, 2006, 120).

Similarly, some names and scenes can be argued to be almost taken directly from the original translation of the poem. A scene that continues after Gandalf introduces the fellowship to Edoras, Meduseld and Théoden is when they close in on their approach to Rohan on horseback and guards stop them. “Who are you that come heedless over the plains thus strangely clad, riding horses like to our own horses?” (Tolkien, 2012, 508). It’s a sentence that can sound strangely familiar if one has also read Tolkien’s translation of “Beowulf”. It’s reminiscent of the way the coastguards stop Beowulf when he approaches them. “What warriors are ye, clad in corselets, that have come thus steering your tall ship over the streets of the sea, hither over deep waters?” (Tolkien, 2014, line 193-196). The biggest difference between these two quotes being that in “The Two Towers” they approach on horseback whilst in “Beowulf” he approaches with a ship. Further on the coastguards continue by saying that they have long kept watch over the seas, whilst the guards in Rohan continue to say that they have kept over the land for a great period. This helps to further cement the connection that it’s possible to draw between “Beowulf” and “The Lord of the Rings.”, because in both works these are proud guards valiantly serving their kingdom to protect it from intruders.

Another scene that stands out due to the striking similarities between Tolkien’s work and Beowulf is a scene from the final volume “The Return of the King”. Merry, another hobbit who ended up on the journey with Frodo and Samwise, fights together with Éowyn, a noblewoman from Rohan, in the battle of Pelennor Fields just outside the capital of Gondor, Minas Tirith. The two of them engage the Lord of the Nazgûl, a powerful commander under Sauron, and deliver the fatal blow by stabbing him with a sword (Tolkien, 2012, 842). It’s what happens to the sword after this fatal blow where the similarities between “Beowulf” and Tolkien’s work become increasingly apparent again. “The sword broke sparking into many shards. The crown rolled away with a clang. Éowyn fell forward upon her fallen foe. But lo! The mantle and hauberk were empty.” (Tolkien, 2012, 842). The sword ends up disintegrating after killing the Nazgûl commander. A scene which is very reminiscent of when Beowulf cuts the head off the antagonist of the poem, Grendel. “In that hour the valiant sword began, after the hot blood of battle touched it, to drip away in fearful icicles.” (Tolkien, 2014, line 1343-1345). The similarities here being that the blood of the Nazgûl and the blood of Grendel were enough to destroy the swords used to kill them.

As Leo Carruthers brings up in his essay of “The Old English Beowulf and Tolkien’s Middle-earth” it’s not just in the volumes of “The Two Towers” or “The Return of the King” that we find influence of the Anglo-Saxons and “Beowulf”. In the first book it’s presented more subtly in terms of showing the courage Frodo exhibits when he volunteers to bring the ring to be destroyed in the fires of Mount Doom (Carruthers, 2019, 4). It’s not because Frodo feels no fear in the moment he decides, but he places more value on bravery and courage. For Frodo it’s simply the right thing to do, and it’s in that moment he arguably ends up showing the same amount of courage that Beowulf does when he goes to kill the dragon in the poem (Carruthers, 2019, 4).

Tolkien also placed importance of the customs in which the fallen were honored in their death, another influence stemming from the influence of “Beowulf”. In the poem Beowulf in his death is praised by valiant warriors who rode around his tomb as a way of honoring him (Tolkien, 2014, line 2655-2658). In “The Return of the King” the similarity happens during the funeral of king Théoden, where Riders of the King’s house ride around the burial mound of Théoden, and sing a song in his respect (Tolkien, 2012, 976). This can also tie in with the death and violence that Tolkien experienced during the first world war, and in his work then wanting to honor the fallen both in real life and in the volumes with a tribute that also honored England’s history by connecting it to “Beowulf.”

It has been speculated by others that Tolkien “without his linguistic training and knowledge of medieval literature, he would never have written his best-known creative works, *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*...”(Carruthers, 2019, 1). This in itself is significant due to the fact it brings forth the discussion of what would his creative works have been without his knowledge and fascination for medieval literature and especially for the poem “Beowulf”. It’s the influence Tolkien draws from that can be said to be part of what impacts the reader the most in the story. The impact of experiencing a grand journey, that invokes feelings and captivates the reader. It draws the readers into this fantastical and epic story that also deals with the on-going war between good and evil. The symbolism and language he constructs from the influence of the poem, not to mention his own experience from the wars, gives the volumes and its characters courage and bravery despite the fact they’re often challenged by despair.

In the end it’s difficult to say how contrasting J.R.R Tolkien’s works would have been without its influence from “Beowulf”. It’s plausible that there might not have even been any “*The Hobbit*” or “*The Lord of the Rings*.” if not for Tolkien’s interest in languages and

medieval literature, which then gives “Beowulf” quite a significant part in it’s influence on the creation of “The Lord of the Rings.”

Conclusion

In exploring J.R.R Tolkien’s work of “The Lord of the Rings”, it becomes evident that both the World Wars and the medieval poem of “Beowulf” have had an impact on his writing. Tolkien’s work is opened up to further scrutiny due to the fact that he on at least two occasions contradicted himself when it came to the presence of allegories. Mainly because this gives the reader a chance of interpreting an allegorical influence in a way that Tolkien didn’t intend to include. Tolkien did admit to writing Samwise as an allegory to the British soldiers he served with, and thus his experience from World War 1 comes through his work. This is again strengthened when the people of Russia find Mordor to be a representation of their country, based on Tolkien’s statement of his feelings for Russia at the time. Tolkien’s love for medieval literature and interest in “Beowulf” also extends into “The Lord of the Rings”, and it’s likely that this influence affected all three of the volumes. From the way he named characters residing in Rohan, to the way he incorporated similar scenes from “Beowulf” into his own work. It even affects Frodo and Samwise. The way it draws them to adventure, inspires courage despite despair and the self-sacrifice to continue the quest for the greater good. In doing so this connects both the World Wars and “Beowulf” together in a way that is heavily inspired by Anglo-Saxons and medieval literature, but also by the real-world experiences that is reflected through the story and the medieval influences.

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