

The Poiesis of Tolkien and Lewis Regarding Hobbits, Children and War

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Abstract

This project investigates the two authors, J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis and the way that the First World War affected their works, *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*. The project seeks to uncover if the First World War had any impact on the themes included in the two works and how the critical analyst can spot these and relate them back to The Great War. Furthermore, the project will also look at Tolkien and Lewis as subcreators and their creative process when writing.

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Introduction

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien and Clive Staples Lewis are known as two of the greatest producers of fantasy fiction. Their most famous works being Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Both of these works have been adapted in many forms and millions of people are familiar with their works. The two authors were good friends, and in their youth the two of them had another thing in common, that they both served in the British Army during the First World War. Seeing that what Tolkien and Lewis accomplished are kind of parallel with each other, serving during The Great War, becoming friends, and producing a work of fiction that has been read by millions. Are there also similar things that can be found in *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*? This is what the project will be investigating while also looking at the creative process of both Tolkien and Lewis as creators of these fictional works.

The project will use biographical analysis, looking at the lives of Tolkien and Lewis and, using historical context, analyse the two works in order to be able to determine if their time serving during the First World War had any impact on the themes or characters in *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Following this the project will look at Tolkien and Lewis as authors and investigate their creative process. All of this will be discussed before the project finally is able to conclude if serving in the First World War had any influence on the writings of J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis.

Theory

Intent

The purpose of this project is to examine parallels between the two authors, J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis, in order to determine whether their mutual experiences during World War I might have had an influence on their literary works, *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Additionally, the project investigates poesis with specific theories, as well as examining the creative process of both Tolkien and Lewis. Furthermore, the project also seeks to provide a dichotomous perspective of the French literary critic Roland Barthes, about the relationship between an author and his text.

In his 1967 essay *La mort de l'auteur*, or *The Death of the Author*, Barthes, takes a stand against traditional literary criticism. Where, in this kind of criticism, it is the norm to look at the author's

own life and intentions in a form of context, when analysing his text (Barthes, 1977). In his essay Barthes disagrees with this notion and puts forth the argument that there is no inherent relationship between a text and its creator. Thus, definitively removing the concept of the author having any underlying authority in the analysis of a text.

To investigate poesis this project examines specific theories such as Plato's method of poesis and Martin Heidegger's understanding of poesis, which is addressed in Jørgen Riber Christensen's article "The Poesis of Charles Dickens's Night Walks" (Christensen, 2019).

The above-mentioned theories will be used as a counterpoint to Barthes' argument, in order to restore the relationship between the author and his text, while also allowing the literary work to be analysed in a manner that what was the norm prior to Barthes' essay.

Death of the Author

The literary theorist Roland Barthes writes about the concept of 'who is talking' in a literary narrative in his essay *The Death of the Author*. He describes how it makes a difference if the person speaking is just a character in the story. Or whether it is the author himself that is using first-hand experiences, which he addresses through a character. This results in the author placing a part of himself in the story, which influences it through his own experiences. In Barthes's mind, when it comes to fiction texts, the author is not a person, but rather an omniscient persona that is known as the author. The new author can be two different entities. He can be the writer of fiction, who distances himself from the story. And he can be the author who draws from personal experience, to build a world and to tell a story.

However, Barthes believes that when it comes to texts such as journals, interviews or biographies, it is still important to examine who the author is as the author has an authoritative role in non-fictional texts. And through non-fictional texts, authors' unfiltered thoughts and experiences can provide a greater insight into the authors themselves. Barthes brings up the writer, Mallarmé, and names the aforementioned writer, as one of the first people to see how the authoritative role of the author was getting weaker (Barthes, 1977, p. 3). Barthes further illustrates this with the concept of time within a text. When the author is given a lesser part, in terms of the overall meaning for the text, this

results in the text and the author not coexisting at the same time (Barthes, 1977, p. 3). And due to the absence of an authoritative author, the entirety of the text itself is dramatically changed.

In M. H. Abrams' work, *The mirror and the lamp: romantic theory and the critical tradition* (Abrams, 1977), Abrams mentions an external factor that can affect the world of an artist. This external factor is the outside universe which can invade and affect the artist's work. The fictional work that an artist creates is imaginary, where the artist himself is still subject to project or even imitates objects from the outside universe into his own. Since the world which the artist creates is still affected by common sense and natural sciences, which the author is already familiar with (Abrams, 1977, p. 7). Abrams further elaborates on this with the theory of the mimetic, where art is an imitation of the world regarding its appearance but not what the world truly is (Abrams, 1977, p. 8).

Umberto Eco wrote the book, *The Role of the Reader: explorations in the semiotics of texts* (Eco, 1997), in which, Eco argues that whenever a reader is engaged with a text, there is always some intertextual knowledge that the reader carries within himself, in terms of prior experience or from texts that the reader may have read. While reading a text, the reader will often encounter a situation that fits within previous intertextual knowledge that the reader recognizes. In such a case, the reader regularly chooses to associate the encounter, with an already existing one from his intertextual library and draw conclusions from it (Eco, 1997, p. 21).

When writing about intertextuality Eco uses the concept of fabula, which is a skeleton of a story or a basic story. As an example of fabula and intertextuality, Eco uses the text, *Un Drame Bien Parisien* as a case study. In it, the reader is resorting to adopt intertextual frames when reading a story (Eco, 1997, p. 31). In *Un Drame Bien Parisien*, the character Raul, raises his hand towards the character Marguerite. Here Eco brings up the point that the reader already has existing knowledge, from intertextual frames, as to what this may likely imply. The implication is that the character of Raul is going to strike Marguerite. According to Eco, to make use of these intertextual frames and be able to identify them, the reader has to go outside the text. Eco refers to this action, as an inferential walk. (Eco, 1997, p. 32).

In the book, Eco writes that when the author has completed his work and passed it on to the reader, the author wilfully allows the reader to make his own interpretations. There will be no change in terms of the dialogue or the style of the work, as the work will remain that of the author, but it is up to the reader himself to finish the interpretations (Eco, 1997, p. 65).

Wolfgang Iser writes in, *The implied reader: patterns of communication in prose fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Iser, 2011), that when a text contains omissions or gaps that are being withheld from the reader, the above-mentioned can be frustrating to the reader. As there is no direct contact between the author and the reader, the reader cannot get clarity or closure on some specific aspects of a text from the author himself.

Keeping this in mind, all the omissions and gaps that a story can contain, are left for the readers to fill in for themselves (Iser, 2011, p. 280). And as such, what Iser writes about texts containing omissions and gaps correlates directly to Eco's writings about the reader using intertextual frames. The author of a text passes his work on to the reader, in order for it to be tied off and interpreted, independently of the author. Iser also mentions a concept that he refers to as "innovative reading" (Iser, 2011, p. 26). This is a concept where a reader commences to engage with a text for a second time. And since this is the second time, the reader is engaging with the same text he already has pre-existing knowledge of. In terms of what the plot is and how it will unfold, the reader will see the text from a different perspective. And in turn, uncover aspects of the text that he might not have realized before (Iser, 2011, p. 281).

In his essay, *The death of the Author*, one of the first things that Roland Barthes writes is:

The author still rules in manuals of literary history, in biographies of writers, in magazine interviews, and even in the awareness of literary men, anxious to unite, by their private journals, their person and their work; the image of literature to be found in contemporary culture is tyrannically centred on the author, his person, his history, his tastes, his passions; criticism still consists, most of the time, in saying that Baudelaire's work is the failure of the man Baudelaire, Van Gogh's work his madness, Tchaikovsky's his vice: the explanation of the work is always sought in the man who has produced it, as if, through the more or less transparent allegory of the fiction, it was always finally the voice of one and the same person, the author, which delivered his "confidence." (Barthes, 1977, p. 2).

As previously stated, Barthes believes that the author of fiction is dead, whereas the author of non-fiction material lives on and has full authority over his texts. In *The Death of the Author* Barthes' views the author of fiction as an entity that has too much influence over how a text is analysed. Barthes argues that contemporary culture is tyrannically centred around accepting the method including that the life and history of authors have an influence on analysing their texts.

In the essay, Barthes kills the author, and by doing so proposes that fiction texts could do without this tyrannical focus of contemporary culture upon the author's life.

Biographical Criticism

In the book, *Theory of Literature*, René Wellek and Austin Warren look at the method of biographical criticism, in particular the relationship between literature, biography and how analysing a authors's biography can assist in illuminating the poetry which the author has created. Wellek and Warren states that while it has certainly been easier for biographers and that since there are now plentiful of biographical material to work with from authors, in the form of private letters, diaries and autobiographies (Wellek & Warren, 1970, p. 77). They warn, however, that since a work of art is different from a private letter or a diary, that it would be wrong to use the biographical method as the central study of a poet. The reason that Wellek and Warren gives is that it is undoubtably false to view art as pure self-expression, rather one should view art as a 'dream' that the author has (Wellek & Warren, 1970, p. 78). Lastly Wellek and Warren concludes that if the biographer keeps this in mind that there is use for the biographical method as a method that can help answer questions asked of literary history in uncovering the creation of the poet's art (Wellek & Warren, 1970, p. 79).

Poiesis

Mark J. P. Wolf studies imaginary worlds and presents his findings in the book, *Building imaginary worlds: the theory and history of subcreation* (Wolf, 2013). In this book Wolf introduces world-building as an activity that is often something that the creator partakes in from a very young age. From building pillow forts, to make up imaginary places that they cannot make physically in their games of make-believe. The playing usually evolves as children get older and end up being the creators playing with tabletop games, Lego playsets and even more activities that favours the imaginative mind (Wolf, 2013, p, 3). Wolf introduces the concept of "Paracosms" which, in the field of psychology, is imaginary worlds that have been built through early childhood and have been developed beyond its basic purpose. Wolf brings up C. S. Lewis as an example of a writer that invented paracosms during childhood (Wolf, 2013, p, 4).

In the article, "The Poiesis of Charles Dickens's Night Walks" (Christensen, 2019), Jørgen Riber Christensen writes about Charles Dickens. In which he adopts Plato and Martin Heidegger's

understanding of the concept of poiesis, to prove that poiesis was central to Dicken's social critique on society. Furthermore, Christensen writes that Plato's idea of poiesis is interpreted as a creative process, but also as something that produces an aesthetic (Christensen, 2019, p. 58). In the above-mentioned article, Christensen writes about two understandings of poiesis, the knowledge of Plato and the understanding of Heidegger. In the former, Plato's understanding of poiesis is that of something which is looking to bring forth an ideal, essential and to live forever. While the latter contrast this, as Heidegger understands poiesis being something that is trying to uncover a hidden truth (Christensen, 2019, p. 57). In the work *Symposium* (Plato, 1999), Plato defines poiesis as having three categories. The first category is the creation of something which is 'not there' into 'being there', where someone creates a world of their own, like God. The second category of poiesis that Plato defines is, where artists create a mirrored image of the real world. Lastly the third and final category that Plato defines is, poiesis in the form of the creation of poetry itself (Plato, 1999). While Heidegger's understanding of poiesis is different from Plato's. In Heidegger's mind, poiesis is creating poetry, where the poetry itself becomes an understanding of the natural world (Christensen, 2019, p. 59). According to Christensen, Heidegger's understanding of poiesis is, where an artist and his creation can be judged and given a value, based upon how his poetry and poiesis uncovers the truth of the world (Christensen, 2019, p. 59).

Christensen quotes the apprentice of Charles Dickens, John Hollingshead, and how Hollingshead says that when Dickens was feeling frustrated when it came to ideas for his novels, be it happenings or characters, he would go for a walk during the night (Christensen, 2019, p. 57). Christensen goes on to write about Gilbert Keith Chesterton and his biography about Charles Dickens where Chesterton explains that Dickens did not go on these nightly walks with the intention to put all of the places or characters in his stories but that it was something that happened unconsciously (Christensen, 2019, p. 62).

In the book series, *Writers and Their Work* does Charles Moseley investigate J.R.R. Tolkien and his works. In this book, Moseley, among other things, look at Tolkien's view of art and poets. Moseley examines Tolkien's theory of poiesis, which he explains as being platonic in that it uses many earlier methods regarding art and what the purpose of art is (Moseley, 1997, p. 28). In the book he cites the poet Sir Philip Sidney whom Moseley argues has a view of poets that Tolkien agrees with:

Onely the Poet...lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, doth grow in effect into an other nature: in making things either better then nature bringeth foorth, or, quite a newe, formes such as never were in Nature: as the *Heroes, Demigods, Cyclops,*

Chymeras, Furies, and such like; so as hee goeth hand in hand with nature, not enclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts, but freely raunging within the Zodiack of his owne wit. Nature never set foorth the earth in so rich Tapisty as diuers Poets have done, neither with so pleasaunt rivers, fruitfull trees, sweete smelling flowers, nor whatsoever els may make the too much loved earth more lovely: her world is brasen, the Poets onely deliver a golden (Sidney, 1595).

The way that Sidney and, in part, Tolkien understand poets and poesis is similar to how Plato understood it. In that, it is an artist who is looking to create an improved view of the natural world, or add something to the natural world, which it may lack. Specifically, how Sidney brings up examples such as mythical creatures and demigods. In which, the poet turns into a godlike figure in his text and becomes the creator, who can form and shape nature, much like a divine being. In the book, *War of the Fantasy Worlds: C. S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien on Art and Imagination*, Martha C. Sammons tackles both Tolkien and Lewis' creative process.

J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis would often meet, both when it came to their occupations as educators, but also socially at the Coalbiter's Club. Tolkien had founded this club, where the members would read Icelandic sagas and the Eddas. During their time in the club, it began to expand, and they would eventually form a literary society, called the Inklings. The Inklings, the members would typically read some of the works they had been writing, but not published, aloud to their fellow members. And what subsequently followed would be both praise and criticism, as this literary society would encourage and inspire Lewis and Tolkien to get their works published (Sammons, 2010, p. 2).

According to the writings of Sammons, Tolkien's method of writing has always initially begun with Tolkien simply writing a name and then subsequently building a story around it. As such, the writing of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* began in reverse. By first naming the characters, then places and objects and eventually deciding how these would interact with each other in the world created for them (Sammons, 2010, p. 16). Sammons paraphrases Tolkien from an interview about *The Lord of the Rings*, where Tolkien said that he did not really invent the stuff that appeared in the books. But rather, that it was the story that came to him, whether he wanted it or not. In addition, Tolkien mentions the character of Boromir, as an example of a character that he did not invent. Since he did not actively try to come up with a character in the style of Boromir for *The Lord of the Rings* as Tolkien was writing Boromir's story, he experienced that the story came to him and in a way through him as it was unfolding. Yet, not explicitly written by Tolkien himself. This led to Tolkien feeling a responsibility to write and publish it (Sammons, 2010, p. 16).

In contrast, Lewis's writing process was different, he would begin by creating mental pictures and concepts, that he had rummaging around in his head, and then proceed to write stories about them. In regard to, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, for years Lewis had an image of a faun that carried an umbrella and some packages. He has had this particular image in his head for a very long time, stemming all the way back to when he was a young boy. And it was not until the age of forty, that he decided he would write a story about that precise mental image. According to Lewis, Aslan manifested from the fact that he had suffered lengthy from nightmares about lions (Sammons, 2010, p. 17). Moreover, Lewis was of a different opinion regarding who wrote *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Where Lewis experienced that writing a story as the author, to be a creative outlet and release the pent-up creative impulses inside of him (Sammons, 2010, p. 17).

Building Imaginary Worlds

When Wolf covers Tolkien as a creator of imaginary worlds, he mentions how Tolkien introduced the idea of a primary and a secondary world when discussing the building of imaginary worlds. The primary world being the material world that we live in while the secondary world is the worlds that authors create. Wolf commends Tolkien on this as it could otherwise end up as viewing it as reality and fantasy, having a primary and a secondary world also states that there is a relationship between the two as the secondary world is relying on the primary world to exist (Wolf, 2013, p, 23).

According to Wolf Tolkien viewed imagination as a divine attribute that all humans share and that the desire to create is one of the ways that you can see how humans were created in God's image. Tolkien came up with the concept of subcreation which means "creating under" which is what the secondary world is, creating a world within the primary world. Tolkien understands subcreation as the creator being limited to create what already exists within the primary world, however it is possible for the subcreator to make new combinations and create things that does not exist in the primary world, new combinations which could be a new language or a new geography (Wolf, 2013, p, 24). Finally, Tolkien views the subcreator as an author that builds and imaginary world, but with the intention of having that world be more than a simple backdrop to a story (Wolf, 2013, p, 23).

Wolf states that all secondary worlds must resemble the primary world in some way for the reader to be able to identify with them and supports his statement by quoting Tolkien who says that fantasy is dependent on the real world and therefore does not make the secondary world too unrecognisable (Wolf, 2013, p. 62). As such Wolf writes that while the secondary world might be a world separate

from the primary one, the main character in stories set in secondary worlds is often quite and ordinary person so that the audience can relate as they are experiencing the new world alongside the main character. Wolf quotes C. S. Lewis who says that the more unusual the secondary world is, the more ordinary a main character should be written to experience it. Lewis bring up Gulliver and Alice as examples of this, ordinary character that finds themselves in unusual situations (Wolf, 2013, p. 63).

When investigating the worlds of *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*, there are many differences. Primarily in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, where symbolism and references from the books and mythology are much clearer than in *The Lord of the Rings*. The universe of Narnia consists of two different worlds. The actual world, where the Pevensie children live, and the world of Narnia. Which is a separate world, that can be accessed by different ways. In, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the way to access Narnia is for the children to walk through a seemingly normal wardrobe, but which actually turns out to be a gateway to the world of Narnia. The "real" world that is shown in the world of Narnia, is mentioned at the beginning and the end of the text. That world is analogous to the real world under the Second World War, which the reader is made aware of in the very beginning. When it is stated that, the four Pevensie children are sent out to the professor's house. Which was to get them away from the air-raids that were happening at the time (Lewis, 1978, p. 7). As such, even though Lewis did not display any use of his military experiences into this work, the Second World War was something that was very much on his mind and something which he drew some inspiration from.

Time and space seemingly work differently in Narnia, as opposed to how it works in the world of the Pevensie children, as Lucy discovers. When she comes back to her own world after accidentally stumbling into Narnia:

“What I said,” answered Lucy. “It was just after breakfast when I went into the wardrobe, and I’ve been away for hours and hours, and had tea, and all sorts of things have happened.”
“Don’t be silly, Lucy,” said Susan. “We’ve only just come out of that room a moment ago, and you were there then” (Lewis, 1978, p. 18).

On the other hand, the universe of Narnia, is a world that is filled with mythical creatures and fantastic beasts. From fauns, water spirits and giants, to centaurs, witches and trolls. And not a single human being, until the Pevensie children arrive in Narnia.

The world in *The Lord of the Rings*, takes place within the universe of Eä. Which is akin to Tolkien's other works, such as *The Hobbit* or *The Silmarillion*. Although, *The Lord of the Rings* begins in a much calmer manner, where Tolkien takes a couple of pages to describe the Hobbits and

their way of living. In the prologue, Tolkien describes Hobbits as little people that are between two and four feet tall, meaning they are smaller than dwarves. Which already is considered to be a short fantasy race by many (Tolkien, 195, p. 26). When it comes to the initial setting in *The Lord of the Rings*, where the Hobbits live, Tolkien writes the following:

Forty leagues it stretched from the Far Downs to the Brandywine Bridge, and fifty from the northern moors to the marshes in the south. The Hobbits named it the Shire, as the region of the authority of their Thain, and a district of well-ordered business; and there in that pleasant corner of the world they plied their well-ordered business of living, and they heeded less and less the world outside where dark things moved, until they came to think that peace and plenty were the rule in Middle-earth and the right of all sensible folk. They forgot or ignored what little they had ever known of the Guardians, and of the labours of those that made possible the long peace of the Shire. They were, in fact, sheltered, but they had ceased to remember it (Tolkien, 1995, p. 31).

The introductory description of the Shire that Tolkien gives, makes it sound like a calm and soothing place. Which has been isolated from wars and conflicts, that may have happened in other places in Middle-Earth. Similarly, to the British Isles, which were isolated from the rest of Europe and initially did not have to deal with a direct invasion from Germany, if you were to make that correlation between the two in terms of World Wars.

Quest structure

In the book, *Myth and the Movies: Discovering the mythic structure of 50 unforgettable films*, there is a foreword written by Christopher Vogler. In which, he explains his theory regarding adventure and the different stages that are needed in order to create an experience. Here Vogler explains that an adventure usually begins with the main character. Who then goes from existing in a completely ordinary world, to entering an extraordinary world, in which the main character is often confronted with a problem that needs to be solved (Voytilla, 1999, p. 2). If you were to look at *The Lord of the Rings* as an example of this you have Frodo Baggins that goes from being an average Hobbit, living an average life in the Shire who encounters a problem, in the form of the One Ring, which needs to be solved. This leads Frodo and his Hobbit friends to leave the Shire and enter the magical world where they are facing an even bigger problem when the ring needs to be destroyed. During this call to adventure, as Vogler refers to it, the main character will be confronted with several challenges meant to test him. At the same time, he also encounters several different allies and enemies, who will either help him or stand in his way. Frodo encounters several allies and helpers in his quest as

the ringbearer from the Fellowship, to Gollum and Sauron's forces which acts as obstacles and the One Ring itself, which seems more like an antagonist than just the object that needs to be destroyed. After the main character has solved the problem which he was confronted with, he then eventually returns to the ordinary world. In, *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo and his Hobbit friends returns to the Shire, finds that there is a final obstacle that they need to overcome when the Shire has been invaded, and then it is back to the ordinary world.

In, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, the transition from the ordinary world and into the extraordinary world happens literally. Where the children cross over into an entirely different world, which has nothing to do with their own, when they enter the magical wardrobe. While, in *The Lord of the Rings*, the change from an ordinary to extraordinary world is different. The Hobbits do not cross over into a different world, instead they venture out from their peaceful existence in The Shire towards the rest of Middle-Earth. Which is very different from where they originally come from. In both works, a problem is then discovered that needs to be solved. In Narnia there is a problem with the White Witch, where the four children of men are the solution to the problem, as foresaid in an old prophecy

Realism/Escapism

In the article, "The Great War and Narnia: C.S. Lewis as Soldier and Creator", Brian Melton tackles the topic of the influence that World War I had on C.S. Lewis as the author and creator of *The Chronicles of Narnia*. The article deals with how Lewis managed to portray and deliver some messages that he had experienced and learned throughout World War I, through his creative work in the universe of Narnia.

Despite not being publicly vocal about the traumas he might have sustained in The Great War. Which is opposed to Tolkien's craft, where *The Lord of the Rings* was intended for older children and was the main target audience. Melton begins the article by mentioning other authors, such as K.J. Gilchrist, who argues that Lewis' attitude and vagueness, when it comes to The Great War is a result of an undiscovered trauma. Which makes him suppress it and not be able to speak of it in his writings. Gilchrist also mentions Humphrey Carpenter, who discusses the reason why Lewis might be silent on the war and its subsequent effects. Carpenter believes that the war did not have an immense impact on Lewis, as it did on some of the other authors, who mention their experiences regarding The Great War (Melton, 2011, p. 123).

Melton further argues that if Lewis does not go into that much detail about his time in the war or lets his writing draw inspiration from it, it is likely due to the fact that Lewis might not have felt that he played a significant role in The Great War. And therefore, did not let the role he had in it to define him (Melton, 2011, p. 123). Additionally, Melton writes that since Lewis does not explicitly write much about the war, and its effects on him, a lot of people studying Lewis might have misinterpreted him. In that the war had in no real way affected Lewis, thus not having influenced his works after the war. However, Melton argues for the fact that by not writing or addressing his time during the war, could very well have been a defence mechanism for Lewis, and not him deliberately choosing not to address it (Melton, 2011, p. 128). Melton also mentions that veterans are not given as much credibility, when compared to those who show visible signs of post war trauma. And if you are a veteran, who has experienced war, which leaves many of the soldiers traumatized but does not have any visible scars, then your testimony about war is given less credibility, as you are not visibly traumatized. Moreover, Melton believes that Lewis might have been a veteran who after the war, learns to adapt to their trauma and goes on to living a relatively healthy everyday life (Melton, 2011, p. 129). Melton also speculates on how experiences from Lewis's life and events in Narnia could be connected, as he dislikes how Freudian writers would psychoanalyze Lewis (Melton, 2011, p. 131).

Where Martha Sammons writes that both Tolkien and Lewis used writing and fantasy as an escape tool, from something in their lives that might not have just been the memories of The Great War. Sammons mentions that Tolkien and Lewis both experienced losing their mothers at an early age, Tolkien losing his mother at the age of twelve, while Lewis lost his mother at the age of ten (Sammons, 2010, p. 3).

During their time serving in The Great War, Tolkien writes that many of his close friends ended up dying, and that trench fever gave him time to begin writing one of his works, *The Book of Lost Tales*. Tolkien also credits the war as being a reason as to what rekindled his love for fantasy. And that he would pass on this experience to his son Christopher, who was serving during World War II at the time, to use writing as a way to manifest his feelings during the war (Sammons, 2010, p. 3).

In light of this, according to Martha Sammons, both Tolkien and Lewis have something traumatic happen to them at a very young age, being the death of their mothers, the loss of friends during the war and both of them used writing and fantasy as a means to escape the death and tragedy that they had both experienced.

Jørgen Riber Christensen in the book *Marvellous Fantasy* investigates *The Lord of the Rings* with the goal of discussing the relationship between realism and fantasy. How while fantasy is considered a genre for escapism, does share some similarities with the theory of critical realism (Christensen, 2009, p. 45). Christensen looks at the industrialisation of the Shire when investigating this. Christensen states that *The Lord of the Rings* is a tribute to the pastoral English countryside while also being a critique of modernity and the industrialization that Britain went through during the Victorian era (Christensen 2009, p. 51). The best example of this is the chapter “The Scouring of the Shire” where the four Hobbits from the Fellowship returns home to find that their bellowed Shire have been invaded. Resulting in a modernization of the Shire that has been turned into a huge factory like landscape (Christensen, 2009, p. 51). Christensen, however, argues that Tolkien is not alone in this critique and does not view it as this antagonistic portrayal of industrialization. The longing for the pastoral world and the romanticizing of the past has been something that has been a factor in numerous legends and gothic romances (Christensen, 2009, p. 52).

Focusing on Georg Lukács’ theory of critical realism to fantasy is the next part of Christensen’s goal. One of the bases of Lukács’ critical realism is that a work of art needs a mimetical rendition of reality to be called realist. This relationship between the fantastical world and the world that is a mimetical rendition of reality can be found in Tolkien’s primary and secondary world, the primary world being the world where the author lives and the secondary world as the world that is being created by the author. (Christensen, 2009, p. 54). The fantastical world filled with magic and mythical beings, and the age of men with its modernity and industrialization which has no room for magic or elves.

For Lukács the critical realist should not be providing solutions to social or historical problems, instead the artist should aim to ask questions in the right way. And while Tolkien with *The Lord of the Rings* does portray the problems that arise with modernity and the loss of the past, he does not provide any potential solution to these problems (Christensen, 2009, p, 56.) Finally, Christensen concludes that *The Lord of the Rings* is certainly not realism or critical realism, the genre of fantasy has a connection with realism as both fantasy and critical realism is making the reader to contemplate social and historical problems (Christensen, 2009, p. 57).

Part Conclusion

In the theory section the project has looked at the following theories. The death of the author theory, where Roland Barthes does away with the author, Umberto Eco and his theory of intertextual

knowledge and Wolfgang Iser and his implied reader that all grants authority over the fictional text to the reader instead of the author. The project has looked at the concept of poiesis, the theory of how creation is done. Mark J. P. Wolf who introduces the concept of paracosms, imaginary worlds that have been built from early childhood. In an article from Jørgen Riber Christensen, he investigates Plato and Martin Heidegger's understanding of poiesis. And finally, Charles Moseley and Martha C. Sammons look at how Tolkien's own theory of poiesis and the creative process of J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis and the other members of the Coalbiter's Club. How imaginary worlds are created are investigated as the project looks at Mark J. P. Wolf and how he covers J. R. R. Tolkien as a subcreator and how Tolkien views creation of imaginary worlds. The theory of how a quest works, in a book from Christopher Vogler is investigated regarding *The Lord of the Rings*. Brian Melton looks at the realism that can be seen in *The Chronicles of Narnia* while Martha Sammons writes about how Tolkien and Lewis both used their imaginations as an escape tool. Finally, Jørgen Christensen investigates the relationship between fantasy and reality in regard to *The Lord of the Rings* and how even though the genre of fantasy might not seem like it, it does have a connection to realism.

Analysis

The Lord of the Rings, The Chronicles of Narnia, a quick summary

The Lord of the Rings and *The Chronicles of Narnia* are likely the most well-known and celebrated works that have come from J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis, with *The Lord of the Rings* being one of the most purchased books in history. The plot of *The Lord of the Rings* is in some way a continuation of another book by Tolkien, *The Hobbit*. *The Lord of the Rings* follows the Hobbit Frodo Baggins as he is undertaking a quest where the goal is to destroy the One Ring of power to finally put an end to the evil forces of the dark lord Sauron. While on this quest Frodo has a fellowship around him that each is given their own quest to complete as the story progresses, the main conflict, however, is still Frodo and his quest to destroy the One Ring.

The Chronicles of Narnia are seven books that all documents the history of the world of Narnia. The protagonists of the seven books are mainly the four Pevensie children, Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy, and later on their cousin Eustace Scrubb, his friend Jill Pole and the two children Digory Kirke and Polly Plummer. Unlike Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* where the quest to destroy the

One Ring and Sauron is the main conflict over three books, Lewis' books do not have a large overall conflict that ties the seven books together. What ties the books together are the main characters and the secondary world that is Narnia, but other than that the quest that the protagonists are partakes in ranges from watching the creation of the world, saving the world from the tyrannical rule of a witch to watching the world of Narnia end.

Now that the overall idea of what *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Chronicles of Narnia* are the project will investigate the two authors, J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis and see how their experiences during World War I affected two of their most famous works. Starting with a closer look at Tolkien.

The Quest

In regard to the quest and quest structure as covered earlier in the project, both *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Chronicles of Narnia* follow Christopher Vogler's model of someone traveling from the ordinary world and into a special one.

Both the Pevensie siblings and Frodo Baggins begin their adventure in the ordinary world. Then the call to adventure, the refusal of the call, the meeting of the mentor and crossing the threshold happens that sets up the crossover into the special world. *The Chronicles of Narnia* has Lucy be the first to cross over into Narnia where she meets Mr. Tumnus, she then returns to her own ordinary world where her siblings do not believe her tales of Narnia. Frodo Baggins in *The Lord of the Rings* begins his adventure as Bilbo leaves the Shire, the One Ring is left with Frodo, but nothing is done with it. Gandalf then arrives with the quest that Frodo must travel to Elrond with the One Ring and Frodo, along with Sam, Merry and Pippin, are off into the special world which is the rest of Middle-Earth.

The interesting part when looking at the quest is looking at the beginning and the end of the quest for two characters. Frodo Baggins and Edmund Pevensie. Their quests are somewhat similar, yet it is almost like they are told in reverse.

Edmund Pevensie starts out very much as almost an antagonist to the rest of his siblings as he crosses over to Narnia and becomes an ally to the White Witch. When you view it like that Edmund starts the quest by failing as a protagonist, he fails Narnia as he has chosen to work against Aslan and his sibling before the quest even really begins.

Frodo Baggins, on the other hand, begins his quest the traditional way and follows Vogler's model of the hero's journey in the order that Vogler expects it to be followed. Where the journey of Frodo becomes interesting to compare with the journey of Edmund Pevensie is towards the end. Frodo stands at the mouth of Mount Doom and is about to destroy the One Ring, the goal of his entire journey, and he fails. Frodo refuses to destroy the One Ring and takes it for himself and it is only because Gollum manages to take the ring from Frodo that it is destroyed (Tolkien, 1995, p. 1049). Vogler's stages of the hero's journey have two points, the Road Back and the Resurrection. With the Road Back Vogler writes that there needs to be an event where the hero needs to make an internal decision. With the Resurrection the hero is reborn or transformed with lessons of insight (Voytilla, 1999, p. 5).

Edmund Pevensie looks to have his event early on in Narnia when he decides to betray his sibling and Narnia as he makes the decision to leave them and travel to the White Witch. His resurrection comes when he finally returns to his siblings, meets Aslan and asks their forgiveness. Frodo Baggins makes his internal decision at the mouth of Mount Doom, and like where Edmund chooses to ally with the White Witch, Frodo actually fails the quest he set out on as he takes the One Ring. Frodo's resurrection seems to come immediately following the destruction of the One Ring as his infatuation with it comes to an end with its destruction (Tolkien, 1995, p. 1051).

The Poiesis of Tolkien and Lewis

In the article, "Tolkien and the Other Inklings", Colin Duriez investigates Tolkien's relationship with the other members of the Inklings, in particular C. S. Lewis. As previously covered in the project the Inklings was a literary society formed by Tolkien with a number of writers which counted Tolkien and Lewis among its members, Duriez writes that the society grew in members as time went on as the son of Tolkien, Christopher, also began attending the gatherings as soon as he was back from his time serving during the Second World War (Duriez, 1996, p. 360). The group would meet Tuesday mornings in The Eagle and Child, St. Giles pub Tuesday mornings and on Thursday evenings where the meetings usually took place in Lewis' room in Magdalen or Merton College where Tolkien spent his time (Duriez, 1996, p. 360). Duriez writes that the Thursday meetings would have been the most interesting as that was where the members would read from their writings and receive critique and comments from the other members. Tolkien would read from what they referred to as the "new Hobbit" which was *The Lord of the Rings* where it would

sometimes be Christopher Tolkien that got to read from the "new Hobbit" (Duriez, 1996, p. 360). Duriez cites Tolkien in how huge an influence Lewis was on him and how much their friendship and their meeting with the other Inklings meant to Tolkien, Duriez writes that Tolkien confessed that it was Lewis' encouragement that made Tolkien able to finish *The Lord of the Rings* and that without Lewis it was not a sure bet that Tolkien would have finished the work (Duriez, 1996, p. 361).

Tolkien and Lewis obviously did not begin to work on *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Chronicles of Narnia* until they were adults and after they had served in the First World War, but they might have engaged with creating secondary worlds long before that. As Mark Wolf states when he talks about the paracosms concept and how he views C. S. Lewis as an example of an author that has created paracosms it would not be wrong to assume that Tolkien also was an author that created paracosms in his youth. As explained earlier in the project paracosms is imaginary worlds that someone builds from an early childhood and serves more than just the basic purpose of being a background setting for a story. Tolkien's own view of the secondary world, a world that exist as more than a backdrop for his stories seem to support this, that the secondary world where *The Lord of the Rings* takes place in has possibly been a paracosm that Tolkien has built upon from an early childhood and then created as a secondary world.

Earlier in the project C. S. Lewis was paraphrased as saying that the more unusual the secondary world is, the more ordinary the main character should be written. In *The Chronicles of Narnia* the secondary world is very unusual, there is magic and both mythological and fantastical creatures inhabiting the world. Talking animals and descendant of regular human beings. There is nothing more ordinary than regular British children, and these are the ones that Lewis has as the main characters of the books about Narnia, children that gets placed in an unusual setting and observes the world around them. Regarding *The Lord of the Rings* it is a bit more tricky as the Hobbits is actually a fictional race created by Tolkien for his own secondary world. So already the main character is a bit more unusual, Tolkien makes up for this by making the Hobbits live a very British life and have their lives be very ordinary when compared to the rest of the inhabitants in Middle-Earth. That way Tolkien manages to make what would be an unusual main character, the Hobbit, Frodo Baggins, into an ordinary one.

John Rosengrant in the article "J.R.R. Tolkien and Creativity I: Transitionality and the Creative Process" seeks to examine Tolkien's creative experience (Rosengrant, 2019, p. 145). Rosengrant quotes one of Tolkien's letters where he recalls having suffered from a recurring dream which

resulted in him having a writer's block, Tolkien then recalls how he was only able to free himself from the writer's block once he wrote down that dream which became the "Downfall of Numenor". Rosengrant points out that was important, not just important in the sense that it made it possible for Tolkien to overcome his writer's block and start writing again. But also important in the way that it gave important backstory for one of the major characters in *The Lord of the Rings*, more specifically the character of Aragon. (Rosengrant, 2019, p. 149).

Tolkien was very much against the idea that the writing of *The Lord of the Rings* was something that he was personally responsible for as he felt like it was almost destined that he was going to write *The Lord of the Rings* and that it was something that was given to him from somewhere else. As he writes in some of his letters: "The mere stories [...] arose in my mind as 'given' things [...] always I had the sense of recording what was already 'there,' somewhere: not of 'inventing'" (Tolkien & Carpenter, 1981, p. 145). Rosengrant writes that Tolkien in one particular letter disavows responsibility for creating the ents that appear in the work but despite that expresses that he was very much satisfied with them and enjoyed them as if he was reading somebody else's work that he had only had the task of writing down (Rosengrant, 2019, p. 153). In regard to Tolkien's poesis after the publication of *The Lord of the Rings* Rosengrant writes that Tolkien produces very little after having completed it. Most of Tolkien's focus was on revising previous stories which his son Christopher edited and published after Tolkien's death. And while Tolkien was surely affected by different factors such as his wife being ill, and later passing away, as well as old age in general. Rosengrant quotes C. S. Lewis referring to Tolkien as a "great, dilatory man" (Rosengrant, 2019, p. 156). With Lewis' comment in mind it is likely that it was common knowledge to his friends in the Inklings group that Tolkien could be a slow writer as so much of his focus would go towards building his secondary world and revising previously published material. When you consider that Lewis thought of Tolkien as a pretty slow writer it could be insinuated that Lewis saw himself as a writer that had his stories finished more quickly than Tolkien. Also, the comments from Lewis' secretary about Lewis being able to write almost anywhere is very telling that when Lewis starts to write that there are not many situations that will stop him. Another factor that might have been a difference in the swiftness of production for Lewis and Tolkien might be attributed to the fact that Lewis did not focus so much on building his secondary world as Tolkien did.

World War I and the experiences of Tolkien and Lewis

J. R. R. Tolkien

Experiences during The Great War

In the article, “The Great War and Tolkien's Memory: An Examination of World War I Themes in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*” Janet Croft investigates Tolkien's experiences as he served in WWI and how Tolkien was able to mythologize these war experiences in *The Lord of the Rings*. Croft writes that Tolkien signed up for a program that allowed him to take his officers' training while simultaneously finishing his BA. And when he completed his degree, he was assigned as a second lieutenant to the Lancashire Fusiliers. Though Croft takes note that Tolkien himself was not that satisfied with his own contribution in the war. He confides this in a letter that he wrote to his son Christopher, in which he struggles with the memory of not feeling he served as a good officer for his men (Croft, 2002, p. 5). Croft states that during his time as an officer and before getting sent to the frontline, Tolkien spent much of his spare time working on his Elvish languages. Tolkien writes to his son that he was not a good officer and working on his Secondary World took much of his time and filled his thoughts. Where it might have been better for an officer to be completely focussed on the task at hand.

After the Battle of the Somme, Tolkien and his unit were sent to the war. Croft is not sure as to how much hand-to-hand combat that Tolkien participated in. Since he was a signalling officer, meaning that Tolkien was mostly responsible for communication.

As well as being the one giving the signal for the troops to climb above the trenches and to gain ground in the ‘No man's land’. However, after a couple of months, Tolkien was sent back to England as he began to suffer from trench fever. He spent the last two years of the war alternating between almost being declared fit for duty and falling back into trench fever (Croft, 2002, p. 5). Croft responds to Barton Friendman and Paul Fussel who examined Tolkien's experiences from the First World War and how they felt that Tolkien was idealizing, romanticizing and referenced the war as if he deliberately disagreed with the history of World War I (Croft, 2002, p. 7). This criticism particularly comes up when Tolkien refrains from truly describing the horrors of war and chooses to describe corpses in a less graphic way than other authors that dealt with World War I. Croft, on the other hand, sees that this defiance when it comes to modern history is an example of Tolkien's theory regarding fantasy. That the main function of fantasy is an escape tool. Not a direct escape from reality, but rather a way to distance oneself from the everyday and the mundane (Croft,

2002, p. 7). Which could have been a useful tool for Tolkien during The Great War, to help with the horrors of war that he and his men stood witness to.

The Lord of the Rings and the German enemy parody

In the article "Nazis in the Shire: Tolkien and Satire" Jerome Donnelly analyses *The Lord of the Rings*, particularly the scouring of the Shire as something which could have been a satirical take on Nazism.

Donnelly's article brings up examples of the tactics used by the Nazis, when they occupied other European nations. Tactics such as spies, secret police, and having the community being held accountable for the action of one individual (Donnelly, 2018, p. 83). Donnelly draws parallels between these tactics and the ones used in "The Scouring of the Shire." Where Saruman's occupying forces take over the Shire and makes use of state terrorism to enforce rules that would control the populace. (Donnelly, 2018, p. 83), and the tactics that the Nazis used during the Second World War after having invaded countries. According to Donnelly, Tolkien was not inspired by patriotic films, but rather much like the general British population, he too was very concerned about the Nazis and what might happen should they invade Britain (Donnelly, 2018, p. 83). Donnelly is of the opinion that even though Tolkien served in the First World War, that it was the Second World War that had a harder impact on his life.

His two sons were serving in the military, and when the blitz started, the war came to Britain. Tolkien felt its impact personally, as the bombing destroyed a warehouse that had the first edition of *The Hobbit* (Donnelly, 2018, p. 86). In a letter to Professor L. W. Forster, Tolkien addresses his thoughts about how the two world wars had affected his writing. Tolkien writes that he personally does not think that either war had any influence on the plot of *The Lord of the Rings* (Tolkien & Carpenter, 1981, p. 300). There are certain things from the war which he drew inspiration from and put into his fictional work. For instance, the landscape of The Dead Marshes, which was influenced by Northern France, post the Battle of the Somme. In fantasy settings like *The Lord of the Rings*, where the servants of Sauron look to eradicate other races, they consider as inferior, this project sees this as events that occurred during the Second World War having influenced Tolkien. The Nazi party of Germany seeking eradicate the Jewish race, but also to drive away the Slavic people in search of 'Lebensraum' or living space. Of course, the orcs in Tolkien's work are not nuanced characters, and they do not seek to exterminate the race of men for ideological reasons, they seek to do so because they are evil by nature. And would write it into his secondary world and give these

traits and ideologies to the races within. However, Tolkien would seek to distance himself from all the horrors and realities of war, and therefore the extermination of races becomes a battle of good versus evil rather than a battle of ideologies.

Frodo, Post-Trauma

Livingston uses Barton Friedman and Hugh Brogan's examples of places where you can see the influence that the First World War had on Tolkien which affected his writing with *The Lord of the Rings*. Examples such as The Dead Marshes and the Battle of Somme and the Shrieking of Nazgûl being compared to the sound of incoming mortar rounds (Livingston, 2006, p. 81). Livingston disagrees with these critics and writes that while these examples are all interesting observations, he sees these arguments as not having any substance (Livingston, 2006, p. 82). What Livingston finds most interesting is, the behaviour of Frodo Baggins towards the end of *The Lord of the Rings*. And how it, in Livingston's opinion, reflects how Tolkien viewed psychological changes of surviving war veterans, who were coming home from The Great War (Livingston, 2006, p. 82). When Livingston brings up PTSD, he is basing it on the earliest recorded cases and findings from Dr. C. S. Myers who studied PTSD or what was referred to as Shell-shock. Dr. C. S. Myers found that symptoms of PTSD could last from months and up to years. According to these early studies, the first thing necessary for diagnosing PTSD is to identify the traumatic event, referred to as the stressor. The stressor must meet two criteria; first, the situation must have mortal consequences, and secondly, the reaction of the person in the situation must be one of great fear, helplessness, or horror (Livingston, 2006, p. 83). After having determined the first criteria for having PTSD, Livingston recalls traumas that Frodo went through in *The Lord of the Rings*. And how these events could be considered stressors for Frodo, making him a susceptible candidate to be diagnosed with PTSD. Frodo, like the other members of the Fellowship, saw war and encountered numerous dangerous situations throughout his quest. But this was the first time that Frodo and the other Hobbits had seen war, unlike his companions. Injuries and traumas were also something that Frodo contracts a number of, the Nazgûl injury he received at Weathertop (Tolkien, 1995, p. 238), the Mines of Moria where Frodo and the other members of the Fellowship can do nothing but watch helplessly as Gandalf fall to the abyss (Tolkien, 1995, p. 377). Frodo's encounter with Shelob where he is stabbed in the stomach with her stinger (Tolkien, 1995, p. 810). However, Livingston argues that the thing which separated Frodo from the rest of the Fellowship, who also saw war and got injured, was the fact that Frodo was the bearer of the One Ring. The One Ring took a toll upon his mind and was

itself a heavy burden for Frodo to bear (Livingston, 2006, p. 83). Livingston concludes that Frodo was under two stressors, the primary stressor of carrying the One Ring, which weighed on him mentally, and the secondary stressor of several mortal situations that Frodo comes across during his quest (Livingston, 2006, p. 84).

An example that Livingston brings up as the first sign of Frodo suffering from PTSD, is when he is preparing for a feast at Ithilien with the rest of the Fellowship. Frodo is very reluctant to wear a sword by his side, even if the sword is only there for ceremonial purposes.

Livingston comments that having an aversion to violence is common for combat veterans, who show post-traumatic symptoms. Tolkien would be familiar with this behaviour following his, and other veterans' experiences from the war (Livingston, 2006, p. 84).

Livingston cites a passage from *The Lord of the Rings* where Frodo comes upon the Ford of Bruinen at the anniversary of his encounter with the Nazgûl:

At last the Hobbits had their faces turned towards home. They were eager now to see the Shire again; but at first they rode only slowly, for Frodo had been ill at ease. When they came to the Ford of Bruinen, he had halted, and seemed loth to ride into the stream; and they noted that for a while his eyes appeared not to see them or things about him. All that day he was silent. It was the sixth of October.

"Are you in pain, Frodo?" said Gandalf quietly as he rode by Frodo's side.

"Well, yes I am," said Frodo. "It is my shoulder. The wound aches, and the memory of darkness is heavy on me. It was a year ago today."

"Alas! there are some wounds that cannot be wholly cured," said Gandalf.

"I fear it may be so with mine," said Frodo. "There is no real going back. Though I may come to the Shire, it will not seem the same; for I shall not be the same. I am wounded with knife, sting, and tooth, and a long burden. Where shall I find rest?"

Gandalf did not answer (Tolkien, 1995, p. 1098).

According to Livingston, his theory of Frodo suffering from PTSD fits, when put in context. As Frodo is clearly being affected by returning back to Weathertop, the place where he contracted a mortal wound from the blade of the Nazgûl (Livingston, 2006, p. 85). Even further removed from his quest, one year after his encounter with Shelob. Frodo is still suffering from the stressor of having been the bearer of the One Ring. As Frodo happens to be ill, lying in bed and clutching the white gem, given to him by Arwen, muttering: "It is gone forever...and now all is dark and empty"

(Tolkien, 1995, p. 1136). Livingston is making an argument that in the above-mentioned incident Frodo is going through the same suffering, both mentally and physically, as a traumatized veteran coming home from the Battle of the Somme (Livingston, 2006, p. 86). As the plot of *The Lord of the Rings* progresses, it is clear to Livingston that the psychological scars which Frodo is still suffering from, have not healed. Livingston notes that Sam records how Frodo has become more prone to self-isolation, something that Livingston states is common with people suffering from PTSD.

On the sixth of October, the second anniversary of Frodo suffering a wound from the Nazgûl at Weathertop, Sam is again met with signs that Frodo is mentally scarred: "One evening Sam came into the study and found his master looking very strange. He was very pale, and his eyes seemed to see things far away. "What's the matter, Mr. Frodo?" said Sam. "I am wounded," he answered, "wounded; it will never really heal." (Tolkien, 1995, p. 1138). Livingston encounters more words that could as well have been uttered by veterans of the First World War, from Frodo. As Frodo admits that he no longer can find solace, not even in the Shire, which he used to be so comfortable living in. Moreover, when Frodo is telling Sam that he means to leave the Shire along with Bilbo, Gandalf and the elves. Frodo mentions how the Shire has been saved, but he can no longer relate to it at all. Even if it is still the same, something in him has changed instead, on account of what he has gone through in his quest to destroy the One Ring (Livingston, 2006, p. 88).

Towards the end of the article, Livingston mentions that Tolkien once said that the character of Sam Gamgee was meant to reflect the common British soldier. Not a reflection of Tolkien as a soldier himself, but the soldiers that served under Tolkien during the war. Soldiers that Tolkien saw as being far superior to himself (Livingston, 2006, p. 89). Livingston weighs in on what qualities Tolkien saw in soldiers that he perceived to be superior to his own. Livingston theorizes that it might have been their ability to move on after the war had ended, which is also what Frodo sees in Sam as he tells him: "...you will be healed. You were meant to be solid and whole, and you will be" (Tolkien, 1995, p. 1140). Tolkien has seen, and experienced, how having something to keep one's mind occupied with during the war, helped keeping at bay the worst consequences of PTSD.

Tolkien himself wrote letters to loved ones about his time serving in the war, and he expressed in a letter how the mythology of his great works first began to take shape during The Great War. In fact, Tolkien outright states that: "The Fall of Gondolin (and the birth of Eärendil)" was written in hospital and on leave after surviving the Battle of the Somme in 1916" (Tolkien & Carpenter, 1981, p. 437). Therefore, the War probably had more of an impact on Tolkien and his works than he

openly admits. Nevertheless, it was also working on his literature that helped Tolkien to get through the war relatively unscathed. Compared to soldiers who were affected more severely of PTSD. That is what Tolkien experienced, and tried to portray, with the character of Sam Gamgee compared to Frodo Baggins. Frodo had nothing to return to once the quest to destroy the One Ring had been completed when compared to Sam who came back to the Shire and managed to start a family. Frodo had mentioned to Sam how he wanted to return to the Shire that he once knew. However, everything he experienced had utterly changed him, therefore, he could not continue remaining in the Shire no longer and had to leave.

Which also meant leaving Sam and the rest of his friends that had all gotten over the war and moved on, which Frodo was not able to do. This different way of handling how you returned from the war that Frodo and Sam have, might have been Tolkien drawing from his own experience with trench fever and how he spent the majority of the war back in England and going from suffering from trench fever to feeling fine and to suffering from trench fever yet again. As Tolkien views Sam as a character that is inspired by all those soldiers that were much better at war than Tolkien ever was, Tolkien probably saw how there were some soldiers that handled the war fine and were also able to return home after the war and live a normal life without any signs of having lived through something as traumatic as the First World War.

Loss of innocence

When examining Tolkien's writing in *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien is not trying to escape the reality of the Great War. Instead, he seeks to distance himself further away from it, while still drawing inspiration from the things that he saw and experienced during the war. When examining the character of Gollum, much like Frodo Baggins, Gollum can be viewed as an example of what can happen to people who experience great peril and trauma. Such as a war that lasted several years, engulfing the majority of the world. Because much like Frodo Baggins traumatically suffers from PTSD after having been the ringbearer, which was a huge responsibility while surviving many traumatising events. The character of Sméagol, or Gollum as he is also known as, is a character that changed a great deal, both mentally and physically from what he originally was. As Tolkien describes Sméagol's ancestors in *The Lord of the Rings* as: "Long after, but still very long ago, there lived by the banks of the Great River on the edge of Wilderland a clever-handed and quiet-footed little people. I guess they were of hobbit-kind" (Tolkien, 1995, p. 82). Hence, it is not too far-fetched to assume that the race Sméagol stems from, does not differ much from the Hobbit race, and is similar to Frodo and the other Hobbits. The unfortunate story of Sméagol begins with his best

friend, Déagol, as he finds the One Ring. Sméagol became immediately enchanted by it, to such a degree that he was willing to murder his best friend, in order to take the ring for himself. However, as time went on Sméagol began to change, both physically and mentally, which led to him being cast out by his own family. Sméagol then travels to the Misty Mountains and remains there for many years in isolation, cut off from the rest of the world, until Bilbo Baggins finds him and steals the One Ring (Tolkien, 1995, p. 82). When examining the events which Sméagol experienced, having murdered his best friend and being cast out by his very own family, it is not unlikely to see this as a traumatising event. Such a stressor likely weighed heavily on the mind of Sméagol. Combining this with the fact that Sméagol subsequently spends many years alone, talking to himself and to the One Ring, it becomes clearer that Sméagol is suffering from a form of mental illness. Considering how Tolkien came out of the Great War, suffering from trench fever and as a young man, had witnessed great peril with the horrors of war.

The loss of soldiers serving under and alongside him, had affected him both during and after the war. Furthermore, Tolkien had likely seen soldiers go through a similar change while fighting in the war. Thus, characters Sméagol, Bilbo, and Frodo Baggins can be seen portraying some of these traits. As they are both psychologically damaged from their experiences with the One Ring. With Sméagol, the damage done to him by the ring is more intense and physically visible. While Bilbo slowly begins to show mental signs of how the One Ring affects him and grows, as their quest progresses. It is likely that Frodo would also suffer more from psychological issues, had the quest to destroy the ring taken longer time. As it would have been in his possession for a longer time. What these three characters, Sméagol, Bilbo, and Frodo Baggins, have in common is that all of them suffer from a traumatic experience, where a loss of innocence happens.

Jerome Donnelly mentions that the beginning of *The Hobbit* is where the reader is introduced to the Shire, which is a place where life is comfortable and calm. Time almost seems to stand still, until Gandalf arrives in the Shire and disturbs the quiet life of Bilbo Baggins. Bringing with him dwarven companions and tales of dragons and adventure (Donnelly, 2018, p. 81). In *The Lord of the Rings*, the portrayal of the Shire is not very different from what it is in *The Hobbit*. Tolkien writes in the prologue to *The Lord of the Rings*, that the Shire is a place of order where the Hobbits have lived for many generations, as he elaborates in the book: "They forgot or ignored what little they had ever known of the Guardians, and of the labours of those that made possible the long peace of the Shire. They were, in fact, sheltered, but they had ceased to remember it" (Tolkien, 1995, p. 31). The aforementioned did not change from the time Bilbo began his adventure, arguably the only thing

that seems to have changed in the Shire, was Bilbo Baggins himself. This can be seen in how the other Hobbits perceive Bilbo Baggins after his adventure:

"He's often away from home. And look at the outlandish folk that visit him: dwarves coming at night, and that old wandering conjuror, Gandalf, and all. You can say what you like, Gaffer, but Bag End's a queer place, and its folk are queerer" (Tolkien, 1995, p. 49). It becomes obvious to the inhabitants of the Shire that Bilbo Baggins has changed since his adventures away from the Shire. As he no longer acts the same way a Hobbit usually acts. Ever since his return, he has not been able to fit in well with the other Hobbits, who have remained there, and are still in wilful ignorance to the world around them.

Sméagol, Bilbo and Frodo Baggins can thus be seen as somewhat similar characters in that they are both psychologically damaged from the whole ordeal with the One Ring. With Sméagol, it is the murder of his best friend and being made an outcast by his family to live in solitude for centuries, combined with the extensive influence of the One Ring. For Bilbo Baggins, it is having to betray his friends and surviving the Battle of Five Armies, as well as the effects of the One Ring tearing at him mentally for several years. Lastly, Frodo Baggins suffers from the massive burden that has been placed on him as the ringbearer. Then traumatically surviving a deadly event after another, until finally breaking mentally. As he claims the One Ring as his own, ultimately failing the quest that he had set out to do. Which undoubtedly weighed heavily on Frodo's psyche.

A different way to examine how The Great War inspired Tolkien's writing, as well as keeping with the loss of innocence theme, is to examine how the Shire is affected and changes throughout *The Lord of the Rings*. The first description of what the Shire looks like, geographically, comes from Bilbo Baggins. As he tells Gandalf how he yearns to leave the Shire, because he longs to see the rest of Middle-Earth. Gandalf asks if he intends to bring Frodo with him, Bilbo brushes it aside as Frodo has not grown tired with the Shire such as he has: "...but he is still in love with the Shire, with woods and fields and little rivers" (Tolkien, 1995, p. 60). However, in the "Scouring of the Shire" chapter, the Shire has drastically changed from the description that Bilbo give at the beginning of the books:

"Many of the houses that they had known were missing. Some seemed to have been burned down. The pleasant row of old Hobbit-holes in the bank on the north side of the Pool were deserted, and their little gardens that used to run down bright to the water's edge were rank with weeds. Worse, there was a whole line of the ugly new houses all along Pool Side, where the Hobbiton Road ran close to the bank. An avenue

of trees had stood there. They were all gone. And looking with dismay up the road towards Bag End they saw a tall chimney of brick in the distance. It was pouring out black smoke into the evening air" (Tolkien, 1995, p. 1114).

The people who had invaded and taken control of the Shire, had completely changed it from the place that it once was. The gorgeous nature and the comfortable-looking Hobbit-holes were gone, replaced with an industry. That looks a lot like the industry that they have encountered in Isengard. Isengard, which could represent a place of industry in an otherwise feudal based world. Here Tolkien was undoubtedly inspired by The Great War, which was a war that really changed people's perception of war. Before the Great War, people still thought of war as something where the two armies engage in battle, forming rows where they take turns firing at each other. And as one side has lost too many men, they raise the white flag, and the war is over. Where the rules were clear, and commanders were gentlemen and men of honour.

As the Great War began, many young men likely joined because they thought that war was still like that. And that the war would not last very long, there would be battles, but whenever one side had lost a significant number of soldiers, the war would be over. Which was not the case, as industrialization would forever change the way that the War was to be waged. And as the war was going to be industrialized, the sheer number of losses would be staggering and unlike any war before it. This is reflected in the book as the four Hobbits return to find that the Shire is in the process of becoming industrialized much like Isengard. With many ruffians running things and the poor hobbits being oppressed. The Shire has become a harsher and more inhospitable place, far from how it was first introduced. Essentially the Shire, much like Sméagol, Bilbo, and Frodo, has in a way lost its innocence. It has proven to not be immune to corruption and has lost its once comfortable and calm feeling in the end.

The Lord of the Ring and dying in war

When it comes to death, Tolkien's experience is, of course, losing his mother at an early age. In terms of soldiers dying, his experience stems from the First World War, where he had lost many of his comrades to the war. And later found himself to be one of the only survivors from the war in his group of friends. Of course, during the Second World War, he would have been worried for his son, Christopher. As his son was taking part in that war, while Tolkien sat at home and received news both from the English media, but also from Christopher himself, in the form of letters they wrote for each other. In the secondary world of *The Lord of the Rings*, these feelings regarding the potential

loss of young men are portrayed by King Théoden. When learning of what has happened to the Fellowship and especially when learning that Boromir had died. Théoden says, "Alas for Boromir the brave! The young perish, and the old linger, withering." (Tolkien, 1995, p. 575).

A comment that certainly could be suitable to the feelings Tolkien had, both during the First World War as a soldier and in the Second World War as a father of a soldier. Witnessing many of his fellow soldiers die has to be different than sitting home in England, a former soldier, and knowing what war is like. Now Tolkien would be watching young men go to war, knowing that a great number of them would not make it back. But while King Théoden is obviously sad that a young man like Boromir has lost his life, Théoden also seems to be filled with some sort of longing. He sums up this feeling during the battle of Helms Deep as him and his men are besieged in the citadel of Hornburg: "I fret in this prison,' said Théoden. 'If I could have set a spear in rest, riding before my men upon the field, maybe I could have felt again the joy of battle, and so ended. But I serve little purpose here" (Tolkien, 1995, p. 597).

Théoden clearly feels that as the King he should be beside his men as they ride in battle. And is frustrated by the fact that they are all trapped in the citadel instead. And would rather be leading his men as they go out to their final confrontation with the enemy. Perhaps Théoden felt that there was more honour in such a death, than in being trapped able to do nothing, other than wait on the enemy to attack. Glorifying war or distancing oneself from the horrors of war, as Tolkien would likely put it, is what is being done here. And while some people, like Barton Friendman and Paul Fussel have analysed Tolkien have criticised him for glorifying war. The character of King Théoden seems almost to be a critique on the people that glorify war and see themselves as lesser men because of what their ancestors did before them. Because Théoden mourns that so much that is young and beautiful, will get lost during the war. He regrets that until that point, he had never quite felt like he could stand side by side with the kings that came before him, without feeling that he was a lesser king. "Farewell, Master Holbytla!' he said. 'My body is broken. I go to my fathers. And even in their mighty company, I shall not now be ashamed. I felled the black serpent. A grim morn, and a glad day, and a golden sunset!'" (Tolkien, 1995, p. 934).

From this passage, it can be argued that even though Théoden had already done a mighty deed at the battle of Helms Deep, he did not feel fully competent when compared to his ancestors. That was until Théoden had his final moment coming to the aid of Gondor and doing battle with a Nazgûl. The section on King Théoden's death does not only serve as a comment on how some people look towards the previous generation, as something that is almost unattainable to them. And not as a

criticism of the glorification of war that some tend to promote, but as a tribute to fallen soldiers of the past. Tolkien would not seek to glorify his time serving in the First World War, or to reference the war as something that is worthy of song and legends. Instead, Tolkien almost writes this as if to comment on war. That while the war itself was something horrific, people should not forget the brave soldiers that gave their lives during it. All of this is addressed when Éomer speaks to the soldiers of Rohan after King Théoden has fallen: "Mourn not overmuch! Mighty was the fallen, meet was his ending. When his mound is raised, women then shall weep. War now calls us" (Tolkien, 1995, p. 935).

Romanticizing war

The glorification and romanticizing of war are present in *The Lord of the Rings*, when observing three of the four hobbits in the books. Frodo Baggins, Mariadoc Brandybuck, and Peregrin Took, also known as Merry and Pippin, to be specific.

As previously mentioned, Tolkien views Samwise Gamgee as a portrayal of the common British soldier, which can be observed when Samwise is compared with the other hobbits that are part of the Fellowship. Sam is the only one of the four friends that has some kind of employment; he is a gardener for Bilbo and Frodo, replacing his father who is too old to be able to do his job (Tolkien, 1995, p. 47). But when it comes to Frodo, Merry, and Pippin, there is no mention of their occupation. Frodo appears to be living off of the inheritance that Bilbo has left him. While Merry and Pippin, seem not to be doing other than loitering around the Shire. All three of them are clearly of the aristocracy when it comes to hobbits, who come from wealthy and respected families. Pippin is from the Took family, who Tolkien describes as a family that is respected for their great wealth (Tolkien, 1995, p. 36). Merry comes from the Brandybuck family, both families that Frodo has some relation with, as Pippin often refers to him as cousin Frodo.

Furthermore, the other Hobbits comments on Frodo's relation to the Brandybuck family, when talking about Bilbo taking him in: "'But what about this Frodo that lives with him?' asked Old Noakes of Bywater. 'Baggins is his name, but he's more than half a Brandybuck, they say.'" (Tolkien, 1995, p. 47).

The three of them, Frodo, Merry and Pippin are definitely of the aristocracy when you compare them to Sam the gardener. Even though they might not share the same wealth and come from different backgrounds, they are still friends and take care of one another. Very much like how it goes in war, where you have young men from every part of society joining the army to fight for a

common goal. Tolkien, being highly educated, would also, in a way, have been part of the upper class. That is, if you were to compare him to some of the common soldiers, who might not have had the opportunity to study at university prior to serving in the army. Perhaps this is why Tolkien partly sees Samwise as representing the common English soldier. In that, Samwise is portrayed differently from the other hobbits that undertake the quest to destroy the One Ring.

Tolkien poured the admiration which he had for the common soldier into Sam and made him a more identifiable character than Sam's aristocratic Hobbit friends.

To a certain extent, all of the Hobbits also romanticize the big quest that they are undertaking. The reason for this is most likely the stories that they have heard Bilbo tell, from his adventure and from all the strange people that he met along his journey.

While they certainly take the quest seriously, there is a feeling of wonder and excitement for what they are about to do. Especially from Sam, who especially grew up loving the stories that Bilbo told. And while Frodo certainly has his share of traumatic experiences throughout the quest. Which leads to Sam discovering the consequences of such a quest can have on the body and mind. It is Merry and Pippin, who are confronted with the realities of war. And in turn are stripped from their innocence. The true journey for Merry and Pippin begins at the House of Elrond. After the council rules as to what must be done with the One Ring. Where both of them are outraged after Sam gets caught spying at the meeting. But the actual reason for their outrage was that Sam is allowed to join Frodo and the rest of the Fellowship. Which Merry and Pippin both perceive as Sam getting rewarded for his actions (Tolkien, 1995, p. 316). As the time of the quest nears, Merry and Pippin advocate for them to be chosen as two of the nine members of the Fellowship. Elrond finally concedes and lets the both of them join but says that the reason they are so enthusiastic about joining is that they cannot fathom what lies ahead in the coming journey (Tolkien, 1995, p. 320). Later during their journey, Merry and Pippin, along with the rest of the Fellowship, encounter many smaller confrontations with the enemy. However, it is not until they get separated from each other that they experience realities of war first-hand. Pippin's journey begins when he and Gandalf ride for Gondor and Minas Tirith, in order to assist in the upcoming siege of the city. Pippin offers his service to Denethor, the steward of Gondor and father of Boromir, as payment for the debt that he feels that he owes for Boromir (Tolkien, 1995, p. 838).

Pippin is thus made to serve as a guard in the city, and at the same time senses that he has changed from how he was at the beginning of the quest: "Already it seemed years to Pippin since he had sat there before, in some half-forgotten time when he had still been a Hobbit, a light-hearted wanderer

touched little by the perils he had passed through. Now he was one small soldier in a city preparing for a great assault..." (Tolkien, 1995, p. 895). Pippin is beginning to realize what war is truly like. Now gone are the days from where he travelled Middle-Earth with the rest of the Fellowship and encountered small battles, in which they were victorious. This is something entirely different, this is war on a grand scale, grander than anything Pippin would have ever seen or have been able to imagine. As the siege of Minas Tirith is happening, Pippin has the first real taste of the fear, a feeling which must have gripped Tolkien and many other First World War soldiers as they tasted their first battle. Pippin is running through the city looking for Gandalf, when the scream of a Nazgûl can suddenly be heard and rips through the air. Tolkien describes Pippin's fear like this: "Forcing himself on against a gust of fear and horror that shook him almost to his knees, Pippin turned a corner opening on the wide place behind the City Gate. He stopped dead. He had found Gandalf, but he shrank back, cowering into a shadow" (Tolkien, 1995, p. 917).

The way Tolkien describes the scream, like a cry, a great shock, and an echoing boom, it is as if he is reliving the days at the front where mortar rounds would rain over the battlefield and soldiers would duck for cover and pray that the round would not land in their trench.

Meanwhile, Merry's journey to war begins after Pippin has left with Gandalf for Gondor. Merry rides with King Théoden and the men of Rohan, even offering King Théoden his service. But when Gondor calls for aid and the men of Rohan are ready to ride out, King Théoden releases Merry from his service and tells him that he should remain with the women and children. Something that Merry does not agree with: "But, but, lord,' Merry stammered, 'I offered you my sword. I do not want to be parted from you like this, Théoden King. And as all my friends have gone to the battle, I should be ashamed to stay behind.'" (Tolkien, 1995, p. 889).

This feeling, that if you are left behind you will be shamed, is something that Tolkien had been confronted with during WWI. As he writes in a letter to his son, Christopher. In which Tolkien mentions that he did not immediately volunteer for the British Army, he recalled that: "In those days chaps joined up, or were scorned publicly. It was a nasty cleft to be in for a young man with too much imagination and little physical courage" (Tolkien & Carpenter, 1981, p. 111). This describes exactly what Merry is feeling, that he would be ashamed if he did not join the war, especially now that all of his friends had done so. Finally Merry is able to sneak to battle with the Rohan army, and the large battle is probably unlike anything that Merry could imagine, He even seems to get a bit shell-shocked, when he is thrown from his horse after the arrival of a Nazgûl,

Tolkien writes that Merry crawled on all fours and that he was both blind and sick (Tolkien, 1995, p. 932). Common signs of those suffering from shellshock are the loss of basic motor functions, so Merry has likely been suffering from that as he takes part in his first battle.

Following both of their experiences with large industrial battles, Merry and Pippin are changed; the change really becomes visible during the Scouring of the Shire events that transpire in *The Lord of the Rings*. They both speak with authority and seriousness that they did not have before they set out on their journeys. This is further evident when they are about to enter the Shire and one of the highway-robbers that have been placed to guard the gates; "'Bill Ferny,' said Merry, 'if you don't open that gate in ten seconds, you'll regret it. I shall set steel to you if you don't obey. And when you have opened the gates, you will go through them and never return...'" (Tolkien, 1995, p. 1109). This commanding of respect continues as the Hobbits make their way through the Shire to deal with the leader of this invading force that has taken hold of their land. Merry and Pippin both show off their titles as messengers of the king, both because they are proud and that it commands respect and is the result of all that they have seen and experienced in their journey. They are easily able to chase off the ruffians without it resulting in bloodshed, as they have gained an iron-clad authority that the ruffians are not used to seeing with other Hobbits. Frodo is hopeful that it will not come to fighting. While the battle-hardened Merry, and Pippin see it in a more realistic way when dealing with the invading force that has taken the Shire "...it will certainly mean fighting. You won't rescue Lotho, or the Shire, just by being shocked and sad, my dear Frodo" (Tolkien, 1995, p. 1117). Merry even shows that he understands why the other Hobbits of the Shire have not fought back as him, as his friends were in the same situation Merry was before the journey. He understands that the other Hobbits have been so comfortable, not having to deal with any sort of conflict for so long that they do not know what to do unless someone were to gather and lead them.

Tolkien and poiesis

As Mark Wolf comments, C. S. Lewis would be one of those writers that grew up inventing paracosms, building imaginary worlds up from an early childhood, and Tolkien, being such an incredible worldbuilder would also be an example of someone creating paracosms. Having been drawn to poetry during his time injured in the First World War Tolkien would have been drawn to once again engage with creating imaginary worlds. The poiesis of Tolkien would fall under both Plato and martin Heidegger's understanding of poiesis, these understandings being that an artist

seeks to bring forth an ideal and to live forever, and an artist seeking to uncover the hidden truths of the world.

Going with Plato's definition of the concept is something that Tolkien undoubtedly would agree with as Tolkien as a subcreator would seek to create his own Secondary World where he aimed to create much like God of the Primary World created all that there is. Martin Heidegger's method of poiesis is also something that could be applied to Tolkien, though it is not certain that he would agree with it. The hidden truth which Tolkien, as the artist, would seek to uncover and have his reader think about might be the whole industrialization that the British society was undergoing as the Second World War made Britain utilize the Total War concept and the consequences that this industrialization would bring with it.

Part Conclusion

With Tolkien, the project has looked at his life during the First World War. How Tolkien spent his life during the War and that he considered himself to be a bad officer, partly because he was so focused on his secondary world and his writings more than he could have focussed on the war. Jerome Donnelly looks at *The Lord of the Rings* and how that especially The Shire is a symbol for Britain, and how The Scouring of The Shire is an example of Tolkien taking inspiration for the events that occurred both during the First and Second World War. And writing a parody of the fears that the British people had at the time when imagining an invasion by Nazi Germany. The thesis has taken a closer look at the characters of Frodo Baggins, Bilbo Baggins, and Sméagol and how they all show varying signs of being affected mentally by the events that they have all experienced. Parallels can be drawn between this and what Tolkien might have seen from his fellow veterans after the war. And likely experienced himself, since he was sent home after suffering from trench fever. Furthermore, how the industrialization of war in the First and Second World War can be experienced through the takeover and industrialization of the Shire. How dying and how characters view death is investigated. From how King Théoden views the death of young Boromir and to how he feels a certain degree of shame when he compares his acts to those of the generation that came before him. Finally, the project has looked upon the characters, Merry and Pippin, and how they start out romanticizing the adventure that they are about to start and how they end up realising what it truly means to go to war, probably like what many young soldiers went through when they signed up for the British Army for The Great War.

C. S. Lewis

Experiences during The Great War

When Brian Melton in the article “The Great War and Narnia: C.S. Lewis as Soldier and Creator” looks at C. S. Lewis' life in the years of the First World War Melton notes that Lewis for a period of time is undecided if he wanted to join the British Army. Lewis' reason for this indecisiveness is that he did not want to spend the majority of his time with war on his mind (Melton, 2011, p. 125).

However, after Lewis begins to study at Oxford he enlists in the army, though he joins a cadet battalion at Kable College. As a result, Lewis can keep studying at Oxford while receiving military training. After having completed his military training Lewis joins the Somerset Light Infantry as a second lieutenant and is sent to the front (Melton, 2011, p. 126). While at the front Lewis did as he said he would and distanced himself from thinking too much of the war, retreating into a world of literature.

Lewis spent his time with poems where he most likely also did a lot of writing, Lewis' former secretary commented that Lewis had an ability that made him able to sit down and write no matter the situation (Melton, 2011, p. 126). Literature and fantasy were an escape for Lewis who did not want to have his mind consumed by the war and this is possibly the reason as to why Lewis feels that he was not that strongly affected by the war. Melton writes that Lewis handled himself well when he served and that he and his company were awarded for some of the work that they did during the war. During an attack in April, however, Lewis is badly wounded, and he is barely able to drag himself towards friendly territory where he gets transported to a hospital and Lewis spends the rest of the war recovering (Melton, 2011, p. 126).

The influence of war

When it comes to how the experiences of war may have impacted C.S. Lewis and how he wrote *The Chronicles of Narnia*, examples of this can be found if you look at the text. The book begins by making it clear that the four Pevensie children are sent away from London and to the English countryside because of the war. Their parents wanted them away from the city as air-raids were happening (Lewis, 1978). This is not Lewis that takes inspiration from his day as a soldier during the First World War, but Lewis being inspired from what he saw as the Second World War was underway. When the Germans were bombing British cities during The Blitz

Melton, looks at some of Lewis' thoughts and feelings regarding war and an example that Melton takes note of comes from *The Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis*, where Lewis would comment that

even though he knew that war was a necessity, he would rather die than live through another one (Melton, 2011, p. 126).

The two girls, Susan and Lucy Pevensie, might be characters that symbolize these thoughts. When the children meet Father Christmas and are each given a set of tools to be used in their future quest, both Susan and Lucy are also given weapons. Susan is given a bow and arrows while Lucy is given a dagger. Father Christmas makes it clear to the girls, however, that the weapons they have been given are only to be used in self-defence as neither of the girls will be participating in the battle (Lewis, 1978). Lucy objects to this and says that she is brave enough to be able to go to battle just like her brothers, but Father Christmas dismisses her as it is not a question of courage. Lewis uses the two girls as a way to comment on his stance regarding people being eager to join the army and fight in a war. In Lewis' mind war is not something glamorous that you should aspire to join no matter the amount of courage that you possess. War is horrible and everything should be done to avoid it, but when there is no other option war can be necessary which is why the girls are given weapons even though they are not meant to take part in the upcoming battle.

As Melton writes, that in the mind of Humphrey Carpenter, this is a sign that the war had little to no impact on what Lewis writes. Carpenter's argument is that Lewis does not go into detail on how the war affected him when compared to other authors like Tolkien. Therefore, either Lewis is not affected by World War I, or he purposely chooses to hide how he was affected (Melton, 2011, p. 123). Martha Sammons would be in contrast to this opinion as, according to her, Lewis is using imaginary worlds and his writing as an escape tool to deal with the loss of his mother and his friends that he lost during World War I (Sammons, 2010, p. 3).

Melton sees several influences that the First World War has on *The Chronicles of Narnia*. He divides these influences up into three categories. The first category being exclusive influences which are themes that Lewis had experience with but purposely chose not to include in his work. The second category Melton calls inclusive influences, which are ideas that Lewis chose to include in Narnia. The final category of influences from World War I is what Melton calls 'Missing in Action' which are themes that are prominent in the writings of other prominent authors that served in World War I that Lewis have chosen not to include in his work (Melton, 2011, p. 130). Melton makes it clear that this is not a project that tries to psychoanalyse Lewis in the traditional sense as that was something that Lewis was very much opposed to. Instead the goal is to analyse *The Chronicles of Narnia* from a historical perspective. Melton only seeks to point to the parallels between *The Chronicles of Narnia* and the First World War, he does not seek to uncover why the

parallels are there or what they could mean as that is open for debate without the thoughts of Lewis himself (Melton, 2011, p. 131).

Excluded by Lewis

The first thing Melton takes note of that has been excluded from *The Chronicles of Narnia* is death, Melton theories that this is because of the attitude that Lewis holds when it comes to death. This is particularly evident after some of the great battles that take place in *The Chronicles of Narnia* (Melton, 2011, p. 131). Melton describes how Lewis had an instinctive distaste for corpses from an early age, stemming from when he saw his mother's body laid out on a bed after she had passed away (Melton, 2011, p. 131). This revulsion that Lewis felt when it came to corpses is something that followed Lewis and only got worse during his time serving in World War I. Lewis would experience the horrors of the war when at the front, corpses would be scattered everywhere. Melton paraphrases Lewis and writes that Lewis encountered corpses of soldiers everywhere, that he would see them lying face down in the mud, propped against a tree. Lewis would be confronted with those corpses that he despised wherever he went during his time on the front lines. Lewis describes his distaste for corpses and how his time fighting in the war only confirmed those feeling in the book *Surprised By Joy* where he writes: "both [...] the very old and the very recent dead confirmed that view of corpses which had been formed the moment I saw my dead mother" (Lewis, 1998, p. 195). Melton notes that some of the battles in Narnia can at times be great battles with a lot of participants and thus, one must expect, that there is quite the amount of fallen following the battle. Despite this Lewis does not mention any corpses on the battlefield, there is no mention of the victors burying their dead or paying their respects to the fallen. Melton points out that Lewis does not make them disappear through some magical device, it is more that when somebody falls, they simply cease to exist (Melton, 2011, p. 131). An example of this visible lack of bodies following a great battle Melton points to the aftermath of the final battle with the White Witch in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Peter's army sits down on the battlefield and enjoys a nice cup of tea following the battle and proceeds to sleep on the battlefield as well (Melton, 2011, p. 132). It is understandable why Lewis would portray the battle this way however as Melton writes how Lewis remarked that he wrote his stories in a way that he would have liked to read them when he was a child. And as Melton previously mentioned Lewis had a particular distaste for corpses, so it is understandable why he chose not to include them in his work (Melton, 2011, p. 132).

Included by Lewis

Melton sees a dark realism in *The Chronicles of Narnia* regarding war as something that Lewis has personally experienced and chosen to include in his work. That war is something real and not just a game (Melton, 2011, p. 132). Much like mentioned previously when looking at how Father Christmas dismisses the Pevensie sisters that want to partake in the battle. The actual combat also seems to be relatively realistic, especially when you consider the fact that *The Chronicles of Narnia* has children as the target audience. Yet in some of the battles that occur in the books you can find passages where someone has their head slashed off or their throat cut. Melton notes that Lewis makes sure that he does not overdo it on the violence and the brutality (Melton, 2011, p. 133) But realism when it comes to combat is something that Lewis intentionally chose to include in his work, he does not just glance completely over the battle itself and he must have drawn some inspiration from his own combat experience. To have been in such a traumatising event as a large scale battle and not being fully damaged by it is another thing that Melton notes Lewis includes in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, something that Melton theorises is Lewis taking some inspiration from his own experience of having survived the battles of the First World War. In *The Chronicles of Narnia*, even though Peter and Edmund both comes out of the war scarred, both physically and emotionally, they do not seem to be affected in a negative way: "Peter became a tall and deep-chested man and a great warrior, and he was called King Peter the Magnificent...Edmund was a graver and quieter man than Peter, and great in council and judgment. He was called King Edmund the Just" (Lewis, 1978, p. 104).

Melton writes how Lewis ended up in the hospital and was released in 1918 and that, while he might not have been emotionally scarred as some of his fellow veterans, he would not have come out of the war unscathed. Melton imagines that Lewis found himself becoming a graver version of himself. Melton sees that Peter and Edmund were changed by the war, but it was not all in a horrible way as it helped them mature. And Melton imagines that Lewis himself must have found himself changed in a much similar way (Melton, 2011, p. 134).

An event from World War I that might have inspired a scene in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is mentioned in the book *Surprised by Joy*. In the book Lewis recalls his first night in France during the war, he then writes how two Canadians took him in and treated him like he was their long-lost friend and gave him cigars and brandy. Lewis notes that neither of the two men were drunk and they did not try to get him drunk but that the reason for them doing this was that they

were simply good people, while Lewis had experienced some, nasty people as he call them, in the army he was overjoyed to meet these two friendly people (Lewis, 1998, p. 181).

The event in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* that Lewis' encounter with the two Canadians has inspired might have been the passage where the Pevensie siblings meet the Beavers, and despite the fact that the Beavers do not know the four children. The Beavers take them in, feed them and dresses them in warm clothing and Mrs. Beaver even treats the children like she is a sort of motherly figure (Lewis, 1978, p. 45-46). An event that is similar to this, yet has a different feel to it is when Lucy first travels to Narnia and meets Mr. Tumnus, Lucy thinks that Mr. Tumnus is a good person as he takes her to his home and provides her with snacks and generally seems to want to help Lucy out of the goodness of his heart. However, Mr. Tumnus breaks down eventually and confesses that the only reason why he is so good to her is because he is supposed to keep her there until the White Witch can arrive and take Lucy (Lewis, 1978, p. 16). This theme of strangers taking someone in simply because they are good people is something that can be found a number of examples of in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, some of it might have to do with Lewis' Christian belief, but he definitely experienced this form of Christian, love thy neighbour, type of love during his days as a soldier when those two Canadians took him in and treated him like a friend even though they had never met before simply because they fought on the same side.

Missing in Action

A thing that you can find in the writings of other authors, such as Tolkien, but that is missing from Lewis' writing, is the demonization of human enemies according to Melton. In *The Lord of the Rings* there is a very clear 'us' and 'them' mentality when it comes to the enemies. Melton writes that during both the First and Second World War, Germans were dehumanized by the British to the point where they lost all individual human identity and were perceived as a combined force of evil (Melton, 2011, p. 140). That can be seen with the orcs but, perhaps more relevant, with the Easterlings, a race of men that chose to willingly ally with the forces of Mordor and as such are portrayed in the same dehumanized way as the orcs are. Melton notes that the enemies that Lewis demonizes in *The Chronicles of Narnia* are already demonic in some way, they are not humans but a collection of different mythological creatures, from werewolves to ogres and minotaurs. When human enemies do appear like the Telmarines in *Prince Caspian*, Lewis does give them a sense of individual identity, from personal names and having them be evil in a very human way, they are not unredeemable and some are simply following orders (Melton, 2011, p. 140).

Narnia and the loss of innocence

Like with *The Lord of the Rings*, where Frodo, Bilbo and Sméagol each lose their innocence in some way, something similar happens with the four Pevensie children where they lose some of that childish innocence that they had before visiting Narnia. As their first adventure in Narnia comes to an end, the days of playing hide and go seek are gone and a more serious, mature way of behaving is now the norm for the four Pevensie siblings. Of course, the four Pevensie children go through more than just the war with the Witch between their crowning and when they are about to return to their own world. Because of the way time works in Narnia, the four children go through many years of experiences as they are fully grown adults by the time they return. Lewis would have experienced his fellow soldiers and himself becoming mature much faster than people of their own age that did not participate in the war.

Edmund Pevensie is perhaps one of the characters in *The Chronicles of Narnia* that has the biggest loss of innocence where he goes from committing a sin and being changed afterwards. Edmund is the next youngest of the four Pevensie siblings. Edmund is described as someone that can be quite spiteful (Lewis, 1978, p. 19), and this character trait is seen throughout the first part of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* where Edmund constantly teases Lucy and needs to be reined in by his big brother Peter. Edmund is also quite greedy and easily tempted, this shows when he meets the White Witch and she gains his trust by giving him candy, Turkish Delight, this ends with Edmund becoming an informant for her of what his siblings are doing (Lewis, 1978, p. 24). Edmund's betrayal truly starts when he leaves his siblings and the friendly Beavers to go be at the White Witch's side. Turkish Delight is what tempts Edmund to betray his siblings as he cannot stop thinking of how delicious the candy is as he is sitting at the Beavers and eats regular food. Finally, having had enough Edmund decides to leave and sneaks out to find the Witch in the hope that she has more candy to give him (Lewis, 1978, p. 53).

Edmund, however, quickly discovers that being in the service of the White Witch is not as pleasant as he imagined it to be. Edmund is treated awfully by the Witch and her servants, the Witch refusing him the Turkish Delight that she had promised him, giving him dry bread instead. When Edmund voices his complaint, the Witch proclaims that: "You may be glad enough of it before you taste bread again" (Lewis, 1978, p. 65). After an awful time as a prisoner of the White Witch Edmund is finally saved and brought before his siblings and Aslan, all of whom forgive him for his betrayal (Lewis, 1978, p. 79). After this Edmund is a changed person, as stated earlier, Edmund

goes from the spiteful little boy that he is introduced as in the beginning of the story and grows up to be a just person. Albeit more serious than his other siblings, possibly because Edmund has experienced this loss of innocence from being a traitor to his family and to Narnia itself.

Another example of a person losing their innocence, or perhaps rather an example of a person growing up is the character Susan Pevensie. In the two books where Susan participates as a protagonist, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *Prince Caspian*, Susan seems to be the most level-headed and calm of the siblings even though Peter is the oldest one. And as such the fact that she too would have to have matured a good deal towards the end of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is not something that is noticed when you compare it to the evolution that Lucy and Edmund go through. Susan participates as a protagonist in two of the books about Narnia, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *Prince Caspian*.

After these books the reader does not hear of Susan until the last book in the Narnia series. In that book, *The Last Battle*, all of the children who previously visited Narnia have gathered. Conspicuous by her absence is Susan, the current king of Narnia asks where Susan is, and the following exchange takes place:

“If I have read the chronicle aright, there should be another. Has not your Majesty two sisters? Where is Queen Susan?”

“My sister Susan,” answered Peter shortly and gravely, “is no longer a friend of Narnia.”

“Yes,” said Eustace, “and whenever you’ve tried to get her to come and talk about Narnia or do anything about Narnia, she says, ‘What wonderful memories you have! Fancy your still thinking about all those funny games we used to play when we were children.’”

“Oh Susan!” said Jill. “She’s interested in nothing nowadays except nylons and lipstick and invitations. She always was a jolly sight too keen on being grown-up.”

“Grown-up, indeed,” said the Lady Polly. “I wish she would grow up. She wasted all her school time wanting to be the age she is now, and she’ll waste all the rest of her life trying to stay that age. Her whole idea is to race on to the silliest time of one’s life as quick as she can and then stop there as long as she can.” (Lewis, 2014, p. 98).

As Lewis was a man of Christian faith this was more than likely Lewis’ cautionary tale to little girls reading *The Chronicles of Narnia*, be good Christian girls with Christian values and do not try to grow up too quickly, instead remain faithful to the religion and you will be allowed into paradise.

This project, however, when keeping in mind that there is a theme of losing your innocence in *The Chronicles of Narnia* chose to look at this moment as Lewis commenting on growing up as a child and looking back at one's youth as an adult. The children of Narnia have all grown up but only Susan is rejecting the world of Narnia. Maybe Susan has been wanting to grow up and see the adventures in Narnia as childish and therefore has chosen to throw them aside as fantasies and games. When reading the passage, it reads like Lewis has made Susan out to be in the wrong for wanting to grow up and forget about Narnia while the others that want to continue having this relationship with the world of Narnia are seen as being in the right.

Seeing as Lewis used fantasy and his imagination a lot when he was faced with a difficult environment such as World War I it would not be wrong to assume that this is Lewis trying to voice his thoughts that imagination being a positive thing to have even as you grow older and that people like Susan who sees imagination as something childish that you should grow out of as being in the wrong.

Aslan, Christ or a soldier

A popular way of analysing *The Chronicles of Narnia* is to analyse it, and Lewis, from a religious point of view. In the article "The Wardrobe as Christian Metaphor" theorist Don King looks at *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* from such an angle where Aslan is, according to King, being portrayed as a Christ figure (King, 1987).

This project does not analyse *The Chronicles of Narnia* with the goal of finding themes of Christianity but seeks to uncover themes that can be related to World War I. One way that Aslan could be analysed if seeking themes of war and soldiers could be to look at Aslan as a symbol for the young soldiers, soldiers whose sacrifices might have inspired Lewis.

The event in question where Aslan willingly sacrifices himself is when he goes to the White Witch and her followers so that the sins of Edmund can be forgiven (Lewis, 1978, p. 87).

And while this sacrificing oneself to cleanse the sins of another is what a Christ figure would do, one must remember that Lewis is someone that has commented that while he hates war as it results in the death of young soldiers. Lewis sees that it can somehow be necessary and that he has respect for soldiers willing to meet death for the sake of upholding peace.

The event where Aslan readily goes to face his death will be analysed by this project as Lewis who takes inspiration from what he has seen a lot of young men do in both the First and the Second World War. Willingly signing up to go to war while knowing that it could result in their deaths. But

doing so because that was the right thing to do as they fought against evil and to protect their fellow countrymen.

Lewis and poiesis

Lewis, much like Tolkien would be someone that created paracosms from an early childhood and used paracosms and poetry to distance himself from the harsh realities of war which is something that he does by retreating into this world of literature and poetry. After the end of the First World War and being back in Britain, Lewis would eventually meet with Tolkien and the other Inklings and they would discuss their writings with one another. The influence of the war can be seen in many of the writing of his fellow Inklings, but Lewis would intentionally try to be as little influenced by the war as possible when it came to his writings. Likely to distance himself from the memories of all the death which is something that Lewis found particularly unpleasant. And as such while fellow authors that were veterans from the war took inspiration from it, Lewis would seek as little inspiration as possible from the war. Of course, small references that can be attributed to the war can be found in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, such as the Beavers and Mr. Tumnus. But overall Lewis managed to not have the influence from the First World War be dominating his work. Looking at Plato's method of poiesis, that it seeks to create something ideal and with Tolkien's view of poiesis as the artist seeking to imitate God as a creator of a Secondary World much like God's Primary World. Lewis would also seek to create something ideal, however, unlike Tolkien Lewis' Secondary World takes a large influence from Christianity. Without Tolkien's method and theory regarding sub-creating *The Chronicles of Narnia* might not have been written.

Part Conclusion

C. S. Lewis' life during the First World War is examined. Not much is known about Lewis' life during World War I as Lewis wanted to distance his mind from war, even as he participated in one. As opposed to Tolkien who has often written in letters about his experiences during World War I. What little that is known is that Lewis chose to focus on poetry as opposed to the war. Examples of Lewis distancing himself from war can be found in *The Chronicles of Narnia* when it comes to the lack of consequences after large scale battles.

In *The Chronicles of Narnia* one can also find examples of characters losing their innocence in some way, Edmund Pevensie is the most obvious example of this as he loses his innocence when he betrays his family and thus sees a change in his character. Susan Pevensie can also be brought up as

an example, not exactly a person losing their innocence from a choice that they made which as a result changes them. Susan is an example of a character that loses her innocence as she grows up and is not interested in the world of fantasy and fairy tales anymore. Which is Lewis commenting on imagination as something positive that should not be avoided just because one grows up.

The project has investigated the character Aslan and how, while others see the character as being a figure inspired by Christ, is interpreted as being a representation of the young soldiers that during the First World War willingly gave their lives to protect their friends and loved ones. The next thing the thesis aims to do is to investigate what common experiences that J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis might have had in common and how you can view some of those common themes in their works, *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

Tolkien and Lewis' common experiences

If one were to look for some visual representation as to what life during World War I could have been like, the 2019 film, *Tolkien*, could very well be a nice representation as to how Tolkien's life was like as he served in the war. The overall plot of the film is about the early life of Tolkien but is also covering his time as a soldier which is the part of the movie that this project finds most interesting. The film opens up under an artillery barrage and it is all chaos, men running around, screaming and having to crawl on their stomachs through the mud to avoid getting hit. A person warns that mustard gas creeps up as the soldiers fetch their gas masks and wait in silence for the gas to pass. There is a sense of claustrophobia when it comes to life in the trenches and Tolkien spends his time writing letters to friends back home in England, and his fellow soldiers stationed at other places (Cherlin, Jenno, Ready & Thykier, 2019).

Bearing this in mind it is not hard to see how both J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis could have been influenced in a similar way and included related themes in their works, as both of them had a comparable journey when it came to the years at the front. For both of the authors their educations were also central, and the war had a certain impact on that as well. Tolkien signed up for a program that let him take his officers' training while also completing his BA, and Lewis waited until he had nearly finished his first year at Oxford before enlisting in the army.

At the end of the war both of the authors suffered hardship. Tolkien constantly suffered from trench fever which kept him out of the war and Lewis was seriously injured and not in good health until the end of the war.

Finally, there was literature which without a doubt helped the two authors to cope with the horrors of war. Tolkien might not have been that great an officer because his mind was not completely focused on the task at hand, perhaps since his mind was busy with his secondary world and the creation of it. While Lewis used literature as a way to distance himself from war so that it was not all that he dealt with during World War I.

The Lord of the Rings, The Chronicles of Narnia and The Great War comparisons

Tolkien and Lewis have similar experiences from World War I which they choose to portray in different ways with one of the most visible examples being how they portray the effects that war has on the people surviving and returning home as veterans. In *The Chronicles of Narnia* the references can be hard to find since Lewis was against speaking of the war in general, so references as to what might have been inspired by Lewis' experience as a soldier in World War I are scarce. One thing that can be identified is the psychological effect that war can have on the individual much like the effect that the First World War had on Lewis himself. This is portrayed when looking at Peter and Edmund Pevensie. While they both participate in the great battle of the book, Peter and Edmund come out of it relatively unscathed. They do not really suffer from any severe physical injuries and the psychological impact only serves to make them better men overall.

When it comes to Tolkien and *The Lord of the Rings* you only need to look at how Frodo Baggins is dealing with the aftermath of the war to see how different that Tolkien portrayed this impact that war can have on a person. Frodo does, like Peter and Edmund of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, survive a very violent war. But unlike Peter and Edmund, Frodo ends up with some severe psychological scarring that has Frodo develop PTSD.

Merry and Pippin are also two characters that are seeing a change as a result of their participation in war. The case of Merry and Pippin is more like Peter and Edmund's than they are like Frodo's. Merry and Pippin also begin the adventure as a pair of immature characters. They are not literal children like the Pevensie siblings, but they are somewhat on the younger side when it comes to Hobbits and they do not seem to have had that much life experience. After participating in the war when they fight during the siege of Minas Tirith that results in a change in both of them as characters. Much like Peter and Edmund, Merry and Pippin go from being immature jokesters that are introduced to in the beginning of the story, to becoming competent leaders that are capable of

organising an army of Hobbits and play the most vital of parts when it comes to the battle of the Shire.

Something that both Tolkien and Lewis would have in common is that they have both witnessed inexperienced young men join the army, and after the war watch those same young men becoming serious, if not grave people. It would also be something that both Tolkien and Lewis experiences on a personal level.

Still, the loss of innocence is something that both Tolkien and Lewis focus on. With Tolkien, how all the traumatic experiences of war, and the mental anguish the One Ring carries with it can change someone. And in Lewis' case how Edmund is changed, not only following the war with the White Witch, but also from the knowledge regarding his intentional betrayal of his family which weighs on him mentally and causes him to change in a different way than his other siblings.

As Brian Melton points out, death is something that Lewis shies away from describing. In part since Lewis is having his target audience be younger children and wanting to write a story that he himself would have wanted to read when he was a child. So, there is not any mention of corpses being all over the battlefield as Lewis would have experienced it during World War I. Tolkien, on the other hand, does not shy away from the consequences of death on the battlefield after a great battle. This can be seen in *The Lord of the Rings* when Frodo, Sam and Gollum are traversing the Dead Marshes, a place where a great battle once took place that is now littered with corpses, much like the battlefield that Tolkien witnessed after the Battle of the Somme. When Sam asks Frodo what they are, Frodo answers: "They lie in all the pools, pale faces, deep deep under the dark water. I saw them: grim faces and evil, and noble faces and sad. Many faces proud and fair, and weeds in their silver hair. But all foul, all rotting, all dead" (Tolkien, 1995, p. 694). Very different from Lewis' description of how the army after the battle with the White Witch just sits down on the battlefield and drinks a cup of tea. With the Dead Marshes you have a battlefield that is still filled with corpses many years after the battle has ended and has become this desolate and rotting landscape that people do not willingly cross.

Both Tolkien and Lewis obviously hold soldiers in high regard and have tremendous respect for the fact that a lot of them gave their lives so that the war could be won. And respect for the fallen is also something that is a common theme in their works. Tolkien has King Théoden be incredibly sad that Boromir has lost his life as he is such a young soul compared to Théoden who is an aging king that more than longs for his chance to perhaps give his life in a moment worthy of song. Théoden represents this way that the young generation look up to the previous one and feel like they have not

quite managed to accomplish as much as they did. Théoden also represents the aging veteran who mourns for the lives of the young ones that are getting sent out to war.

Aslan represents some of that for Lewis and the way Lewis respects that a soldier is willing to go out there to fight for his loved ones knowing that it might be his death. Aslan willingly takes Edmund's place as the sacrifice to the White Witch much like many soldiers during World War I willingly went to war for their country. Tolkien might have disagreed with the willingness of it all, as he writes to his son that there was a feeling that if you did not join the British Army right away that you were free to be ridiculed for being a coward.

Cowardice and bravery are something that are tackled in both, *The Lord of the Rings* and in *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Many characters face situations where they have to be brave in some way and other characters are shown to be cowards that suffer for it. Frodo in particular is a brave character, although he might be too brave in some way as he feels like he should go on the quest alone and not rely on anyone. When you consider that Sam too is one of Tolkien's bravest characters, not only because he opts to follow Frodo, but because he willingly defies the orders of Frodo who tells him that he should not follow him (Tolkien, 1995, p. 461). In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Edmund is the character that shows most courage as he has to face his family and Aslan after having betrayed them and gone over to the White Witch. That takes a completely different courage than facing dangers to face your family and ask for forgiveness when you know that you were the one in the wrong. While Tolkien and Lewis might not exactly have watched that type of bravery during their World War I days, they would have watched a lot of soldiers performing brave deeds, and Tolkien in particular seem to have ended up really respecting what the common British soldier did during the war. Lewis does not speak that much about the war, but Tolkien is more than willing in his letters to share his admiration for how much he respected the common soldier, especially when he compared one to himself as an officer who was not the best kind of officer. This respect for them and the bravery that he likely witnesses from a lot of them must have influenced the way that he chose to write Sam in the books, as Tolkien comments that Sam is a portrayal of the common soldier that Tolkien knew.

Part Conclusion

In this section of the thesis, the authors, J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis has been examined. First their common experiences during World War I where it has been discovered that both Tolkien and Lewis had a similar journey on their way to the war, taking their education either just prior to, or

white receiving military training. Both of them have received injuries that kept them out of the last part of World War I. And finally, how the both of them used literature to escape the horrors of the war, Tolkien who used his secondary world as an escape and Lewis who spent most of his time with poetry.

The second part deals with the comparisons that can be made regarding *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Chronicles of Narnia* and the themes they share with Tolkien and Lewis' experiences from World War I that they have incorporated into their works. Influences such as the effect that war can have on people mentally, like how Frodo is impacted mentally by his adventure. And the two Pevensie brothers, Peter and Edmund, as well as Merry and Pippin and the changes and growth from their common experiences of having participated in war. Other than that, what else is covered is the loss of innocence that happens to the characters and the sacrifices and bravery that characters in the books as well as soldiers in the First World War

Lastly the poiesis of both Tolkien and Lewis are looked at, how they both wrote and created their secondary worlds. With them connecting in their literary society, the Inklings were where Tolkien, Lewis and other authors at the time met and discussed their writings with each other. Some of Tolkien's thoughts on his creative process are covered, like how he was once in a slump as he had a dream and could not continue his work until he had written that dream down, or how Tolkien sometimes felt like the creative process was out of his hands and it was like a divine being was guiding his thoughts on what to write.

In this next section, all of these topics that have been previously looked at will be discussed and how these fit together with the theories that have been introduced.

Discussion

If Roland Barthes' theory regarding 'the death of the author' was to hold true, then the life experiences of J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis would not have impacted their writings. It would not be relevant when discussing *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*. This project has however demonstrated that by examining the life experiences which both authors had, as well as certain key themes in their books, that the experiences which impacted the lives of Tolkien and Lewis can be seen frequently in their works. Either, in the way that they wrote their fictional characters, how characters changed and evolved throughout the story, or how war affected the ecology of their secondary worlds. The project has used biographical criticism to investigate the relationship between J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis' biographies and their works. As René

Wellek and Austin Warren warn of not using the method as a central study, the method of biographical criticism will be combined with literary history in order to examine the historical context in the creation of *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*. And to uncover the relationship between the Great War and the two authors' lives, as to how it influenced the creation of their work.

When it comes to poesis and Plato's understanding of the concept, being that the author is creating their own world like a God, it correlates with Tolkien's view of the concept. That it is an artist that looks to create another view or looking to add something to the natural world. Where the poet becomes the creator of his own world and can form or shape nature in any way or form that he desires. Combining this concept with how Tolkien sees a subcreator, as someone that aims to imitate God and create his own secondary world as something that is much more than a simple backdrop to a story. It becomes clear that Tolkien has indeed become this poet that uses poesis, like Plato intended for it to be used. As Tolkien is inventing usable languages, mythology, legends and creatures for his work, it cements him as someone using poesis in a way a great subcreator would. C. S. Lewis, to an extent also works well as a subcreator. However, it could be argued that Lewis was not quite on the level of Tolkien, in regard to how much time and effort that went into creating his secondary world. Lewis did not create any functioning language for the world of Narnia. The reason possibly being that Tolkien created these as he was fascinated with languages in general and enjoyed playing around with them.

When pairing Jørgen Christensen, with Georg Lukács theory regarding critical realism to assist, the project can conclude that *The Lord of the Rings* is a genre that has connections both realism and fantasy. And as critical realism makes the reader contemplate historical and social problems. Which ties in with Martha Sammons writings about Tolkien and Lewis, in which she examines the use of writing fantasy as an escape tool from a harsh reality. Looking at the harsh realities that both authors experienced during the Great War, they would need to find an escape that would allow them work through their feelings and thoughts. Where working on their secondary worlds and writing fantasy might have been one way, they found that escape. Lewis, and especially Tolkien, appear to write their characters and their evolution post war, as a way of either working through some thoughts and feeling that they have had regarding themselves or their fellow soldiers. Or they aim to make the reader contemplate how the events could have had such a big impact on a character psychologically. The things that Tolkien and Lewis would seek escape from can be observed in the movie, Tolkien, where his early life and some of his experiences throughout the Great War can be

seen portrayed. And it is these experiences and memories, which Tolkien and Lewis seek to shed some light on, or work through mentally with their writings.

The mental trauma that both authors are possibly suffering from can be observed in both of their works, in form of both inclusion and absence of these particular themes and events. Death from war being a primary example, which sheds light on the difference between Tolkien and Lewis. While Tolkien would include corpses lying on the battlefield in his works. The most famous one being the Dead Marshes, a vast inhospitable place entirely littered with corpses. On the other hand, Lewis would not choose to include such imagery in his writings, where there were battlefields with the dead lying around. What both authors have chosen to include in their works is the psychological effects of war. And how experiencing war and surviving it, can affect a person in several ways. Those experiences can be viewed in several of the main characters in *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*, as the four Hobbits and the four Pevensie children. However, the outcome and how Tolkien and Lewis view those afflictions on the people experiencing war, differs. Tolkien appears to cover multiple aspects of how war can affect someone with his characters. Where Frodo Baggins is a portrayal of the negative side of veterans and how they can end up with mental disorders like PTSD, which keeps them from living a normal life. The characters Merry and Pippin, on the other hand, appear to be Tolkien's way of showing that not everyone who experiences war is affected by it in such a negative way, as Frodo was. Whereas, both Merry and Pippin emerge out of the war as stronger and more experienced characters. Lewis does not portray any of his characters as having been affected by war as strongly as Tolkien. Out of the four Pevensie children, only the two brothers Peter and Edmund actually participate in war. Neither of them appears to have symptoms of PTSD or having trouble post war as Frodo did. Both Peter and Edmund seem to be affected by their experiences in a positive way, much like Merry and Pippin. With Edmund evolving in a graver direction due to him also having experienced being treated as a traitor, on top of his experience as a war veteran.

However, in contrast to the four Hobbits, the reader does not see them experiencing any trauma, be it minor or major. This might be due to the fact that Lewis' work is intended for young children rather than for a mature audience, as Tolkien's was. Dying, more specifically character willingly risking their own life for others, is something that can be observed in both Tolkien and Lewis' works. King Théoden, who leads his people to battle and, in the end, gives his life to fight evil, is something that Tolkien and Lewis must both have felt during the war. As they and their fellow

soldiers were sent to the frontlines, where they were going to battle willingly, while well knowing that they might not make it back.

Conclusion

The goal that the project sought to accomplish was to examine the parallels between J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis, in order to be able to determine if their mutual experiences serving during The Great War would have had an influence of their works, *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*. In order to accomplish this the project looks the Roland Barthes and his argument against traditional literary criticism, that traditionally looks at the author's own life an intention when analysing texts. The project thus makes use of biographical criticism, where the method is to look at an author's biographical material in a historical context, in an attempt to revive the authors that Barthes has done away with.

Furthermore, the project also sought to investigate the creative process of both Tolkien and Lewis and used Plato's method of poiesis to uncover how Tolkien and Lewis worked on their literary works.

Looking at Tolkien and Lewis' shared experience from serving during The Great War the project concludes that both of them had relatively similar experiences and that both authors found poetry as a measure of escaping the harsh reality that was the norm for the people being on the front lines. Both Tolkien and Lewis were affected by their experiences and have, knowingly or not, used this in some form when they have been working on their secondary worlds for their works, *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

Tolkien would likely deny that any of his work is inspired from his experiences during The Great War, although he might concede after a while and admit how certain places in Middle-Earth were inspired by real places he'd seen when he served during The Great War. Tolkien himself bringing up the Dead Marshes as an example of a place in Middle-Earth that could be inspired by the battlefield after the Battle of the Somme, and Sam Gamgee that Tolkien viewed as reflecting the British soldiers that Tolkien knew during the war. The project finds that there are many themes and characters in *The Lord of the Rings* that can be attributed to experiences that Tolkien either had personally, or what he perceived his fellow veterans to be dealing with during and after The Great War. Experiences like psychological changes in one after having lived through something traumatic and finding that you are changed because of it. The project looks at the Hobbits in the case of this.

With Frodo Baggins being the most visibly affected of the Hobbits after they have succeeded in destroying the ring. The reader can tell that something in Frodo has changed, something that Frodo himself also makes note of, and what is helping him make the decision to leave the Shire and Middle-Earth.

When it comes to Lewis, he also would deny that the First World War had any real influence on the production of his work and when compared to Tolkien it is harder to see any direct influence of The Great War in *The Chronicles of Narnia*. With Lewis' work the biographical analyst should look at the things that Lewis has chosen not to include in his work when compared to author prominent authors that also served in the First World War. While Lewis does include battles that have armies colliding, he has chosen intentionally to omit the harsher realities of war in his work. The harsher realities which can be severe injuries or the battlefield after war which would be filled with corpses and blood. Lewis would remark that the reason as to why he is doing this is because his work is aimed at young children, but this project would theorise that Lewis omits these parts because of how Lewis has a particular distaste for death, something he started having from an early childhood but which only grew after his participation in The Great War. Much like with Tolkien and the Hobbits, the characters in *The Chronicles of Narnia* go through a change psychologically following their experiences. Lewis, however, does not portray the negative effects that something traumatic can have on a person mentally. By the end of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, all of the children have grown up but none of them look to have any psychological damages despite all that they went through in their adventures.

The poesis and the creative process of Tolkien and Lewis that the project has examined, would look at the two authors as subcreators, meaning that they have created their own secondary worlds from early childhood. Tolkien in particular would have been interested in subcreation and viewed himself as the type of subcreator who is creating a secondary world with the intention of having it be more than a backdrop to the story. Something which the project observes in the sheer detail that Tolkien includes in his secondary world, which is created with a mythology and its own usable languages. Lewis is not that much of a subcreator as Tolkien, and this might play a part of the creative process when comparing the two. The project has looked at Tolkien and Lewis and their literary society called the Inklings where the members would meet, discuss their poetry and critique each other's works. Tolkien and Lewis were prominent members of this group and inspired each other greatly, Tolkien stating that Lewis' encouragement was a crucial factor when it came to Tolkien finishing *The Lord of the Rings*. When it comes to the two authors and how their secondary

worlds affected their writing ability, the fact that Tolkien spent so much time on his secondary world, going back and correcting, working on the languages and more meant that Tolkien spent much time as a subcreator as opposed to write new material. This project concludes from Lewis being cited as saying Tolkien was a rather slow writer that Lewis was not so interested in his secondary world and that Narnia was more a backdrop to the story than Middle-Earth was to the story that Tolkien wrote.

Out of the two methods of poesis that has been discussed, Martin Heidegger's and Plato's, the one that Tolkien and Lewis are most liked to would be Plato's method of poesis where the artist seek to create something ideal and to live forever. For Tolkien and Lewis, it is their Secondary Worlds that is the ideal, both men are devout Christians and seeks to emulate what God was able to accomplish with the Primary World. The Secondary Worlds of Middle-Earth and Narnia are these ideal worlds that ideal in the sense that they imitate the real world but combine different things into creating something new and unique.

Based upon all that has been examined and discussed in the project, from Tolkien and Lewis' time in the war and how both authors later influenced each other's lives, it can be determined that Roland Barthes' argument that a work exists independent of the author is not true. That argument does not correspond with what this project has uncovered, because without having participated in World War I, Tolkien would never have taken some of the inspiration for *The Lord of the Rings*. If Tolkien had not converted Lewis to Christianity one of the main themes in *The Chronicles of Narnia* would likely not have been present and the work would be something different than what it currently is.

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