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THE EFFECTS OF WORLD-BUILDING AND LITERARY TROPES ON IMMERSIVE
LITERATURE STUDIED THROUGH THE WORKS OF J.R.R TOLKIEN
Bachelor's thesis

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Kinnitus

Olen koostanud töö iseseisvalt. Kõik töö koostamisel kasutatud teiste autorite tööd, põhimõttelised seisukohad, kirjandus allikatest ja mujalt pärinevad andmed on viidatud.

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/töö autori allkiri/

PREFACE

Fantasy author John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, often abbreviated as J.R.R Tolkien is among the most influential writers of the fantasy genre. His lifelong work with literature led to him redefining many common aspects of fantasy and although there were many fantasy authors before him, he is widely considered to be the “father” of modern fantasy. He is well known for his works such as “The Hobbit (1937)”, “Lord of the Rings”(1954) and “The Silmarillion”(1977) all of which take place in his fictional universe named Eä. These titles belong to a sub-genre of fantasy known as High fantasy, which can be defined as a fictional story taking place in an entirely fictional world. Despite the fantasy setting, Tolkien's works are immersive to a degree where the reader can imagine themselves living in the world he created, despite it being filled with races like elves, orcs and many others. One attributing factor to this is Tolkien's dedication towards world-building within his works. There is detailed lore and history for various locations, and the races of Middle-Earth have their own distinctive cultures, myths and in some cases even languages. He also handled common literary tropes, such as “The Chosen One” or “The MacGuffin” by approaching them in unique and original ways, to avoid the methods that often lead to clichés. Both of these aspects have greatly influenced the immersion and entertainment value of his work and the legacy he left behind.

This thesis focuses on how world-building and common literary motifs can affect the immersion of a reader within the fantasy genre, while analyzing why certain aspects either succeed or fail. The structure of the thesis is as follows: Introduction, Chapter 1, Chapter 2 and Conclusion. The introduction defines the meaning and history of world-building and explain the difference between a trope and a cliché. Chapter 1 “On world-building and literary devices” contains world-building and the process behind it, while analyzing the immersion effect it has on the reader. It also includes an essential list of requirements to consider while in the process of world-building. Additionally the first chapter focuses on literary motifs or tropes, specifically concentrating on why these tropes are often used and how they are created. Chapter II “The effect and value of world-building and tropes within fantasy literature” provides an overview of how the usage of world-building and literary tropes affects the immersive capability of literature and various aspects of world-building that can either add or remove the value of a work of fantasy. The conclusion presents the outcome of this research.

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INTRODUCTION

Immersion Through Literary Tropes and World-Building

The act of immersing a reader within a written work of literature can be described as maintaining their attention. If a book is unable to maintain the reader's attention, they are likely to stop reading. A reader will certainly expect certain criteria to be met within literature. The story should be written with proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, and in a way that it is worth the reader's investment. Characters and their setting must be consistent and plausible and the plot of the story should be interesting in order for it to be worth telling. If these criteria are not met, the reader is more likely to stop reading (Smith 2014).

One aspect of creating and maintaining immersion is via the usage of literary themes and motifs, or tropes. The word “trope” is commonly seen with a negative connotation, as it can be interpreted as an overdone trait in either character, story or setting and they can be found in all forms of media. This misconception stems from a similarity to the term 'cliché' as both can be used to describe certain themes or ideas prevalent in media such as cinema or literature. A trope can be defined as something recurring in specific genres of literature, while a cliché is an idea or expression that has been overused and lacks original thought (Wrede 2014). The word cliché itself originates from the French language and it was originally a technical term for printer, which was identified as a French idiom that took on the current meaning in the 1920s (Etymonline-cliché). A cliché is considered to be something that an aspiring author should avoid in their work, as using them too often can portray a lack of original thought. In terms of literature, a cliché is either a phrase or plot point that has become familiar to a regular reader, and therefore cliched stories are predictable and uninteresting (Quinn C. 2009).

Another important aspect of story-telling is the setting for the characters and events. In terms of fantasy and science fiction, the word 'setting' is interchangeable with the word 'world-building' as world-building is the creation of a fictional setting. The world the story takes place in impacts the characters and the plot as good world-building focuses on how the setting affects the characters and plot (Pereira 2019). World-building and the usage of literary motifs can greatly alter how immersive

a written work can be. Despite the influence these aspects can have, the effect they have on immersion are understudied.

The Definition and Purpose of World-Building

World-building as a term can be written as one word or with the use of a hyphen. Both versions of the word have been used in print. However 'world-building' is more common in edited text and for the purposes of this thesis, the hyphenated version will be used. The word 'world-building' has had multiple meanings since its conception. The earliest recorded use of it was in the year 1805, where it was utilized to describe geological formations. The word later took on the meaning of an imaginative realm for artists and poets and at the time of writing, world-building is the word for creating a completely new fictional world for the purpose of telling a story. Both of these definitions have become obsolete as of the second half of the 20th century, when it began to take on the current meaning (What is world-building and how do you spell it? 2016).

World-building or the creative process of creating a world for a fictional story is a part of literature, specifically within works that include elements of imagination or futurism (Hamilton 2009, 8-9). It most commonly consists of qualities such as history, geography, ecology and other similar aspects. It is not uncommon for works of fantasy to also contain many different races and cultures, which are written in a detailed way adding a sense of logic and believability to them (Stableford 2004). Some authors, such as J.R.R Tolkien have even created fictional languages with their own grammatical rules, phonetic sounds and alphabets. The world-building of a story is only limited by how much the author wants to create for their setting.

As a component within written literature world-building has become synonymous with the science fiction and fantasy genre and it has reached an equal amount of importance to other aspects of literature, such as plot, characters, and setting in other genres. Setting in literature can be defined as the where and when of a scene in a relatively realistic scenario that can be defined as non-fictional. For example, the setting of the social epic “Truth and Justice” by A.H.Tammsaare is the country of Estonia during the late 19th century and early 20th century. In contrast to setting, world-building focuses on writing something that is completely unique and contemporary, such as the fictional planet named Arda or as it is better known, Middle-Earth in J.R.R. Tolkien's work or the land of

Narnia in the works of C.S. Lewis. Setting is utilized in literature, theater and cinema with the intent of realism, often taking place in real places and sometimes including real historic people, while world-building offers far more creative liberty through imaginative locations and characters.

Sanderson (2020) claims that in terms of importance, world-building is in third place right behind character and story. In his BYU (Brigham Young University) 2020 creative writing lectures he explains how the three core aspects of a story are character, plot and the setting. Sanderson states that a story with poor characters and/or poor plot with excellent world-building, will inevitably be worse than a story with excellent characterization and/or plot with poor world-building. World-building should be an additional aspect of the story, used with the intent of developing the characters or the plot, rather than the primary focus of the work.

The main purpose of world-building should instead be to create context as the fictional setting that dictates the plot of the story. In his essay “On Fairy Stories,” Tolkien distinguishes two worlds. The primary world that humankind inhabits and a secondary world, that only exists within the mind of the author. Tolkien often used the word “enchantment” as a stand-in for immersion in his essays. For example:

The land of fairy-story is wide and deep and high, and is filled with many things: all manner of beasts and birds are found there; shoreless seas and stars uncounted; beauty that is an enchantment, and an ever-present peril; both sorrow and joy as sharp as swords. In that land a man may (perhaps) count himself fortunate to have wandered, but its very riches and strangeness make dumb the traveller who would report it. And while he is there it is dangerous for him to ask too many questions, lest the gates shut and the keys be lost. (Tolkien 1983: 1)

In the same essay, Tolkien stated that the descriptions of the fictional world do not have to be connected to the story or the present narrative, but it can exist on its own. He describes the secondary world as a place the reader can enter. Once the reader is in this world, they are “enchanted” and it is up to the writer to keep them so, as any moment which breaks the suspension of disbelief will break the “enchantment”.

What really happens is that the storymaker proves to be a successful “sub-creator.” He makes a Secondary World which your mind can enter. Inside it, what he relates is “true”: it accords with the laws of that world. You therefore believe it, while you are, as it were, inside. The moment disbelief arises, the spell is broken; the

magic, or rather art, has failed. You are then out in the Primary World again, looking at the little abortive Secondary World from outside. (Tolkien 1983:18)

Tropes Within Literature and what Differentiates Them from Clichés

The word 'trope' originates from the Greek word tropos, meaning 'turn', 'direction', or 'way' as the use of a trope turns the meaning behind something from literal to figurative (Trope-etymonline). In literary terms it has taken the meaning of a recurring motif or theme within general literature. One of the better known examples of a trope is “The Chosen One” where the plot relies on the main character who is destined to solve the conflict that has been presented. Some variations of this trope also include other well known motifs, such as having a mentor character to guide them or a mystic prophecy hinting at the plot. Another widely used trope is the “MacGuffin” where the plot contains a specific unique item that has unexplained properties or abilities. Some examples of such would be the three Silmarils in Tolkien's book “The Silmarillion”, which are only desired for their beauty, despite having mysterious powers. The Arkenstone in “The Hobbit” is another good example from Tolkien's works, as it is the key item leading the plot but it has no purpose other than to be a beautiful gemstone, with which one of the main characters, Thorin Oakenshield plans to unite the dwarven kingdoms.

A large amount of tropes are both useful and impossible to avoid. A trope can be considered a foundation on which the plot and characters are set and being aware of them can assist the author in many ways. Understanding literary tropes creates an opportunity to combine and subvert them to create something unexpected and exciting. (Harstone 2020). Tropes are tools for an author to use in storytelling in order to convey a meaning or an idea in a more concise and easy to understand way. They are a baseline that exceptional authors can either subvert or twist in order to create something entirely new. It could be argued, that the usage of tropes can inadvertently make works of literature more engaging and enjoyable. In his book titled “Life the Movie: How Entertainment Conquered Reality” the American writer, journalist and film critic, Neal Gabler (1998) brought forward the notion that the parts of entertainment that are most often critiqued are the most enjoyable aspects of it. *“One does not necessarily have to cluck in disapproval to admit that entertainment is all the things its detractors say it is: fun, effortless, sensational, mindless, formulaic, predictable and subversive. In fact, one might argue that those are the very reasons so many people love it.”* (1998: 20)

A cliché is either an element of writing, such as an artistic expression or a literary motif like a theme or plot point. What differentiates it from a literary trope is that a cliché has been overused to the point of losing its original meaning or effect (Blake G. & Bly R.W 1993: 85). Clichés also appear in all forms of media as well as casual conversation. Many cliché phrases rely on abstraction through analogy to exaggerate something, usually for the sake of comedic effect (Literary devices-cliché). Among the most common of such clichés in verbal communication are phrases such as “hot as hell” to describe either very warm temperatures, the strength of spice in a meal, or a particularly attractive person. The short phrase “tail between your legs” implies cowardice or lack of courage, and the phrase “plenty of fish in the sea” offers an optimistic and positive outlook in terms of romantic possibilities. Relying on such literary tools too often in creative writing may imply that the author does not have anything unique or original to say about the topics they are attempting to cover and it causes their work to feel unoriginal and uninspired.

The Unique Aspects of J.R.R Tolkien's Creative Writing

As previously mentioned, John Ronald Reuel Tolkien is widely considered to be the 'father' of the modern fantasy genre due to the popularity of his most well known works. As his work was written into one cohesive fictional universe, his work is categorized as high-fantasy. The first commonly cited example of this genre is a book titled “The Well at the World's End” (1896) by British poet, novelist and textile artist William Morris with Tolkien's novels being regarded as the current archetype for high fantasy (Dozois 1997: 14). The sub-genre received its name from award winning fantasy author Lloyd Alexander, in his 1971 essay “High Fantasy and Heroic Romance” (Stableford 2009: 267). Although there had been many fantasy authors before him, the success of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* acted as a catalyst for the resurgence of the genre and the influence of his work can be found in all forms of media.

Tolkien found inspiration for his novels from a wide range of sources with his primary influence being from his profession of philology. His study into historical language focused mostly on Old English literature and he took great inspiration specifically from the Old English poem Beowulf, a prose which he translated into modern English with commentary. This commentary served as a basis for his lecture “Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics” in 1936. The translation and analysis

were both among many of Tolkien's unprinted works that have been edited and posthumously published by his son Christopher J.R Tolkien (BBC News 2014). Among the other things that influenced his writings were religious views, specifically Catholicism. In his essay "On Fairy-stories" Tolkien spoke of the act of sub-creation which works similarly to how God may have created the world. In his letters he once described it as "a tribute to the infinity of [God's] potential variety (Tolkien 1981: letter 153: 206). The extent of influence Christianity had on his work may have even influenced his creation myths, as parallels can be drawn behind the creation myth of Eä, the universe of Tolkien's legendarium and the creation story in Christianity. The one god in his legendarium, Ilúvatar creates the Ainur, who can be interpreted as angels. The Ainur perform Ainulindalë, which is the song that created the fictional universe. One of the Ainur, named Melkor was prideful of himself and envious of the one god and attempted to change the song for his own nefarious reasons. The creation story and Melkor's rebellion at their core resemble Lucifer's fall within the Old Testament, specifically in the chapters Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14 (The Old Testament). He also drew inspiration from mythology, archaeology and natural geography, with a large number of locations being inspired from his personal experiences. The direct inspiration for the Shire, the homeland of the hobbits originated from his childhood home in the English countryside and the urbanization that came with the expansion of Birmingham (Carpenter 1977). The depiction of orcs, the expendable soldiers in the antagonist's army and their place of residence, the region named Mordor, were both inspired by Tolkien's experiences during the first world war (Ciabattari 2014). It should be stated, that on the topic of orcs, Tolkien may not have perceived them as pure evil but rather as tools used by the villains such as Melkor or Sauron. In relation to the war, one of the best known influences on location and story from his personal life stems from the Battle of Somme. In his letters, specifically one to professor L.W. Forster, Tolkien wrote how the war had no influence over the story or how it unfolded, but it did affect the landscape. He brings the example of the location named "The Dead Marshes", a swamp that is filled with the bodies of knights who had fallen in battle (Tolkien 1981 letter 226: 321). The description given by one of the protagonists within the trilogy reveals the horrors of war through the eyes of someone who had known only peace.

"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. A fell light is in them." -Frodo Baggins, The Two Towers, "The passage of the Marshes". (Tolkien 1954:154)

J.R.R Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings* brought the fantasy genre into the mainstream. The books were successful across Britain and they became popular in America in the 1960s due to American counterculture (Shippey 2000). Their sudden popularity led to the reissuing of many older and obscure fantasy works, as the interest in the genre had exploded and many of those formerly obscure and forgotten works reached an unprecedented level of popularity (Scroggins 2016). Tolkien's style of fantasy literature has been the inspiration for many aspiring authors and the effects of his work can be seen in modern fantasy and despite the fantastical setting, his literature is still immersive.

The research questions are:

- 1.What are the traits of good/bad world-building and how does it affect the immersion of the reader?
- 2.What are the most common tropes used within world-building and story-telling for the fantasy genre and why do these tropes succeed or fail?

CHAPTER I WORLD-BUILDING AND TROPES WITHIN LITERATURE

1.1 On World-Building and Immersion

1.1.1 The Definition of “Good” World-Building and Various Aspects of it

The necessary amount of effort placed into world-building is dependent on the sub-genre to which the story belongs to. As previously explained, Tolkien's works fall under the category of high-fantasy, which typically require a larger amount of world-building. There are however many works in “low-fantasy” which still require considerable effort in their world-building. Some of the better known examples in “low-fantasy” literature are works in the “Harry Potter” (1997) series by J.K. Rowling and “The Chronicles of Narnia” (1950) by C.S.Lewis. Both stories are suitable to be in the general fantasy genre due to the whimsical characters, concepts such as magic, plot and setting, but both retain a connection with the real world. In the case of Rowling's works, the story takes place in the real world, with the world of magic being hidden to the non-magical masses. The many stories related to the fictional world of Narnia are still connected to the real world as the main protagonists are from Earth. The starting moments in chapter one of the series states that the real world setting is England during World War II giving the readers an insight into the conditions of the protagonists before placing these protagonists into the fictional setting of Narnia. In the case of “low fantasy” world-building usually takes less time and effort, as the author can rely on concepts from the real world that the reader is most likely already familiar with. In “high-fantasy” the process of world-building is much larger, as the setting, traditions, cultures, ecology and environment are very commonly unfamiliar to the reader and require some explanation or introduction.

Despite the idea of escapism that is often affiliated with the genre of fantasy, there is a demand for more realism within it. One aspect that makes fantasy so enjoyable, is the chance to vicariously live through the characters in a setting that is wholly different from the real world and exploring a secondary world, different from reality. Even so, people also want to experience something that is relatable to them, such as the protagonists, locations and everyday aspects that are familiar (Silverstein; Baur 2012: 21). Good world-building could be described as the act of bringing a fantasy world to life, by making it believable, understandable and consistent. A well constructed fictional setting offers a sense of realism that allows an external observer to visualize the characters within the story taking action in the locations of the world. Good world-building can additionally offer an insight into the perception of the characters, as the personalities within the story act as the

reader's view into the surrounding world. There are no specific instructions for the sub-creation of a fictional world. However, there are many aspects and nuances that are commonly referred to.

Even if the genre is fantasy or science fiction, there is a need for logic and consistency within the written work. The internal logic of the secondary world needs to establish the rules it has and they must be followed throughout the story. The need for this internal logic could be explained with an example of a magician throwing a ball of fire at a shielded target. If, for instance, the target has a wooden shield that is singed by this fireball, the same type of magic should not be able to melt a metal shield later in the story without proper explanation. If the exact same magic is even later on used to turn something wooden into ash, then it can be interpreted as the lack of any consistent logical rules within the story which can immediately break an attentive readers immersion (Marchitto 2016). The inconsistencies of internal logic can be explained if the cause for them is to create a sense of mystery around it. Having unexplained aspects within a story will create interest and desire to reach an answer. A good example of an inconsistency with internal logic being repaired throughout the story would be “Planet of the Apes” (1968). Throughout the movie, the viewers are led to believe that the story takes place on an alien planet, however various moments and environmental aspects throughout the movie break the immersion of it being an unknown planet, such as the ecosystem consisting of similar fauna, the intelligent apes speaking the English language and the theocratic form of governing. Furthermore, there is a scene in which an aged human doll plays a sound, shocking both the primitive human and the intelligent apes, confirming that neither side was aware of such a thing being possible. This scene led to the more observant viewers being able to theorize the final twist within the story before the ending. The ending scene with the protagonist discovering the ruins of the Statue of Liberty confirms that the story takes places on Earth in the distant future, re-contextualizing many previous scenes and explaining multiple aspects of the story that could have been interpreted as “plot-holes” without the final scene.

Causality remains as a constant part of the world, both real and fictional. There is a relationship between actions and consequences and this connection must be retained in fiction as well. Cause and effect is vital for a sense of realism, even in whimsical non-realistic scenarios, as it allows the reader to observe how characters respond to different situations. Furthermore, efficient use of causality will dictate the plot, as active leading characters will inevitably influence the story (Ray n.d). An example of causality within literature would be the ring of power being discovered in “Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring”(1954) and the secret meeting called by Lord

Elrond in Rivendell, to discuss how to handle the circumstances it has created. Another efficient example of cause and effect is portrayed in the cinematic adaptation of the book, specifically in the abandoned mines of Moria. The hobbit Peregrin Took, most commonly called Pippin, accidentally knocks a bucket into a well. The loud noise from it falling and bouncing around the walls of the well sounded loudly through the many chasms below, which alerted the orcs of Moria about the intruders in the mines, causing them to immediately rush over to the room where the fellowship had been. To ignore cause and effect within literature would be the same as creating circumstances that inevitably will feel unnecessary and it can lead to actions feeling unwarranted or pointless if there are no circumstances to them.

History is an ongoing narrative of past events correlating between various people, cultures and the conflicts between them, shaping said cultures and people in the modern time. A similar need for history is present in a fictional world, as the past decides the present era, in which the plot is occurring. Some authors dedicate a large amount of time and energy to the history of their fictional worlds, writing lineages of heroes and kings, exploring the religious origins and beliefs of the common people and sometimes great events that altered the geographical layout of the world. A large portion of such creative writing is often considered as flavor text, due to many elements of it never impacting the main narrative or the characters affiliated with it (Silverstain; Baker, 2012: 31). Written history for a fictional setting needs to be handled with care, as to avoid deterring the viewers away. The current tradition of writing long, complex and detailed history is often associated with Tolkien. Tolkien created a history for the fictional world of Middle-Earth that can be categorized into different ages, each of which span thousands of years. Much of these ages were detailed with different dynasties, races, cultures, and many other aspects, with the full collection of Middle-Earth history being 12 volumes long. As Christopher Tolkien had stated, his father's earliest work was inspired by specific locations in England and the history of those locations (C.J.R Tolkien). However, it is not exactly necessary to place such an emphasis on history within a fictional world, to the degree Tolkien did. Tolkien created a long and thought out chronological timeline within his works, as he had a passion for history and he created his fictional world in order for stories to occur in them rather than vice versa. While most authors work with the intent of creating the world in service of the story, Tolkien instead created a world in which many stories take place. An insight into his world-building can be found from many sources, such as the aforementioned essay "on Fairy-stories". In his letters, he expressed a necessity for a meticulously detailed world, that had been conjured to a larger degree, than just the story narrative. In a letter,

written to Hugh Brogan, he had this to say: “If you want my opinion, a pan of the 'fascination' [of The Lord of the Rings] consists in the vistas of yet more legend and history, to which this work does not contain a full clue. “ (Tolkien 1981:letter 151: 204)

A variation of locations can also add to the immersive aspects of fantasy literature. Location is often used to compile multiple aspects of a secondary world, such as geography, climate, natural fauna and other similar environmental nuances (Stableford 2004). For example, the place named 'The Shire' in Tolkien's works is a peaceful agriculture focused region. Very many parallels can be drawn between the Shire and England, specifically with the region of Worcestershire. The climate of the Shire is described as not overly cold during winter and fairly warm during the summer. Shippey has brought forward the notion, that the Shire is a calque upon England, as many clear similarities can be found between the two locations. One such similarity is the original three tribes that inhabited the region. The history of England includes the founding tribes, such as the Angles, Saxons and Jutes, while The Shire has Stoors, Harfoots and Fallohides. The local folklores includes legendary founders, whose names are related to “horse”, such as Hengest and Horsa for England and Marcho and Blanco for the Shire. These similarities also extend to the surnames of it's inhabitants, such as Banks, Cotton, Underhill and many others (Shippey 2005: 92-93). As there were very few natural threats, the Hobbits were a peaceful race in Middle-Earth, most of whom would leave the Shire very rarely, if at all. On the other end of the locational spectrum, there are locations such as Mordor with a hot, humid climate and many dangerous wild creatures. The inhabitants of this region such as the orcs, are violent, cruel and very often extremely sadistic (The Hobbit, chapter IV: “Over Hill and Under Hill”). If the locations are written with the intent to immerse the reader in a secondary world, it can be possible to make the fictional setting feel real enough to be compared to actual locations. George R.R. Martin has explained such immersion by comparing the lands of Middle-Earth in Tolkien's works to actual locations, such as the south american country Uruguay. In a 2019 interview he stated, how he knows more about Middle-Earth's locations, scenery, the cultures and the history than he does about some real world places, due to the setting within literature being large and complex enough to be considered as a character (An Evening with George R.R. Martin, 24:06).

1.1.2 The Most Commonly Known Approaches to World-Building

Once an understanding of the previously mentioned aspects is reached, the process of world-building can begin in a way that remains consistent and immersive. In the modern online writing communities, there are three specific approaches to world-building, named the “Free, Fixed and Found” methods, which have obtained their names from online content creators within the field of literature. The currently used names for these methods were popularized by Benjamin Cook, who is better known for their online personality of “Talebot” on the Youtube channel named Tale foundry, as the names were popularized by their series on the topic of world-building. The methods themselves had no particular naming convention prior to the online video series, however the core aspects were known, simply without an accepted termin for them.

The Free approach to world-building is the most liberal out of the three methods and it is also the most popular, likely due to Tolkien using it in his legendarium. This approach relies on creative liberty that does not specifically rely on a narrative related to the plot. Many examples of this can be found in Tolkien's works, such as the explanation of a minor conflict known as the Battle of Greenfields in *The Hobbit*. Said conflict was only mentioned in reference to the game of golf being created in the Shire roughly two centuries before the events in “*The Lord of the Rings*”. The battle itself had no impact on the greater narrative and could easily be removed from the story without losing anything vital, yet it was kept in with the sole intent of expanding the fictional world in order to make it seem more real and to increase the “enchantment”. The Free method is sometimes described as creating for the sake of creation, as there are no constraints other than the ones the author sets on themselves. The Free method can be approached in three different ways, depending on where the author starts. Free world-building can begin from either the top, bottom or the middle and each approach allows the secondary world to develop through various connections between written parts. Starting from the bottom means building the fictional world from the smaller details and developing larger parts, such as the environment around it. For example, an author could write about a specie of creatures with a very specific and unique ability and then move on to the environment these creatures live in that mandated the development of said trait. For example, if there is a blind species of carnivorous humanoids with echolocation, they will most likely live in caverns deep underground as them living in the suburbs of a city would not be advantageous for them. Starting from the top, is essentially world-building by focusing on the larger aspects first. In the case of high-fantasy, it would mean creating the fictional planet first and then approaching other large aspects, such as continents, countries, environmental biomes, cultures, species and then approaching smaller details. The third approach to the Free method is starting from the middle in

scale. In these cases, the starting point is most commonly a character, location or a group of people and the world around them is constructed both upwards and downwards. Starting with a character or specie allows the author to adapt the world around them, by asking questions like where does this specie live and how they survive in that environment. (Silverstein; Pramas 2012: 17)

The Fixed method is more constricted by the setting needed, as the purpose for it is to be integrated into the ongoing narrative. Aspects, other than location, that are within this design are required to stay consistent as they are a definitive important part of the story, meaning that they cannot be changed or altered as liberally as the Free method. In the case of *The Hobbit* one part of world-building that became fixed to the setting and narrative was the preference of peace and a general tendency to avoid adventures for the Hobbit race, as the main character of the story, Bilbo Baggins was originally against the thought of joining the group of dwarfs in their mission to Erebor, mostly because he represented the more resilient yet domestic virtues. It was also vital for the story, that Bilbo was to be different from the majority of Hobbits, as to explain his sudden acceptance of adventure. Similar fixed aspects of the hobbit race were their ability to move very silently, which once established could not have been removed, as it was a necessity for various plot points. Fixed aspects of a fictional world are often so closely tied to the written narrative that they can not be altered even if the author does not specifically agree with them. An example of this would be the idea, that all orcs across Middle-Earth are evil, which implied that a single race can be only immoral or vile. Tolkien personally disagreed with this notion, as he was against ideologies that would portray any prejudice based on race and he even attempted to explain the orcs as machinery that could at best imitate speech, similarly to parrots at one point in the writing process. In the earliest version of his book, "The Book of Lost Tales" Tolkien attempted to specify on the origin of orcs as a race bred by Morgoth from the subterranean heats and slime, specifying that their hearts were made solely of granite (1984: 159). Tolkien was forced to abandon this idea later on, and he approached writing the orcs as an evil race, even if he disliked the implications. Although the idea, that orcs were created by Morgoth (formerly known as Melkor) was a viable option for their origin, that also contradicted his ideology. Within the third part of the Lord of the Rings series, the protagonist Frodo Baggins stated on the topic of orcs how "The Shadow that bred them can only mock, it cannot make: not real new things of its own. I don't think it gave life to Orcs, it only ruined them and twisted them" (Tolkien 1955: 104) reaffirming, that Tolkien believed that evil is unable to create anything new, but that it rather corrupts what good forces have created.

The Fixed method often works together with the Free design, as many freely planned nuances of a fictional setting become necessary for the story. This exemplifies the two approaches to the Fixed method. The method can follow either a story-based design or a world-based design. The story-based design builds the world in correlation with the story. Locations are introduced, described and explained as they become necessary for the narrative of the plot. Some well known examples of such world-building appear in the works of G.R.R. Martin, like Castle Black being introduced and described to the reader, as it becomes relevant to the story. The world-based approach often correlates with the Free method, as it relies on a setting that has already been developed to some degree. This is the method that Tolkien followed, as he created the setting of Arda and Middle-Earth before writing his most known works. The World-based approach focuses on creating a story in a fictional world, that already exists, allowing the characters to explore the setting, introducing the fictional world through them. It should be noted, that even if an author decides to focus heavily on world-building, it is more efficient to limit it only to one story. For example, the appendices on the world of Middle-Earth constitute nearly half of *The Return of the King* and the collection of mythopoeic stories within *The Silmarillion* offers further information in regards to the narrative of the Third Age in Middle-Earth, however the appendices and the *Silmarillion* can be ignored while still obtaining the full experience of the trilogy.

The last accepted approach to world-building is the Found method, in which various details, locations and other such nuances are discovered as the story progresses. This method of world-building is most commonly utilized within interactive media, such as table-top games like “Dungeons & Dragons” due to the inherently interactive nature of it. The Found method allows the author to explore their own written world, in order to progress the story. For example, if the plot demands the characters to be out of their usual environment, the author can choose between previously established external locations, that have yet to appear within the narrative. Once the choice has been made, the author can then start asking themselves questions related to the fictional location. In settlements, those questions are often related to interesting locations, the people or other similar notions, while in a natural setting the questions would be related to the terrain, the creatures and how the characters interact with the environment. The reason this method is most popular within Tabletop role-playing games is due to the unpredictability of human behavior and those who interact with the setting often choosing to explore locations that had not been prepared to be explored. For instance, most such games have a plot-line, however the way certain points of it are reached is up to those who interact with it as the characters in the setting, which can lead to the

story being derailed by those characters. They may try to explore locations that are not related to the planned story, therefore the “gamemaster” has to improvise and create those locations in order to maintain a plot and to make the experience enjoyable for the players (Silverstein , Cook, 2012:13).

1.1.3 Against World-building

Despite the popularity and the wide usage of world-building within fiction, there have been many arguments against it. In terms of importance, the fictional setting or world-building takes the third place, right behind character and plot (Sanderson 2020) and many have claimed that the act of large scale world-building is unnecessary. Authors or designers should limit it to only plot-relevant settings. British game designer, Alexis Kennedy (2017), made the comparison between world-building and the vertebrae in mammalian animals. Although vertebrae is something mammals have in common, it does not necessarily make something a mammal. Tolkien's influence on the fantasy genre has lead many aspiring authors to believe that they need to have a detailed map, with every last location written out and explained to some degree. Just as many authors attempt to create long and complicated timelines, that have no real narrative effect on the story. On the topic of world-building akin to Tolkien's works, Kennedy stated the following: “Having an invented language or thousands of years of history doesn't hurt the vitality or appeal of a fictional world. But they're rather beside the point.” The main purpose of a novel is to tell a story that involves intriguing characters in unique and memorable situations. Furthermore, he compared the act of world-building to plumbing, by stating that although he would not want to live in a building without plumbing, he would also not want to visit a building that is only about plumbing. The secondary worlds, whether designed in a game or written in a story, are locations that we visit, but not live in, therefore concrete knowledge of past battles, kings or other such historical aspects that are not wholly connected to the present narrative are a welcomed addition, however unnecessary (Kennedy 2017).

Wendig defines world-building as something that “covers everything and anything inside that world. Money, clothing, territorial boundaries, tribal customs, building materials, imports and exports, transportation, sex, food, the various types of monkeys people possess, whether the world does or does not contain Satanic 'twerking' rites.” World-building is simply fleshing out the world and it should not be prioritized as it can lead to large amounts of time being spent on pointless

aspects that are in no way related to the story (Wendig 2013). Some have made the argument, that the act of creating a perfect secondary world is completely impossible, as it would need to have every last minute detail or question answered. In such a case of world-building there would be no gaps left for the reader to fill, as every living being, item, location, phenomenon or other would have a long-winded explanation (Michel 2017). Such an act of world-building is simply not possible and if it was possible, it would not create a cohesive readable story. It would constitute the largest library in history, crafted through lifelong dedication and work. Harrison claims that the act of world-building is a dull excuse that literalises the urge to create. It numbs the readers mind, by explaining things that could be left up for the imagination (Harrison 2015). Not all things within literature need to be explained and sometimes ambiguity adds to the experience. Having a thorough explanation to everything that appears within the story will lessen the overall intrigue around it. The most common aspects of this line of thought appear in comedy and horror. The most efficient way of removing the comedic value of a joke is to explain what makes it funny. In the case of horror, the author should explain enough, but not too much, as the fear of the unknown is one of the primal fears of humanity and by removing the “unknown” aspects of something, it removes the emotion it may cause. Authors have to keep in mind that world-building is a tool for the story, not the story itself and having unexplained parts in history or location can add to the value of the written work.

1.2 How Tolkien Affected Storytelling Tropes

As stated previously, tropes are a common motif, theme or an idea that appears throughout media. Some of the best known tropes are those that have been used widely across many genres, such as “The mentor” where one, usually elderly character guides the young protagonist or trains them to become capable enough to overcome the challenges they will inevitably face during their journey. For example, Obi-Wan Kenobi and master Yoda in the original Star Wars trilogy or, to some degree Gandalf in Tolkien's works. Tropes are used to convey ideas and thoughts in a sensible fashion and given the wide variety of writing tropes, many believe it to be impossible to write a cohesive story without any previously used tropes. With ongoing development in the field of entertainment, the word “trope” has started to take on a more expansive meaning, as ideas, character traits, items and many others.

In order to avoid potential confusion, it should be noted, that the word “trope” has multiple direct meanings. In linguistics and literature, it means the use of figurative language for artistic effect (Miller 1991: 9). This includes examples, such as oxymoron, parable, hyperbole and many others. Among the many tropes, metaphor, metonymy, irony and synecdoche are considered to be the “master” tropes, as they are used very frequently in every day dialogue (Burke 1969: 503). In the field of cinema, a trope is a visual metaphor or an image that has a contextual meaning that is easy to identify (Buytendijk 2010), such as a “Mexican standoff”. The given example conveys that there is no strategy involved and any member of said discourse taking action can lead to their own downfall, at the hands of another. This is often visualized after it's namesake image, of three men wielding two firearms that are pointed in a triangular fashion at the other members of the conflict. In fantasy fiction, the word trope refers to core elements that make up a standard fantasy story. Clute (1999) states that these elements are the conflict between good and evil, where a heroic protagonist goes on a quest (1999: 796) to defeat the antagonist, who is typically a dark lord of some variety (1999: 250). Such stories usually contain some form of unknown power, like magic (1999: 615-616) and take place in a time-period with characteristics of medievalism. With the continuous advancement of entertainment media, the word “trope” has taken on a more collective term, as it has been used to also mean plot conventions and devices used within creative works, with many small scale ideas growing and becoming easily recognizable. “The Lord of the Rings” trilogy was the foundation for the expansion and development of many such tropes.

Tolkien's world of creative fantasy has become the standard depiction of the fantasy genre and many currently known and accepted fantasy tropes originate from his works. Some of the better known instances of this are ideas and concepts that Tolkien codified and reworked such as elves, dwarfs and goblins. Although the fictional races existed prior to the creation of Middle-Earth as a fictional setting, Tolkien altered and popularized many aspects of them. The term “elf” existed long before Tolkien's works, as the word originates from Germanic folklore. The original depiction of elves was dwarfish and partially malicious, and during the Middle-Ages they were often confused with faeries (Etymonline-Elf). Many medieval germanic-style cultures depicted elves as human-like beings with sublime beauty and magical powers (Jakobsson 2015). Many elven traits that are found in modern day works of fantasy are of Tolkien's creation. Some of these traits are ageless bodies, meaning that elves effectively do not die to old age, a strong connection with nature and incredibly keen senses. Although the idea of elves being magic occurred in pre-Tolkien fantasy and myth, modern depictions differ from their origins. Pre-Tolkien era elves would often use magic actively,

however post-Tolkien elves were deemed magic, despite very rarely displaying any kind of active magic. Another popular aspect of the modern elf archetype is the rivalry between the elves and dwarfs, originating from Tolkien's work. In the case of the dwarven race, it should be noted, that Tolkien created the word “dwarves” as a plural of dwarf. While the correct method of spelling the plural for dwarf is dwarfs, Tolkien specifically wrote it as “dwarves”, which has since then been widely accepted as an alternate spelling of the word (Smallwood 2020), despite being unrecognized within many dictionaries.

The case for the fictional race named goblins is similar to elves, as the concepts and ideas behind goblins existed prior to Tolkien's work. The idea of a goblin originates from European folklore, with many variations in their appearance, behavior and abilities, depending on the story they appear in and the country of origin. Most commonly they are either mischievous or malicious with the only constant trait being their short stature and unpleasant appearance. One important aspect of the word “goblin” is how prior to Tolkien's work, it did not specifically mean one single race of beings. The word can be nebulous, as it can refer to many different types of creatures, leading to the many variations of goblins across many cultures (Matthews 2010: 279). After the publication of “The Hobbit” and “The Lord of the Rings” trilogy, the word goblin took on a new meaning, referring to one specific race of creatures. Tolkien primarily used the word “goblin” to describe the most common foot soldiers of the antagonistic force in “The Hobbit” but in the later entries to the Middle-Earth franchise, the name used was “orc”, which is an Old English word for either ogres or demons. The two words were interchangeable, but the popularity of Tolkien's work within the genre has lead to both words being associated with specific creatures. Modern depictions of orcs within fantasy describes them as large, physically strong and often barbaric race with a proficiency for warfare, while modern goblins are explained as short, evil and often cowardly creatures, who rely on ambushes and traps in order to obtain victory against other races. The modern depiction of the goblin remains somewhat accurate to Tolkien's description of short in stature and humanoid in shape, while the case of orcs is similar to the Uruk-Hai, a specific breed of orcs within Tolkien's work, who are taller and stronger than regular orcs.

One very large overhaul that Tolkien made regarded dragons, who are considered to be one of the most iconic creatures within both fantasy and mythology. The concept of dragons seems to go as far back within human myths as humanity itself, with the earlier iterations being similar to serpents or various reptiles. Some of the first depictions of dragon-like creatures originate from the

Mesopotamian era, like the mušḫuššu of Babylon, a dragon that had been subjugated by Marduk, the patron deity of Babylonia (Wiggermann 1992: 157). Many other cultures had their own variants of dragons as well, such as Apep of Egypt, Vritra of India (Frawley 2021), Leviathan of Israel, Wyverns and Hydras from Greece and Rome. But the most recognizable and most relevant to Tolkien's works would be the Dwarf king's son, Fafnir from Norse mythology. Prior to the publication of *The Hobbit* (1937), dragons had most commonly been depicted as mindless creatures, that were the representation of evil and greed. The archetype for a dragon, was a large, scaled, sometimes winged creature, with an obsession towards power and wealth with the most standardized depictions being Fafnir in old Norse mythology and Beowulf's Bane from the final act of the Anglo-Saxon poem "Beowulf". Of the two given examples, the former had intellect comparable to a human, as his greed caused him to change from a dwarf into a dragon to guard his vast treasure (Fafnir-Britannica). Other depictions of dragons before Tolkien were bestial in nature, driven by either hunger or a love for gold. Tolkien's depiction of an intelligent dragon in the *Hobbit* popularized the idea of intelligent dragons beyond ancient epics and mythology, and many similarities can be drawn between Fafnir and the two most well known dragons within Tolkien's work. The primary antagonist of *The Hobbit*, Smaug mirrors Fafnir in their greedy nature and dialogue with the protagonist, as the verbal exchange between Bilbo and Smaug mirrors that of the conversation between Fafnir and the man who slew him, Sigurd. The largest difference between the two exchanges is the time in which it occurs within their respective stories, as Sigurd's conversation takes place after a fatal blow to Fafnir, however the dialogue between Smaug and Bilbo takes place before Smaug has been defeated, most likely for the sake of literary tension (Unerman 2002 :94-101). Something similar occurs in "The Book of Lost Tales", as Glaurung, the first dragon within Tolkien's legendarium is depicted similarly to Fafnir as a large, greedy wingless worm-like creature. Tolkien took much inspiration from Norse mythology while on the topic of dragons, yet disputes have arisen over how much of a role he played in popularizing the idea of intelligent dragons, as prior to his works, some children's authors wrote about benign and sympathetic dragons, in books such as "The Reluctant Dragon" (1898) by Kenneth Grahame. Although the ideas presented by such authors persisted, the topic of dragons remains mostly in line with Tolkien's depictions and characteristics. On the topic of dragons, Tolkien had stated, how the generally older depictions of dragons were far more enjoyable to him. "I desired dragons with a profound desire. Of course, I in my timid body did not wish to have them in the neighborhood. But the world that contained even the imagination of Fáfnir was richer and more beautiful, at whatever cost of peril" (1983:20).

Tolkien did not only codify or re-work existing mythological creatures, but he also added to the list of fictional species that are utilized within modern fantasy. Some very well known creatures within the modern fantasy genre originate from his works, such as the Hobbits and Ents, with creatures such as the Balrogs being used to a lesser degree. The aforementioned names have been subject to copyright by the Tolkien estate, however since ideas are not subjected to copyright laws, similar creatures have appeared in various other medias. The best known instance of this copyright being infringed on is within the earlier editions of the table-top game “Dungeons and Dragons”, where the original creations of J.R.R Tolkien were utilized as aspects of the role-playing part of the game, with hobbits being a playable race and ents and balrogs being creatures that could be encountered in combat. The threat of legal action from Tolkien Enterprises caused for many of these instances to be either removed or renamed. The term “Hobbit” was replaced with halfling (Gygax 1985:12), the specie of Ents were renamed to be Treants and Balrogs became Balors (Gygax 2008). These changes have been widely used in many other works as well.

In addition to specie or creature based creations, Tolkien also created many now commonly utilized storytelling devices. The Wiki style website, “TV Tropes” describes, collects and categorizes many commonly occurring plot devices, character archetypes and various other aspects of storytelling, and multiple categories have originated from Tolkien and these tropes are named after instances within his work. Some of the better known instances of such tropes that Tolkien named are the idea of “Gollum made me do it”, depicting a typically weak willed individual being coerced into doing evil actions by a darker half of themselves. A commonly utilized storytelling device with environmental undertones is the idea of “digging too deep”. The trope consists of a group of characters unknowingly releasing something evil through the act of excessive exploitation of natural resources. Some of the better known examples of this across media are films such as *Godzilla: King of the Monsters* (2019), in which it is strictly stated, that human activities such as seismic surveys and strip mining are gradually waking up the hibernating monsters. In Tolkien's works this is exemplified by the dwarfs of Khazad-dûm awakening a Balrog, that lead to the downfall of the dwarf settlement and to it's eventual renaming into Moria.

“Gloin sighed. 'Moria! Moria! Wonder of the Northern world! Too deep we delved there, and woke the nameless fear. Long have its vast mansions lain empty since the children of Durin fled. But now we spoke of it again with longing, and yet with dread; for no dwarf has dared to pass the doors of Khazad dum for many lives of kings, save Thrór only, and he perished.” (Tolkien 1954, “The Fellowship of the Ring”, Chapter 2: The council of Elrond:160)

CHAPTER II-PUBLIC OPINION ON WORLD-BUILDING AND TROPES AS AN ASPECT OF A WRITTEN STORY

2.1 The Method Utilized for Accumulation and Compiling Data

The practical portion of the research includes the gathering and analysis of data on world-building and how it is perceived by the public along with the literary tropes that are affiliated with either fantasy as a whole or specifically with world-building. This data was gathered in the form of a questionnaire which consisted of 15 inquiries. The majority of these questions were in the written form, allowing the respondents to give a more thorough and complex answer than a simple yes or no. In order to encourage the respondents to write as much or as little as they desired, the questions were not made mandatory, meaning that the respondents were encouraged to reply only when they had something to add. This in turn may lead to an inconsistent number of responses between questions. In order to effectively analyze the given responses, a minimum quota of 50% was added, meaning that respondents who answered less than half of the questions were excluded from the analysis. As the research is focused on a subjective opinion based aspect of written literature, there was no specific age range nor occupational group for the respondents. However, for the sake of categorization the respondents were asked to include their age range and level of education. The requested trait within the respondents was that they are individuals who were willing to give opinionated statements on the creation of a secondary world within fantasy literature and willing to comment on their answers.

2.2 The Questions and how Their Responses Would Affect an Aspiring Author

The first and second questions asked for the respondents age group and level of education respectively in order to categorize the answers efficiently by both traits. The proposed levels of education are secondary, tertiary, received bachelor's degree or master's degree. These questions were not mandatory and respondents who chose to not answer these were still included under the category of "Chose not to disclose", provided that they have responded to over half of the remaining questions.

The third question within this survey asks for the respondent to explain in their own words and thoughts what world-building means and what genres of literature they associate it with. The question was presented in the form of a written answer, as to allow the respondents to explain their thoughts as briefly or verbosely as they wished. The responses would be analyzed and categorized to find certain patterns and to assess how broad the definition of world-building is to an average person.

The Fourth question of the questionnaire is a multiple choice question, inquiring what stance the respondent takes on the topic of world-building. The given replies are positive, neutral and

negative. Due to the nature of the questionnaire, an overwhelmingly positive response is expected for question four, meaning deeper analysis is optional for the answers of those respondents, who chose either neutral or negative.

The fifth inquiry asks the respondent to write if any certain author comes to their mind when they hear the word “world-building”. The purpose of this question is to search for patterns to find the most relevant well-known world-builders, so an aspiring author may find inspiration on how the creation of a fictional world occurs and which authors have mastered the process.. The following question asks the respondent to give their thoughts on why those specific authors were chosen.

Question seven is in the form of a multiple choice check box, asking about the importance of various aspects or topics that can be written about in a fictional secondary world. The intended purpose of this is to understand which parts of world-building are interesting for the reader and worth investing time into. The chosen topics are as follows: Geography, climate, politics, economy, society, religion, scientific level, art and history. The respondents would choose one out of five options to express their opinion and interest in that specific topic within fantasy fiction world-building. The five given options varied in levels of interest, with the lowest being completely irrelevant and the highest being very interested. Some of the aforementioned aspects require additional research for an aspiring author, as to make the written world consistent and realistic, while maintaining a sense of awe and immersion. In order to reach a conclusion on the importance of the given aspects, the responses will be graded by the average interest in the topic.

The eight inquiry asked the respondents to write what makes a fictional world feel realistic in order to determine what the fictional world needs to contain in order to immerse a reader in it. The question is structured in the same form as question three, allowing the respondent to write longer answers if they desire. The expected outcome of this decision is detailed responses bringing attention to what makes a secondary world feel compelling and realistic, even within the world of the whimsical.

The ninth question is on the opposite end of previous question. While the previous question focused on what makes a fictional world feel real, this inquiry focuses specifically on what breaks a readers immersion while attempting to integrate themselves into this secondary world presented to them. The responses are also in the form of a written answer, similarly to to the third and eighth question and the answers will be categorized and analyzed in order to create a specific guideline to avoid losing the attention or goodwill of the reader within works of fictional literature. It should be noted that this question does not expect answers related to specifically world-building and literary tropes within fantasy and/or science fiction literature. Rather, the expected responses are far more general and can be applied as a guideline for other genres of literature as well.

Questions 10-12 were created in order to affirm if the public sentiment matches with Sanderson's statement on the importance of world-building. As stated in chapter I, world-building should be in third place behind characterization and the plot, as a perfectly crafted fictional world will not be enough to save a story from an uninteresting plot or dull and predictable characters. The questions focus on the importance of plot, characterization and world-building respectively. As the respondents are already familiar with the concept of world-building and are willing to write long and thorough answers, the expected response is heavy prioritization of world-building over the other aforementioned topics. The questions are organized as a linear scale inquiry, asking the respondents to choose how important the mentioned core element of literature is to them on a scale of 1-5. The responses will be calculated to find the average for each of the aforementioned topics.

The 13th question asks if the respondents themselves have attempted pursuing creative writing in order to gain a deeper understanding of if they have invested their own time and energy into creative writing, allowing for deeper analysis of their other responses. Furthermore, this data can be utilized in order to assess the public interest in pursuing creative writing. The options given were an affirmative, consideration without pursuit and denial.

Question 14 specifically focuses on the literary tropes that are deemed as overused and/or easy to dislike. The respondents will reply by writing which literary trope (as in character archetype, setting, location or theme) is particularly overused and they are asked to further explain why they believe so. The purpose of this question is to highlight aspects of either world-building, storytelling devices or character archetypes that should be subjected to change, as to maintain public interest in the fantasy genre.

The 15th and final question focuses on both storytelling and world-building tropes and it asks the respondents to write which themes and ideas should be approached more often within creative writing.

2.3 The Responses to the Questionnaire

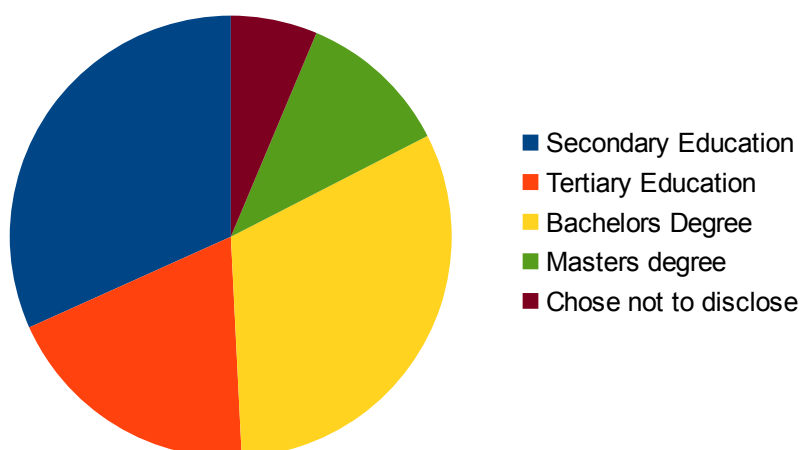
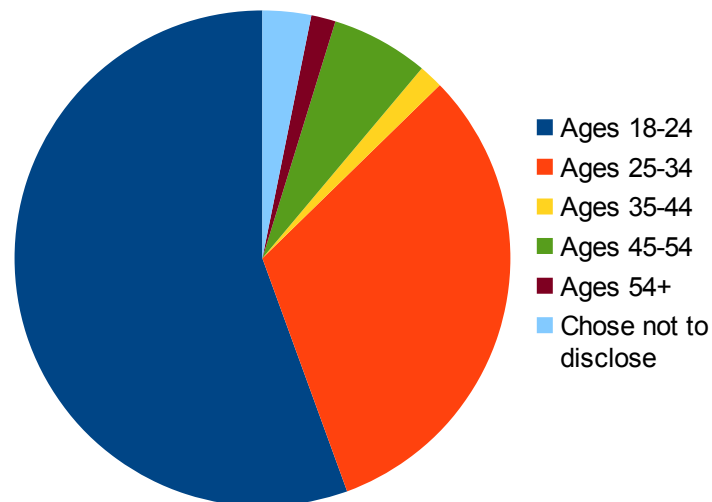
Over the time span of 18 days, the questionnaire received 67 responses, out of which 3 responses had to be removed, due to them not meeting the aforementioned criteria of answering at least 50% of the questions. The remaining answers will be thoroughly analyzed and categorized in search of any notable patterns.

The responses were gathered via the social media network Reddit, with the respondents being from two specific communities on the platform. Those two communities were "SampleSize" a community dedicated to the publishing and answering of online polls and "worldbuilding" due to the thematic core of the thesis. The questionnaire was first published on the 23rd of March, 2022 in the SampleSize community and received 28 responses within the span of 6 days. On the 30th of

March 2022 the questionnaire was published in the worldbuilding community and it received 39 responses, before the questionnaire was closed.

The organization and analysis of the received responses began on the 1st of April. The answers given were read through, noted, categorized and the most common themes within the answers will be marked in the following points.

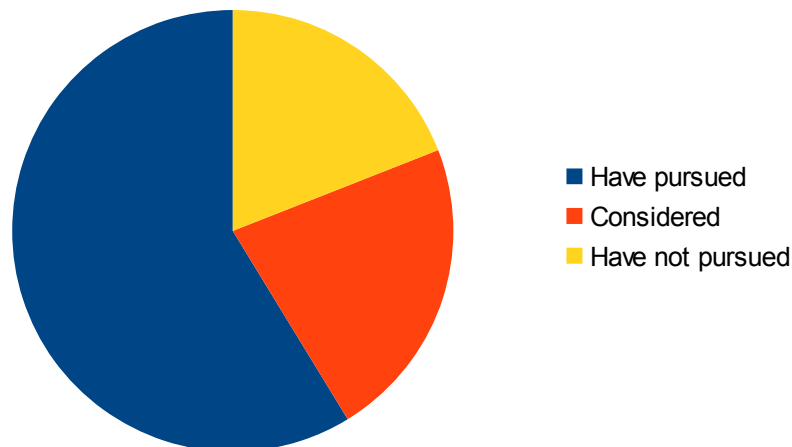
2.3.1 The respondents by age and level of education



From the respondents of these qualifying inquiries, it can be assumed that there is a wider interest towards the act of world-building within the young adult age groups, as the majority of respondents (55.56%) belonged to the age groups between 18-24 and 25-34. It should be noted, that the

questionnaire was in the digital form and the likelihood of those within the older age ranges finding it were much more limited, therefore it can not be conclusively stated that the interest is exclusive to the younger demographic. The level of education was more evenly split, indicating that world-building within literature does not appeal to only one specific level of education and it attracts readers of all ranges.

2.3.2 The Public Interest in Pursuit of Creative Writing



Among the respondents less than a fifth claimed that they have never attempted nor pursued creative writing. As the majority of respondents belong to the younger age demographics, it can be interpreted as a growing interest towards creative fiction or literature in the younger age groups. The other answers of these respondents were given attentive care and analysis, as those who have attempted to write within the more free and creative genres as fantasy are more likely to offer a unique perspective.

2.3.3 The Public Definition and Stance on World-Building

The overwhelming majority of responses could be qualified as in tune with what has been compiled in the first chapter. Public definition of world-building is the creation of a fictional world for the sake of immersing a reader in a different world that feels real, understandable and plausible. Furthermore the act of world-building can also be the purpose for it, as it can be a method for self-expression. It has also been defined as the introduction of story-specific concepts to help the reader understand how the world functions and it allows for those concepts to be explored in both literature and interactive media such as tabletop games and digital games. Although the topic is generally associated with fantasy and science-fiction, it appears in other genres such as dystopian novels and alternate history works. A large amount of world-building does not specifically appear within the written work, but rather in the personal notes of the author, in order to maintain consistency within their work. Among the 64 respondents, the stance on world-building is overwhelmingly positive

with 92.2% (59/64) choosing the option in favor of world-building. The remaining 7.8% (5/64) replied with a neutral stance, indicating minor interest while still prioritizing other aspects of a written story.

2.3.4 The Authors Known for World-Building and why They are so Well Known

The responses for the fourth question were overwhelmingly in favor of the more well known authors of the overall fantasy genre. As the question was asked in plural form, the respondents were encouraged to write as many authors that they believed were affiliated with world-building. This specific question received 59 responses, out of which 38 replied with J.R.R Tolkien along with a number of others. The second most commonly given answer was Brandon Sanderson with 11 respondents followed by George R.R. Martin with 8 respondents. The responses to the following question clarifies why these authors are regarded as those with a strong connection to world-building.

Tolkien is considered to be the pioneer of modern fantasy, as he popularized the concept of a secondary world and set the standard for immersion within the genre. How well he is documented also has invigorated the public belief of him being the “father” of modern fantasy as many of the modern fantasy tropes and traits of fictional worlds have originated from his works. Numerous respondents stated how his works have a great deal of depth to them, creating a sense of belonging in that world. Additionally his unique way of descriptive writing made it very easy for many readers to visualize the world the story took place in.

The respondents who chose Sanderson shared a collective theme around systems. Multiple respondents wrote of Sandersons consistent and detailed style of writing. This systematization he utilizes is notable specifically in the magic systems and cosmology for his shared fictional universe, greatly adding to a sense of immersion and consistency within his works. Another reason why Sanderson is so widely respected within the writing community is due to his work ethic on writing.

Martin’s stories are praised for their world-building, as they are extensive and written in a detailed manner. The histories written for legendary figures, noble families and past conflicts add a sense of realism and they often explain or contextualize the various cultures, conflicts and characters that appear in the actual story. Among the respondents were claims, that in his case the world-building is roughly half of the story.

A common denominator for the given responses was the amount of time and effort that had been dedicated towards the creation of a fictional setting that was elaborate and intriguing. Said process made the fictional setting feel truthful and they were made much easier to visualize. The amount of

history, society and culture present within fantasy works with good world-building allowed for the readers to feel as if the fantasy setting existed before the story and it will continue to exist after it.

2.3.5 The Interest in Various Features of a Fantasy Story

As stated in Chapter I, in terms of importance world-building should be placed behind plot and characterization, as perfect world-building can not save an uninteresting plot or bland characters. However the public value of these core elements of a fantasy story seems to differ, with the respondents placing a heavy importance on world-building. Plot and character, although valued highly by the respondents, were on average marked as less significant. This is most assumedly an outcome of a positive bias towards world-building as it is a characteristic of a specifically fantasy or science-fiction story.

The most chosen response on the topic of Geography within a fictional world is mild interest beyond what is necessary for the plot. Of the 63 respondents, 30 of them chose the option for mild interest and 19 replied with high interest in the topic. As the remainder of responses were neutral, with a single entry showing mild disinterest, the importance of geography in a secondary world has been marked as 4.0 out of 5 in terms of public interest.

The interest in the climate of a secondary world is for the most part only in relation to the plot of the story. Of the given categories in world-building, this received the most responses claiming it to be either neutral or mostly irrelevant. 23 respondents replied with plot related interest, with the second most chosen option being mild interest at 21 votes. On average the interest in the climate of a fictional world is marked as 3.4 out of 5, clarifying it as the least significant part of a fictional world.

An equal amount of respondents found the topic of politics within a secondary world to be mildly and very interesting. Both of the highest options had 27 votes, with the remaining 9 respondents showing interest only if it is directly linked to the plot. On the linear scale, politics is valued at 4.2 out of 5. As politics can be described as a divisive topic even within fictional settings, an aspiring author should take caution when writing this topic.

The most common answer for the interest value of the fictional world's economy is mild interest with 29 responses, followed by neutrality with 17 votes. On a linear scale the economy within a fictional world is valued on average at 3.5 out of 5.

The aspect of a fictional world that received the most votes in terms of public interest was society, with a total of 42 respondents showing strong interest in it. Of the remaining respondents, 17 chose the option for mild interest and 4 opted interest if related to the plot. There were no respondents who chose indifference or a lack of interest. On average, the importance of a fictional society in a secondary world is 4.6 out of 5

The religious beliefs and practices of a fictional world received responses that were mostly interested in the topic. The most popular vote was deep interest with 25 respondents, followed by mild interest with 19 answers. On average the public interest towards religion within fantasy was a 4.0 out of 5.

The majority of responses in regards to the scientific level were in the high and mild interest, with 27 and 20 votes respectively. On the linear scale the intrigue for this topic is 4.1 out of 5.

The public interest in the art of a fictional world is bordering both mild interest and plot relevancy, as both options received 21 votes. The following most popular vote was high interest with 13 responses. The average interest for the art of a fictional world is marked at 3.6 out of 5.

The interest towards the history of a fictional world received an overwhelmingly positive response, with 34 individuals claiming to be very fascinated with it and 19 respondents showing mild interest. Of the remaining 10 votes, 9 were interest only if related to the plot and 1 response for mostly irrelevant. The average interest for the past of a fictional world is 4.1 out of 5.

2.3.6 Creating or Breaking Immersion Within Literature

The most common patterns among the respondents focused on three aspects that make a fictional setting feel real, those topics being consistency, history and secondary events. As stated in Chapter I, internal consistency is a mandatory aspect of a fictional world to maintain the sense of realism. Changes in said consistency must be explained, as to not break the sense of immersion. Fictional history can be called a “double-edged sword”, as there needs to be a proper amount of it. Writing too much history for the world of only one fantasy story will unnecessarily inflate the length of the novel and deter readers who do not have a deeper interest towards history. However writing too little about the history of a fictional world can make it seem dull and uninteresting, as if the world started to exist only as the story started. Fictional history can contextualize some events of the world the story takes place in, however the history that is only for the sake of written immersion should be limited in quantity or exist as a separate entity. Secondary events can be explained as events that occur within the fictional world that are not a vital part of the main plot. Writing nations, cultures and locations that do not appear in the story can broaden the world and add to the size of it, while also making it seem more enchanting.

A very important aspect of a fictional world is the culture and society that appear in it and how it is affected by the unique aspects of the fantasy world. What the reader may consider fantastical would under regular circumstances be very mundane within a fantasy world and it can be integrated into the society or culture. An excellent example of this appears within the television show “Avatar: The Last Airbender” (2005), where the unique “magic” known as bending is utilized for many different daily life purposes, such as the city of Omashu having a complex delivery system that utilizes gravity and earthbending to move parcels around the city. While the act of manipulating worldly elements through simple physical movement may be a completely foreign and miraculous idea in

the real world, it is considered a mundane aspect within this fictional world and its inhabitants have utilized it in a way similar to mundane concepts in the real world.

The culture also has to be fit for the environment and having aspects of a fictional culture be well thought out will make the setting more cohesive and relatable. Both small and large details need to interact to create a cohesive and understandable world, yet similarly to history it can be done in excess. What greatly adds to the sense of realism is asymmetry, as true fantasy is often idealized and symmetric, while perfection is very rarely obtainable.

While creating immersion is a difficult task with many nuances to it, breaking immersion is rather simple, as it often stems from a lack of effort or a lack of critical thought. As detail can be important to many readers, things should be explained, albeit moderately. Events do not occur without rhyme or reason and the amount of explanation for them can greatly vary. If something is described in a short and very concise manner, it may come off as having no depth to the answer (I.e “A wizard did it”). Explaining something in too great a detail can come off as encyclopedic exposition, which is very prevalent within Tolkien's works. Such exposition or explanation can very easily occur in world-building, however it is much easier to notice in character dialogue, where characters simply state that some sort of behaviour is a part of their culture. Such instances can be interpreted as the author speaking to the reader, in order to poorly clarify that, which should either be left up for interpretation or written about in a different manner. Speaking with the reader can also occur in a different manner, as some authors have either knowingly or unknowingly interjected modern concerns and politics into their work. This can in the worst case alienate a large portion of their audience and greatly decrease the value and public perception of the written book.

Fictional cultures need to be handled with extreme care as to not alienate specific audiences and to avoid overly simplifying something complex. As the culture of a nation or race can be incredibly unique and wonderful, special care needs to be taken to represent either an existing or fictional society to avoid writing monocultures. Fictional civilization should explore various ideas, rather than be explained away by one simple trait. The clothing, language, tools and other such commodities need to be internally consistent with the culture they appear in. For example, if a story is set in medieval Europe styled fantasy, the appearance of the modern era black suit would seem very out of place. The same can be stated about modern slang and names appearing in settings that appear to be historic.

2.3.7 Literary Tropes and Themes Within Fantasy Literature

Literary tropes can be defined as tools at an author's disposal, yet some of those tools can be rather outdated. The question regarding tropes or archetypes that are either overdone or poorly handled received 51 replies and among these responses there was a notable repetition of specific ideas. The

most commonly mentioned trope is the “Chosen one” archetype, in which the protagonist is destined to defeat the evil lord, as it greatly reduces the stakes of the story. The protagonists of such stories are often the central piece of the narrative and the declared hero of a prophecy, which greatly damages the immersive value of the narrative. It is difficult for the reader to feel suspense, as such leading characters are guaranteed to eventually win and their journey or struggles feel pointless, as they did not stem from the characters free will, but were orchestrated by destiny. This trope sometimes includes ideas like “secret family”, in which the protagonist is very often an heir to the throne or somehow related to the antagonist. Another prevalent sub-trope of the Chosen one is overpowered bland protagonists, who only serve to act as a self-insert for the sake of power fantasy. The inclusion of such tropes usually places an emphasis on a morally black and white world, leading to bland protagonists and antagonists. Some however stated that the morally grey characters in a grey world can eventually lead to a decrease in morality, as a very grey fictional world attempts to deny objective good and evil and such traditional fantasy stories can be uplifting to read, especially in uncertain times.

Many common tropes in modern fantasy literature originate from Tolkien. A notable amount of respondents stated that many modern fantasy stories rely too heavily on the foundations set by J.R.R Tolkien. The most commonly cited trope falls under the category of typical characterizations, such as a purely evil race that serves the antagonist. Other responses include the stereotypical description of elves being ancient and wise, while the dwarfs are greedy and live underground, with both races showing open disdain for the other. Such typical characterizations can be repetitive across different works by different authors and it makes the fantasy setting feel tedious. Special attention was brought to dragons, as nearly all modern depictions of them are either in line with how Tolkien described them or imitations of the many types of dragon from Dungeons and Dragons.

As the fantasy genre is focused on exploring the limits of creativity, it should focus on creating something new, as opposed to mirroring the history of reality. The archetype for a fantasy setting is very often based on medieval Europe, with minor differences that are plot related and very often left unexplored. Some of the worst offenders of such settings are shallow depictions of either cultures or fantasy races. Monocultures suggest a lack of effort from the author and simplistic species or races (such as bipedal sentient animals) do not interact with the fictional world in meaningful ways.

The respondents of the questionnaire gave a large variety of answers in regards to the themes, ideas and plot line related tropes that should appear more often. Of this variety, the most prevalent themes were in regards to society, culture and relationships. A vast majority of both fantasy and science fiction is human-centric in nature, with them being the default race and fantasy races being secondary. The human race is very often displayed with the nuclear family archetype, so diverging from those set standards allows for the exploration of family and culture related themes in a more unique way. While creating a fictional culture off the premise of an already existing culture, the author needs to be familiar with said culture in order to represent it respectfully.

Modern fantasy places the events in a medieval era, leaving the genre stagnant. The exploration of themes and ideas that the fantasy genre could examine is limited to one specific era and the outcome of prevalent themes in such eras are left unexplored. Many fantasy works have a habit of romanticising the idea of empires and colonialism, without proper understanding of their expected outcomes and how they affect an ordinary individual or the entire society. The inclusion of the consequences for such matters in such settings can focus on creating and surveying new themes and it can create distinctive experiences for the reader. Alternatively, the setting of a medieval fantasy world can be completely discarded, if the author chooses to explore a different era. While the genre of urban fantasy focuses on fiction that includes magic and is set between the 19th-21st century, it is overshadowed by other genres of fantasy and is very often still based on real history or the real world. Ideas such as an industrial revolution or technological advancement in a fantasy setting are very rarely explored and such settings can be informative, innovational and entertaining.

Another category of answers focuses on the representation of specific groups and character interactions, specifically on the theme of love. There is a lack of stories centered on platonic love, between good friends or siblings. When the term “love” is used in modern literature, it most commonly refers to the romantic definition and is traditionally written in a heteronormative manner. Although there has been an increase of LGBT characters in all forms of media, very many of those characters are handled recklessly, leading to flat characters without any depth. A fictional characters romantic preference should not be considered a personality trait and creating a character only for the sake of representation without having them positively affect the plot will feel forced. A viable option to connect characterization with the fictional world is to explore how they are treated by the various cultures and societies of a fictional world.

The remainder of the responses focused on various aspects of the plot and the surrounding fictional world. Various already existing tropes can be altered and twisted, creating what is both new and yet still familiar for a reader. If common literary devices are subverted well, they can completely re-contextualize the entire plot or create a truly unique and iconic moment or story. Larger pieces of literature aimed for older audiences should also be complex, with multi-threaded plotlines. Multiple concurrent storylines that interact with each other to some degree that eventually conclude in the overarching conclusion of the story. The fictional worlds such stories take place in should be detailed and complex as well, with locations that are thought out and explained with wildlife that is unique and biologically plausible.

CONCLUSION

The thesis titled “The effects of World-building and literary tropes on immersive literature studied through the works of J.R.R Tolkien” is intended to be a source of information on both of the titular topics in order to serve as a tool for aspiring authors. World-building as an aspect of a written story has over time become as valued as characterization and plot in the public eye and it appeals to literature enthusiasts of various ages, with the most positive definitions coming from the younger age demographics. It can be explained as the process of creating and explaining a fictional setting or a secondary world that is crafted with the intent of immersing those who enter it. It is most commonly associated with the fantasy and science-fiction genres as both of them require it to create an understandable and distinguishable setting for the story. The process of creating such a secondary world is a large scale project that requires time, effort and consistency. The most well known author affiliated with the idea of world-building is J.R.R Tolkien, as he popularized the idea of creating a fictional world that has no relation to the real world and his dedication towards his own fantasy world and the many narratives that occurred there have set the standard for modern fantasy. Other commonly cited authors on the topic of secondary worlds are Brandon Sanderson, who is praised for his systematic approach to story-telling and world-building and George R.R Martin, who has managed to weave the fictional history of his world into the ongoing narrative within his titles. Out of the many various nuances of secondary worlds, there is a distinct interest towards the society, politics and history of those fictional places and the inclusion and expansion of these topics can greatly increase the viability of the setting. Creating a fictional world requires consistency and attentive care to keep the reader immersed, meaning that various details need to be carefully planned out. If the fictional worlds contain unique traits, such as magic, they should be integrated into those cultures in organic ways, similarly to how technology is ingrained into modern culture in the real world. The author should avoid speaking to the reader through expository paragraphs, as such instances remind the reader that they are visiting a fictional location. The more unique ideas in fiction should be shown, rather than described, in order to leave a memorable impact. Many of the classical tropes affiliated with the fantasy genre have been explored multiple times, such as the “Chosen one” or the “dark lord” and the repetition of such themes has slowed down the development of the genre. Another overused theme within fantasy is the typical characterization of the standard fantasy races, such as elves, orcs or dwarfs. The case for orcs is especially prevalent, as they are very often categorized as a purely evil race and such shallow depictions can propagate outdated ideals. Although morally grey characters and plotlines are enjoyable for many, it should be noted that there can be a sense of comfort in a traditional good against evil story and such themes should not be abandoned. In terms of setting, the fantasy genre has grown stagnant as many aspiring authors attempt to recreate the worlds of previous authors. As the fantasy genre is about creativity, authors who aspire to create should rather construct something new over altering what has been made before.

SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

Lõputöö “Maailmaehitamise ja kirjandusliku seadete mõju kaasahaaravale kirjandusele, uuritud läbi J.R.R. Tolkien'i tööde” eesmärk on olla teabeallikas mõlema pealkirjas esitatud teema kohta, et olla abivahendiks pürgivatele autoritele. Kirjutatud loo osana on maailma-ehitamine sama väärtustatud, kui tegelaste iseloomustus ning teose süžee ning see on meeldiv erinevas vanuses kirjandushuvilistele, kusjuures kõige positiivsemad arvustused tulevad noorematest vanuserühmadest. Maailma-ehitamist võib seletada kui fiktiivse asukoha valmistamist ja seletust, või teise maailma valmistamist, selleks et kinni haarata neist, kes sellesse sisenevad. Seda soestatakse kõige sagedamini fantaasia- ja ulmežanriga, kuna mõlemad žanrid vajavad seda, et luua teosele arusaadav ja eristatav keskkond. Sellise fiktiivse maailma loomise protsess on suuremahuline projekt, mis nõuab aega, vaeva ja järjepidavust. Kõige tuntum maailma-ehitaja on J.R.R. Tolkien, kes populariseeris fiktiivsete maailmate valmistamise idee kirjanduses ning tema pühendus selle loodud maailma valmistamise ja selles toimuvate lugude jaoks on muutunud kaasaegsa fantaasia standardiks. Teised fiktiivsete maailmate teemadel tsiteeritud autorid on Brandon Sanderson, keda kiidetakse süstemaatilise lähenemise eest lugude jutustamisele ja maailma ülesehitamisele ning George R.R. Martin, kes on suutnud põimida enda teostes toimuva narratiivi fiktiivse maailma ajalooga. Fiktiivsete maailmate erinevatest nüanssidest on publikul suur huvi nende kohtade ühiskonna, poliitika ja ajaloo vastu ning nende teemade kaasamine või laiendamine märkamisväärselt suurendada tegevuspaiga elujõulisust. Sellise väljamõeldud maailma loomine nõuab järjepidavust ja tähelepanelikkust, et lugejat endasse süvendada, mis tähendab et erinevad detailid tuleb hoolekalt läbi planeerida. Kui toimumisaigas on ebatavapärased omadused nagu maagia, siis seda peaks ühendama kultuuriga orgaaniliselt, sarnaselt tehnoloogiale päris maailmas. Teose kirjanik peaks vältima lugejaga otseselt rääkimist selgitavate lõikude kaudu, kuna sellised lõigud tulevatavad lugejale meelde, et nad on külastamas väljamõeldud asukohta. Ilukirjanduse ainulaadsemaid ideid tuleks kirjeldamise asemel näidata, et luua meeldejääv mõju lugejale. Paljud fantaasiažanriga seotud klassikalised kirjanduslikud ideed nagu “saatuse väljavalitu” või “õel lord” on korduvalt käsitletud ja uuritud ning selliste teemada pidev taaskasutus on aeglustanud fantaasiažanri arengut. Veel üks ülekasutatud teema on standard fantaasiarasside (nagu päkapikud, haldjad ja orkid) tüüpiline iseloomustus. Orkide juhtum on eriti levinud, kuna neid liigitatakse sageli puhtalt õelate rasside sekka, ja sellised pealispinnased seletused võivad propageerida aegunud ideaaale. Kuigi moraalselt hallid tegelased ja teosed on nauditavad paljudele, tuleb tõdeda, et traditsiooniline hea kurjuse vastu lugu võib luua lugejas mugavustunnet ja seda liiki teoseid ei tasu täielikult hüljata. Asukoha poolest on fantaasiažanri areng tardunud, kuna paljud pürgivad autorid üritavad taasluua eelnevate autorite maailmu. Kuna fantaasiažanr on seotud loovusega, peaksid loomishimulised autorid varem valmistatu muutmise ja kopeerimise asemel pigem midagi uut valmistama.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

The message and the link to the questionnaire in the online community of r/Samplesize on the social media platform Reddit, posted on 23.03.2022.

[Academic] World-building in fantasy literature (Anyone 18+)

Hello. At the moment I am a university student gathering data on the topic of world-building or the setting of a fictional world in order to write a thesis with the intent of assisting aspiring authors. Some of the questions are text based, however there are no limits or minimums for those answers, so the respondents can answer in as many words as they would like.

Estimated time to complete is between 10-20 minutes.

Thank you for your time.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1__AAHcZmJu5OPtkZ6WGpCkRjAVmHu8f1Xxa8ZIr6iBgE/edit?usp=drive_open

Appendix 2

The message and the link to the questionnaire posted on the online community r/worldbuilding on the social media platform Reddit, posted on 30.03.2022.

Questionnaire on worldbuilding

Hello everyone. At the moment I am a university student, who is gathering data on the topic of worldbuilding within literature with the intent of writing a thesis, that could assist aspiring authors in their future endeavors.

My target audience for this questionnaire is people who are familiar with the idea of worldbuilding and who would be willing to give their opinion on various aspects of it. Estimated answering time should take between 10-20 minutes. Thank you for your time.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfkE0HZM7ud-1W-cTsrdeUT6g5MvrrcAPo9cKVOFz7Ow_QFw/viewform?usp=sf_link

World-building in Literature and How it Affects Immersion

The aim of this questionnaire is to reach a better understanding of how world-building and commonly utilized literary tropes involved with it can affect the immersive value of a piece of literature with the intent to assist aspiring authors. The primary focus is on world-building or the process and details of a secondary fictional world for the purpose of the story. The questionnaire will include inquiries about how such a secondary world is perceived, understood and how it may be changed.

Some of the questions will ask for specific details about the respondents, such as age group and their level of education. Such questions are for the sake of categorization and academic analysis. The questions involving the respondents personal details will not be published anywhere and answers from each of the aforementioned categories are equally valid.

Pealkirjata jaotis

1. Your age group

Märkige ainult üks ovaal.

☐ 18-24

☐ 25-34

☐ 35-44

☐ 45-54

☐ 55+

2. Your level of education

Märkige ainult üks ovaal.

☐ Secondary Education

☐ Tertiary education

☐ Bachelor's degree

☐ Master's degree

3. In as many words as you prefer, how would you explain "world-building" and what genres of literature do you associate it with?

4. What is your stance on world-building?

Märkige ainult üks ovaal.

☐ Dislike it

☐ Neutral

☐ Enjoy it

5. Are there any specific authors that come to your mind when you encounter the word "world-building"?

6. In as many words as you prefer, please explain why that specific author came to your mind.

7. How important are the following topics in a secondary fictional world to you?

Märkige ainult üks ovaal rea kohta.

	I do not care about it at all	Mostly irrelevant	Only interested in it if it is related to the story	I want to know a little about it	I want to know a lot
Geography	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Climate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Economy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Society	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Religion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Scientific level	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Art	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
History	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. What are the aspects of a secondary world that make that fictional world feel real to you?

13. Have you ever attempted to pursue creative writing in the fantasy or science fiction genre?

Märkige ainult üks ovaal.

- ☐ No, I have not
- ☐ I have considered it, but have not tried
- ☐ Yes, I have

14. Which specific tropes (such as plot points, locations, character archetypes etc) do you particularly dislike or are tired of? Why those tropes specifically?

15. What are the storytelling or world-building tropes you want to see more often?

Google pole seda sisu loonud ega heaks kiitnud.

Google Vormid

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