The Land of Shadow

Reading Mordor in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*:

A Geopolitical Threat or the Suppressed Other?

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Tutkielma keskittyy J.R.R. Tolkienin *Taru Sormusten Herrasta* –kirjan itäiseen maanosaan Mordoriin, ja siihen, miten Mordor kirjassa esiintyy. Tutkielma tarkastelee Mordoria hobittien Frodon ja Samin matkan kautta, ja tarkoituksena on selvittää, voiko kirjassa pahan tyyssijana ja Mustan Voiman, Sauronin, linnoituksena esiintyvän Mordorin kuvauksen nähdä toiseutettuna kuvauksena, jossa on elementtejä sekä kolonialismista että kylmän sodan aikaisesta ideologiasta, vai riiteleekö tämä kuvaus sen vahvan geopoliittisen aseman kanssa, joka Mordorilla on Keski-maassa.

Teoriat, joita tutkielmassa käytetään, ovat pääosin tilallisuuteen ja postkolonialismiin liittyviä teorioita, kuten Robert T. Tallyn ja Bertrand Westphalin geokritiikki, Georg Lukácsin transsendentaalinen kodittomuus, Fredric Jamesonin kognitiivinen karttaus, Michael Pickeringin kokoamat ajatukset stereotypioinnista sekä Edward Saidin orientalismiteoria. Näiden rinnalle nousee myös geopolitiikka, jota edustavat muun muassa Klaus J. Dodds, Simon Dalby ja Gearóid Ó Tuathail.

Tutkielma jakautuu kahteen analyysiosaan, joissa ensimmäinen keskittyy Mordoriin fyysisenä paikkana ja tilana, ja toinen käsittelee Mordorin kanssa liittoutuneita kansoja, itäläisiä ja eteläisiä, sekä Sauronin palvelijoita örkkejä. Tilaan ja paikkaan liittyvät kappaleet käsittelevät suoria maisemakuvauksia Mordorista, Frodon ja Samin Mordorissa ja jo sen ulkopuolella kokemaa transsendentaalista kodittomuutta ja karttaamattomuutta, ja Mordorin geopoliittista asemaa ja Sauronin johtajuutta. Kansoja käsitellään puolestaan omissa kappaleissaan.

Tutkielman loppupäätelmä on se, että Mordor, jonka kuvaukset kuolleesta luonnosta ovat täynnä ympäristökatastrofin tunnusmerkkejä, jota ei voi navigoida tai muodostaa mielessä kognitiivista karttaa alueesta ja joka on poliittisesti diktatuurin hallitsema, on samanaikaisesti kuvaus toiseutetusta, vaarallisesta ja pahuuden tuhoamasta alueesta, sekä kuvaus voimakkaasta, kolonialismin keinoja käyttävän diktaattorin hallitsemasta maasta, jonka liittolaiset ovat mykkiä ja stereotypioituja, ja jonka asukkaat ovat geneettisen mutaation ja mutilaation tuloksia, sotilaita, joiden elämästä eivät välitä kuin sotilaat itse. Mordor on ”musta maa”, jonka toiseuttaminen muistuttaa sekä kolonialismin ajasta että kylmän sodan ideologiasta.

Avainsanat: postkolonialismi, tilallisuus, Taru Sormusten Herrasta, geopolitiikka, geokritiikki

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1. Introduction

Imagine the following scenario: a blonde, fair-skinned woman, driven from her homeland and denied her right to the throne, faced with a primitive tribe of warriors – of dark-skinned men, painted and long-haired, riding horses in a strange land, full of seas made of grass and vast deserts without an oasis. This image seems familiar, not simply because it is the premise for the story of Daenerys Targaryen, a heroine in the contemporary high fantasy novel series *A Song of Ice and Fire* (first book 1996), written by George R.R. Martin and later turned into a successful TV series – but because it depicts a meeting that is all around us in both history and popular culture: a meeting with the Other, in other words, that which is outside the familiar.

Another similar encounter takes place in the predecessor of all fantasy novels of our time. Two hobbits are faced with an impossible task: to sneak into a land that is both unknown and dangerous, inhabited by peoples allied with evil. An inspiration to the aforementioned *A Song of Ice and Fire,* J.R.R. Tolkien's epic *The Lord of the Rings* (1954), a novel composed of three volumes that divide into six books, takes place in a fictional world: Middle-Earth is inhabited by different races, such as elves, men, dwarves, hobbits and orcs. It tells the tale of how the One Ring, forged by the Dark Lord Sauron, was found and ended up in the possession of a hobbit from the Shire, Frodo Baggins. Upon finding out about the true nature of the Ring that his uncle left to him, Frodo flees his peaceful rural home and begins his journey to destroy the Ring – the only way to achieve that is to carry the Ring to where it was forged, a fiery mountain in a land inhabited by evil.

The name of this land is Mordor, and Tolkien, famous for his vivid descriptions, paints a clear picture of the land as seen for the first time by Frodo and Sam:

> A chill wind blew from the East. Night was gathering over the shapeless lands before them; the sickly green of them was fading to a sullen brown. Far away to

> the right the Anduin, that had gleamed fitfully in the sun-breaks during the day, was now hidden in shadow. But their eyes did not look beyond the River, back to Gondor, to their friends, to the lands of Men. South and east they stared to where, at the edge of the oncoming night, a dark line hung, like distant mountains of motionless smoke. Every now and again a tiny red gleam far away flickered upwards on the rim of earth and sky.
>
> (II: 603)

In this description, Tolkien presents a clear difference between the lands of the North and West and the shadowed, dark East. Mordor, literally translating to the "dark land", is the place where evil resides and which is nearly inaccessible to anyone who is not an inhabitant of the land.

However, to this land must the journey of Frodo and Sam take them, and so the focus of this thesis lies with Mordor as well: the crucial question is how the land of Mordor is depicted through the journey that the two hobbits embark on and eventually complete in books four and six. As a fantasy novel written intermittently between the years 1935 and 1954, when it was finally published, Tolkien's epic is full of both pre-war ideologies and early Cold War era worldview, evident in its representation of the "evil" of Sauron, his land and everyone allied with him. Keeping that in mind, the main objective of this thesis is to concentrate on how Mordor can be read in the story: is it an essentially Othered land that is depicted through the dichotomy of "us" and "them", and how does this Othered perspective compare with its powerful, dominant geopolitical position?

The theoretical background for this thesis can be traced back to European history. The European cultures have faced not only the Orient, but also the cultures of Africa and native America, on three significant occasions: in the sixteenth century with the slave trade, during the colonial period and the "scramble" for Africa, and finally, during the post-war period that marked the migrations of so-called "third world" peoples to both Europe and America (Hall 1997, 239). During the colonization of Africa, there were no existing maps of any of the lands – Africa was largely a mystery to Europeans, but deep-seated fears of miscegenation

and the Enlightenment idea of ranking societies from "barbarism" to "civilization", with Africa right at the bottom of the "barbarism" scale, gave Africa a reputation as a land that was both "marooned" and "historically abandoned" (Hall 1997, 239). The cultural differences were seen as both intimidating and inferior, and the actual African landscape, exotic and different to what any European had ever encountered before, was feared because the explorers did not know what to expect of it.

This same phenomenon is clearly visible in Tolkien's novel: Frodo and Sam, who must journey into Mordor, have no map, for no map of the land exists. In spatial theory, this phenomenon, of our being-in-the-world being a state of uncertainty, of displacement, has to do with both the literal fact of being lost and the more abstract sense of *transcendental homelessness*, a state of anxiety and "unhomeliness" amidst your surroundings (Tally 2013, 47). In Frodo and Sam's case, this sense of the uncanny finds its base in that Mordor is a land where no outsider is allowed, with impenetrable natural defenses and a repulsive, exotic landscape. Whereas outwardly, this might again seem similar to the historical situation between Europe and Africa, what is different from the Western explorations is the clear shift in the power dynamic, the geopolitical situation of the world in question: in European history, the West held the dominance while Africa was, though unmapped, an inactive "being" waiting to be discovered. In Tolkien's novel, the power dynamics of the land come closer to the geopolitical situation of the early Cold War era world and the impeding confrontation between the West and the Soviet Union: Mordor holds the dominance, while Frodo and Sam are the outsiders, the so-called underdogs, facing a vast, unknown land, an enemy with a far greater power than they or their allies in the West hold.

This is what the first part of my analysis will focus on: first, I will examine the landscape of Mordor depicted on the level of direct descriptions, and second, I will show how the spatial concepts of an unmapped land and transcendental homelessness can be applied to

Mordor and the hobbits' journey, and finally, I will outline the geopolitical map of Middle-earth and place Mordor on it as the dominant power and a geopolitical threat with the aid of referentiality.

While Hall outlines three important encounters between the West and the periphery, the most important of these three has no doubt been the colonial period. The "scramble" for Africa and the resulted encounters between the African peoples and the Westerners have profoundly shaped the idea of racial difference that was (and in parts, still is) prominent in the Western world: the image of the "dark man", living in a land that was both unmapped and uncivilized, was constructed to become the Other, a converse image to the Western norm. In postcolonial theory, the Other is a form of conceptualizing the Self: essentially, it means how the contrast between the Self (the familiar, "we") and the Other (the unfamiliar, "them") is created, and how the Self becomes the centre of knowledge, much like the Europe of the colonial era, and the Other everything outside of that. In practice, the process of Othering is an attempt to form an identity separate of the oppressed Other and distance the referent by restricting it to a fixed, often stereotypical image (Pickering 2001, 48-49).

As Pickering further explains, the entire concept of the Western culture relied entirely on the constructed dichotomy between their own, advanced society, and the racially and culturally inferior societies that existed outside the so-called center, Europe (2001, 51). The stereotypical image of the uncivilized, primitive man with dark skin and lesser cultural heritage dates back to especially the 1800s and the mapping of Africa, and because of the Western hegemony over cultural matters until the late twentieth century, it has persisted as a fixed image in the cultural works over the years. This is also the case in Tolkien's novel, and as such, the second part of my analysis will be focused on how the concept of the Primitive can be applied to the peoples allied with or living in Mordor, both men and orcs, as well as

argue that the orcs are simultaneously described in more sympathetic terms than the Easterlings and Southrons, and as the "ultimate Other" to be killed on sight.

The relevance of this thesis is two-fold: firstly, as was already mentioned, Tolkien's novel was a groundbreaking work at its time and moulded the genre of fantasy into what it is today: all the fantasy novels of this day still draw inspiration from Middle-Earth and its peoples and cultures. However, this creates a self-fulfilling circle: the racial representations that are present in Tolkien's works are taken for granted, and re-presented in contemporary works of fantasy without examining their validity. For example, it could be argued that in *A Song of Ice and Fire*, the dothraki people, who were described in the first paragraph of this introduction, are essentially, or at least initially, the Other to the focalizer Daenerys – different, dark-skinned, with a culture that seems more primitive and inferior to that of Daenerys' home land, speaking a language she cannot understand. This representation of the Other is common especially in the genre of fantasy: along with *A Song of Ice and Fire*, the same dichotomy is present in David Eddings' world-renowned series *The Belgariad* (1982-84) and *The Malloreon* (1988-91), where, in a world constructed much like Europe, the Other is to be found in the South, in peoples of dark skin, militant cultures and ruled by power-hungry tyrants. This makes it especially important to analyse the racialised discourse found in Tolkien's novels, as they are the paragon to most contemporary works of fantasy, and as the genre of fantasy continues to become more and more popular in both literary and other media.

The other side of the coin to this thesis' importance is the theoretical part: while Tolkien has been the subject of an outstanding number of scholarly studies during the decades since the publication of *The Lord of the Rings*, only a few of them handle the subject of either spatial imagery or postcolonial representations. In 2004, Andrew Rearick III called for an end to the academic silence on the topic of race and racism in Tolkien's works (864). Eleven years later, this thesis is an answer to that call – though perhaps not in the manner Rearick would

have wished. However, it is important to remember that the main argument in this thesis is not to accuse Tolkien himself of being racist. That is an argument that has had academics and critics writing both to accuse (see: John Yatt, Stephen Saphiro, C.S. Lewis, W.H. Auden) and to defend (see: Andrew Rearick III, Joshua Roberts, Cristopher Tolkien), and I take no part in this particular debate. Instead, the aim is to focus on the land of Mordor in terms of its topography, geopolitical position and inhabitants, at the same time outlining certain problematic elements present in these descriptions. The focus is thus the writing, not the writer.

While this thesis will draw on the key concepts in postcolonial theory, the focus will be on the more recent theoretical field of spatiality, geocriticism and geopolitics. These theoretical subjects are the ones to start this thesis: in chapter 2, I will focus on spatial studies and the perception of space both outside and inside the literary field. I will then explain two concepts that relate to maps and mapping: literary cartography and cognitive mapping. The chapter ends with a look on a recent field of study, geocriticism. In chapter 3, the focus will move from spatial to geopolitical, as I will start by examining critical geopolitics and the importance of space and place in relation to it. The second part of the chapter focuses on the postcolonial aspect, outlining the concepts of the Other and the Primitive, along with a look at stereotyping as a practice associated with postcolonial thought. I will finish the chapter by presenting a closer look at Edward Said's theory of Orientalism and how this relates to the topic of this thesis.

Chapters 4 and 5 will deal with the analysis of the novel: in chapter 4, I will focus on the land of Mordor and both its topography and political situation. I will start by outlining and analysing the direct description of the landscape of Mordor, and then take a closer look at how the landscape and the evil that dwells there affects Frodo and Sam's ability to map their physical and mental landscape and surroundings. Finally, I will examine the geopolitical

dimension of Mordor, the effect of Sauron's leadership and its parallels to the politics of the real world. In chapter 5, the sphere of analysis moves from the physical land to the peoples inhabiting it or allied with it: I will start with the Easterlings and the Southrons, their descriptions and the connection to the concept of the Primitive, and then move on to the orcs in service of Sauron. There, the focus will be on the dichotomy of the orcs as the ultimate Other and at the same time, as humanized image of a soldier drawn into war unwillingly.

2. Spatial understanding and geocritical thought

Up until the early twentieth century, critical thought was mostly focused on the discourse of linearity, time and historical consciousness, and only the recent decades mark the birth of what has been called a "spatial turn" – it came to be as a product of "a new aesthetic sensibility", in other words postmodernism, as well as the breaking of traditional geographical lines through the post-war years and the effects of postcolonialism (Tally 2013, 3). Before the crucial shift in the general consciousness in the minds of the people, space and place were treated as fixed and immobile: as Foucault argues, a "devaluation of space" had dominated critical thought for centuries, as those who considered history (and more broadly, the human thought) as a linear – and only linear – process saw space to have an "air of anti-history" (1980, 177-178). For the longest time, space and place had no position in critical thought, either in literary studies, or in the field of other societal or political studies.

However, in the decades since, the privileged position of time and temporality over that of space and place has changed, as a new field of study, centering on space, place and spatiality has emerged (Wegner 2002, 180). This is a largely interdisciplinary field that focuses the attention anew to productions of space, approaching the subject from various ways of thinking: social theory, history, geography, philosophy and, perhaps with the most relevance to the topic of this thesis, literary and cultural studies (Wegner 2002, 180).

In the next three subchapters, I will be focusing on the theoretical field of spatial studies. I will begin by outlining the change in the perception of space, also called the "spatial turn", then moving on as I attempt to explain the different conceptions of space and place with the help of the theoretical thoughts of Robert T. Tally, Bertrand Westphal, Leonard Goldstein and Henri Lefebvre. I will then examine space and place in the context of literature and conceptual maps; first, with the practice of literary cartography, and second, with two concepts closely associated with maps and mapping: Georg Lukács' theory of transcendental homelessness, and Fredric Jameson's imago-spatial practice of cognitive mapping. I will end this section on spatiality on a brief look to the critical paradigm of geocriticism.

2.1. The perception of space

Shortly after World War II, after the birth of the postmodern society and the general displacement that pervaded the post-war discourse, space and place began to gain dominance in critical theory, in time even rivaling the concept of temporality that had been the focus of most critics until that period of time. This change in critical thought has later been named the "spatial turn", increasing spatial and geographical focus in critical texts and in the academic world (Tally 2013, 11-12).

This shift towards spatial thinking can be attributed to several factors: in the post-war world, attitudes had to be re-examined, and the perspective of progressivity and prosperity that was associated with the idea of time no longer applied after the horrors of the atomic bomb and concentration camps. After the war, previously fixed geographical lines between countries were redrawn, as a massive postcolonial relocation of masses took place, both from the ex-colonial countries to Europe and America and from different areas of war-touched countries, either emigrating to other areas inside their homeland after the destruction of their own homes, or completely moving to other countries in pursuit of a better life, after the economical slump in the post-war years (Tally 2013, 12-13). In this new world, not only was

place more defined, more distinctive because it was now uncertain; but it could also be explored: because of tourism, the matters of space and place became closer to both the public interest and the center of critical thought.

With this new interest, it became crucial to define "space" as a concept. The French critic Bertrand Westphal defines space firstly as a "concept that encompasses the universe": something that is at the same time both infinitely small and infinitely large (2011b, 4). However, he then introduces a more simplified approach: dividing space into two different concepts, one more abstract, the other more concrete. The first of these is "conceptual space", which Westphal describes as "free", "mobile" and "undefined": a space then becomes "factual place" when it is somehow defined in a meaningful way (2011b, 5). While space, according to this simple distinction, is something that quite simply *exists*, an area or a concept that is undefined and constantly shifting, place is a defined landmark, "a point of rest"; in other words, space becomes a place once it "occasions a pause, … that, however brief, makes it into a subject of storytelling" (Tally 2013, 51). However, it should be noted that the lines between space and place have been studied by geographers for years, and, as Westphal notes, the two concepts are never mutually exclusive (2011b, 5-6).

This definition of space leaves it largely an abstract concept, but space can also be viewed as linear: Leonard Goldstein argues that space as a linear concept very much exists, and as such, can be ascertained to possess three essential characteristics. Firstly, space is constant and homogenous; secondly, space is measurable; and thirdly, it is always observed by a single entity that perceives it from a central position (1988, 20-21). In other words, this linear perspective of space means it is quantifiable, and, perhaps more importantly, also viewed and thus understood from the point of view of a sole individual. Goldstein's theory of space reflects a modern interpretation of space, and so does the theoretical view of Henri Lefebvre, a famous French Marxist philosopher and social theorist. His argument is that

space, and especially the modern space, is not to be understood as a "container to be filled with content"; in other words, his idea differs from Westphal's simplified definition of space as something indefinite, only turning into something meaningful upon human interaction (1991, 170). Instead, Lefebvre defines space as social product: his argument is based on the idea that space is, at once, both the result of and the requirement for social structures. His concluding statement of the state of space is the following:

> Is space a social relationship? Certainly – but one which is inherent to property relationships (especially the ownership of the earth, of land) and also closely bound up with the forces of production (which impose a form on that earth or land); here we see the polyvalence of social space, its "reality" at once formal and material.
>
> (1991, 85)

What this means in practice is that for Lefebvre, space is a fundamentally human construction; and, simultaneously, fundamentally historical.

Lefebvre's theoretical construction for understanding and categorizing spaces, a "conceptual triad", consists of three ways in which space is represented: spatial practice, representations of space, and representational space, each connected to three ways of experiencing space, namely, the domains of the "perceived", the "conceived", and the "lived" (1991, 33-40). For Lefebvre, observing the space of a given society makes it possible to understand its spatial practices, whereas the representations of space are more to be understood as closer to the conventional concept of space, as the representations combine both what is lived and what is conceived. Representational space, while also incorporating the idea of the "lived", focuses more on the direct experiences of the individual and the way those living in these spaces have both dominated and directly lived through them (1991, 38-39). This is a way of understanding space in a modern sense, as a construct that is built socially and is meaningful to the society in both observing its practices and "mapping" the spaces that

are lived in[1]. This, along with the geopolitical theory that is also concerned with space in societal context, will be important later on in the analysis section.

According to Tally, spatiality, as a concept, is a means of understanding the world: the world consists of spaces and places, and the spatial turn is a response to the shift in the political, cultural and philosophical state of the world; it is a tentative, new approach that attempts to provide a new way of thinking and analyzing these spaces that are found all around us, not least in literature. As Tally goes on to say, literature is also a means of understanding the world, in the form of writing about it, and as such, he calls for "new cartographic approaches, new forms of representation, new ways of imagining our *place* in the universe" (2013, 42-43). In other words, space, place and mapping are not only key concepts in understanding the postmodern world, but also in understanding and clarifying our place in the world by means of literary and cultural studies.

2.2. Literary cartography and the text as a map

Throughout history, people have used the map as a means of locating themselves when faced with an unfamiliar place. The map functions as a guide to understanding our surroundings, to defining our place in the world – something that is essential, as one of the most unpleasant feelings is the feeling of being lost, uncertain of one's surroundings and place of being. The map gives us an illustration, a concrete, if figurative, representation of the world that surrounds us, and helps us realize the space around us into a defined, meaningful place.

In a certain way, it is possible to say that literature functions in the same sense – in Tally's words, literature is also a "form of mapping, offering its readers descriptions of places, situating them in a kind of imaginary space, and providing points of reference by

[1] This can be turned the other way around: representational space means understanding space as something that is analyzed through the people living in these spaces, but it is possible to look at spaces that are not lived in through the idea of abandonment. If lived spaces are defined and dominated by those living in them, are spaces that are abandoned or scarcely lived in defined through the absence of inhabitants?

which they can orient themselves and understand the world in which they live" (2013, 2). Literature draws us a map not of pictures but of words, creating a kind of map with the descriptions of places inside the text that orients the readers towards a "map" of the world in which the events of the text take place.

However, it is not only the texts that can be read as a map; also the act of writing itself can be seen as a sort of mapmaking process. As Tally argues, the writer employs similar practices to a mapmaker, observing the place in which the events of the text take place, and deciding which of the features of the landscape to include in the text:

> The literary cartographer, even one who operates in such non-realistic modes as myth or fantasy, must determine the degree to which a given representation of a place refers to any "real" place in the geographical world.
>
> (2013, 45)

Here, Tally refers to the writer of any given text as a "literary cartographer", mapping the world that is then transferred into the text: notable in this is how he includes not only the writers of novels or other texts whose settings are based on the real world (such as James Joyce with his novel *Ulysses*), but also the writers whose works take place in mythical or entirely fantastical places – in this, J.R.R. Tolkien is a prime example.

While literary cartography tends to be mostly concerned with the mapping of "real" spaces (or "real-and-imagined spaces" as Edward Soja calls them), for the topic of this thesis, a direct referentiality to any real, existing space is outside a conceivable possibility, as the landscapes Tolkien has "mapped" in his novel do not exist in real life[2]. His world is a fantastical world, but that does not mean it cannot be analyzed with the same theoretical approaches as real spaces:

> In a fantastic cultural work, the artist pretends that things known to be impossible are not only possible but real, which creates mental space redefining – or pretending to redefine – the impossible.
>
> (Miéville 2002, 45)

[2] However, parallels can and should be made, e.g. between The Shire and English countryside, based on the descriptions of the landscape and Tolkien's own notes made outside the story; as well as between Mordor and the Soviet Union, based on the shared geopolitical situation in Primary and Secondary worlds.

Even though the world represented in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is "impossible", it has been constructed according to the rules of "real" – W.H. Auden has separated these two concepts by calling the real world the "Primary world", and the imaginary, created world of Middle-Earth "Secondary world" (1968a, 138).

What makes it possible to analyze the Secondary world in a similar way to a text reflecting the Primary world is the rigorous set of rules applying to the creation of a Secondary world: "an imaginary world can be so constructed as to make credible any landscape, inhabitants, and events which its maker wishes to introduce", but this invention of a whole history, the imaginary mapping of a whole landscape for an entire world, means it has to be entirely convincing (Auden 1968b, 50). While a dream world may be inconsistent or illogical, an imaginary world must follow a logical set of rules that, while they may be different from the rules of the real world, still must be both "as intelligible and inviolable" (Auden 1968b, 50). As Middle-Earth has been constructed to be as real a world as the Primary world we live in, it can also be analyzed with the same theoretical approach as the novels representing places that are found in the real world.[3] To conclude, regardless of the "factuality" of the world depicted in a text, the descriptions still "constitute a sort of map", not only because they "allow us to create mental images of the places they describe", but also because they "give those places life and meaning" (Padrón 2007, 258-259).

This idea of the writer as a mapmaker is the basis for the notion of literary cartography. As Tally puts it, narrative is a "form of world-making" that produces a certain representation of the ensemble of things the narrator or the writer wishes to include. This ensemble is constituted of a variety of elements, such as parts derived from other narratives, factual descriptions, descriptions based on first-hand observations or secondary images based on

[3] Of course, it has to be noted that while the literary cartography often happens inside the text and in writing, in *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien does provide the reader with an actual map.

myths or invented entirely. This narrative, in Tally's words, is what in the end makes it possible for the reader to form a comprehensive image of the world that is represented, but this image may also be used in other cartographic narratives (2013, 49). While literary maps are not always narratives, narratives are nearly always spatial: the events, the beginning, middle and ending of a given narrative can be located in a spatial frame of reference inside the text itself just as much as they can be located as a temporal point in time. This shift reflects the postmodern spatial turn, and indeed, a form of literary cartography is the modern novel (Tally 2013, 49).

With the postmodern sense of displacement came also the existential sense of not belonging: according to the Hungarian literary theorist Georg Lukács, a condition of the modern world is the sense of "transcendental homelessness". Lukács defines this state of being-in-the-world as follows:

> When the peak of absurdity, the futility of genuine and profound human aspirations, or the possibility of the ultimate nothingness of man has to be absorbed into literary form as a basic vehicular fact, and when what is in itself absurd has to be explained and analysed and, consequently, recognised as being irreducibly there, then, although some streams within such a form may flow into a sea of fulfilment, the absence of any manifest aim, the determining lack of direction of life as a whole, must be the basic *a priori* constituent, the fundamental structural element of the characters and events within it.
>
> (Lukács 1971, 62)

What this means is that in the modern world, the subject can no longer define the world as something obviously meaningful. Transcendental homelessness is the "resolution of a fundamental dissonance of existence", the result of the world not presenting in itself any meaning but instead appearing as both undeterminable and incomprehensible (Lukács 1971, 62).

In a similar manner to Tally, who outlines the modern novel as being a form of literary cartography, Lukács argues that the modern novel reflects the change in the human consciousness. As Paul de Man puts it in his study of Lukács' *Theory of the Novel*, the new modes of constructing a story that came with the postmodern ideology show the

"modifications in man's way of defining himself in relation to all categories of existence" (1966, 529). For Lukács, the general sense of alienation in the world and modes of thinking affected the way the novel is constructed, as "homelessness in the novel came to indicate that the world itself was out of joint" (Neubauer 1996, 533). Transcendental homelessness was an existential condition that emerged already in Lukács' time in the post-World War I society, as well as a defining characteristic of the new mode of writing and characterizing the novel.

This concept of transcendental homelessness is close to twentieth century existentialism, a philosophical field of thought represented by such philosophers as Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre (Tally 2013, 47). Heidegger's theory of the "uncanny", which translates to a sense of "unhomeliness" and an existential anxiety, the feeling of "not being 'at home' in the world", is close to the idea of transcendental homelessness (Tally 2013, 47). A subject has an acute feeling of being lost, not necessarily physically but both mentally and psychologically, and, because the world does not offer any clear meaning, the subject has to devise this meaning themselves. This concept of being lost amidst your surroundings, both literally and figuratively, will be an important concept in the analysis section, as it will be referenced in relation to what Frodo and Sam experience upon first reaching the borders of Mordor.

Transcendental homelessness is the reflection of a postmodern condition in the world, a failure to locate oneself inside a network of surroundings – however, Fredric Jameson offers a possible solution to this, called cognitive mapping. Jameson has, over the years, defined cognitive mapping in several ways, but as Tally describes it, cognitive mapping is the process of

> an individual subject's attempt to locate his or her position within a complex social organization or spatial milieu, as is the case with a single person who is walking around in an unfamiliar city, attempting to gain a concrete sense of place in relation to various other places on a mental map.
>
> (2013, 68)

Jameson himself speaks of cognitive mapping as a combination of map-making practices and social class consciousness, operating within the postmodern society: the meaning of the cognitive map is to allow a "situational representation on the part of the individual subject to that vaster and properly unrepresentable totality", in other words, the city or other space in which the individual is located (1984, 90). Cognitive mapping is the attempt to understand the totality from a subjective point of view, but not only the totality in the sense of a cartographic entity or a geographical location, but also in terms of social space: Jameson utilizes a Marxist perspective in his view of cognitive mapping, noting that the mapping does not happen only on part of the locale of one's being-in-the-world, but we also constantly map our place in the world as a relation between our individuality and both local and international class realities (1984, 91).

In relation to the concept of cognitive mapping, Jameson refers on several occasions to Kevin Lynch, author of *The Image of the City* (1960). Lynch introduces two terms, imageability and wayfinding, in his book on urban mapping: his argument is that one can essentially map their place in a given place (in this case, a city) by using a visual image created in one's mind, and use these points of reference to navigate. The easier to visualize a cityscape is, the easier it is to construct a "mental diagram" which will then make it relatively easy to move inside this cityscape (Tally 2013, 71). However, the more difficult the visualization of the city, the more difficult it is to form a comprehensive mental map of it: according to Lynch, "urban alienation is directly proportional to the mental unmapability [sic] of local cityscapes" (Jameson 1990, 350). This means that in an alienated city (or, to extrapolate, a space that is in some sense to be considered alienated, if by alienated we comprehend it to mean a space that lacks specific markers that would define it or create a differentiation from another similar space – much like the hills of Emyn Muil in *The Lord of the Rings*), the people either visiting or living inside it are unable to comprehensively imagine

a visualization of a map of the city; in other words, they are "unable to map either their own positions or the urban totality in which they find themselves" (Jameson 1984, 89).

This alienated space is characterized by a sense of confusion, and from that confusion, a state of existential anxiety can be born; in turn, this sense of being unsure of one's place in the world can lead to transcendental homelessness that characterizes the postmodern urban space (Tally 2013, 71). The concept of cognitive mapping, then, is Jameson's answer to Lynch's space that lacks "imageable" markers: it is the disalienation of the postmodern space, a reconquest and reconstruction of the sense of place, a "mental map of the social and global totality we all carry around in our heads" (1984, 89; 1990, 350). Cognitive mapping is a form of mental cartography that maps both the physical environment and the social dimension by creating a complex understanding of one's place in the world, and while a complete comprehensive view of the totality of postmodern space may not be possible to attain, cognitive mapping aids in the attempt to situate oneself in the spatial network of social and geographical relations.

2.3. Geocriticism

The theoretical approaches outlined in the previous subchapters are all theories that focus, more or less, on the individual's approach to the surrounding space. This point of view is called an ego-centered analysis, and most of the literary spatial analysis focuses on either the author or the central fictional character, and what prevails as the subject of the analysis is the interpretation and not the space itself. Westphal, in his study of geocriticism, argues that while other, ego-centered spatial studies focus on the referent in a monological environment, geocriticism takes a geo-centered approach, and instead of placing the writer or the character in the middle of the analysis, geocriticism concentrates on the representation of space, using the spatial referent as the basis for the analysis and "placing *place* in the center of the debate" (Westphal 2011b, 111-113).

Despite this differing approach, geocriticism draws on many of the writings of the critical theorists introduced in the earlier subchapters, such as Foucault, Jameson, Lukács and Lefebre, as well as the postcolonial theorists that will be introduced in chapter 3 of this thesis. That is one of the key characteristics of geocriticism: it is an interdisciplinary field and is closely affiliated with the spatial theories that concentrate on the so-called "nomadic perspective" (Westphal 2011a, xiii). However, geocriticism focuses on the heterogeneous aspect of space that includes both aesthetics and politics (Tally 2013, 113).

In addition to this central idea of space as defined in itself and from as many sources as possible, Westphal outlines five key concepts that characterize geocriticism: spatiotemporality, meaning that spatial analysis is always fundamentally linked with temporal concerns; transgressivity, or the instability of representations and the perpetual motion of space; referentiality, meaning that a representation is "linked with the referential world"; multifocalization, or the broadening of points of view when viewing a space; and, finally, a polysensuous approach, meaning the perceiving of places with multiple senses (Westphal 2011a, xiv-xv). Of these approaches, the last two are the most important for the analysis section of this thesis, as I will attempt to outline a multifocalized and polysensuous perspective of Mordor, instead of an ego-centered approach solely from the point of view of Frodo and Sam.

A multifocalized perspective departs from the "traditional" approach of a subject gazing upon an object that is often judged either exotic or inferior towards a more inclusive and less stereotypical representation (Westphal 2011b, 123; Tally 2013, 142). This means that the representation varies depending on the subject, the differing accounts coming together to form a comprehensive image of the spatial referent that is being examined. Westphal lists three "basic variations" of multifocalization, the point of view alternating between exogenous, endogenous and allogeneous. The exogenous representation is by far the most common,

especially in travel literature (which, in a way, *The Lord of the Rings* can be said to be, as well): the point of view is that of a foreigner to the space of reference, and it often "exudes exoticism". The spatial representations examined in postcolonial studies are often exogenous, as the gaze that falls on the object and the way the object is then viewed is an Othered gaze. The endogenous point of view is the most resistant to an exotic view, as it operates within a familiar space, while the allogeneous view falls somewhere in between familiar and foreign, as the character in question would already be familiar with the place but at the same time would be viewed as a foreigner by the indigenous population (Westphal 2011b, 128-129). For example, in *The Lord of the Rings*, with Mordor and its surroundings as the space of reference, Frodo and Sam are exogenous characters, foreigners to the land and thus viewing it with the dichotomy of the Self (or the Same, according to Westphal) and the Other. Endogenous characters would be the orcs that live in Mordor, while the only (and perhaps dubious) allogeneous character is that of Gollum, who, unlike anyone else in Tolkien's world, has travelled to Mordor before, but is still viewed as an outsider, both from the perspective of the inhabitants of the land and from his own.

While spaces can be viewed from multiple perspectives, they can also be oriented through senses. Traditionally, the sensory approach associated with perceiving space is sight, but as Westphal notes, "all senses convey perception insofar as they receive information (kinesthetic or biochemical sensation) and develop that information through a mental process (identification or association)" (2011b, 133). The perception of the world and, subsequently, our surroundings, is a multisensory one, and all the senses are important as "the sources of the meanings humans attach to and associate with places" (Tally 2013, 142). Polysensoriality, much like the multifocalization, is dependent on perspective, and also shares the heterogeneous characteristic. In other words, space can be represented in a variety of ways inside the sensory perception, as some spaces are characterized by one sense, while others are

"synesthetic" or characterized by or perceived with multiple senses (Westphal 2011b, 134, 136).

To conclude, the geocritical approach combines many different critical fields of study into one, interdisciplinary subject, the goal of which is the "active exploration" of all spaces in literature, both imaginary and real. In Tally's words, geocriticism "explores, seeks, surveys, digs into, reads and writes a place; it looks at, listens to, touches, smells, and tastes spaces" (2011, 2). Geocriticism is a perception of space as the referent, the placing of place as the focus of interest, one that is to be examined in multiple ways in order to form a comprehensive image of the spatial object.

3. Geopolitical power and the concept of the Other

The two theoretical fields of study outlined in this chapter are both concerned with questions of identity, history, nation and power relations. Geopolitics can be broken into two parts that are then united into one concept: the affix "geo" provides understanding for the first concept, namely, geographical locations, territories and even identities that are tied into a certain place; whereas the latter part of the term, "politics", moves the sphere into a larger one, from geographical interest to a political one. Essentially, geopolitics is "preoccupied with borders, resources, flows, territories and identities", thus defining a political map of the global landscape and examining how these geo-political practices "generate particular understandings of places, communities and accompanying identities" (Dodds 2007, 3-5). Geopolitics, much like spatiality or geocriticism, holds in its center the idea of space and place, but connects them to a broader frame of reference by examining the political structures based on the space and place that are in the center of the study.

Space and place are also at the center of another theoretical field: namely, postcolonialism. As a broad concept, postcolonialism is an umbrella term for a field of study

that concentrates on the subversive discourse and designating "the subaltern consciousness", on the identities of the nations, peoples and spaces subjected to imperialism (Xie 1997, 7). However, postcolonialism (or rather postcolonial interest) is also concerned with space: the colonial practices have been called "geographical violence", and the questions inherent in the postcolonial field of study, such as identity, resistance and power, are deeply tied to the concept of space and spatiality (Upstone 2009, 4). The most important concept, perhaps also for the postcolonial theory but certainly for this thesis, is the concept of the Other that was already touched upon in the introduction; it will be examined in more detail in subchapter 3.2.

I will begin with an explanation of geopolitics, outlining the concept of critical geopolitics and the idea of sovereignty that is a key concept in this field of study, and finally, I will examine the importance of space and place in geopolitics. I will then continue with postcolonial theory, briefly explaining the history of this theory and then focusing on the postcolonial Other and the two concepts needed in order to fully understand it: representation and stereotyping. Finally, I will end with a brief look at the work of Edward Said, famous for his theory of Orientalism that is also closely connected to the ideas of space and place.

3.1. Power and geopolitics

Geopolitics is a term that was coined in 1899 and has since attracted much attention and controversy. It emerged at first as "geographers and other thinkers sought to analyse, explain and understand the transformations and finite spaces" of the early 20th century world. However, as it initially analysed the imperial world and thus was seen to support the western imperialism, and as the German "geopolitik" of the 1940s was – with much reason – frowned upon in the post-war society, geopolitics was often seen as a "bastardized form of geography that had been conscripted to political service" (Atkinson and Dodds 2000, 2). However, there was a renewed interest in the geopolitical thought in the late 20th century, and its modern signification, "the spatiality of world politics", dates to this time period as well (Ó Tuathail

1998, 18). In the Cold War era, geopolitics evolved into a critical thought called critical geopolitics, a theoretical field that "sought to combine the interrogation of contemporary political change with the critical evaluations of geopolitical reasoning and representations" (Atkinson and Dodds 2000, 9).

It is important to note that geopolitics is not a neutral way of viewing global spaces, but instead, it is in itself a form of both politics and geography, operating within a certain context. The practice of geopolitics is a critical one, thus giving it the name 'critical geopolitics' (Ó Tuathail and Dalby 1998, 2). The area of interest for critical geopolitics is that of international politics, as it examines how these politics are represented either spatially or geographically. In critical geopolitics, geography appears as a form of discourse in the global political field and as such, functions as a way of expressing both power and knowledge (Sharp 2000, 333).

A great way of showcasing this is to look at the political discourse during the Cold War: the geographical structure of the world was reinforced by not only the country leaders but also other politicians, journalists and experts. These geographical identities and imaginations helped people understand their place in the Cold War world, and speeches made by the country leaders established concepts such as the "iron curtain" that, while metaphorical, were highly grounded in the geographic reality of the time, and eventually reinforced the idea of Europe's division (Dodds 2007, 7, 9). Here is an excerpt of an address given by President Truman in 12 March 1947, in which he represents his view of the world during the early stages of Cold War:

> The world is not static, and the status quo is not sacred. But we cannot allow changes in the status quo … by such methods as coercion, or by such subterfuges as political infiltration. In helping independent nations to maintain their freedom, the United States will be giving effect to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It is necessary only to glance at a map to realize that the survival and integrity of the Greek nation are of grave importance in a much wider situation. If Greece should fall under the control of an armed minority, the effect upon its neighbor, Turkey, would be immediate and serious. Confusion and disorder might well spread throughout the entire Middle-East.
>
> (Quoted in Dodds 2007, 8)

The importance of the geographical imaginations during the Cold War was notable especially for the United States, as the way the Soviet Union was represented as the "evil empire" both helped reinforce the idea of the United States as the *good* nation, and also created a strong image of its Other, the Soviet Union, as the "prevalent danger" and "savage nation" (Dodds 2007, 18). I will return to this presented dichotomy of the United States (or the West, as Great Britain was closely allied with the US) as the good and the Soviet Union (or the East) as the evil in the analysis chapters when talking about the presented image of Mordor.

These geopolitical representations of global politics are at the center of critical geopolitics, and they are examined from several different angles: in their study, Ó Tuathail and Dalby outline a "three-fold typology" of geopolitics, emphasizing that it should be seen as a social, cultural and political phenomenon. The first of the three-fold is practical geopolitics, concerned with the practical matters of statecraft and the bureaucracy involved in the foreign policies. In practical geopolitics, the world is "spatialized into regions with imagined attributes and characteristics", labeling places either dangerous or safe. Formal geopolitics, the second form of geopolitics, is that of a "strategic community", the concentrated geopolitics of a group of people, often security experts inside a state or a nation, who examine the global geographical situation and use those to justify the decisions made inside that state or nation. The final form of geopolitics is popular geopolitics that can be found "within the artifacts of transnational popular culture". These geographical imaginations are just as important as the geopolitics happening in the higher layers of a nation, as these imaginations contribute to the broader geopolitical image and identity that is reinforced inside the culture and cultivated in the minds of the people through popular culture and media (Atkinson and Dodds 2000, 10-11; Ó Tuathail and Dalby 1998, 4). For this thesis, the most important concepts are practical geopolitics and popular geopolitics, as I will be examining

how these two are combined in the spatial representation of Mordor in the eyes and imagination of Sam and Frodo.

The geographical imaginations created in all these three forms of geopolitics all center upon the idea of geopolitical architecture, which means the management of national territories and the establishing of borders between what is inside and what is outside (Dodds 2007, 56). In the words of Ó Tuathail and Dalby, these "geopolitical imagi-nations" create a visualization of the order of space "across an uneven and broken landscape that is being territorialized with lines delimiting administrative provinces and an official inside and outside" (1998, 3). This idea outlines the importance of space and place in geopolitics, as national territories are essential in the forming of a geopolitical map. These national territories, as they are formed, utilize the practice of boundary drawing, and for a nation considered sovereign, the border controls and the maintaining of these boundaries are essential: not only is the act of unwanted invasion of a nation and the military crossing of these boundary lines considered the ultimate violation of territorial integrity, but some nations hold exclusive control over all of the mobility inside their territory (Dodds 2007, 57, 59). This covers everything from the close surveillance of tourists and other visitors to the complete closing of national boundaries to any outsiders.

The idea of "outsiders" is central in geopolitical discourse, as geopolitics deals as much with maps consisting of meanings, as it does with literal, geographical maps or their representations. Critical geopolitics interests itself in the "spatializations of identity", as physical geographical territories or boundaries in turn create opposing moral or ideological concepts, such as safe and dangerous, or the Self and the Other (Ó Tuathail and Dalby 1998, 4). Essentially, geopolitical representational practices affect the "politics of identity", and these geopolitical representations are not found only in the practice of statecraft but also in the ordinary lives of the people (Atkinson and Dodds 2000, 10). The geopolitical consciousness is

reinforced in the mundane interactions and discourses that together "build a sense of 'us' as not like 'them'", of the boundary line around a nation lining also the identity of the people who live there (Thrift 2000, 385).

However, the image represented of a nation is, in geopolitics, always tied to the territory it possesses, and this territory, while often described as stable and fixed, is not always so. As Upstone notes, the political stability of space is what the power of a nation is judged by, and the same identity, the identity of the nation, is then enforced on those inhabiting the space – even if these people do not share the identity, or have one already (2009, 4-5). This theme touches upon the theoretical field of postcolonialism, which, as a "counterdiscourse of the formerly colonized Other" against the geographical, cultural, social and political hegemony of the West, is concerned with the geopolitical power and knowledge associated with the ideas of nations and nationalism (Xie 1997, 9; Esty 1999, 25). In this sense, geopolitics is closely connected to the postcolonial critical theory, which will be examined next.

3.2. The postcolonial Other

Postcolonialism, as a theoretical field, emerged in the post-Second World War society, as the colonial rule of the West crumbled and the so-called subaltern voices were allowed a space in the public discourse. At least initially, postcolonialism was concerned with the struggles of the colonial subject against the oppressor: the alienation and dislocation, the displacement of person and time, culture and territory (Bhabha 1994, 58-59). The early works in the field of postcolonial theory worked with the analyzing of colonial discourses and the accounts of anti-colonial struggles, and as such, postcolonialism has always been firmly rooted in the historical imperative of the past (Mishra and Hodge 2005, 375). However, this practice of looking at the past does not signify the end of colonialism; instead, "it points to a colonial past

that remains to be interrogated and critiqued" (Xie 1997, 15). One of the key concepts to undergo this interrogation is the concept of representation.

I have already discussed representational practices in context with multiple theories, such as spatiality and geopolitics, as both of the theories included the representation of space. However, postcolonialism is concerned with the representational practices in a broader sense: postcolonialist representations handle not only the representation of space, but also peoples. To define the term, representation is "the production of meaning through language" (Hall 1997, 16). In other words, we have an image, or a concept, for some specific idea or thing in our minds, and produce its meaning through language: representation is the link between the abstract concept and the concrete word in the language, and it allows us to refer to objects, people or things, be they real or imaginary. Consequently, there are two types of representations: mental representation, which is a crucial element in the process of representation, as we form the meanings for concepts in our minds, as well as classify and organize these concepts into meaningful categories. However, it is impossible to convey these meanings without another system of representation: namely, language. Language works by means of signs, which have been arranged into various relationships and convey meaning through the use of codes that exist only as social conventions and that are unconsciously learned through our culture (Hall 1997, 17, 28-29).

Representation also acts as a complex cultural and political tool for describing different socio-political and ethnic groups:

> [Representations] provide ways of describing and at the same time of regarding and thinking about these groups and categories. They may also affect how their members view themselves and the social world around them. Public representations have the power to select, arrange and prioritise certain assumptions and ideas about certain kinds of people, … dramatising and idealising or demonising them, while casting others into the social margins, so that they have little active public presence or only a narrow and negative public image.
>
> (Pickering 2001, xiii)

Because we form the meanings through different representations, the possibility to assign these meanings to accounts of others grants the assigner an immense power over those being described. The politics of representation are especially concerned with these issues, especially the possibility to both speak for and speak of those who are represented (Pickering 2001, xiii). Furthermore, it is a common practice to use the idea of difference and, conversely, similarity, to form relationships between different concepts and also to differentiate them from one another (Hall 1997, 17). This practice is the element around which the concept of the Other builds itself.

Another key element in the concept of the Other is the marginalisation of this difference, which is achieved through the use of stereotypes. According to Hall, stereotypes pick some characteristics of a person or a group that are easily remembered and recognized by many and then erase everything else of the person or group than those traits, exaggerating them, reducing their complexity and making them a fixed standard (1997, 258). Stereotypes "render uniform everyone associated with a particular feature" – in other words, some particular features or types of behaviour are taken out of their original context and put into isolation, and then ascribed to all the members of a certain group or category (Pickering 2001, 4).

Stereotyping presents us with an image that is homogenised and fixed, and because of this, it freezes the way we see those presented in the stereotype, and, as Pickering argues, it also "excludes alternative ways of seeing and understanding". However, he also notes that while stereotypes are typically considered erroneous because of these reasons, their nature is also paradoxical in the sense that while the loss of individual understanding of others is included in the process of stereotyping, it also aids us in seeing and assessing those around us (2001, 4-5, 7, 18, 43). Nevertheless, both Hall and Pickering agree that stereotypes function as a form of social control, constructing difference as an anomaly, an abnormity, for the sake of

maintaining normative stability; stereotyping separates the acceptable from the unacceptable, and then makes the latter "marginal to the moral order", at the same time revalidating the *acceptable*, which it was measured against and was found lacking (Pickering 2001, 5, 7; Hall 1997, 258).

This vast gulf between what is considered acceptable and what is considered to be outside of it has been considered by Westphal as well, and he calls this practice "ethnotyping": ethnotypes are stereotypical representations of people, linked to their space of national territory that is set in a "discursive register that is also the register of the stereotype". The ethnotypes reinforced inside a certain territory are "ameliorative" in that they uphold positive qualities, and this ameliorative ethnotype is irrevocably paired in opposition to its neighbour, the Other, a pejorative ethnotype. Here, stereotyping forms a clear image of the Other, constructing it through the difference between it and the Self, whose hidden nature is at the same time revealed (Westphal 2011b, 144).

Indeed, difference is essential in constructing meaning, not only because we form meanings through difference and similarity (for example, we can say that *black* has a meaning *non-white*, and conversely, *white* can be defined through the idea that it is not *black*), but also because, as Bakhtin theorises, meaning is formed through dialogue, and in dialogue, the Other is needed (Hall 1997, 234-236). However, the process of Othering is the denial of this dialogue, the denial of transformation and change, and, of course, history. The process of Othering, Pickering argues, is "a rhetorical strategy of exclusion", where a distance is created between the Self and the Other through an attempt to restrain the Other "in its place at the periphery" (2001, 48-49).

While the emergence of the Other as a concept is rather recent in the field of postcolonial literary theory, its roots go back to the end of the nineteenth century and the idea of the Primitive. As Pickering notes,

> The process of becoming modern and building empires profoundly altered the ways in which people in Europe thought about cultural difference. Western societies classifying themselves as modern and civilised relied heavily on the contrast between their own sense of advancement and the idea of racially backward and inferior societies. Those who were conceived as *inferior* in this way became *interior* to national identity in the West by becoming its Other, its decivilised counterpart.
>
> (2001, 51)

The idea of the Primitive is closely connected to the concept of the Other. During the nineteenth century, also called "the Age of Discovery", the Western societies underwent major changes, and the shift from the old society into a modern one affected people's thoughts and ideologies. Furthermore, Darwinism brought up the idea of the origins of the human race. All this enabled the development of the concept of the non-white Primitive, who was the "conceptual opposite of the civilised subject" (Pickering 2001, 52).

The Primitive was considered to be simple, to lack a sense of culture and to be genetically incapable of self-governing, instead requiring the civilised whites to guide and control them. This was a way of "naturalising" the Primitive; namely, the differences between the black and the white people were considered natural, and therefore permanent and incapable of changing (Hall 1997, 244-245). The Primitive, as Pickering argues, was thus frozen in a permanent state of underdevelopment, its society a "society without history", an illusory concept created to prove that there was solid evidence behind everything that made Europe dominate all the other regions of the world (2001, 56-57). The concept of the Primitive was a part of European geopolitical discourse, representing their Other in a permanent state of inferiority: in Ó Tuathail's words, "they were represented as Europe's past, as the external barbarity and savagery that defined the civilization of Europe" (1998, 20). The idea of the Primitive can also be applied when analyzing Tolkien's descriptions of the Easterlings and Southrons, two peoples allied with Mordor against the peoples of the West.

In conclusion, the concept of the Other is part of racialised discourse, and thus is also defined by binary oppositions. Just as *black* and *white* carry the connotations of opposite traits, such as *savagery* for *black* and *civilisation* for *white* in racialised discourse, the same applies to the Self and the Other in the process of Othering (Hall 1997, 243). Much like in stereotyping, the Self acts as the normative baseline for what is acceptable, and the Other is the homogenised stereotype of everything that is opposite to the Self and what it represents; an object that is "incidental, inessential [and] immobile", forever staying in a frozen state (Pickering 2001, 70).

3.3. Said and Orientalism

Palestinian-born American literary critic Edward Said is most well-known for his theory of Orientalism, outlined in the book of the same name, first published in 1978. Said bases his theory on the Orient's special place in what he calls the "European Western experience", meaning mainly the ideas of the Orient that appear in French and British cultural and political thought especially during and right after the colonial period (Said 1978, 1). The theory of Orientalism is closely connected to the postcolonial perspective, as Said notes that the Orient is "one of [Europe's] deepest and most recurring images of the Other", here invoking the terminology that was discussed in the previous subchapter (Said 1978, 1).

Said gives three distinct definitions to Orientalism, all of which he sees as interdependent. The first definition, as well as the most widely accepted of them, is the academic definition: "anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient ... is an Orientalist". In other words, all the studies made in the subject of the Orient are part of the Orientalist paradigm. The second definition is about distinction: Orientalism, as a theory, essentially revolves around the idea of there being both ontological and epistemological differences between what is defined as "the Orient" and "the Occident" – the former often synonymous with "East", and the latter with "West". This is a more imaginative meaning of

Orientalism, as it works within the framework of an idea that has been accepted by a wide collection of writers from many fields of study. The third and final definition is "more historically and materially defined than either of the other two", as it focuses on the narratives created from the 18th century onwards – the last definition of Orientalism is the colonial definition, of Western domination of the Orient through both physical (direct ruling, settling) and cultural (making statements, teaching, describing) means. Said underlines the fact that Orientalism, in this sense, is almost exclusively limited to Britain and France and their "cultural enterprise" (Said 1978, 2-4).

This cultural dimension is further highlighted in the terms "Orient" and "Occident" – as Said emphasizes, as ideas, the concepts themselves are entirely man-made. The Orient is essentially a thought, an idea, "that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence", but as such, has no true correspondent in the real world (1978, 5). What Said argues about the relationship of the Orient and the Occident is that it is, first and foremost, a relationship where the power dynamic is shifted towards the West. The Orient was "Orientalized", not simply because it was somehow discovered to be Oriental, but because "it *could be made* Oriental" (Said 1978, 5-6, emphasis in original). As such, the Oriental discourse can be seen as a valuable tool to observe and analyse the European-Atlantic hegemony over the Orient, as well as the European culture: according to Said,

> The major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures. [...] In a quite constant way, Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible *positional* superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand.
>
> (1978, 7)

In other words, there is a certain narrative position the gives a Westerner the superiority over the Orient, which is simply being represented. This narrative shift that is integral to the

formation of the Other is what Said calls “the power to narrate”, or, alternately, “to block other narratives from forming” is something that relates to the concept of imperialism (1993, xiii).

The central contest in imperialism was closely dealing with domination over and acquisition of land. The imperialist attitude towards land and its ownership was (and in many ways, still is) concentrated on controlling, settling on and conquering land that is not yours, that is “distant, that is lived on and owned by others” (Said 1993, 5). Partially, the imperialist prerogative, especially towards the unmapped lands south of Europe, was an idea of bringing civilization to the barbaric natives that inhabited the areas, an idea that manifested itself in the well-known phrase “white man’s burden”. However, the imperialist attitude towards both the East and the South was, above all, a political one, and Orientalism represents a geopolitical awareness in all the cultural aspects of the French and British writing done during the height of imperialism; it reflects a world that is unequal and has created a will to understand the parts of it that are found different and novel. Orientalism functions in a realm that is fundamentally geopolitical, by establishing an unequal power relation between two parts of the world and looking at them through the lenses of “us” and “them” (Said 1978, 12).

This basic distinction of seeing the Orient as the Other has its roots on the idea that the people of the time had, something that Said calls “the very core of traditional Orientalist dogma”: that the people living in the Orient were not like “us” (1978, xv). The thoughts on the essential qualities of the Orient were centred around its difference, the “separateness”, as well as the inequality of both its status and its peoples in comparison to the West. The peoples were described as “backwards, degenerate, uncivilized and retarded”, and Orient itself was seen as a place “requiring Western attention, reconstruction, even redemption” (Said 1978, 206-207). Orient as it was at the time, both in the texts circulating in the West that were based on either real visits to Oriental countries or accounts of it, suffered

from marginalization, in a way similar to Pickering's details of stereotyping and the Primitive that I outlined in the subchapter 3.2.. Orientals could not represent themselves, and were rarely represented in the accounts of the Orient – instead, they were written about as "problems to be solved or confined or [...] taken over" (Said 1978, 207). Furthermore, in Western discourse, the "they", the Oriental peoples, were exclusively recognized as "coloureds", causing the qualities associated with the Orient to be associated uniformly with non-white peoples – and for the Orientals to conform to the idea of the Primitive (Said 1993, 20).

In short, Orientalism is "a set of constraints upon and limitations of thought", not only upon the Orient as a place, culture and people, but also on those who write or even act on the Orient (Said 1978, 3, 42). Orientalism is deeply connected to both culture and politics in the modern world and furthermore, it can also be seen as a "political vision of reality" that supports and brings forward the idea of the fixed difference between the West – or what was familiar – and the East – the unknown, 'the strange' (1978, 12-13, 43). It tells as much of the West as it tells of the Orient, and the idea of the Orient is created through what we think of as *knowledge* of them; in other words, the Orient (or the image of the Orient) exists because of its identification by the West (Said 1978, 40). However, Orientalism, while containing many of the traits typical in the idea of European hegemony and Western superiority over non-white or non-European peoples, is never to be considered solely imaginative. Like stereotypes, it contains elements of truth, but the image it presents us of the Orient is still far from being completely realistic (Said 1978, 2, 7).

Finally, I want to highlight what I consider to be the two most important things to note in Said's theory, in regards to the premise of this thesis: the first is that the East and the West, or the Orient and the Occident, were considered to be fundamentally different from each other in culture, mentality, society and landscape, the East being the inferior counterpart to the

superior West (Pickering 2001, 148; Said 1978, 12). The second point is about the historical context: as Said points out, during several decades from the 1950s onward, the relations between the East and the West were extremely strained, and "[n]o one will have failed to note how 'East' has always signified danger and threat during this period, even as it has meant the traditional Orient as well as Russia" (1978, 26). As *The Lord of the Rings* was published in 1954, it becomes evident why these themes can be expected to be found in the text, and I will utilize both of these aspects in the analysis of Mordor.

4. Where the shadows lie – the descriptions of Mordor

The most striking thing, when performing a close reading of *The Lord of the Rings*, is not the complexity of the plot, not the patch-quilt narrative, not even the moral core of the story, but rather the immense, even exhaustive descriptions of the world of Middle-earth. Tolkien, while writing the story of Frodo Baggins and the One Ring, created a world comparable to our own in its rich history, languages and landscape. Geographical locations and places have their own names, sometimes in several languages, and a large part of the narrative of the story is focused on describing the landscape, the literary cartography of the land. In Habermann and Kuhn's words,

> Tolkien is a master of landscape descriptions, frequently focalized through the characters, which allows readers to visualize and imaginatively to situate themselves in the landscapes that unfold in the text, supported by the maps and other drawings.
>
> (2011, 264)

Indeed, it is possible to say that "the literary cartography of Middle-earth is the principal effect of the narrative" (Tally forthcoming, 6). In other words, the narrative focus on the landscape, its topography and the sensorial descriptions focalized through the primary characters seem to be nearly as important for the story as the events unfolding within it. For the purpose of this thesis, the main focus is on the land of Mordor and its descriptions.

It is important to note that while there are several accounts of Mordor prior to the events that happen in the land, appearing in the speeches of several characters, as well as in Frodo's visions, Tolkien uses Frodo and Sam (as well as Merry and Pippin, the two other hobbits, in books three and five) as "narrative centers" (Thomson 1967, 55). It is only when the hobbits enter Mordor that the reader is given a direct account of its landscape and inner workings. It is rather appropriate for the hobbits to be the center of the narrative, the eyes through which every step of the journey is related to the reader, because their eyes "are the eyes of the alien, for the hobbits are cultural strangers within the densely complex interplay of humans, Dwarves, and Elves" (Battis 2004, 912). In the same way as the reader is a stranger to the fantastical world of Middle-earth, so the hobbits, previously confined to their own land of the Shire, are unaware of the outside world and explore and observe it alongside the reader.

Frodo and Sam's journey to Mordor will be the main focus of the first two subchapters. In 4.1, I will examine the descriptions of Mordor that are focalized through Frodo and Sam, who travel deep into the land, all the way through to its center, Mount Doom. I will argue that the descriptions worsen gradually, the deeper into the land the hobbits travel, and that the deterioration of the landscape has been caused by the evil of Sauron who rules the land. The second subchapter will remain on the topic of Frodo and Sam, but present a different point of view of their travels: I will argue that the hobbits suffer from transcendental homelessness, in other words, they are unable to map their physical location or create a socio-mental map of their surroundings. Furthermore, the deeper into Mordor they go, the more they are stripped of their sense of self and the cognitive map they have built prior to entering the land. Finally, the last subchapter will broaden the scope with which Mordor and the other lands are examined, as I will examine Mordor as a geopolitical power. I will at first assert the certain referentiality found in the novel, and with its aid, I will focus on the issues of identity, power hegemony and surveillance, as well as tie in some parallels to real-world politics.

4.1. From Emyn Muil to Cirith Gorgoroth – the spatial imagery of Mordor

It is not until the second half of the second part of the trilogy that the narrative finally moves the events to the land of Mordor, but even before that, the few mentions and descriptions of the land paint a picture of a place that embodies death. The name, in Elvish meaning the "Black Land", is already foreboding – it is, in Sam's words, "the one place in all the lands we've ever heard of that we won't want to see any closer" (II: 603). This view is shared by most critics: in simplified terms, when the places of Middle-earth are being described, that description might very well be something like "pretty Shire, proud Gondor, beautiful Imladris, terrible Mordor" (Werber 2005, 227). Mordor is a literal land of darkness, of shadows, a dead land; all because it is, simultaneously, the land of evil, the home to the Dark Lord Sauron and his armies. Their influence in the landscape is apparent as "the evils of Sauron and the dangers he poses to the ecology of Middle-earth … appear in descriptions of the land of Mordor itself" (Dickerson & Evans 2006, 185).

The first direct description of Mordor, even before the hobbits enter the land, is when Frodo observes it from a watch tower:

> Then turning south again he beheld Minas Tirith. Far away it seemed, and beautiful: white-walled, many-towered, proud and fair upon its mountain-seat; its battlements glittered with steel, and its turrets were bright with many banners. Hope leaped in his heart. But against Minas Tirith was set another fortress, greater and more strong. Thither, eastward, unwilling his eye was drawn. It passed the ruined bridges of Osgiliath, the grinning gates of Minas Morgul and the haunted Mountains, and it looked upon Gorgoroth, the valley of terror in the Land of Mordor. Darkness lay there under the Sun. Fire glowed amid the smoke. Mount Doom was burning, and a great reek rising. Then at last his gaze was held: wall upon wall, battlement upon battlement, black, immeasurably strong, mountain of iron, gate of steel, tower of adamant, he saw it: Barad-dûr, Fortress of Sauron. All hope left him.
>
> (I: 401)

The contrast between the beautiful, bright Minas Tirith, the fortress of good and the beacon of the West, and the darkness, fire and smoke rising from Mordor is so strong that it leaves Frodo completely bereft of hope. While Minas Tirith is "proud and fair", the similar

battlements and gates in Mordor are described in more negative terms, as an impregnable fortress of iron, steel and adamant—a tower built to last. Jane Chance notes the same juxtaposition of images: that the Citadel of Gondor "which houses the High Court and the Place of the Fountain at the foot of the White Tower, lies at the top of the pier of rock (itself an image that anticipates Mount Doom)" (2010, 99). Gondor, as the last true resistance of the west and the city of the true king, is set in direct opposition to Mordor—the white and the black city, a fortress that is beautiful and a fortress that is indomitable, dark, housed by "the haunted Mountains".

The path that Frodo and Sam choose to take to Mordor goes through "the barren slopes and stones of the Emyn Muil", a rocky wasteland on the east side of the river Andúin (II: 603). It is still a no-man's land, outside the borders of Mordor, and yet it is already characterized by unpleasantness, a landscape that is dangerous and difficult to navigate:

> [O]n the whole they had worked steadily eastward, keeping as near as they could find a way to the outer edge of this strange twisted knot of hills. But always they found its outward faces sheer, high and impassable, frowning over the plain below; beyond its tumbled skirts lay livid festering marshes where nothing moved and not even a bird was to be seen.
>
> (II: 603)

This is the first example of the landscape taking on living qualities. The rocks are "frowning", the marshes are "livid"—the landscape of Mordor is described in almost animalistic, even personified terms. As Walker puts it, "[w]hen the ruggedness of the landscape becomes a prominent threat to the progress of Frodo and Sam toward Mordor, setting previously peripheral asserts itself, dominating the narrative through a vividly hostile animalistic profile" (2009, 44). This same tendency continues all through the narrative: when the hobbits stand on a cliff, it is described as "bare and bleak, its feet wrapped in mist", and the few trees they come by are "dead and gaunt, bitten to the core by the eastern winds" (II:603, 605). The topography of the land is not merely threatening, but threatened in itself by the sickness that lies upon the land.

After the hobbits acquire an unwilling guide in the form of Gollum, the creature that has followed them all the way to the edges of Mordor, their guide takes them through a vast expanse of swamp that is the last living organism before the desert that lies before the gates of Mordor:

> On either side and in front wide fens and mires now lay, stretching away southward and eastward into the dim half-light. Mists curled and smoked from dark and noisome pools. The reek of them hung stifling in the still air. Far away, now almost due south, the mountain-walls of Mordor loomed, like a black bar of rugged clouds floating above a dangerous fog-bound sea.
>
> (II: 625)

The Dead Marshes, as the swamp is called, is a treacherous place where one misstep may send the hobbits into the depths of the waters, filled with dead, rotten bodies that have been left there since the Last Alliance of Elves and Men, the battle against Sauron hundreds of years ago. It is a direct reminder of what the last battle against the Dark Lord brought, and already in their name, the marshes are effectively "dead". Chance sees that the marshes "symbolize death and despair (Mordor) and act as a psychological deterrent to the Fellowship's progress: to move forward they must conquer their own aversion to death and failure, their lack of hope at the possibility of succeeding" (2010, 85). While I would argue that Frodo and Sam's hopelessness only grows during their journey, the Dead Marshes are a grotesque, reeking graveyard for everyone who fell in defense or opposition of Sauron, and thus the hobbits do, quite directly, pass over the past failure to fight against the dark power of the black land.

Lying behind the marshes is nothing but the "wasted, blasted landscape of Mordor" (Chance 2010, 116). The desert and desolation that the hobbits witness upon finally exiting the marshes provides one of the most striking descriptions of the entire book:

> Even to the Mere of Dead Faces some haggard phantom of green spring would come; but here neither spring nor summer would ever come again. Here nothing lived, not even the leprous growths that feed on rottenness. The gasping pools were choked with ash and crawling muds, sickly white and grey, as if the mountains had vomited the filth of their entrails upon the lands about.

> High mounds of crushed and powdered rock, great cones of earth fire-blasted and poison-stained, stood like an obscene graveyard in endless rows, slowly revealed in the reluctant light.
>
> They had come to the desolation that lay before Mordor: the lasting monument to the dark labour of its slaves that should endure when all their purposes were made void; a land defiled, diseased beyond all healing.
>
> (II: 631-2)

The image presented is one of a land that is sick, diseased, devoid of growth and so far removed from the environment that not even the seasons can touch it. As Dickerson and Evans say, "this must rank as one of the lengthiest and most gruesome passages describing environmental degradation in modern literature" (2006, 186). On mere word-level, the words used are worth noting: Tolkien uses descriptors such as "leprous", "gasping", "fire-blasted" and "poison-stained", "defiled", and finally, "diseased beyond all healing". Not only that, but the landscape is once again humanized, as the pools are compared to the vomited entrails of the mountains. This, rather tellingly, is first look of Frodo and Sam into the real Mordor and it is relayed to the reader in a description full of strong imagery, and Sam's sickness upon seeing the sight is a broader reflection on the effects of environmental devastation in an individual.

When the way into Mordor through the Black Gate, Morannon – once again bearing the descriptor "black" – is shut, Gollum takes the hobbits into Mordor through another way: through the valley of Minas Morgul, formerly the city of Minas Ithil, until it was taken over by the Witch King of Angmar, the lord of the Ringwraiths. The city is described in eerie terms, as the hobbits first behold it in moonlight:

> Paler indeed than the moon ailing in some slow eclipse was the light of it now, wavering and blowing like a noisome exhalation of decay, a corpse-light, a light that illuminated nothing. In the walls and tower windows showed, like countless black holes looking inward into emptiness; but the topmost course of the tower revolved slowly, first one way and then another, a huge ghostly head leering into the night.
>
> (II: 703)

The light of the city is not real light but rather a non-light, in other words, it has no illuminative quality to it; even the windows are described as literal black holes, eating away all light and symbolizing emptiness. Chance calls this the "spiritual and intellectual emptiness of Minas Morgul" (2010, 90) – it is a dead city, commanded by a witch called back from the dead, and death is another analogue for emptiness. For Frodo and Sam, even approaching the tower is repulsive: "[e]very step was reluctant, and time seemed to slow its pace, so that between the raising of a foot and the setting of it down minutes of loathing passed" (II: 703). In the words of Dickerson and Evans, here "[w]e can feel the anguish of a lifeless landscape and the anguish imposed on those who pass through it: the shadows of blindness and death" (2006, 188). Death, or lack of life, is a permeating quality of Mordor, and while in Emyn Muil and the Dead Marshes the hobbits still had strength to labour on towards their destination, the closer they come to actually entering the land, the more its barren landscape and the consistent presence of death hinder them. In fact, it seems that while the no-man's land is physically difficult to cross (Emyn Muil is full of sharp rocks, cliffs and fissures, the Dead Marshes dangerous, changing and both nearly impossible to navigate), the two entrances to Mordor, the Black Gate and Minas Morgul, are both characterized by emptiness, environmental devastation and an air of death, all of which seem to attack the mental state of the hobbits more effectively than the mere physical obstacles.

If the descriptions of the land outside the borders of Mordor are full of environmental tragedy, the land of Mordor itself is the very image of such: described as "hard", "cruel" and "bitter", it is an "accursed land" full of smoke and fang-like cliffs (III: 899). In the middle of this land, there lies the destination of the hobbits, the ominous Mount Doom that is compared to a slumbering beast: "its feet [were] founded in ashen ruin, its huge cone rising to a great height, where its reeking head was swathed in cloud. Its fires were now dimmed, and it stood in smouldering slumber, as threatening and dangerous as a sleeping beast" (III: 923). Not only

is the imagery once again animalistic, but there is also another comparison to be made: the passage speaks of the volcano and its "huge cone", rising up to the skies – an image easily comparable to an industrial site. The same description is repeated several times in the text, as the hobbits trudge closer to the "huge mass of ash and slag and burned stone, out of which a sheer-sided cone was raised into the clouds" (III: 940). Many critics are unanimous in their reading that Mordor, and especially Mount Doom, can be read as an industrial site that has been abandoned and that functions as the symbol of hostility, environmental damage and the evil of industrialization – which is, according to Valente, the only moral message that Tolkien himself admitted to placing in the story (Habermann and Kuhn 2011, 271; Valente 2004, 36; Dickerson & Evans 2006, 188).

This comparison is further reinforced by the final passage inside Sammath Naur, the very place where the One Ring, the ultimate symbol of Sauron's evil, was forged: Sam enters the cave that leads inside the mountain, following Frodo, and he sees that both the floor and the walls "on either side were cloven by a great fissure, out of which the red glare came, now leaping up, now dying down into darkness; and all the while far below there was a rumour and a trouble *as of great engines throbbing and labouring*" (III: 945, emphasis mine). Here, the narrative makes a direct reference to engines, an invention that, by all accounts, does not exist in Middle-earth—or at least the West of Middle-earth. As Auden notes, Tolkien's world is preindustrial, and while such arts as mining and metallurgy are highly developed, horses are still the main means of transport and the weapons used consist of swords, bows and spears (1968b, 53). Furthermore, not only is it implied in the narrative that Sauron possesses advanced (in comparison to other lands of Middle-earth) industrial technology in his land, but the descriptions of Mordor itself draw "from the imagery of war, industrialization, and urbanism, which in our world seem to run roughshod and rampant over the landscape as pasture, farmland, and undisturbed wilderness retreat as before an advancing enemy"

(Dickerson & Evans 2006, 187). The advancing enemy, in this case, is the evil of Mordor, and so the closer the hobbits travel to its center, the bleaker its landscape turns.

However, despite being a land of death and desolation, Mordor still has life to it. When fleeing from orcs, Frodo and Sam jump from a bridge and their fall is broken by "a tangle of thorny bushes"—something that causes Sam to exclaim that while he didn't expect anything to be growing in Mordor, but if he had, he would have expected bushes like the ones they fall on (III: 917). A little further along, Mordor's struggling nature is again mentioned in the narrative:

> Upon its outer marges under the westward mountains Mordor was a dying land, but it was not yet dead. And here things still grew, harsh, twisted, bitter, struggling for life. In the glens of the Morgai on the other side of the valley low scrubby trees lurked and clung, coarse grey grass-tussocks fought with the stones, and withered mosses crawled on them; and everywhere great writhing, tangled brambles sprawled. Some had long stabbing thorns, some hooked barbs that rent like knives.
>
> (III: 921)

The imagery of Mordor's nature is that of plants in a state of war: they are "struggling", the grass actively fights against the stones while moss is slowly suffocating them—even the brambles seem prepared for fighting, with thorns and barbs like knives. Mordor's landscape is full of hostility, not only against outsiders but also itself, as nature has to fight for its survival. Dickerson and Evans see this as an exhibition of nature's tenacity and will to survive, even in the midst of horror and desolation; but they note that in Mordor, this struggle is eventually doomed to failure, if the evil of Sauron is not stopped and the land not cleansed of his presence (2006, 189). This brings us to the core argument over the environmental devastation plaguing the land of Mordor: that it is because of the evil inhabiting the land that its landscape has suffered enough to have been turned completely desolate.

Mordor is "a desert made lifeless not through natural causes but through the actions of Sauron" (Dickerson & Evans 2006, 190). That is the general reading that is, after a close reading of the novel, the easy conclusion to make; especially as the fortress Sauron inhabited

before his return to his original stronghold suffered the same environmental damage, though its scope was a lesser one, corresponding to the shorter time spent there by Sauron. In Middle-earth, evil always leaves its mark on everything surrounding it, even the nature and landscape, and Mordor is the prime example of this. The phenomenon of a living culture, also called *bios*, that takes over a landscape in such terms that the space and culture form a symbiosis, is named *biogeography* (Werber 2005, 240). In Mordor, the living culture is that of Sauron, of industrialization and ultimate, unquestionable evil, and this evil has polluted the landscape to such extent that the deeper one goes into Mordor, thus going closer to Sauron's dwelling of Barad-dûr, the more one can see the devastating effect his evil has had on the land. This also draws on Lefebvre's idea of representational space, in that it, too, brings to focus "the way those living in these spaces have both dominated and directly lived through them" (1991, 39). In other words, Sauron's direct domination over the physical expanse of the land is also the primary cause for its barrenness – something that is alluded to already in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, where it is said that "we see that Sauron can torture and destroy the very hills" (I: 266). Furthermore, Curry notes that the most beautiful places in Middle-earth, such as the Shire and the elven dwellings of Rivendell and Lothlórien, possess such beauty "because they are loved by the people who share them" (Curry 1997, 28). This idea of ecocriticism suggests that Mordor's desolation is not only a direct effect of the evil in the land, but also a result of a lack of love—Sauron, merely using the land to house his armies and subjecting it to industrial strain, bears no love for the land as such and the nature reflects this by having to struggle for its own existence.

This reading is further reinforced by the passages of Ithilien, where Frodo and Sam meet Faramir, Boromir's younger brother and the leader of the resistance that uses Ithilien as a base of operations. Ithilien is thus associated with the West, with Gondor, and outright presented as a land that has not been under Sauron's dominion for long:

> The growing light revealed to them a land already less barren and ruinous. The mountains still loomed up ominously on their left, but near at hand they could see the southward road, now bearing away from the black roots of the hills and slanting westwards. Beyond it were slopes covered with sombre trees like dark clouds, but all about them lay a tumbled heathland, grown with ling and broom and cornel, and other shrubs that they did not know. Here and there they saw knots of tall pine-trees. The hearts of the hobbits rose again a little in spite of weariness: the air was fresh and fragrant, and it reminded them of the uplands of the Northfarthing far away. It seemed good to be reprieved, to walk in a land that had only been for a few years under the dominion of the Dark Lord and was not yet fallen wholly into decay.
>
> (II: 649)

The threat of Mordor and the darkness is still present, still "looming ominously", yet the nature of Ithilien is already far richer than that of Emyn Muil, the Dead Marshes or Mordor itself: trees grow there, the air is fresh to breathe and it makes the hobbits think of the Shire—a direct reference to their own, lush farmland. The description of the hiding place of Faramir and his men is, on the other hand, compared to an elven building: "[i]t was as if they stood at the window of some elven-tower, curtained with threaded jewels of silver and gold, and ruby, sapphire and amethyst, all kindled with an unconsuming fire" (II: 674). Both references underline the drastic difference of the place where the rangers of Gondor still fight against not only Sauron, but also against the environmental desolation and destruction by refusing to release the control of the land to Sauron and thus functioning as a barrier between the nature and the effect of evil. But the evil is everywhere, and the fight against it is a losing one – until the tower of Barad-dûr finally falls, and the evil is vanquished once and for all.

4.2. Transcendental homelessness – the lost hobbits

In Tally's words, "there is something truly terrifying, or at least rather frustrating, in being lost. Not to know where one is, or perhaps, not to know where one is relative to where one would like to be, is a thoroughly unpleasant feeling" (2013, 2). This feeling, the sense of being lost, is what characterizes most of Frodo and Sam's journey to Mordor. Even before they set out, their knowledge of the world is described in terms of blank maps: when Frodo

looks at the maps made in the Shire, everything around its borders is white (I: 43). The hobbit culture does not concern itself with the lands outside its borders, and even though in Rivendell, before the fellowship sets out, Frodo looks at the maps of the outside world, it is of little help: there are no maps of Mordor, no one who would have journeyed there and returned to make a map of it. This, of course, creates a dichotomy between the narrative centers (i.e. Frodo and Sam) and the reader, as the book comes with an accompanying map of all of Middle-earth, Mordor included – so the reader is able to look at the map and map the itinerary that the hobbits take, yet in the actual story, the hobbits are continuously plagued by the sense of being lost.

For the hobbits, the choice to travel to Mordor was never a choice at all. They undertake the perilous journey because of a duty to the world and its peoples at large, and the land of the East is, as it is often described as, according to Levy-Bertherat, a hostile territory both on the part of its inhabitants and its geography (2001, 119). It is the latter that is of special interest to this subchapter, as while Frodo and Sam gradually travel closer to Mordor, it is the landscape that continues to hinder them. It is already in Emyn Muil where the hobbits start to feel lost: "It was the third evening since they had fled from the Company, as far as they could tell: they had almost lost count of the hours during which they had climbed and laboured among the barren slopes and stones of the Emyn Muil" (II: 603). Climbing over countless rocks and stumbling their way forward without a map of any sort, the hobbits are already losing their sense of time, unable to keep count of the hours that have passed. Finding a clear path between the clefts is nearly impossible, and more than once the hobbits are forced to retrace their steps:

> 'We had better try a way back southwards along the line of the cliff, I think,' said Sam. 'We might find some nook there, or even a cave or something.'
> 'I suppose so,' said Frodo. 'I'm tired, and I don't think I can scramble among stones much longer tonight – though I grudge the delay. I wish there was a clear path in front of us: then I'd go on till my legs gave way.'
>
> (II: 612)

This physical sense of disorientation continues throughout their journey to Mordor, the tiredness that comes from trying to find a way in an unfamiliar landscape. This spatial anxiety is referred to several times: the hobbits are "lost in a shadowy silent world, cut off from all view of the lands about, either the hills that they had left or the mountains that they sought" and both time and distance seem to be impossible for them to grasp in the endless night of Mordor (II: 626).

However, the anxiety and confusion they feel is not only limited to the sense of being physically lost. The further the hobbits travel into Mordor, the more their sense of loss extends to their selves: they start to forget their memories of the Shire, which, to the hobbits, is the core of their identity, along with their entire existence in Mordor being characterized by a loss of the past and an uncertain future. Frodo puts this existential dilemma into words:

> And here he was a little halfling from the Shire, a simple hobbit of the quiet countryside expected to find a way where the great ones could not go, or dared not go. It was an evil fate. But he had taken it on himself in his own sitting-room in the far-off spring of another year, so remote now that it was like a chapter in a story of the world's youth, when the Trees of Silver and Gold were still in bloom. This was an evil choice. Which way should he choose? And if both led to terror and death, what good lay in choice?
>
> (II: 644)

The hopelessness of not finding a way in the land is joined by a deep sense of not belonging: Frodo, who feels himself to be only a "little halfling", has taken on a task far too big for him and begins to realize that in the land of Mordor, all his choices seem to lead to nothing but terror. As De Man puts it, Frodo suffers from an "individual's frustrating experience of his own inability to acquire universal dimensions" (1966, 531). He is unsure of the way he should take, he knows the task is something not even "the great ones" (in other words, the wizard Gandalf, or the elven leaders Galadriel and Elrond) dared to undertake; in other words, Frodo is aware of his own smallness on the larger scale and feels unsuitable and out of place not only in the land itself, but also with himself and the task he has to fulfill. It is not by chance

that the hobbits are described as “little squeaking ghosts that wandered among the ash-heaps of the Dark Lord”, helpless and lost (II: 632).

Not only are the hobbits lost in both their physical and mental being-in-the-world, but the sense of loss extends to yet one more aspect: their senses. The gradual loss of their senses begins already in Emyn Muil, as Frodo gets caught in a storm and loses his eyesight, though not permanently:

> He steadied himself a little, laying his face against the cold stone, feeling his heart pounding. But either the darkness had grown complete, or else his eyes had lost their sight. All was black about him. He wondered if he had been struck blind. He took a deep breath.
> ‘Come back! Come back!’ he heard Sam's voice out of the blackness above.
> ‘I can't,’ he said. ‘I can't see. I can't find any hold. I can't move yet.’
>
> (II: 608)

Without his sight, Frodo is unable to map the sensory landscape around him, as his other senses, such as touch or smell, are not of use in the slippery, deadly rocks and cliffs of Emyn Muil. In a similar manner to the nature and landscape of Mordor, also its sensory landscape provides to be desolate, even threatening: the sounds the hobbits hear are described as “thin”, “cold” and “cruel”, and the air is “stagnant” and “stuffy” (II: 629, 697,711). The ultimate loss of senses happens inside Shelob’s tunnels, right on the border of Mordor, in between the land outside and inside:

> Here the air was still, stagnant, heavy, and sound fell dead. They walked as it were in a black vapour wrought of veritable darkness itself that, as it was breathed, brought blindness not only to the eyes but to the mind, so that even the memory of colours and of forms and of any light faded out of thought. Night always had been, and always would be, and night was all.
> But for a while they could still feel, and indeed the senses of their feet and fingers at first seemed sharpened almost painfully. […] But after a time their senses became duller, both touch and hearing seemed to grow numb. […] And still the stench grew. It grew, until almost it seemed to them that smell was the only clear sense left to them, and that was for their torment.
>
> (II: 718)

In this passage, the loss is complete. The hobbits are stripped of even their memories of colours and light, and gradually sight, touch and hearing all forsake them so that only their

smell is left, and even that one sense turns against them. It is significant that the ultimate sensory loss happens right as the hobbits are passing into Mordor—the border they cross manifests itself as the dulling of all of their sensory perceptions, the landscape turning from a synesthetic (or polysensorial, see 2.3.) one into its opposite, a landscape without senses.

Ultimately, Frodo and Sam's experience in Mordor is defined by a failure to map their way. The landscape, unfriendly, hostile and desolate, is in itself hindering their journey, and its sensory unmapability makes it impossible to navigate it through sensory perception. Mordor, as a whole, is the very image of an alienated landscape. As Jameson puts it, "the alienated city is above all a space in which people are unable to map (in their minds) either their own positions or the urban totality in which they find themselves", and though Mordor is less a city and more a desolate expanse of well-guarded land, the description still fits (1984, 89). Frodo and Sam suffer from an incapability to "project a mental map of their environs" and thus their entire existence inside the land of Mordor is full of the sense of the uncanny and an intense anxiety—the feeling of "not being' at home' in the world" that is the fundamental center of transcendental homelessness (Tally forthcoming, 17; Tally 2013, 47). However, unlike the modern urbanites to whom the use of Jameson's cognitive mapping is possible as an answer to the condition of the transcendental crisis, to Frodo and Sam, making a cognitive map of Mordor is an impossibility.

According to Jameson, disalienation would consist of a "practical reconquest of a sense of place, and the construction or reconstruction of an articulated ensemble which can be retained in memory and which the individual subject can map and remap along the moments of mobile, alternative trajectories" (1984, 89). This construction of a map of alternating paths would require a sense of understanding of the landscape and the geographical situation surrounding the hobbits, but as they have no knowledge of the land and cannot move there freely, such a conquest is not possible. Furthermore, Frodo and Sam and their continued

failure of wayfinding are set in a comparison against the one who holds the knowledge that, in turn, makes him the ultimate power and authority over the land: the Dark Lord Sauron (Blunt & McEwan 2003, 9). They infiltrate the land, cross the borders without permission, and suffer from a continuous fear of being discovered: Frodo exclaims to hate the land as he feels "all naked on the east side, stuck up here with nothing but the dead flats between [him] and that Shadow yonder" (II: 605). Similarly, when the sun shines, the hobbits "had no welcome for that light; unfriendly it seemed, revealing them in their helplessness" (II: 632). Sauron, along with his servants, holds the only cognitive map of the land, while Frodo and Sam are forced to find their way by effectively stumbling in the darkness.

Though perhaps there is one outsider to Mordor who possesses a coherent cognitive map of its topography. As Tally notes, it is Gollum who "represents this sort of cognitive cartographer"—Gollum, who has been to the land before, who also functions as the personified map for Frodo and Sam (forthcoming, 18). After Frodo spares his life, Gollum offers to take them into Mordor, and it is largely due to him that the hobbits ever make it as far. Gollum, unlike the hobbits, makes the full use of his senses while he maps their surroundings:

> His head on its long neck was ever turning this way and that, while he sniffed and muttered all the time to himself. Sometimes he would hold up his hand and halt them, while he went forward a little, crouching, testing the ground with fingers or toes, or merely listening with one ear pressed to the earth. […] Gollum hissed and whispered to himself, but it appeared that he was pleased: in some mysterious way, by some blended sense of feel, and smell, and uncanny memory for shapes in the dark, he seemed to know just where he was again, and to be sure of his road ahead.
>
> (II: 626, 628-9)

Gollum's knowledge of the land and his surety of the way is in direct contrast to Frodo and Sam and their constant uncertainty over their position, their surroundings and often even the time of day. It is not a coincidence that Gollum's betrayal culminates in Shelob's lair, where the hobbits are stripped of their senses, the feeling of time and distance, the ultimate

combination of loss that never leaves them after they exit the tunnels. Without Gollum to guide them, the hobbits are just as lost as they were at the start of their journey in Emyn Muil, and the environmental emptiness translates into an existential emptiness in the hobbits.

Gradually, the mental desolation that the hobbits suffer throughout their journey grows into an all-encompassing loss of place and hope. Frodo, further mentally strained by the Ring, seems to be completely cut off from his previous sense of self: he cannot remember the Shire or its places, and upon waking up from slumber asks Sam where they are and how they got there, as he can no longer recall it (III: 910, 918). When Sam is forced to cross the border, he feels as though "[h]e could never come back", and Frodo grimly concludes that on the road to the mountain, they will not need much, and "at its end nothing" (III: 898, 937). This shows a resigned attitude that is rather defeated than outright suicidal—the final loss is the belief to anything beyond the end of their journey. The impact of this, narrative-wise, is made even stronger by the fact that this goes against the traditional quest narrative: the one leaving on the quest must complete it and return to their initial, or natural, state (Ribemont 2005, 46). However, for Frodo and Sam, the return to the initial state, either in the sense of the physical land of the Shire or their initial transcendental state is not only unlikely (regarding their return to the Shire), but also impossible (regarding their sense of self). Even back in the Shire, Frodo suffers from a deep anxiety of not belonging, both physically and existentially, and so at the end of the story, he leaves Middle-earth and the transcendental homelessness that began in the East and never left him.

4.3. The Dark Power – Mordor as a geopolitical threat

Up until this point in this thesis, it has been possible to utilize the theories such as spatiality, transcendental homelessness and cognitive mapping without justifying their use in the analysis of a fictional novel, as they have been used in literary analysis by other literary critics. However, as this chapter deals with the theoretical paradigm of geopolitics, which is

closely associated with geography and political studies and as such, the real (or Primary) world, I feel it necessary to start this chapter by discussing why and how it is possible to apply a theoretical practice that was created and has mostly been used in relation to the events in the real world in the analysis of a fictional novel.

The key to applying geopolitics in literary analysis is representation. In Westphal's words:

> Representation involves the translation of a source into a derivative – the source sometimes "real" (the world) and the derivative is "fictional" (the mental image, the simulacrum). Because it connects at least two instances, this extension sustains comparisons: same, other, and analogue … Under this simplified scheme, representation is based on a movement (a transmission), a relationship (of comparison), and a system of signs.
>
> (2011b, 75)

In other words, representation means that a source that is often derived from the real world is then turned and represented in a fictional work, and this creates a relationship of multiple meanings between the two. The fictional works represents, if not all, at least a part of the real world that is was based on. As with any literary cartographer, Tolkien too faced the choice as to "the degree to which a given representation of a place refers to any 'real' place in the geographical world", in other words, the degree to which his world of Middle-earth and its places and practices would refer to or draw inspiration from the real places and practices of our world (Tally 2013, 45). From Tolkien's interviews and the letters he left behind it is possible to determine that he meant the story to be a mythology, one for his own country, England:

> Tolkien's stories then were grounded in England and Northern Europe. Taken together these stories … would come to form a connected body of tales, fictional histories, invented languages, and literary essays about an imagined world called Arda, and Middle-Earth. … But this was an "alternative" remote past of our own world, set in a time far gone yet still reachable through epic tales, and still distinctly **our world**.
>
> (Roberts 8-9, emphasis in original)

This choice to present Middle-earth as a past history of our own world already makes it possible to examine it in the same manner as one would examine the real world, but as it is clear Tolkien referenced our world with particular care in his design of Middle-earth, it is important to note that any "peculiar features can thus be attributed to design rather than coincidence or ignorance on the part of the author" (Habermann and Kuhn 2011, 265). However, it is also important to keep in mind that this design does not imply any allegorical content, but is rather recognizing that Tolkien's world is a "geopolitical fantasy" that in its making required an imaginative map of the world—our world—to make it without mistakes and believable to the reader (Tally forthcoming, 27). Thus to argue for a geopolitical reading of a fictional novel does not require the reading of an allegory, but as the world of Middle-earth was modeled after our own world to appear real as well as to act as a conceivable "past" to it, references to the real world and parallels with its geopolitics and the geographical situation not only can, but should be made.

Geopolitics is concerned with conceptual spatializations of physical landscapes that incite understandings of concepts such as danger, security and identity (Dalby and Ó Tuathail 1998, 4). The dichotomy of danger and security is an especially relevant one when examining the world of Middle-earth, as there is ever only one danger outlined, and that is the land of Mordor. According to Ó Tuathail, there can be no "geopolitical order without a condition of hegemony" (1998, 19). In Middle-earth, the hegemon is Mordor, at least in military power. As Ruane and James say, "with regard to the dynamics of power, Mordor is on top and still rising as the War of the Ring draws close" (2012, 88). The military might of Mordor is alluded to several times in the novel by several different characters, and Mordor is generally considered to be the power hegemony: against it, there is no hope to win in a battle of arms. Faramir, the son of the Steward of Gondor who rules the last defense against Mordor in the

king's absence, and Beregond, a man of Gondor's guard, express this loss of hope in regards to winning the war:

> 'What hope have we?' said Faramir. 'It is long since we had any hope. The sword of Elendil, if it returns indeed, may rekindle it, but I do not think that it will do more than put off the evil day, unless other help unlooked-for also comes, from Elves or Men. For the Enemy increases and we decrease. We are a failing people, a springless autumn.'
>
> (II: 677)

> 'And now all realms shall be put to the test, to stand, or fall – under the Shadow. … [In Minas Tirith] will the hammer-stroke fall hardest. And for that reason Mithrandir came hither in such haste. For if we fall, who shall stand? And, Master Peregrin, do you see any hope that we shall stand?'
>
> (III: 765)

The words of the Enemy (in other words, Sauron and his forces) increasing refer to Sauron and his armies: Mordor is said to "draw all wicked things" and more than that, Sauron actively gathers these beings there to fight for him (I: 58). When Sam and Frodo look upon the plains of Morgai inside Mordor, they see Sauron's armies and slaves in camps and tents "ordered like small towns", clustering "like some huge nest of insects" (III: 923). In military strength, Sauron and Mordor have no match.

However, it is not only the peoples of Middle-earth that are called to arms when the East prepares to launch the final attack and the West prepares to withstand it; also the space and nature are highly politicized. In Werber's words, "the realms, territories and regions of the different nations have been molded through years of control in such a deep way that they should be counted as important parts of the political and military power of Middle-Earth's races" (Werber 2005, 228). The river Bruinen defends Rivendell from the attack of the Ringwraiths, the entire forest of Fangorn moves against the orcs and uruks in Helm's deep, while conversely, the entire borders of Mordor defend it from an attack or invasion from the outside. When Frodo and Sam climb the stairs of Cirith Ungol to come into Mordor through Shelob's tunnel, they find the way difficult:

> The passage seemed to go on for miles, and always the chill air flowed over them, rising as they went on to a bitter wind. *The mountains seemed to be trying with their deadly breath to daunt them, to turn them back* from the secrets of the high places, *or to blow them away* into the darkness behind.
>
> (II: 709, emphasis mine)

This "plausibly encompassing sentience" as Walker talks about in relation to the landscape of Middle-earth and Mordor is what politicizes the entire nature of the land (Walker 2009, 43). The same animalistic hostility that was discussed in relation to Mordor in chapter 4.1 is also geopolitical hostility: the repeated references to Frodo and Sam's fear of talking as they believe their surroundings – not only the possible animals, but also the plants and landscape – to be listening assign the entire landscape a geopolitical dimension.

In fact, Liebherr argues that the entire geography of Middle-earth and the geographical boundaries between the lands are constructed as a divide of good versus evil (Liebherr 2012, 75). While it is possible to assign a real geographical divide to the opposing sides[4], there is still an inherent morality to the distinction between them. The two sides opposing each other are the "benign natural forces and the contrasting industrialized forces of evil", in other words, the peoples of the West who value nature and naturality, and Mordor, the land described in heavily industrialized terms and that suffers from environmental devastation (Habermann and Kuhn 2011, 263). Mordor is the more extreme example in terms of the arrangement of politics and society. In Auden's words, the most common political system in Middle-earth is a "benevolent monarchy", and there are only two differing instances: the Shire, which is a "small-town democracy", and Mordor, which is, "of course, a totalitarian and slave-owning dictatorship" (Auden 1968b, 53).

The titular dictator (and, incidentally, the one the entire book is partially named after, the lord of the Ring) is Sauron, who leads his country "with immense productive capability

[4] North and West form the resistance, the Free Peoples of the West, comprising of the Shire, the elven realms of Rivendell and Lórien, as well as the two lands of free men, Gondor and Rohan. East and South, on the other hand, consist of Mordor and the lands of Rhûn (the land of the Easterlings) in the east and Harad (the land of the Southrons) in the south.

and who commands a vast military force", but whose real power is realized through his servants and armies who carry out his will in the physical realm (Tally forthcoming 24-25). In fact, Sauron never appears in the entire novel as an active party, nor does he appear in a physical form: Gollum speaks of him as seeing almost everything, and that the day when Sauron comes out of the Black Gate is near – but of course, that day never comes. Tally explains Sauron's physical absence in the war through a parallel with real political leaders: "like Hitler, Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt, the executive leaders of states and armies in a time of war rarely step onto the field of battle" (forthcoming 24-25). Thus Mordor, as a whole, is governed by the will of a leader who is equally threatening as he is invisible, who leads a land with a vast but barren landscape and inhabitants whose main purpose is to follow Sauron's orders into where he leads them – that is, to war.

This description of Mordor could be one and the same Dodds gives of the Soviet Union in the minds of Americans and the West at large, in the beginning of the Cold War: "The Soviet Union … was… geographically expansive, culturally monolithic, religiously suspect, and politically ceaseless in its desire to corrupt" (Dodds 2006, 153). While many critics are quick to make an allegory between Mordor and Hitler's Germany during World War II, some have also made the parallel with the Soviets; in fact, some Russian critics see the book as a "typically Western allegory of the danger from the East" (Werber 2005, 237). Mordor is geographically the largest unified land governed by a single entity in Middle-earth, with a mostly barren landscape, industrial advancement, large camps for housing armies and surrounded by a range of mountains and the Black Gate that form, effectively, an Iron Curtain of their own around its borders. With a massive army (in other words, the inhabitants of the land, as Mordor makes no difference between an inhabitant and someone who must fight), Sauron can sacrifice not one, but several armies in order to win his battles **(**Ruane & James 2012, 91). This is a clear similarity with Stalin and his treatment of his own people during and

after the war. Furthermore, Tolkien himself makes a comment about the Russian landscape that is easy to parallel with his own descriptions of Mordor:

> [C.E.M Joad] has the advantage of having been in Russia – and loathing it. … He said if you got into a train and looked out of the window, and then read a book for a few hours, and looked out again – there would be nothing outside to see to show that the train had moved at all!
>
> (*Letters* 63)

This certainly sounds similar to what Frodo and Sam observe during their journey to Mordor: not only Emyn Muil, but also the Dead Marshes and the plains of Morgai are all characterized by the sameness of the place with itself: it is easy to get lost, as there are no visible landmarks and everything around looks the same. Even inside Mordor, the only landmark is Orodruin, and the only way to tell where one is by seeing whether or not the mountain looms nearer or farther than before.

There is also a wider parallel to be made. East can be understood as not only the Soviet Union, but the way Mordor's political system and its geopolitical totality are described is also reminiscent of the way the Arabic countries were often understood "in unflattering terms, as unstable, threatening and/or exotic" (Dodds 2006, 10). Mordor is the hegemon, the geopolitic power that threatens the peace and sovereignty of the entire world – in other words, Mordor is also the threat, the Other. As Dodds notes, the role of the other is an important part of creating a self-understanding for the one assigning the role of the other (in this case, the West), as it both identifies the significant threat and conversely, reinforces the identity of the self as a "force for good" (2006, 18). In this way, the self – in the novel, this means both the Free Peoples of the West as well as the reader and narrator, as the novel is focalized through the hobbits and the reader experiences the novel through them – is defined as something fundamentally good and right through the opposition with the other – in the novel, Mordor and its desolate landscape and totalitarian politics. Placing Western (or European) identity in a superior position when compared to all the non-Western ones is the center of Orientalist

discourse (Said 1978, 7). In Middle-earth, Mordor is both a hegemonic geopolitical power and the other, much like the Soviet Union was to the western consciousness during the Cold War.

Another key aspect of Orientalism and the entire concept of the Other is viewing the Orient and the Other as the unknown, something unexplored, something easy to generalize, both exotic and threatening because of it. Mordor is strictly the latter of these, not least because it is unknown to the outsiders because of its own will. It is surrounded by mountains, cliffs and marches on all sides, the most imposing of these being the mountains that culminate in the Black Gate, the (supposedly) only entrance to the land:

> Upon the west of Mordor marched the gloomy range of Ephel Dúath, the Mountains of Shadow, and upon the north the broken peaks and barren ridges of Ered Lithui, grey as ash. But as these ranges approached one another, … there was a deep defile. This was Cirith Gorgor, the Haunted Pass, the entrance to the land of the Enemy. High cliffs lowered upon either side, and thrust forward from its mouth were two sheer hills, black-boned and bare. Upon them stood the Teeth of Mordor, two towers strong and tall. … Stony-faced they were, with dark window-holes staring north and east and west, and each window was full of sleepless eyes.
>
> Across the mouth of the pass, from cliff to cliff, the Dark Lord had built a rampart of stone. In it there was a single gate of iron, and upon its battlement sentinels paced unceasingly. … None could pass the Teeth of Mordor and not feel their bite.
>
> (II: 636)

Instead of an iron curtain, the entrance to Mordor is through an iron gate, heavily guarded and impassable unless one has been summoned or knows the passwords. Sauron's control over his territory is absolute, both in the border control and the "watching gaze" of surveillance; several times in the novel, Sauron is referred to as the "Eye of Mordor": Sam feels its malice when he puts on the Ring, and according to Gollum, "[Sauron's] Eye is all round, but it attends more to some places than to others" (III: 898, II: 642).

This is what Battis calls "an internal system of monitoring and containment" – Sauron watches his land and the movements of his enemies constantly, monitoring and observing, and this constant watchfulness inspires fear not only in Frodo and Sam, whose success depends upon not being discovered, but also Sauron's servants (2004, 919). This

"omnipresent policing" and surveillance of the land and its borders, along with observing the loyalty of the servants and that all orders are carried out, is a practice associated with colonialism (Kumar 2003, 86). In fact, Battis notes the same thing in her analysis of the novel: Sauron's attempts at world domination result in war as his goal is to exterminate or enslave the peoples of the other lands while those already under his power are not allowed to exist as individuals and are expected to show unwavering loyalty to a political leader that is constantly absent in the physical command of power. These are all signs of colonialism, but Battis argues that his motivations are not: it is a "brand of domination [that] is never typified as mercantile or colonial. He simply desires control" (2004, 919). But the desire to control more land is, in itself, a colonial motive, and so it stands to reason the effects of Sauron's motivations are also the ones that characterize colonialism.

However, this is not the only colonial aspect that can be examined in relation to Mordor. According to Kumar, colonialism manifested as projects carried out without any regard for the already existing constructions of indigenous land and peoples (2003, 86). Initially, the look of Mordor is a land that confines the armies in as much as it shuts other lands out, but this is not the case:

> As he gazed at it suddenly Sam understood, almost with a shock, that this stronghold had been built not to keep enemies out of Mordor, but to keep them in. It was indeed one of the works of Gondor long ago, an eastern outpost of the defences of Ithilien, made when, after the Last Alliance, Men of Westernesse kept watch on the evil land of Sauron where his creatures still lurked. But as with … the Towers of the Teeth, so here too the vigilance had failed, and treachery had yielded up the Tower to the Lord of the Ringwraiths, and now for long years it had been held by evil things.
>
> (III: 900)

In reality, the Mordor of old was not hidden behind watchtowers and walls, but they were built by the men of the West upon Sauron's first defeat, to confine the evil of Mordor and keep it from threatening Gondor and everything outside its borders. The conquering of Mordor did not warrant even a colonial practice and reuse of land – instead, it was deemed so

dangerous and inherently evil that it was confined within a stronghold so vast and strong so that none could get out. Thus it was not only Mordor that tried to limit the human encounter between the lands by shutting everyone out, but also a similar attempt from the part of the West, to keep its other imprisoned and out of sight.

What is at play here is "the ancient dichotomy of 'our land-barbarian land'", with Mordor labeled as the barbarian, dangerous and evil land that should be allowed to be in no touch with the western world (Tally 2013, 92). This identity of Mordor as something evil, dark and dangerous is reinforced with the ways of talking and names, not only the ones the peoples of the West use of it, but also its geographical names. Dodds places great emphasis on how names (metaphorical and not) carry identities and are both inherently geographical and essential in shaping the geographical imaginations as they offer a clear way to divide "the good" and "the evil" (Dodds 2006, 4, 8). Sauron is continuously referred to as "the Dark Lord", "the Dark Power", "the lord of the Black Land" and "the Enemy". Dark and black appear also in the geographical names of Mordor: as Chance explains, "in the East, Mordor is named after the Anglo-Saxon word for 'death'" (2010, 81). But not only is the land itself black, but the gate of Mordor is the Black Gate, the pass to the land is Haunted, outside its borders lie the Dead Marshes and Minas Morgul, the Tower of Dark Sorcery. All of these descriptors denote darkness and death, qualities assigned to the other, but perhaps the most efficient way of suppressing the other of Mordor comes in the form of refusing to name it. Sauron is also called the "Nameless Enemy", Faramir calls Mordor "the Nameless Land", and when Pippin struggles over its name, Beregond says they (the men of Gondor) "seldom name it" (III: 764). It is possible to argue that the land stays unnamed partly out of fear, but by the refusal to name it, Mordor is effectively stripped of any identity.

5. Allies of Evil – the peoples of East and South

Darkness lies in the East. It is not only the darkness of the landscape of Mordor, the Black Gate and Barad-dûr, not the more metaphorical darkness of Sauron's power, but also the quite literal darkness for the Enemy to cover the lands in: his allies. In Rearick's words, "it is undeniable that darkness and the color black are continually associated throughout Tolkien's universe with unredeemable evil (2004, 862). It appears continuously in the place names of Mordor, in its descriptions, in the description of Sauron – and in the skin colour of his allies.

The most notable of Sauron's servants are the Ringwraiths, but they are not of central interest to this chapter; instead, the main interest lies in his other servants, because as Gandalf says, "not all his servants and chattels are wraiths! There are orcs and trolls, there are wargs and werewolves; and there have been and still are many Men, warriors and kings, that walk alive under the Sun, and yet are under his sway" (I: 222). The Men referred to in this speech are Easterlings, the people inhabiting the land of Rhûn, and Southrons or Haradrim from the far land of Harad in the south. Along with the orcs, they are the only peoples in the entire novel to be described as having dark skin.

However, as this chapter has to do with analyzing the peoples in a manner that touches on the aspect of race, it is important to note that the entirety of the racial discourse in Tolkien's world of Middle-earth is permeated by something called "race-consciousness" (Kim 2004, 884). A person, or a race, can be identified by their features, dress, colour, language and other such attributes, and to know a person is "to know the race, and vice versa" (Kim 2004, 885). This does not simply apply to the dark-skinned races, but also the Free Peoples of the West: Frodo was able to identify Faramir as Boromir's brother simply by his features; the elves can be recognised both by their looks as well as their shared language; it would be possible to identify someone belonging to the race of hobbits or dwarves simply by having met one representative of the race. In a world built on racial consciousness, the differences

between the races are easy to put under scrutiny, but I will once again note that the aim of this chapter is not to examine whether or not Tolkien (or the narrator, or the hobbits) utilises racialism in his novel, but rather to build a communicative discourse between the Primary world and the Secondary world, and to understand the racial codings used in the novel within a wider context.

In 5.1, I will start the analysis of the peoples allied with Mordor with a look at Easterlings and Southrons, the descriptions of their appearance, language and behaviour found in the novel, and finally compare these to the accounts of Orientalism and the idea of the Primitive, as well as present some ideas about the geographical locations that these people hail from. In 5.2, I will examine the orcs of Mordor, their descriptions, speech and the dichotomy of the orcs being described on one hand as the ultimate Other, an enemy that can be killed without remorse, and on the other hand as soldiers caught in the bureaucracy of their land and complaining to each other about the people in charge.

5.1. Red clothes and golden collars – the wild Easterlings and the cruel Haradrim

"The evil characters are servants of Sauron", as Thomson puts it succinctly, and yet no less accurately (1967, 52). It sounds simplistic, yet that is the way of the novel: the evil characters are, almost without exception, allied with the Dark Lord, carrying that same darkness within them. As the peoples of the West are generally described in a uniform manner, so are the peoples of the East: in Liebherr's words, "the people in the West tend to be associated with bright imagery and are generally described as having attributes such as pale skin; the people in the East are most often associated with dark imagery and depicted with non-white characteristics usually bestowed upon the post-colonial Other" (2012, 76). In other words, the people in the East are often equaled to the Other, not only in terms of their descriptions, but also in the lack of it.

This is especially evident when attempting to find descriptions of the Easterlings: one quickly comes across a sheer lack of any and all individual descriptions of their character outside of their appearance. In fact, the Easterlings have a distinct lack of even the appearance descriptions, only ever being appraised or described as a mass. The first mention of them is in passing when Frodo, looking at the Middle-earth from Amon Hen's old watchtower, sees signs of war everywhere, and notices that "out of the East Men were moving endlessly: swordsmen, bowmen upon horses, chariots of chieftains and laden wains" (I: 400-401). The only time when the Easterlings are assigned any attributes is during the battle of the Pelennor Fields, when the narrator tells that "the Easterlings were strong and war-hardened and asked for no quarter" (III: 848). However, the most important description of them comes from *The Two Towers*:

> It seemed as if whole armies were on the march, though for the most part they were hidden by the reeks and fumes drifting from the fens and wastes beyond. But here and there [Frodo] caught the gleam of spears and helmets; and over the levels beside the roads horsemen could be seen riding in many companies. ... These were Men of other race, out of the wide Eastlands, gathering to the summons of their Overlord; armies that had encamped before his Gate by night and now marched in to swell his mounting power.
>
> (II: 693)

From these three descriptions, it is possible to conclude at least a few things. The Easterlings are, first and foremost, a race of fighters. The mentions of them are always connected to war, and they appear only as armies to join Sauron's growing power. They are described in terms of which army division they belong to, and even their defining characteristic is that they have seen many wars and are experienced in warfare. This is a difference to the men of the West, who are rarely seen to perform violence or violent acts outside of battle and in absolute necessity, but the chief quality of the Easterlings is prowess in battle and they are presented as a more violent people (Liebherr 2012, 77). The frequent connections to war and fighting establish them also as a threat to the West.

Another important point to be made about the quotation above is that in the mind of Frodo, or the narrator, the Easterlings are not simply Men. They are "of other race", and there seems to be a division between the *real* Men (the men of the West) and the *others*, who fight on Sauron's side – the Men are thus divided "into noble and foul breeds" (Werber 2005, 230). This is further supported by the fact that even though the men of Rohan and the men of Gondor are peoples of different countries, they are never described as different races: Faramir speaks of the men of Rohan as "men of fierce valour, but our kin from afar off, unlike the wild Easterlings or the cruel Haradrim … the Men of Darkness" (II: 679). Therefore, this division into different races inside the one race of Men seems to be limited to only those Men who support the Dark Lord.

The division is further strengthened by the construction of the political system: the Easterlings have chieftains, which is strikingly different from the kings, stewards and captains on the Western side. A chieftain is the leader of a clan or a tribe, and the fact that there were several of them suggests that the Easterlings consist, in fact, of several different tribes. This primitive view of war-hungry tribal men contrasts directly with the Western civilization and the "benevolent monarchy" that can be seen in Gondor (Auden 1968b, 53). Furthermore, the sparseness of the descriptions of the Easterlings is, in itself, an indicator that the Eastern Men are the Other to the Westerners: the Other is traditionally silent, never individualized. This is the case with the Easterlings, as they are never seen as more than a mass, an army composed of non-individuals, who have no voice of their own. This lack of speech is significant especially as Tolkien's novel is full of languages, even the language of Mordor that Sauron and the orcs use, but no language for the Easterlings.

Although the Southrons are described in much more detail than the Easterlings, the descriptions are either exotising or alienating and feature the use of the adjectives "cruel" and

"wicked" several times. The first and also the most comprehensive of all the descriptions of the Haradrim comes from Gollum:

> Dark faces. We have not seen Men like these before, no, Sméagol has not. They are fierce. They have black eyes, and long black hair, and gold rings in their ears; yes, lots of beautiful gold. And some have red paint on their cheeks, and red cloaks; and their flags are red, and the tips of their spears; and they have round shields, yellow and black with big spikes. Not nice; very cruel wicked Men they look. Almost as bad as Orcs, and much bigger.
>
> (II: 646)

When compared to the first description of Boromir, a man of the West, "a tall man with a fair and noble face, dark-haired and grey-eyed, proud and stern of glance", the contrast between the two images is quite drastic. Even their clothes are different: whereas Boromir was clad in rich clothes, the cloak "lined with fur", his collar made of silver with a single stone on it (I: 240), the Haradrim had golden collars, red clothes, and they bore "corslet[s] of overlapping brazen plates" and their "black plaits of hair [were] braided with gold" (II: 660-661). As this comparison shows, the colour and materials are polar opposites, and add to the contrast already established between the West and fair skin colour and lighter eyes, and the Haradrim's all-black colour scheme, accentuated by the extravagant clothes and the traditionally used threatening colours like red and yellow. When the colours are compared to the description of Faramir's men, the Ithilien rangers that battle against the Southrons, the contrast is even clearer: their clothes are in various earthly colours, like brown and green.

Unlike the Easterlings, the Southrons speak in the text, though never in actual words and only as a passing reference: they "[cried] with harsh voices like beasts and carrion-birds" and did not understand the language of the Westerners (III: 823). Their language, to the Western, civilized peoples, sounds much like the sounds animals make, and their language is "harsh", implying it is unpleasant to the ear. Furthermore, the lack of a developed language and the animal comparison also carries the implication that their communicative skills are limited; moreover, it also means that their level of civilization is hardly on par with the West,

as the language and the ability to communicate effectively both through speaking and writing are often considered the threshold of civilized society.

The Southrons are also warriors, like the Easterlings. They possess "ships of war" that ship out from the havens of Harad to bring warriors to Mordor, they move in regiments, are led by chieftains and fight with giant, elephant-like creatures called mûmakil (I: 400, III: 817). One of the most important individual descriptions is of a Harad chieftain, during the battle of the Pelennor Fields:

> Southward beyond the road lay the main force of the Haradrim, and there their horsemen were gathered about the standard of their chieftain. And he looked out, and in the growing light he saw the banner of the king, and that it was far ahead of the battle with few men about it. Then he was filled with a red wrath and shouted aloud, and displaying his standard, black serpent upon scarlet, he came against the white horse and the green with great press of men; and the drawing of the scimitars of the Southrons was like a glitter of stars.
>
> (III: 839)

The Southrons seem, in fact, more united than the Easterlings: they have only one chieftain with one banner, again bearing the threatening colours black and red, as well as the symbol of a serpent, a symbol that is often associated with evil. A notable difference to the Western soldiers is the weapon of the Southrons: they use a scimitar, which is a weapon that originated in the Middle East and further exotises the Southrons and differentiates their culture from those of Gondor and Rohan. In fact, the descriptions of the Haradrim are difficult not to parallel with the accounts of black Africans that were common in the West in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, as blacks were seen as "savage brutes" with a lust for blood and fighting, uncivilized and primitive (Hall 1997, 239, 243).

However, there is one instance that humanizes the Haradrim in the book: this view of the Southrons comes from Sam, as he sees a dead Southron man, and wonders "what the man's name was and where he came from; and if he was really evil at heart, or what lies or threats had led him on a long march from his home; and if he would not really rather had stayed there in peace" (II, 661). This is the only instance when any of the protagonists express

any doubt in the seemingly inherent evilness of the Southrons. Liebherr sees this as an example of Sam making "an emotional connection with this unknown man" and thus portraying the Haradrim in a more sympathetic light (2012, 82-83). Snyder has a different view of the function of this scene: according to him, "Sam's reaction ... is modern rather than medieval. It is the reaction is a civilian ... an interpreter of the epic and heroic world of medieval romance for the modern reader" (2013, 136). Sam is, essentially, the reader, and his reaction is the reaction of a modern reader, someone who has not had previous encounters with war, and as a solitary example, it works more in favour of Sam's general character than truly questioning the Southrons' motive in fighting alongside Sauron.

The description of both the Easterlings and the Haradrim relies heavily on the location of their homeland. Maria Sachiko Cecire notes that "Tolkien's fantasy works from 1950s exhibit the influence of medieval *mappae mundi* (world maps), which frequently lumped together China, Africa and even Russia as a part of the peripheral region they called the 'Indies'", and that not only do the lands of the enemies lay at the edges of Tolkien's world map, but the South and the East are also inhabited by threatening "dark-skinned peoples who require suppression or subjugation" (2009, 399). The enemy lands, Rhûn for the Easterlings and Harad for the Southrons, both lie behind an area of land that is inhabitable[5] as well as inhospitable, and the only two descriptions of these lands are both related to the sky: Aragorn has travelled far and wide, "even into the far countries of Rhûn and Harad where the stars are strange" (I: 248). Gollum has never travelled to these lands, but he has knowledge of them, as he shows when he talks about the road to Harad:

> We never went that way, but they say it goes a hundred leagues […]: but we never went there, alas no! we never had a chance. And further still there are more lands, they say, but the Yellow Face is very hot there, and there are seldom any clouds, and the men are fierce and have dark faces. We do not want to see that land.

[5] The Brown Lands come before the Sea of Rhûn, and South Gondor, through which the road to Harad travels, is described in the world map as being "now a debatable and desert land" (I-III, appendix).

(II: 641)

Even Tolkien himself describes the countries of the East and South as "uncharted", inhabiting the "realm of wild or evil men, alike only in their hatred of the West" (*Letters* 157). Even in his own description, the two peoples are not capable of living in peace with the West and instead are a threat to them – this view is something Niels Werber also argues for: "Tolkien's epos and Jackson's films, [when] viewed from an Anglo-Saxon perspective, tell the story of a battle of an advanced, civilized Western world against the retarded barbarian masses of the East, hungry to conquer the world" (2005, 237).

There are some explanations given as to what could be behind the choice to portray the threat to the West as dark-skinned, primitive and exotic tribes from the East and the South. According to Roberts, it is purely a geographical reason:

> Geographically as we leave the climes of Northern Europe behind, we start to find to the south and east African, Central Asian, Turkish and Arab peoples. Realistically and sensibly we find this similar equation in Tolkien's middle-earth [sic]. There are dark-skinned Southrons who live in the hot climates of the south. … [The Easterlings and Southrons] are devices that help place Middle-earth 'in the familiar', in the 'real'.
>
> (2007, 9)

In a similar manner to which the descriptions of the Shire are easily equated to the descriptions of English countryside, the Southern and Eastern peoples are dark-skinned as they would be in the Primary world. Roberts' argument is that Tolkien, who crafted his world very carefully and with the attempt to present Middle-earth as an ancient past of our world, made the Easterlings and Southrons appear similar to the peoples found in Africa and the Middle East in an attempt to maintain the believability of the relation between this world and the world of Arda. Rearick is of similar mind to Roberts, stating that "in the medieval world that Tolkien portrays an enemy from the tropical South probably seemed natural" (2004, 868). However, Tolkien is also using the medieval influence of the *mappae mundi* in such a way as to present the Eastern and Southern peoples as both primitive and threatening.

It is clear that both Roberts and Rearick are willing to read the novel as a product of its time: it was written during World War II and was published in the 1950s, a time when, as Epp notes, "the common colonial and imperial mindset in Great Britain had not been overtly challenged by postcolonial thought" (2008, 3). Thus the alienating, exotising view of the Eastern men and the primitive account of them conforms to the Orientalist perspective: the Orientals were, generally, "designated as backward, degenerate, uncivilized and retarded" (Said 1978, 207). Furthermore, it can (despite Tolkien's assurances to the contrary) be seen as reflecting the political discord in the world at the time of publication, especially as the Cold War was creating tensions between the East and the West in Europe. Several other fantasy authors, for example Susan Cooper, have even openly acknowledged that they have used World War II and the following period of unease and tense relations as the basis in their stories (quoted in Cecire 2009, 399). The Othered image of the Easterlings and the Haradrim can be said to be based not only on the cultural mindset of the mid-1900s and the yet unquestioned colonial ideologies, but also on the influences of World War II and the tensions between the East and the West.

However, it is important to acknowledge that this reading is culturally coded and must be read in a larger context: namely, the context of racialized discourse. It is undeniable that the only dark-skinned peoples described in the book are, unquestionably and unexplainably, evil. Roberts argues that "Tolkien never suggests that only the non-white humans were prone to evil" (2007, 12). It is true that the Númenoreans show that Sauron's corruptive power touches everyone, in a similar manner to Frodo's eventual succumb to the Ring, but that is a show of evil inside people, and the capability to fight against it – whereas the peoples of east and south, with their dark skin, strange language and exotic dress, are only ever given the capability to evil.

In the end, there is only one possible end for such evil: subjugation and defeat. Everyone is slaughtered in the battle of the Pelennor Fields, no foe is left alive, and at the end of the War of the Ring and Sauron's defeat, the orcs and beasts run,

> But the Men of Rhûn and of Harad, Easterling and Southron, saw the ruin of their war and the great majesty and glory of the Captains of the West. And those that were deepest and longest in evil servitude, hating the West, and yet were men proud and bold, in their turn now gathered themselves for a last stand of desperate battle. But the most part fled eastward as they could; and some cast their weapons down and sued for mercy.
>
> (III: 949)

Only the greatest and evilest of the warriors make for their last stand, the rest run or plead for mercy as they see there is no win against the glorious and majestic Westerners. The Other is defeated, either driven away to darkness, or subjugated by making it realise its own inferiority.

5.2. Shagrat and Gorbag – orc, the ultimate Other?

In the world of Middle-earth, orcs are the only race that are not created by the father of the gods or by any of the *valar* themselves, but are instead corrupted, made to be a mockery of the elves, who are considered the noblest and fairest of all the races. In Werber's words, orcs are the result of "genetic experimentation, crossbreeding and dark magic" (2005, 235). However, orcs are like elves and hobbits, for example, in the sense that they are divided to different "breeds" of orcs that vary in size and strength. The largest are the uruks that are described as "goblin-soldiers of greater stature, swart, slant-eyed, with thick legs and large hands" (II: 415). In Mordor, Sam sees one of the orcs who has imprisoned Frodo: he "caught a glimpse of his evil face as it passed: it was scored as if by rending claws and smeared with blood; slaver dripped from its protruding fangs; the mouth snarled like an animal" (III: 906). The animal comparisons are frequent when the narrator describes the orcs: they are digging "busy as ants", when they run in the sun "their heads were down and their tongues lolling

out", and they are outright called "the maggot-folk of Mordor" (III: 822; II: 452; III: 886). Like the language of the Easterlings and Haradrim, the language of Mordor, also called the black speech of Mordor, is "foul and uncouth" (I: 253). There are many instances in which the orcs speak in the common tongue, but one particular example includes their own speech:

> One of the Orcs sitting near laughed and said something to a companion in their abominable tongue. 'Rest while you can, little fool!' he said then to Pippin, in the Common Speech, which he made almost as hideous as his own language. 'Rest while you can! We'll find a use for your legs before long. You'll wish you had got none before we get home.'
> 'If I had my way, you'd wish you were dead now,' said the other. 'I'd make you squeak, you miserable rat.' He stooped over Pippin bringing his yellow fangs close to his face. He had a black knife with a long jagged blade in his hand. 'Lie quiet, or I'll tickle you with this,' he hissed.
> 'Don't draw attention to yourself, or I may forget my orders. Curse the Isengarders! *Uglúk u bagronk sha pushdug Saruman-glob búbhosh skai'*: he passed into a long angry speech in his own tongue that slowly died away into muttering and snarling.
>
> (II: 445)

The black speech, as can be seen in the example, is an agglutinative language, in which words are formed by joining affix morphemes to the stem, similar to languages such as the Turkic, Mongolic and Ancient Near East languages. Yet the language is described as "abominable" and "hideous" – perhaps because it is a language imposed on the servants of Mordor by Sauron, thus replacing varieties of Orkish, though it is still spoken, as when several different members of different tribes meet, they use their native languages and cannot understand each other (II: 445). But even these languages are not originally their own; instead, they "took what they could of other tongues and perverted it to their own liking; yet they made only brutal jargons, scarcely sufficient even for their own needs" (III: 1131).

The longer quotation above also showcases an important aspect of the personality of orcs: their tendency towards violence. One of the orcs threatens Pippin with torture, and this is a common habit with orcs: as Liebherr says, "it is in fact the Orcs who are consistently depicted as performing violent acts throughout the tale. Moreover, the violence of Orcs is very often directed against other Orcs" (2012, 78). This is evident in many scenes of the

novel, but nowhere more so than when Sam sneaks into the tower where Frodo is kept prisoner:

> At once he saw that up here the fighting had been fiercest. All the court was choked with dead orcs or their severed and scattered heads and limbs. The place stank of death. A snarl followed by a blow and a cry sent him darting back into hiding. An orc-voice rose in anger, and he knew it again at once, harsh, brutal, cold. It was Shagrat speaking, Captain of the Tower.
> 'You won't go again, you say? Curse you, Snaga, you little maggot! If you think I'm so damaged that it's safe to flout me, you're mistaken. Come here, and I'll squeeze your eyes out, like I did to Radbug just now. And when some new lads come, I'll deal with you: I'll send you to Shelob.'
> 'They won't come, not before you're dead anyway,' answered Snaga surlily. 'I've told you twice that Gorbag's swine got to the gate first, and none of ours got out. Lagduf and Muzgash ran through, but they were shot. I saw it from a window, I tell you. And they were the last.'
>
> (III: 905)

The two captains of the tower, Shagrat and Gorbag, fought over the beautiful mithril shirt that Frodo had when captured, and in the process, their underlings got into a fight that ended with Shagrat's win inside the tower, but with Shagrat and Snaga as the only survivors. Despite previous friendly interactions, the two captains turn against each other easily, and the orcs in their command see nothing wrong with slaughtering each other in various ways; in the quotation, Shagrat speaks of squeezing Snaga's eyes out, a threat of brutal violence that is directed to an ally. Orc commands seem to be enforced through violence, and it is often through that threat that the commands are obeyed.

This willingness to turn against one another and the use of violence as a way to communicate make the orcs almost frightfully different from the other races. Orcs seem "to be irredeemably evil and incapable of repentance: on meeting either, there is only one thing to do: kill" (Auden 1968a, 138). As Werber states, "the Orc is the 'other'" (2005, 234). They are the enemy, the incarnation of evil, often portrayed as being incapable of human emotions. Their only function seems to be to kill and to serve. Unlike the Easterlings and the Haradrim, the orcs do not lack speech or descriptions, but their otherness comes rather because of how they are treated by the other races. Werber argues that the orcs are treated as "beasts,

barbarians or monsters": an emotionless, non-human enemy that can be killed without remorse and who "only count as numbers in a sporting competition of death" that Legolas and Gimli play during the battle of Helm's Deep (2005, 231). For the other races in Tolkien's world, orcs are their natural enemy, the ultimate other that can be considered less than human in both intellect and worth. They can be killed, slaughtered even, without it seeming like cruelty or inhumanity, because the other "lives a life not worth living", and their otherness is the distinguishing feature that makes them different from "honest opponents" (Werber 2005, 233). During the final fight before the Black Gate and after Sauron's fall, the enemies of the Free Peoples of the West

> were flying and the power of Mordor was scattering like dust in the wind. As when death smites the swollen brooding thing that inhabits their crawling hill and holds them all in sway, ants will wander witless and purposeless and then feebly die, so the creatures of Sauron, orc or troll or beast spell-enslaved, ran hither and thither mindless; and some slew themselves, or cast themselves in pits, or fled wailing back to hide in holes and dark lightless places far from hope. (III: 949)

In the end, if there are orcs still alive that are not slain in the fighting, they become their own demise: like ants, orcs either kill themselves in despair, leaderless, or go into hiding; yet another instance of the other returning to where it belongs, out of sight.

There are at least two different ways of interpreting this view of the orcs as masses of obeying, unfeeling troops. They can be seen as the ideal soldiers, something that is much connected to both World War II and the Cold War: as Werber argues, "Tolkien wrote at a time in which every military commander dreamed of troops with perfect obedience" (2005, 235). The orc is the perfect soldier, an 'it' that has no individuality, a machine created for the sole purpose of killing without conscience or human feelings to hinder it. On the same note, this representation can also be read as a critical commentary on the genetic experiments that had just started to emerge in the 1950s: it is easy to see the argument that genetic mutation equals degeneration of human qualities in the description and treatment of the orcs as a race.

Of course, as Werber notes, this degeneration can also be seen as an improvement, depending on the perspective from which they are viewed (2005, 235). For the peoples of the West (and arguably, the reader), the loss of human qualities and individuality is a negative trait, whereas for Sauron, it means complete obedience on the part of the orcs and is thus a positive quality. The description of the orcs does not only refer to the Cold War, but also to the idea of the Primitive and the depiction of the East as the Other: Dodds notes that Middle-East inhabitants "were depicted as irrational, demonic and prone to violence" (2007, 156). Furthermore, the orcs also do not possess any kind of means or modes of designating themselves, much like Indians and African peoples in the twentieth century Western literature (Werber 2005, 234).

However, the orcs can be read in more symbolic terms. According to Rearick,

> A central error when thinking of Orcs in Tolkien's imagination is to envision them as mortal beings like hobbits and men. However, their darkness is not determined by race but by their alliance with evil. This use of terms like darkness and shade comes from scriptural images. So the battle between light and dark, which runs all through *The Lord of the Rings*, comes from Tolkien's Judeo-Christian mindset.
>
> (2004, 870)

In other words, the orcs are so different from the other races exactly because they are supposed to be. The descriptions of darkness and evil that come with the orcs make it easy to draw a comparison between the orcs ("demons") and elves, who are immortal and have the right as the only race in Middle-earth to sail to Undying Lands, a life after "death" that requires leaving the mortal world behind. This argument is strengthened by Tolkien himself listing the races of his created world as "elves, dwarves, the Kings of Men, heroic 'Homeric' horsemen, orcs and demons" (*Letters* 159). Tolkien also modeled the word *orc* after the old English word for demon, though he states it was only for convenience and not as an allegory (*Letters* 178). Even so, in a novel full of references to Christianity, the reading of orcs as symbolic demons, irredeemably evil and perfect soldiers for the Dark Lord as such, does not seem out of place.

At least, that is what would be easy to conclude. The truth is, however, that the matter of the orcs and their descriptions is not quite as one-note as that. As Kim notes, the portrayal of the orcs is hardly monolithic as they are in several instances described almost like "workers caught in the bureaucratic machinery" (2004, 884). The orcs speak throughout the novel, and more importantly, speak to each other – the hobbits often witness orcs talking and conversing, and these instances portray soldiers who are not necessarily content with their lot in life:

> 'No, I don't know,' said Gorbag's voice. 'The messages go through quicker than anything could fly, as a rule. But I don't enquire how it's done. Safest not to. Grr! Those Nazgûl give me the creeps. … But He likes 'em; they're His favourites nowadays, so it's no use grumbling. I tell you, it's no game serving down in the city.
> … I'd like to try somewhere where there's none of 'em. But the war's on now, and when that's over things may be easier.'
> 'It's going well, they say.'
> 'They would,' grunted Gorbag. 'We'll see. But anyway, if it does go well, there should be a lot more room. What d'you say? – if we get a chance, you and me'll slip off and set up somewhere on our own with a few trusty lads, somewhere where there's good loot nice and handy, and no big bosses.'
> (II: 737-8)

Gorbag's words are not those of an inhuman, perfect soldier with no will of his own – in fact, his speech is reminiscent of any soldier in an army where the chain of command is out of his reach. His wish is to leave the warfront and set up somewhere where no one is ordering him around, a drastic change from life in Mordor, where the Ringwraiths are the ones in charge and there is a price to asking questions.

In Tally's words, the orcs portrayed through the story are, when viewed from the point of view of the hobbits, described as "regimented, thoughtful soldiers who have been given different orders from their leaders" and who, despite fighting against one another, mostly seem rational and even individualistic, even if their way of expressing this individuality is repressed because of the dictatorship of Sauron (forthcoming, 22). The orcs are a violent race, but they are also dominated by violence (Liebherr 2012, 79). When Frodo and Sam are pretending to be orcs, they come across "a gang of the smaller breeds being driven unwilling

to their Dark Lord's wars; all they cared for was to get the march over and escape the whip" (III: 930). This shows that not all orcs were aiding Sauron willingly: in fact, these smaller orcs are more slaves than servants. The view of the orcs as the ultimate enemy, as perfect, unfeeling soldiers is called into question by these passages that portray the orcs as questioning their orders or outright defying Sauron or those enforcing his rule.

There is one explanation that accounts for the dichotomy of the orcs as the ultimate other and as unwilling soldiers caught in Mordor's bureaucracy, and that is the narrative. The orcs only speak when one of the hobbits is the focalizer of the scene, and these are the times when the orcs are also viewed in slightly more sympathetic terms, questioning and arguing with each other like any regular soldiers. However, during the large battles like the battle of Pelennor Fields or Helm's Deep, the orcs are never individualised, instead depicted as a mass that represents everything evil and that can be killed without remorse, the true ultimate Other that has no life worth living. In other words, the orc is both human and not, both the incarnation of evil and a creation that is unhappy serving the Dark Lord and yet unable to go against him. Yet at the very end, orcs are an extension of their master: when he goes down, so do they. It is as Gorbag says, as a warning to Shagrat: "don't forget: the enemies don't love us any more than they love Him, and if they get topsides on Him, we're done too" (II: 738).

6. Conclusion

That a world is imaginary does not, at least for Tolkien, make it any less real. In fact, when creating the world of Middle-earth with its immense geographical and historical details, Tolkien seemed to treat it with the same level of realism as many of the "real" places in our Primary world (Tally 2013, 152). The level of detail Tolkien affords especially to the geographical descriptions of the various landscapes makes the novel a geographical and geopolitical fantasy, one which places more importance in the realness of the world than in

the actual events. It would be possible and interesting to examine the world of Tolkien's Middle-earth and its topology in much wider terms than in this thesis, especially as the places and cities of Middle-earth are places as real as any of our world. However, in the case of Mordor, its presentation is in many cases one-sided, the inherent evil and darkness dominating all the narrative discourse about it. Mordor is a land inhabited by ultimate, almost symbolic evil as Sauron never appears in the novel in physical form or speaks directly, even though his presence and near omniscient surveillance governs the land with absolute dictatorship. The presence of such evil has corrupted the geography and landscape of Mordor almost entirely, as the land becomes more desolate the deeper one goes.

While the no-man's lands outside the borders of Mordor are physically difficult to navigate, dangerous and unwelcoming, the true landscape of death and devastation, both physical and mental, lies inside the boundaries that map the land of literal darkness. Mordor is a place described in desolate terms, full of dying nature, barren plains, volcanic ash and fires, and it culminates in the aptly named Mount Doom in the middle of the land, standing there as a symbol for volcanic doom and industrial evil. However, it is not only the evils of industrialization that account for the environmental damage done to the land: in Middle-earth, the land is described in terms of biogeography, as "the most dramatic aspect of Tolkien's vision of evil and its devastating effect on the natural environment is revealed in the extreme in Mordor" (Dickerson & Evans 2006, 186). Sauron's evil has affected the nature and landscape of Mordor by effectively polluting it and causing the environment to wither and die.

The desolation of the landscape turns into the desolation of the mind during the journey of the hobbits: they suffer from a sense of loss that transcends the boundaries of physical, mental and sensorial. Their entire journey is characterized by a sense of not being "at home" in their surroundings, the transcendental homelessness of Lukács' theory, and they are

incapable of mapping their way or position both in the direct landscape as well as the larger, mental map of their task; in other words, Jameson's answer to transcendental homelessness, the cognitive mapping of one's surroundings, is not the answer to Sam and Frodo. The answer is Gollum, who has mapped the land and functions as the cognitive cartographer inside the story (Tally forthcoming, 18). However, as long as Gollum leads the hobbits, they have no need for in-depth knowledge of their surroundings, but as Gollum's betrayal leads them into Mordor through an experience of the loss of all sensory perceptions, the hobbits are left alone with their spatial and existential anxiety. They are lost, both with the task too big and impossible for them, as well as with the barren landscape; and this state of homelessness in the world that the hobbits feel can be showcased in one short exchange as the hobbits cross the plains of Gorgoroth with the mountain in sight:

> 'Thank you, Sam,'' [Frodo] said in a cracked whisper. 'How far is there to go?'
> 'I don't know,' said Sam, 'because I don't know where we're going.'
>
> (III: 941)

On a larger scale, Middle-earth is a land depicted in an interwar period and thus highly politicized in both its societies and landscape, even in its nature as rivers, mountains and animals are included in the geopolitical divide between the East and the West, or the evil and the good. The East, in other words Mordor, is the geopolitical power and hegemon – forming Ó Tuathail's outlined condition of hegemony – in Middle-earth, commanded by Sauron who leads his land in a totalitarian manner and with little regard for either the landscape or his armies, bearing similarities with the Soviet Union during the beginnings of the Cold War. As Dodds notes, controlling the borders is a way of showing exclusive control over the territory and its flow of people, and accordingly, Sauron instills heavy border controls and surveillance over his land, a literal watchful eye that parallels the colonial practices – something the effects of his war-waging also accomplish (Dodds 2006, 59). However, Mordor too can be regarded as a land suffering from the effects of colonial mechanics as the stronghold around it was built

to keep the land separate from the West. In conclusion, Mordor is both the geopolitical power and the threatening, inherently evil Other that is either assigned an identity of darkness through its geographical names, or refused an identity altogether by the decision of the peoples of the West not to name it.

Mordor is not the Other only through its identity as a land, but also through the identity assigned to its inhabitants and allies. The image the novel presents of dark-skinned peoples of the East and the South is essentially an alienating, Othered image: a caricature of the Primitive that was discussed in 3.2: they are warrior tribes, advanced only in their armoury and weaponry, consistently silent, their language incomprehensible to the Westerners, their evilness inherent or otherwise never explained, a fixed standard as a stereotype. They are objects that are described in terms of how the 'heroes' see them, and the absence of their own voice continues through the whole story and even in the appendices. This representation of the Easterlings and the Haradrim as a pejorative ethnotype can be seen as a product of the lingering colonial mindset of the early twentieth century, especially in the descriptions of the Haradrim. In the descriptions, the concept of the Primitive is easily visible, as are the influences of Said's Orientalism, especially in the descriptions of the Haradrim as gold-wearing, elephant-riding tribesmen.

However, the image the novel presents of the East cannot be explained only in terms of Saidian or postcolonialist theory: the influence of World War II and the Cold War shows in the tensions between the East and the West and the 'us' and 'them' distinction between the races. Especially the image of the orcs is closely connected to both World War II and the Cold War: it is that of the ultimate Other, a manufactured killing machine that has no individuality, one that can be killed or hewn down in a battle as they are without humanity or will of their own. Even so, the depiction of the orcs is more complex than that, as orcs are given a voice: they speak to each other, and in these passages, their speech is akin to that of soldiers

unhappy with their orders and the war. In other words, the orcs are given individual opinions that differ from those of Sauron or his chief commanders, and some of the orcs are portrayed as nothing more than slaves to Sauron's will. In the end, it is the Easterlings and the Haradrim who present a more unified image that conforms to the concept of the Other; the orcs are both the ultimate Other and a more sympathetic reading of soldiers during wartime.

Most of the novel was written during the World War II, and the consciousness of war and its devastation is made concrete in the depiction of Mordor. Its name is a shadow of a darker past, a shadow that quite literally begins to cover the lands in darkness. The Black Land is as its name suggests: black and grey in its landscape, hostile and ever vigilant against outsiders, its people characterised by darkness, either in the colour of their skin or their clothes, but always by the darkness of their minds. In Tolkien's creation, the East and the West stand in direct comparison, darkness against light, and thus Mordor becomes the Land of Shadow, the unmapable land as Africa once was to Europeans, though it is such by choice of the Dark Lord's. It is a darkness beyond the mountains, ever looming and threatening – an Other at the edge of one's consciousness. It is appropriate that this conclusion should end with the most famous poem of the entire novel, one that illustrates more clearly than anything that in Middle-earth, the shadow of the Other truly lies upon the East:

> *One ring to rule them all, one ring to find them,*
>
> *One ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them*
>
> *In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.*
>
> (I: epigraph.)

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Appendix 1: Map of Middle-earth