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*The influence of Taoism and Feminism on The Lord
of the Rings*

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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Abstract

Many feminist critics emphasize the profound influence of their theory on literature focusing on the perspective of gender. This thesis sets out to demonstrate that eastern philosophy like Chinese Taoism helped contributed to shaping fantasy fiction through the ages. To illustrate this point, this research analyzes female and male characters in John Ronald Reuel Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* from a Taoist view. This research gives the main reasons that led to the feminist criticism and extracts the features of Taoism from Tolkien's work. The literary goals underscore the advantages of philosophy in fantasy, including enabling people to apply eastern philosophies like Chinese Taoism in the English department.

Keywords: JRR. Tolkien; Taoism; philosophy; Feminism; feminist criticism; fantasy fiction; protagonists; women.

Résumé

De nombreuses critiques féministes soulignent l'influence profonde de leur théorie sur la littérature centrée sur la perspective du genre. Cette thèse vise à démontrer que la philosophie orientale comme le taoïsme chinois a contribué à façonner la fiction fantastique à travers les âges. Pour illustrer ce point, cette recherche analyse les personnages féminins et masculins du Seigneur des anneaux de John Ronald Reuel Tolkien d'un point de vue taoïste. Cette recherche donne les principales raisons qui ont conduit à la critique féministe et extrait les traits du taoïsme de l'œuvre de Tolkien. Les objectifs littéraires soulignent les avantages de la philosophie dans la fantaisie, notamment en permettant aux gens d'appliquer des philosophies orientales comme le taoïsme chinois.

ملخص

تؤكد العديد من الناقدات النسويات على التأثير العميق لنظريتهم على الأدب مع التركيز على المنظور الجنساني. تهدف هذه الأطروحة الى إثبات أن الفلسفة الشرقية مثل الطاوية الصينية ساهمت في تشكيل خيال الفانتازيا عبر السنين. لتوضيح هذه النقطة, يحلل هذا البحث الشخصيات من الإناث والذكور في رواية سيد الخواتم لجون رونالد رويل تولكين من وجهة نظر طاوية. يعطي هذا البحث الأسباب الرئيسية التي أدت إلى النقد النسوي ويستخرج ملامح الطاوية من عمل تولكين. تؤكد الأهداف الأدبية على مزايا الفلسفة في الخيال ، بما في ذلك تمكين الناس من تطبيق الفلسفات الشرقية مثل الطاوية الصينية في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية.

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis represents my own work which has been done after registration for the degree of Master at Ammar Thelidji University, and has not been previously included in a thesis or dissertation submitted to this or any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualifications.

Signature:

Date:

Dedications

This humble research is dedicated to my father inspired me from childhood and made me feel like a queen. Also, I dedicate this work to:

. I appreciate what my grandma and my mother did for me.

. The one who truly supported me till the end is my Aragorn and my future husband Ismael Shikh, I appreciate all of your help so much.

. Thanks to my friends from all the creatures, Fairies, Elves, Tengu, Humans, Dwarfs, and the Hobbits.

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Dr. Naoumi is like Gandalf to me, he is wise, calm, and he is a sage, a person whose words provide such knowledge that most people do not have. JRR Tolkien quoted in his book the fellowship of the ring: "I wish it need not have happened in my time," said Frodo. "So do I," said Gandalf, "and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us." Gandalf used heroic words to explain the history of the ring to Frodo and to insist that he must rise to the challenge he offered him like Mr. Naomi.

Finally, I owe a debt to my favorite writer J.R.R. Tolkien for this Dissertation and to Peter Jackson for creating the three series that introduced me to Middle-earth and its great characters and for everything that has gone into these pages. Regardless of how many sleepless nights I spent surrounded by scribbled visions of hobbits and elves. I feel lucky to have this golden chance to be able to work on a book I am interested in. Mythology and fantasy lovers should know more about the great man behind this fantastical trilogy.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	I
Resume.....	II
ملخص.....	III
Dedications.....	IV
Declaration.....	V
Acknowledgements.....	VI
Table of contents.....	VII
General Introduction:	1
Chapter One: Chinese Taoism and Fantasy Fiction	1
Introduction.....	8
Philosophy in Fantasy.....	8
Understanding the Tao (Yin and Yang theory).....	9
Fantasy Fiction in the Chinese Literature.....	12
Taoism in the Western culture.....	13
Western Taoist Philosophy.....	15
Taoist alchemy and western chemistry.....	16
Taoist female characters in Chinese novels.....	19
Conclusion.....	21
Chapter Two: Feminist representations in Chinese Taoist Literature	22
Introduction.....	23
Feminism and early writings.....	23
Feminist reflection in the Chinese works	26
Conclusion.....	32
Chapter Three: Taoism and Feminist Criticism in The Lord of the Rings Trilogy	33
Introduction.....	34
Feminist Criticism in The Lord of the rings.....	34
Taoist features in The Lord of the Rings.....	46
Conclusion.....	54
General Conclusion	56
Works Cited	58

General Introduction

The Lord of the Rings is a Trilogy of three epic fantasy adventure films directed by Peter Jackson based on the novel. It is one of the most widely acclaimed fantasy novels in its genre, according to *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*, in the 20th century it is considered “the most influential fantasy novel ever written” (Clute, 1997:951). The writer of this novel is John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (1892-1973) an Oxford University professor and an expert in Old English, and a medieval fantasy novelist. Tolkien created many Elvish languages; the best-known are Quenya and Sindarin and he created the middle earth in his famous work *The Silmarillion*. Since *The Lord of the Rings* was first published, it received a great deal of criticism from the perspective of gender mainly focused on the decrease of female character roles. From the feminist's point of view, women characters in Tolkien's novel are nothing more than the secondary characters and to maintain a balance Peter Jackson increased and created some roles for women. In the interview, he said: "We didn't add female characters, we expanded a little bit," as it is expected because Hollywood must follow modern social perspectives that is why it should contain more female characters to avoid criticism and to satisfy all the segments of society. However, the feminist literary criticism of Tolkien's work was based on the feminist ideology which explores the influence of middle earth's women on the role and representation saying that the writer is stereotyping.

The understanding of gender has become the theoretical inspiration for some feminist theories that have used the issue of cultural

determinism to emphasize the symbolic domination and violence of men over women. Females can take a form of masculinity in some situations, but men are the ones who grow up to be particularly masculine and no one can judge God or the universe for this fact. Professor Futoshi Taga of Kansai University opines: "This survey gives a glimpse of the ambiguity of traditional and hegemonic masculinity norms. On the other hand, men who sympathize with masculinity have a high percentage of being victims of bullying and violence and being perpetrators, and have many experiences of drinking troubles and traffic accidents. On the other hand, men who sympathize with masculinity have a high self-esteem and are willing to express emotions and support others. As he mentioned that masculinity can harm men, so if women turn to be masculine, the universe may lose its balance. Both femininity and masculinity are cultural values that have to be balanced to avoid the harmful effects of either. According to feminism, female characters are weak and should be desecrated by changing the ideals of women in fiction like Galadriel. Feminine means being a victim, useless and sensitive while some feminist characters like Katara from Avatar, she is strong and very empathic but still have a sensitive side. Convincing the world that a woman's strength is by fighting or holding a weapon only gives a vibe that they have made her a thousand times weaker than her nature. What makes a female character strong? Power? Physical strength? It is understood that Tolkien had no ill intentions towards women on the contrary, he sanctified and characterizes them well. A

study released in April 2020 supported by human and social sciences called *Minds of Metal and Wheels*: “Tolkien and Lewis on Science and Faith claimed that Tolkien expands into the protection of civilization itself, its ancient traditions and its inherited moral and spiritual wisdom.” As it is quoted before in this master thesis it will be argued that Tolkien is trying to preserve the traditions and to keep the English culture on its origins. Women used to stay in the house to cook and raise children for those who are to the point of darkness and suppression of women’s identity as Suzzi Tordebring opines: “In *The Lord of the Rings*, which is primarily a story about men and women are generally very stereotypically depicted. They are seen as “maidens” who must adhere to male protection. This view is hardly unexpected from an author born in the reign of Queen Victoria and who spent most of his life in the men’s club atmosphere of Oxford colleges.” In 1920 Oxford university allowed females to study and the first female graduates was annie rogers, The first degree ceremony followed at the Sheldonian Theatre on 14th October 1920 (oxford, 2020).

The Chinese have traditionally used the yin-yang philosophy to explain the ‘natural’ phenomena of gender relations, conveniently creating a power relation dominated by the yang, or males. However, Taoism cherishes at its heart, equality in education and the Li (pattern, principle) of change. These two principles, an equal opportunity to learning and an attitude of openness and flexibility, do not counter feminism. Rather, this is where the two philosophies meet and where

they are most able to reinforce each other” (Shen Yifei, 2001). Many of Tolkien’s works are known to have a mixture of traditional feminine and masculine traits that is not compatible with the ideology of nowadays societies. There are many different sources in which the English culture so, feminists criticize his description to women in the world he made “the middle earth” because his females are girly, pure, beautiful, gracious and caring although there are some female characters like Eowyn and Galadriel who showed their masculine side in battles (Beatriz Dominguez Ruiz, Granada, 2015). It is argued that the most students in our department know these works and watched the TV series so, this will make the trilogy highly suited for use in the English literature classrooms.

The purpose of this study is to explore the role of women in *the lord of the rings* and also to clarify the feminist literary criticism of masculinity and femininity traits of the main characters as well as discovering the reasons that led feminists to criticize Tolkien. This study aims to develop a theory on how women and men should act according to Chinese Taoism yin and yang. This study includes feminists who criticize literary works and it intends to find out how the results of the analysis can be adapted to feminist criticism and discrimination in the English Literature section. This study seeks to answer the following research problems:

1. What does the term Tao (yin and yang) means and is Taoism religion, philosophy or a theory?

2. What are the main reasons for the feminist criticism of Tolkien's works and how male and female roles are defined in *The Lord of the Rings*?
3. What are the features of Taoism in *The Lord of the Rings*?
3. How can the findings be used to envision the ideals and philosophies of basic civilizations such as Chinese Taoism?

Several literature groups will benefit from this study on why feminists criticize feminine characters in literary works using the study results which it will introduce literary people to the Chinese Taoism by understanding what the role of women really is in *the Lord of the Rings* and applying this theory. Feminists will be better equipped to understand which changes are needed to develop because this critic will encourage writers to describe their female characters freely without expecting any criticism. In fantasy, there are some philosophies applied on feminine characters, current and future and this might have more feminine traits that show all the sides of the woman. Despite the numerous works on the interaction between Chinese philosophies, such as Taoism with feminism, few studies dealt with this theory in Western literature. “Dong pursues the belief that there is a natural ordering of men and women and rationalizes it through *yin-yang*..., teachings about the status and role of women is reinforced by the relationship of *yin and yang*.” (Batista, Class of 2017) this point will be discussed in chapter III.

In the first chapter, philosophy in fantasy will be discussed and Taoism will be defined and explained with some keywords and

General Introduction :

examples from the Chinese culture. The second chapter will be a review on the feminist reflection in the Chinese literature and how feminism deliberated the Chinese works and some famous works and characters mentioned. In the third chapter Taoism will be applied starting with the analyses of female characters in *the lord of the rings*. The method used in this research is descriptive and analytical to study the female characters in *the lord of the rings* and the Taoist philosophy that will be applied on the feminist's criticism of *the lord of the rings* in the last chapter of this dissertation.

Chapter One

Chinese Taoism and Fantasy Fiction

1. Introduction:

Fantasy fiction is a genre of literature that features magical and supernatural elements involving mythical heroic creatures and sorcery. For example, *The Beauty and the Beast*, *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Hobbit*. Fantasy as a genre can be represented in many forms such as a novel, drama or poetry. Generally, fantasy is defined as the power or process of creating unrealistic mental images in response to psychological need an object of fantasy (Merriam Webster). Unlike Dr. Seuss who defined fantasy as a necessary ingredient in living and as a way of looking at life through the wrong end of a telescope. According to what he said, the philosophical side exists to understand that more attention is paid to philosophy in fantasy fiction.

1.1. Philosophy in Fantasy:

Fantasy fiction is a philosophy like John Ronald Reuel Tolkien's books and poets in hell by Janet E. Morris. Philosophical fiction writers made desirable characters in a world that only exists in their minds. They gave readers the chance to travel the Utopian world they created using imagination. Philosophical ideas are interpreted in the literary forms because fiction relies on shaping and forming wise characters and stories. Also, the fantasy writer is able to visualize and describe the plot of his story the way he chooses. Furthermore, philosophy exists in fantasy because some novels dive into fantastical themes via magic and supernatural creatures. In addition, they contain

wisdom and knowledge to illustrate people visualize the prospect of using the philosophical features. Philosophical feature in fantasy are metaphysical elements, symbolism, nature, and theology. The narrative element is the base of this genre and it differs from the realistic genre because the setting and characters are created by the author. Authors can use mythology and real folklore to inspire them to shape their world. There are 144 sub-genres in fantasy writing, for example, dark fantasy, contemporary and fairy tale. “the function and role of society, the purpose of life, ethics, morals, the role of art in human lives, the role of experience, and the development of knowledge. The books in this genre can also be about ideas or ideals for society and mankind. The stories often explore or explain the difficult or dark parts of human life.”(Mark Malatesta, 2018). It is necessary to have a philosophy in fictional stories to draw the reader's attention and interest and understand the writer's philosophy. Some philosophical features in fantasy are: Politics, Axiology, Metaphysics...etc. Also, some stories are considered to be philosophical because they are about life experiments, good and evil, fairytales, polemical. The value of philosophical fiction in fantasy is the entertainment, inspiration, and making new experiments with hypothesis.

1.2. Understanding the Tao (yin and yang theory):

Taoism also spelled Daoism, is a Chinese philosophical and religious theory that is translated as “The Way of the Dao” or “the

path” in classical Chinese. It emerged during the Han dynasty and Laozi has been the author, but it was written by the Grand Historian of Sima Qian. This hopeful message served as a facilitating to heal the wounds that were imposed upon the society during a time of political issues and warfare (403-221 BCE). This theory is evidence to prove that the understanding of gender is presented within Chinese civilization and evolved over centuries. However, nowadays China is into Western thoughts like feminism but it differs in the way of practicing. China is a country that relies on traditional thoughts and sources despite the influence of western culture. Daoism has long been challenging the patriarchal, for example, women such as Huang Ling-Wei stripped of her traditional role as woman and gain more freedoms.

The concept of yin (陰) and yang (陽) lies at the basis of Taoist philosophy, as it represents the inner peace and balance that changes people's view of the universe. It is a kind of paradoxical theory because it illustrates how two opposing forces the black and white are complementary, dualistic and harmonic in the natural world and how they in hence the other. The duality of these two forces or elements brings the physical and meta-physical world into being in which it depict the discernment between right and wrong, morning and night, or male and female. As the Daodejing states, “...as soon as everyone in the world knows that the beautiful is beautiful, here in lies ugliness, All recognize the good as good. Here in lies evil....as soon as everyone knows the able, there is ineptness...”. Lao Tzu talked about

the feminine or the great mother as a passive force represented by the black and the masculine, being the active force that is the most visible and prominent, represented by the white. The Dao dejing has celebrated femininity and mystery and it illustrated that the yin element is as equally strong and as important as its yang counterpart. The yin and yang symbols have a white dot in the black symbol and a black dot in the white symbol. The two dots represent the idea that both femininity and masculinity carry the seeds of one another and the opposite genders have some traits of each other (Robin R. Wang, 2018).

The reproductive nature of both the Dao and beings draw a red line on yin-yang elements and work to balance the life force of the human body in Tai-chi practice. These two elements become one and complete a full circle through their interdependency to clarify the point that there is masculinity in femininity and there is femininity in masculinity. In addition, Daoism is neutral religion and it promotes a feminine consciousness and the yin should be cultivated and understood because the feminine element and one's femininity is not a weakness. The four main beliefs in Daoism are patience, compassion and simplicity to live in harmony with nature (David Mclachlan Jeffrey, Sichuan University, 2021). Sometimes Yin can turn to yang and sometimes yang turn to yin a great example given by: Master Gu, "The sun represents the yang, it is hot and bright but there is still yin inside it which is called the sunspot." Another example about the yin

turning to yang is: “The moon is cold and dark but it has its own light which is the moonlight” (I-ching, Book of change).

1.3. Fantasy Fiction in the Chinese literature:

Chinese fantasy fiction has two literary genres which are XianXia or 仙侠 (immortal heroes) and Wushia or 武俠 (martial heroes) in Chinese. Both genres are about dynasty and the adventures of the martial artists in ancient China. These two genres are influenced by Chinese philosophy and mythology, for example, Taoism, Buddhism, Chinese folk, and alchemy. Most Chinese stories historical or cultural are about immortality and it mainly focused on mythology such as Gods and high-powered Wuxia heroes. Nowadays, XianXia is the most read and preferable Chinese genre because it takes its roots from the kept origins of the ancient Chinese thoughts and religion. According to the Chinese ideals, characters in XianXia novels are perfect because they are wise, magical, romantic, and spiritually powerful (A glossary of words in Wuxia and Xianxia, 2017).

Ying and Yang are a natural physical phenomena used as two main elements from the five elements used in the novels. New fantasy sub-genre emerged after translating Tolkien's works was named Xiuzhen 修真 (immortality cultivation). Xinzhen is used to build an imaginary world in which cultivators are independent as self-training, and energetic fighting against monsters. Back in the time to the early 20th century, as a result to the limited availability of Western fantasy writings, Chinese fantasy irrupted in the field of literature that stood in

a competition with the New Literature. In pre-modern China, Novels were primarily fascinated with recording the strange instead of applying the Dao, for example the Chinese novel “romance of three kingdoms”. Chinese modern writers are now translating Western stories instead of continuing to write the usual Chinese stories using the old style. Therefore, with the development of the internet, Chinese users created an online site for the individuals to write their own fictional stories called “Manhua” (Zickmund,2000). Chinese fantasy fiction characters are humans who turn into heroes by achieving the supernatural fighting abilities through hard training processes and meditating (internal energy cultivation). The inspiration of Taoism affected Xianxia more than Wuxia because it contains new creatures featuring immortals, dragons and energy healing. Qi energy is the life force and the source of life in everything, if the human is alive and healthy that means he has the Qi and it is good but if he is sick it means he has a bad Qi. This energetic system is used as the main concept in martial arts, Chinese novels, and Tai-chi (Xinkai Huang,2011, p.6).

1.4. Taoism in the Western Culture:

Taoism and its culture are the base of eastern history and it has accompanied the Chinese modernization since ancient times. Taoism influenced the Chinese people with its belief and became the system of their life. Moreover, Confucio was the one who introduced Taoism

to the world by interpreting its deep meaning in his book “The Dao is Intangible”. There were many Chinese professors who traveled to the Western countries and had the chance to represent their culture, and especially this influential theory “Daoism”.

Lin yutang is a Chinese linguist, philosopher, and translator who have traveled to the United States and Europe for advanced study. When he returned to China, he taught, edited English and corrected many mistakes in the journals. Lin yutang was an expert in translating and explaining Chinese concepts and theories in English. During the 1st liberal feminist movement in 1848, Lin yutang discussed Taoism at Harvard University and he said that the concept of women is expressed in creation. However, he explained at that time, the traditional concept of the Chinese women compared to the western women is the same except that Chinese society is in harmony. From his point of view, he thinks that the ideal state of humans is harmony same as Taoism. The equality between men and women is not in stripping masculinity from men and femininity from women but it is by improving security and developing the protection of women's rights. After all, there is a biological difference between the two genders which is the neglected truth. If Western feminism did not started with the objective of protecting women's rights it would not be accepted in the Chinese culture. However, He respected women and wrote an article called “Ancient Feminist Thought in China,” and translated the diaries of Chinese strong female warriors. He showed the Westerners that the Chinese Taoism is not stereotyping because

Taoism in the history of China has influenced in many characters such as Yao Mulan and Yao Sian. Chinese women appeared active and energetic in history as teachers, priestesses and many other works unlike the old Western women who used to be housewives. Westerners often focus on changing what does not suit them, whether in religions or philosophy. They have changed Taoism in all respects to take what is positive and reject what is not beneficial to them.

1.5. Western Taoist Philosophy:

Westernized Taoism emerged because the traditional Taoism is the most misunderstood philosophy in the west. Taoist philosophy has been distorted or rather modified it (for them) by getting rid of the religious aspect such as deities, worship, and others. Here is why they attributed it to atheist and agnostic philosophy which is how they present it to learners (bbc.co.uk, 2012). The major beliefs in both the eastern and western Taoism are: to live in harmony with nature, humility (no fame or glory), live a simple life and search for inner peace by a deep meditation. Few Westerners have adopted its gods and goddesses, although there are a few organizations... that have installed altars in their centers, worship Taoist gods, and celebrate Taoist (and Buddhist) festival days (Livia Kohn, 1998).

Taoism as a religion does not reflect Christianity or any other religion and even astrology. Religious people will feel the connection to their spirit and the energy of the universe but not necessarily question God's

existence. The real traditional Taoism was not divided into religious and philosophical until the westerners modernized it this way. “Although it is difficult to divide Taoist philosophy into metaphysical and ethical theory, such as Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy, Taoist thought is truly comprehensive enough to embrace all philosophies and disciplines that seek true knowledge, cosmic principles, and life wisdom” (Peter Kun-Yu Woo, 1980). Taoism is a comprehensive knowledge of all the philosophies in the world. Instead of wasting time and searching for universal wisdom, great benefit, and a rare treasure of knowledge somewhere else, many resorts to Taoism.

1.5. Taoist Alchemy and Western Chemistry:

Liu Haitian, a Taoist immortal related to several alchemical traditions Taoist alchemy has a history of more than two thousand years, recorded from the 2nd century BCE to the present day. It is divided into two main branches, known as Waidan, or External Alchemy, and Neidan, or Internal Alchemy. The two branches partly share their foundations but differ in their respective practices and it is based on A Chinese Treatise on Alchemy Based on Yi Jing Theory.

In October 2015, Tu Youyou, the Chinese scientist won the Nobel prize in physiology and medicine. Its teachings and practices focus on the idea of the Elixir, usually called Golden Elixir (jindan), Reverted Elixir (huandan), or simply Medicine (yao) which is “the essence” or the secret of immortality (Prof. Gu Zhengkun). Taoist alchemy use

five principle elements and five secondary elements related to (inner) organs. The theory of five elements explains how Qi (all the vital substances) cycles through various stages of transformation. As yin and yang continuously adjust to one another and transform into one another in a never-ending dance of harmonization, they tend to do so in a predictable pattern (Christopher Hafner, L.Ac, 2019). Every organ in the human body is related to a certain element of nature, and has a specific color, and feeling. For example:

The kidney (water element) is blue and it is related to fear.

The stomach (fire element) is red and it is related to stress.

(liver, lungs, kidneys, heart, and spleen), these inner organs have a system of energy pathways and blood channels in the whole human body. In every cross part, there is a pressure point named "Y" and this point can be used for healing or killing when attacked. For example, the pressure points in the lung are 12, heart 5, liver 25, and kidney 2 (Dr. Xin-Ming Wang). Danjin or the key of immortality is divided into three treasure: Qi or Chi, Jing, and shen. The first treasure is Jing “the essence” and it is a developed Chi energy like electricity and it used in martial arts. The second treasure is Qi which is the life force energy and the spiritual energy of any being alive, it is used in Tai Chi practice. The third treasure is Shen (spirit), the divine energy The Shen is responsible for thinking, planning, and feeling. Shen energy is expressed differently depending on personality and constitution. Also, it is gifted energy from heaven and it exists on earth only when the

divine energy distance on someone like prophets and hermits...etc. People with Shen energy are hard to recognize because the human comprehension and notice are not enough like, angels (By Stephanie Ray, BCN).

The only civilization that knew “The Golden Elixir” secret of immortality is china because the real story of Jindan is Chinese. In ancient China, there was an old man named master Tao or Dao who lived alone at the top of the mountain and it was rumored that he could turn stone into gold. People began to climb to the top of the mountain carrying stones to ask him to turn them into gold. He suggested to them that he better teach them how to transform the stone, that is, gold themselves. They accepted and he started teaching them how to absorb energy and turn it into golden energy (their energy). It takes them months to master it and when they finish mastering the last level. They ask him why they can't turn stones into gold and he answers: You are the Gold. The Chinese believe that health is gold and reaching a high psychological, spiritual and physical level of strength equals immortality. Chinese alchemy spread around the world and inspired many cultures after inventing the medicine to many diseases and the invention of gunpowder, and Fire-arrow (Scott Park Phillips). Chinese alchemy changed many beliefs about immortality in antiquity in addition to being part of Chinese Taoism which included all kinds of sciences. The Chinese alchemy was to purify the soul from the negative energy that may cause diseases such as anxiety that may result in other diseases such as blood pressure.

1.6. Taoist female characters in Chinese novels:

In Taoism, females represent the “yin” soft and beautiful but also, they can be independent personalities. As Lin yutang said, “harmony is the best state of the human,” because according to yin and yang, men and women are harmonized. For example, Hua Mulan is a historical female character in the Chinese legendary folk heroine in the Dynasty era 4th to 6th AD. When the Huns invade China, Mulan was the only child of her honored family and one man from every family was called to join the army. Mulan's father, who has an old wound and cannot walk properly, decides to fight for his country and the honor of his family though it is clear that he will not survive an enemy encounter because he is physically weak. So, she took his place as a tomboy. She prayed for the protection of her family and left as a man in her father's armor with her family's horse. A week later, Mulan and the other troopers have survived the training camp and are on the way north to stop the Huns. After being spotted and pursued by the enemies, an impasse situation in the mountains forced her to come up with an idea. But then, her real gender will no longer be a secret. She decided to risk everything to save China. The value of the story is the honor, duty and the sacrifice for the family. Mulan is valued and precious not just as a woman but as a daughter and as an honorable person. Taoism is clearly represented in this novel because she was completely a Taoist and took control of the situation around her and then found a solution. After Mulan saved the emperor and returned

home, she told Emperor Shang that: “The flower that blooms in adversity is the rarest and most beautiful of all.” It has a deep Taoist meaning which is, a woman who looks like a misfortune ends up being the best of them all. Chinese wise man once said “the black sheep of the family comes out on top” (Francis Ford Coppola).

Some other feminist warriors are described as independent and strong like Qiu Jin, who was an oriental twentieth-century Judith and Jewish widow from Bethulia. She cut off the head of the Assyrian general Holofernes besieging the city, and she saved the Israelites from damage. Qui Jin was a self-reliant and brave heroine, when others seemed 'helpless and demoralized undertook to save them single-handedly'. She contradicted the most cherished customs of Confucian or modern Chinese Taoism. Qui Jin was hardly a cynosure of universal acclaim but she was admired, respected and emulated by radical Chinese women and men seeking a new society accommodating women. Her modern feminism struggled to overcome an ancient patriarchy. Here was her appeal. She exuded no moral ambiguity. Consequently, if she was demonized by the conventional; she was deified by the radical - and inspired them as the contemplated and attempted to construct the future. Qui Jin, in fact, is not divorced from occidental culture and political iconography. Qui Jin is closely associated with the attitudes, aspirations and fantasies of modern Western feminism (H Fan, J A Mangan, 2001).

1.7. Conclusion:

Finally, many Chinese ladies are famous for their martial art skills and Zhang Ziyi quoted, “Chinese women are much more modest than American women when it comes to clothes. We tend to show less flesh.” It is known that China is a very conservative country, especially in terms of women's clothing, as they reject the scandalous and transparent, so what she said is just evidence of that, and it has nothing to do with humility. This is how the Chinese commented on what she said: as an old religiously Taoist country there will always be respect between genders like, yin yang. It is not easy to define Taoism because it is a complicated philosophy that few people can understand. Taoism is not just a religion but a way of life and a theory in the same time.

Chapter Two

Feminist representations in Chinese Taoist Literature

2. Introduction:

Feminist literary criticism started as a social movement in the Western society then it began to occupy all fields until it reached literature. “The objective of feminist literary criticism is to give a critical respond towards the opinion manifested in literary works which is given by its culture (Miller in Culler, 1983:47). Feminists defended their theory saying that the reason for the emergence of feminist criticism is the oppression of women in literature which is a historical fact for them. “critical feminists focus on issues of power and seek to explain the origins and consequences of gender relations, especially those that privilege man. They study the way that gender ideology...is produced, reproduced, resisted and changed in and through the everyday experiences of men and women” (coakley 45-46). They indulge in criticism of the male gender while failing to see the rest of the story because what matters is how female and male characters are shaped.

2.1 Feminism and early writings:

Feminism became a part of literature with the change of women in society from the first wave of feminism in the 1860s till the 1960s. It started as an idea to defend women in general then it turned to be a literary work. Women writers began to focus on the role of females in the in the old books written. They started to examine, analyze, and interpret political and social gender studies depending on their

feminist theories. New feminist theories appeared in English literature calling for a woman to be completely free from patriarchal constraints. As for the main goal, it is to get rid of the literary theory developed by men through time. Language was a source of weakness when used to describe females, and they see that the linguistic-cultural division is a compulsive system that destroys some aspects of the personality of both women and men alike. Feminists have tried to radically change the image of women in the world, to overwhelm languages that possess femininity and masculinity, such as Arabic and Spanish and French. Masculine female characters have been added to Disney and Novels as a result of the feminist desire to draw a strict personality and difficult public image for women like 'Wonder Women'. Not only that, but they had to change the reality of some characters we knew in the past and They had to accuse and denigrate some writers in the past by ignoring the reality of their environment that prompted them to write like JRR Tolkien and Helen DeWitt. One of the early feminist philosophical writing is, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) by Mary Wollstonecraft in which she talks about the importance of women's education and it pushes readers to consider women's livelihood from a humanitarian aspect and not to impose religious restrictions on them. The idea of freeing woman from religious oppression and stop treating them like kids and to stop forcing them to be what they do not want to be. Early feminist writers were against the idea of giving power to man because of toxic masculinity and denied the fact that woman is powerful. Elizabeth

Cady Stanton was one of the early feminist writer in New York when she published her book « A Slave's Appeal » in the 1860s. Early modern literature was a challenge to new feminists, for example, Shakespear's female character 'Portia' in his book « The Merchant of Venice » is an independent, rich, smart, and beautiful lady who is considered to be a feminist character nowadays. Feminism was based on blaming the previous literary works and favoring one writer over another for a masculine female character or criticizing politics for gender inequality. In addition, “women's rights movements linked to the first and second wave of feminism fought to establish gender equality as a fundamental human right” (Abendroth, 2014, p. 106).

In order to have the highest authority in implementing the feminist policy in this fields. It doesn't matter if the feminists like the book the most important thing is that they criticize everything they think is anti-feminist. Masculinity, violence, harassment, and weak females in stories are the obstacle to women's total freedom. In the eastern world, feminism has invaded the Arabic and Islamic countries writings and radically changed women by making them abandon principles. However, the other half, who rejected these liberating ideas because of their cultural identity, tried to express their opinion on this issue. Because of The religious and cultural awareness and the writers who reject settlement, Arab feminist criticism emerged as a respond to the critics of feminism. Among the feminist critics there are feminist

writers who proved their presence in the third world feminist writings such as, nawal saadawi, ghada samman, and Asia Jabaar.

Wonder Woman is a masterpiece of feminist writing and a comic story, written with suggestive feminist messages to abandon the old social concept that rejects women being warriors. The wonder woman was created in 1941 by William Moulton Marston psychologist, writer, and an advocate for women's rights. He created a demi-Goddess and an Amazonian warrior and a founding member of the justice league. Plus, her goals are justice and peace in the world and to show that women are independent and they can fight. In another perspective in the third world countries, social and economical issues including unemployment and clandestine immigration etc seem like endless and unsolved problems where in reality by looking deep one can notice that the one and only cause is the dominance of women in the field. To put it simply, if this majority of women chose the responsibility to raise the future generation. Nowadays young people could have find jobs and stop dealing with underground commercial methods to buy a parentless life and that automatically prevent the rising of illegal immigration once and for all resulting in a stable self sufficient if not successful country.

2.2. Feminist reflection in the Chinese works:

Ancient Chinese women's literature is considered among the popular Taoist philosophical works because it supported women, especially throughout history, in addition to the ancient Chinese

historical stories that contained independent women and warriors in the Chinese army. According to Yenna Wu, Western feminist strategies are applied in the study of modern Chinese literature tend to adopt the binary paradigm of male domination/female oppression. Women's literature or what Marge Piercy calls it "a language of feminism," in her dissertation: "National Imaginaries: Feminist Fantasies at the turn of the Century". It scan China's feminist movement, "including the late Qing feminist press and their "new lexicon articulating women's incipient identity as national subjects" (pp. 35, 36, 39). There many Chinese feminist works, writers, and famous characters in China and around the world such as:

Work 1:

A Sky of One's Own 《自己的天空》 is a feminist work written by the Chinese-Taiwanist writer "Yuan Chiung-chiung". The main character is Jing Min, an independent woman who deals with the issues of women's silence in front of men and the responsibility of the house such as washing, cooking and ironing. Also, how kind she is to everyone and how she endured the hardships of life with strength, and how she faced her problems with a smile. When she cut the hair of her friend, he told her that he loves her but she just kept silent. Then, she accepts his love and she lives with him the rest of her life. Yuan Chiung-chiung won the first prize of China Times Literary Award and the Fiction Award of United Daily News Literary Prize (duhoctrungquoc.vn/wiki/en/Yuan_Chiung-chiung). She focused on

woman who takes care of her family, friends, and the house. These women are considered to be a treasure in China due to the recent spread of the phenomenon of working women. Chinese women were not passive but active and able to do many things. Apart from participating in feminism, they have also tried hard to utter a feminist discourse that is not recognized or even suppressed by official feminism. Sophia is representative in this context (Xiaoqing Liu, 2011).

Work 2:

Miss Sophia's Diary is a Chinese story written in 1927 by the feminist writer Ding Ling and translated by W.J.F. Jenner. At the time when the story was published, the Chinese felt that China should be moving forward, more influenced by the stereotyped image of the West (angussporran, 2021). Sophia is a modern Chinese woman who struggles in understanding her own identity and sexuality by feeling sexually attracted to Nanyang and she gets lost in her thoughts when she encounters Li jishi. The attempt to understand women for themselves and the other was a philosophical issue for feminists in China. Sophia's diary is not limited to sexual attraction between the sexes only, but an understanding of the stages of intellectual development in her mind (Ka F. Wong). The reader can get a general idea about the life of modern Chinese women at that time. She lives alone and sometimes she does not leave her room but she is active. Sophia cannot work and because of her illness.

Work 3:

Hua Mulan is a Disney character and a legendary folk heroine from the Northern and Southern dynasties era (4th to 6th century AD) of Chinese history. It was written by Guo Maoqian, and recreated by Created by author Robert D. San Souci (historyextra.com). Mulan is a warrior female who took her father's place with the army to fight for the honor and duty of her family and kingdom. Mulan is considered to be a liberal feminist, who have the same position of man, and individual, courage. In the war between Chinese army and Khan army Mulan was brave enough to go through difficulties, risk her life, and fight. It is not easy for a woman to replace a man and be in a situation like her especially in training and camping with the other men. Mulan is skilled martial artist and Tai Chi professional and activating the Qi means physical and spiritual strength (Irene Andini Wishnu Adyatmasani, 2021). All that matters in Mulan is the essence of the story and the message received by the reader. The warrior woman was part of ancient and modern Chinese history. It was not called a feminist until feminism spread in the world and reached China.

Work 4:

Amy Dooling is a scholar of modern Chinese literature and she has published books on 20th century women's writing and feminist literary culture. The most famous book which caught the eye and became famous until the present is: "Women's Literary Feminism in

Twentieth-Century China”. The book examines women from the perspective of the historical and new Chinese empires. It analyzes the emerging feminism in China recently and has provided some examples of well-known audio and literary works.

“Chinese characters were created some 5,000 years ago and during that time span it was sufficient to say that women and men did not have equal rights. The Chinese value balance, as in balancing forces. The Yin and Yang concept is deeply rooted in Chinese philosophy, where two opposing forces must coexist to make harmony in the world. Because of this, the Yin component is “negative, passive, and female” whereas the Yang component is “positive, active, and male.” So it appears that women got the short end of the stick when it came to this philosophy. As we mentioned in our post about Chinese names and gender, women tend to get stuck with characters that mean "pretty" or "safe" or "flower" in their names” (Sara Lynn Hua, 2015). This means that Chinese gender justice had a traditional Chinese source, which is Taoism, which some feminists consider to be the oppression of women today. Many fail to comprehend the contradiction that feminism suffers from, especially against ancient philosophies, and what puzzles the literary world even more is the Chinese women's follow-up to such movements. Yin and Yang are the clearest theories in history. They are not as vague as one of Plato's theories, but rather simplicity in explanation and application. The

problem remains in the intellectual concept and the human environment that affects him.

There are some iconic Chinese females with feminist features mentioned by mike in his Youtube video: “6 Most FEARED Female Warriors in Chinese History”, (The Chen Dynasty) just three of these characters will be mentioned such as:

Character 1:

Mu Guiying (穆桂英) was a legendary heroine and Chinese female warrior during The Tang Dynasty. She is a skillful martial artist, independent and smart woman who married a young Zumba, the son of the legendary general Yong the sixth. She fought next to her husband when she played a huge part in the following battle against the Khitan forces, especially in breaking their previously unstoppable Heavenly Gate Formation (天門陣).

Character 2:

Tong Sire was a rebel Chinese warrior who learned martial art at 15 during the Ming Dynasty, she was standing up for the poor and who the emperor enslaved Chun Zu (Chun soo). She took her army (around 10,000) and kill all the local officials and destroyed the government property and executed some of the officials who stood in her way. No one knows the rest of her story because some say that she kept

escaping from the government and other say she was captured and tortured to death.

Character 3:

Xun Guan was a Chinese military general who lived in the Jin Dynasty and who had more than 13,000 of soldiers and took them into battle. She was just 13 years old when she led the forces to the battle and they succeeded after the victory she forced the generals to retreat. Her father praised her strategies and cleverness because without her he would not defeat the enemy.

2.3. Conclusion:

The study of Chinese women's literature can not only rely on the essentialism of western feminist literary theory but also must return to the social reality and cultural reality of China. However, what is originally found in Chinese culture and literature can be called feminism. Hong Kong Chinese proverb: (hope a son/child will become a dragon, meaning 'long for a child to succeed in life) and (hope a daughter will become a phoenix) (Jackie F.K. Lee). The Chinese revere the phoenix as they revere the dragon because both are born leaders, highly focused, and can endure hardships in life.

Chapter Three

Taoism and Feminist criticism in The Lord of the Rings

2. Introduction:

Feminist literary criticism of literary works led to the distortion of some great writers' images and sometimes their interpretation of some works is over exaggerating. The reasons for these critics must be discovered to reach logical concepts because their critics will lead to a limited writings and this is against freedom of expression. So, this chapter aims to investigate what led to the feminist criticism of Tolkien's works and to analyze the role of female characters in the concept of masculinity and femininity. The attention of some literary critics and those accused of applying theories to literary works will be interested more in this field. In this study, descriptive and analytical method is used to study the female and male characters in *The Lord of the Rings* and some other works study the Taoist philosophy to see if it is compatible and balanced. It intends to find out how the results of the gender balance analysis in Chinese Taoism may prove some feminist criticisms false and to achieve this result questions will be answered in this chapter. The purpose of this study is to determine whether the masculine and feminine are balanced in Tolkien's Trilogy "*The Lord of the Rings*". Data were gathered from many reliable sources and the purpose was the master degree dissertation at Laghouat's University.

3.1. Feminist Criticism in the Lord of the Rings:

In Joseph Pearce's article, "Why Feminists Hate Lord of the Rings," there are four main reasons mentioned and the first reason is

that Tolkien is writing for man audience only and for his literary friends and club. Why would a writer write a story for a small group of society? Why would he lose his money and waste his time on a fairy tale read by his friends and the people who see him every day? Why not just gather them in a place and narrate orally? Worldwide writers should write stories, for people, humans from all varieties races, and ages. What if the world he is talking about is real and spiritually exists? Tolkien in his Essay “On Fairy Stories” stated: “a secondary world which your mind can escape reality to a better place and to set the imagination free from the chains of this world. Inside it, what he relates is ‘true’: it accords with the laws that world. You therefore believe it, while you are...inside. The moment disbelief arises, the...art has failed”. Also, he said, “It is not the strength of the body, but the strength of the spirit.” (J.R.R. Tolkien)

No one can judge a book by its cover and women's rights do not start from criticizing a book written in 1954, but it is by planting an idea of respecting women in society. In Tolkien’s youth and college days during the WWI, women were not allowed to attend university and history proved how the British society was at that time. Tolkien is a complex man with a Catholic confession and with a huge knowledge of history, theology and mythology (norse, greek,...etc) (Simon Tolkien, 2017). Tolkien was sane and this is why the insane find it hard to understand his works.

The second reason mentioned is the few female characters in the novel conform to traditional feminine stereotypes (supposedly the fairy bride, the good witch, and the shield maiden,) (Joseph Pearce). The fairy bride is Arwen, the fairy princess who gave up her immortality for a man and they pity her for choosing love. What feminists neglect is the fact that she defeated the 9 ring wraiths into the river by drowning them with a spell and after that she healed Frodo. The acknowledgment of some feminist critics of what she did for Aragorn is a weakness because she is submissive and a sacrifice for a man is a weakness (book: the fellowship of the ring). Aragorn is protective, loyal and worthy of her love and as result to his good masculine traits he did not cheat on her with Eowyn when he had the chance to do. Also, the good witch is Galadriel the noble queen of elves notorious and well-respected as a symbol of Mary as the mother of Jesus.

“Galadriel was modeled on the Virgin Mary” (Lowski 101). Some feminists have the ability to criticize ‘The pure Mary’ then what to expect as a novelist in this century. Galadriel doesn’t follow her heart because she views life as instant testing and all she cares about is if she passes or not, she follows the path of the hermit. The definition of power in Tolkien’s dictionary is different from the feminists one because to them power is physical strength and being a stubborn. Galadriel’s power is limitless because of all the theories and hypotheses about her taking the one ring. She refused to take it

because Galadriel has the wisdom and she knows that it would corrupt her. She desperately wants to strengthen her kingdom and she wanted to contribute greater good of Middle earth and her people.

The shield maiden is a symbolism to the Vikings female as Eowyn of Rohan, she has all the traits that feminists are looking for in a female character but they criticize her. Leanna Madill addresses in her study, “Gendered Identities Explored: *The Lord of the Rings* as a Text of Alternative Ways of Being,” Eowyn is anti-feminist character just because she stopped fighting and decided to marry after killing the Lord of the Nazgul. Madill argue with this idea because the rejection of Aragorn to her love awakened fire inside her as a motivation for her to fight. Eowyn is famous for her scene when the witch king said: you fool, no man can kill me

She removed her mask and said: I am no man. (LOTR: The Return of the King)

Dr. Sara Brown in her article “the invisible other: Tolkien’s Dwarf-Women” ‘feminine lack’ using Simone de Beauvoir’s theories to prove that dwarf females are marginalization and passive. In English language the word ‘dwarf’ can be used for both genders. All the dwarves have beards including women and DÍS was the queen of dwarves and the daughter of Thráin II. She was the only female dwarf mentioned in Tolkien’s book ‘the battle of the five armies’ and Gimli said that there are few dwarf women. Female characters with beards, stubborn and go to fight next to their husbands using axes. Also, they

have the same structure as men, is not that masculine enough? Hollywood feminist film theory is criticized by many feminists because the more they want females to dominate and be powerful they fail in a way that makes them seem like a psycho or with mental issues. In addition to that, his trilogy is not romantic and free from sexual harassment, if it is not like that everyone will not be able to watch the series in front of their parents without feeling embarrassed. Sandra Miesel is another feminist who said that the traditional values are not important to feminist criticism unlike other feminists who denies the traditional and religious values. Therefore, she is one of the feminists who reject the idea of feminism entering the literary field because she believes that feminism has social and cultural limits. In her article, "The Lady's of the Ring," she clarified that the traditional feminine function is not harmful to feminism. She admits describing how it is good that Tolkien's females are "excel in traditional feminine functions," she means that they are beautiful, healers, and "they inspire, counsel, preserve, nourish, and heal -- all in the service of life" (Miesel).

Tolkien was influenced by medieval England in artistic way what led him to give idealized qualities to his female characters. The previous studies shed the light on femininity and masculinity as negative points. Also, they neglected the fact that fantasy is a free open world because it is well known that the basic element of fantasy is to create the desired world (by the audience) that doesn't exist. It is

clear that Tolkien had no ill intentions towards woman, on the contrary, he sanctified and characterized them well. Masculinity in his book is not toxic like they say because they described it as toxic cultural values away from the fact that Tolkien was inspired by his time when he was a soldier in WWI (Simon Tolkien, 2017).

On 2nd September 2022 Amazon will release a new TV series of *the Lord of the Rings* called “*Ring of Power*”. The first season show will be the most expensive season ever produced on television. The real fans of the trilogy and Peter Jackson’s three series seemed unsatisfied after the last trailer of the series. Amazon used a lot of suggestions and radical changes, so it turned out to be far from the realm in the book. The fans of *the Lord of the Rings* are traditional and from the trailer, it seems like a different story with a new setting but not Tolkien's middle earth. Peter Jackson is a great example of how to adapt a book to film because every fan agrees that the changes he made didn't change the feeling and the intent of Tolkien's world. What made the fans criticize Amazon’s *Ring of Power* nudity, LGBT, and black actors which don’t exist in Tolkien’s work and it is not racism because they are making a story based on a novel so, the characters should be shaped like the real ones. New Galadriel’s armored feminist photo gave a bad first impression about the series because Galadriel is a respected high elf queen and. they showed a photo wearing armor. The change in Tolkien’s plot led the fans to quote:

“Evil cannot create anything new, they can only corrupt and ruin what good forces have invented or made.” (J.R.R Tolkien)

From this incident, the fans of *the Lord of the Rings* are traditional and simple like Tolkien and they want a serial reflection that refreshes their imagination. They do not want any changes that would satisfy the divided communities or groups of society like feminists and LGBTQ. Fans of *The Lord of the Rings* prefer simplicity and they love Tolkien's simple language that young and old understand. Also, they accepted his world and characters as they are and they never ask for any slight change. Tolkien's female characters do not need any improvement or changes because they are perfect as they are in the eyes of the fans. As an example, Galadriel was a particular example of the feminine power above men who respected her and she did not need armor and a weapon to fight in her battles when she was young (*Silmarillion*, Chapter 9). The Prophet Muhammad said: “Seek knowledge from the Cradle to the Grave.” Galadriel learned the great wisdom from Millian the Maya in Valinor because to her wisdom and knowledge are power.

Feminists wanted more female warriors like Eowyn despite their contradiction about her. ‘Uqbah ibn ‘Amir reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “Do not hate your daughters, for they are your precious companions.” So, how will the heart of a man whoever he is could let a woman fight. Adding to that, wounds and pain she will incur even if her masculine side is dominant.

Lewis said: “Battles are ugly when women fight.” Men need healers in war, and this has always been the specialty of women, so Lewis believes that it is okay for some women to fight but not all of them because when many women fight, there will be no healers left to save the wounded, so an imbalance occurs in the war, and everyone dies in battle, as a result, there will be no one left alive, so the battle becomes much uglier. Many researchers made an argument on ‘The lack of female characters in the lotr and some of the female characters’ names will be mentioned to see if the number is few as they say. Some Tolkien’s female characters are: Shelob, Rosie Cotton, Morwen, Elanor Gamgee, Luthien, Haleth, Idril, Belladonna Took, Goldberry, Melian, Elwing, Varda.

The Lady Galadriel or the Lady of the Light is the majestic queen of Elves in the middle earth that has been criticized by many feminists in the recent years. Jin Li thinks that Galadriel is speaking after her husband and she is trying to steal the light of her husband Celeborn to show off and seem higher to others. It is not a strong reason indeed, because Galadriel is known to the world with her beautiful qualities of nobility, wisdom, and magical independence without forgetting her power. She turned to a scary woman and used the power of her ring to defeat and banish Sauron the most powerful wizard of the istari. Tolkien’s concept of women is build on the matter of respect because he wanted more than a female character but a Holy Spirit character from another realm instead of ordinary characters facing daily life

problems (Gregory Hartley, 2012. p95). The spiritual attraction that prompted the writer to describe the queen Galadriel this way is his attempt to paint the image of the ideal lady who is close to his heart and spirit, and he succeeded in that, despite her fearful and dark side, but she is loved and unique. She sent Gandalf grey wizard a flock of giant eagles and saved him much time and especially when he struggled to run with his 13 friends against Azog the general of the dark goblins and his flock of soldiers and wolves.

There are many other reasons that lead to criticizing Tolkien for being a spiritualist and for creating the elves or a type of Jin in Islam (the luminous). Elves were the first of the races of the Children of Ilúvatar and the most civilized creatures in the middle earth. They can see visions of the future by meditating or in mirrors or a silver basin of water as it is mentioned about Galadriel in the fellowship of the ring. They have many abilities like Telepathy, mind reading, and they are gifted with immortality because some of them lived for centuries. They are full of light till some people fell into mistake thinking that they are arch-angels and they do not need to use a sword when fighting. In the article it was mentioned that female warriors were not appreciated in the medieval times. Historically speaking, many appreciated females fought with the soldiers in the medieval ages for example Fu Hao in China's Shang dynasty (d. c. 1200BC) and Queen Teuta of the Ardiaei tribe in Illyria (fl. 229 BC).

Aragorn is the most criticized character in the book because of his masculinity, he is a brave knight, respecting History and the Queen Galadriel, and loyal to his lover Arwen. Feminists criticized him because Aragorn did not like Eowyn's masculine side and she should be equal to him. She wanted to fight in his side for the sake of protecting her motherland and in the same time she wanted to be with him but he showed his loyalty to Arwen and as a result Eowyn married Faramir. It is argued that away from being female warrior no man wants a wife who can put a sword on his neck if he gets into a fight with her. In the third book "*The Return of The King*" Aragorn is the king of Gondor mentioned, he is the descendant and the heir of Isildur and the one who cut the finger with the ring of power off the hand of Sauron in the battle. He is loyal especially when he gave his heart to Arwen and he is willing to do anything to protect the people he loves. Yet this icon of positive masculinity and the powerful king was a wise self-controlled man. He did not fight to show off dominance, ego, or physical strength. At the moment of his coronation as the King of Gondor, He bowed before the two little hobbits and set them on his throne and he said, "Praise them with great praise!"(The Return of the King) Feminists, choose to describe the masculine illness as "toxic masculinity" and continue to silhouette what can be contemplated as positive masculine traits like Aragorn such as providing, protecting, being brave, loyal to the love of his life (Arwen), being ambitious while toxic masculinity traits are violence, controlling others and using power over women.

The civilization that surrounded Tolkien was masculine but at the same time, it was supportive because women were respected and praised religiously. The works written at that time had less harm and shame for women, there was no abuse or any negative description of femininity. According to Jo-Anne Rowney's article: "Tolkien true story: How JRR Tolkien's romance with Edith Bratt inspired Middle Earth tale." Tolkien's life with his lovely wife (Edith Mary Tolkien), exonerate him from these criticisms. She died at the age of 82 and Tolkien died 21 months later in 2 September 1972 so they buried him with her. She was the inspiration for his main female characters (Lúthien, Tinúviel and Arwen Undómiel) and he believed that woman can go as far as man because of his wife.

"A year after her death Tolkien, known to his family as Ronald, wrote to his son Christopher: "I never called Edith Luthien, but she was the source of the story that in time became the chief part of the Silmarillion." (Jo-Anne Rowney's, 2019). He loved his wife so much that he wrote his fantasy novel "*Beren and Lúthien*" after her death to express their immortal truthful love story. "As Beren looked into her eyes within the shadows of her hair, the trembling starlight of the skies He saw the mirrored shimmering." (song of Beren and Lúthien). He is Beren and she is Lúthien, two half-elves in love with each other and in the story Lúthien died and from sadness and sorrow she sang a song of woe before the throne of Mandos Lord of the Dead the suffering of elves and man. Many 21th century writers and musicians

were inspired by Tolkien's works like Karen Haber and Sally Oldfield. Why does no one have a living mother in *the Lord of the Rings*? J.R.R Tolkien was an orphan, by the age of nine he lost his father then he lost his mother at 12 years old. His childhood and experience affected him in a clear way in some of the suffering that some of the characters in the book had experienced. Every Tolkien's fan knows that he lived in the Victorian era, where women were feminine and Lolita. For example, those who watched the series Mrs. Bridgerton will notice that there are two types of women, the submissive girl, who fall in love and marry (Daphne Bridgerton), and the other type is feminist, hard to get, and independent, but with the ability to marriage and love a man (Eloise Bridgerton, Kate Sharma).

Hostile behavior against a book written in the 19th century and criticizing a writer who died in 1973 does not mean that this will change the history of women. In addition, it is absurd that feminists defend the rights of women and stand on issues of harassment, and at the same time they criticize Tolkien because he did not write any intimate scenes, nor did he make Aragorn betray Arwen for Eowyn, and judging him because made the ideal image of chaste and pure women.

W. H. Auden is a British-American poet who pointed out that good and evil in Tolkien's trilogy were sophisticated and more realistic. Good did not have an easy time against evil because evil is much

more powerful. All the good races should unite against it to win like what happened against Sauron. In 1950, the world's politics and the WWII have come to an end after Hitler (The Nazis) and Stalin damaged the world. These are fairy tales discussing political and historical issues combining battles and legends and it is not only about gender issues and masculinity. Soldiers often travel over great distances and when they come back home their traveling turn into a story telling through generations. The size of the person is not important because he can face the evil of the huge world and survive its evil. The Hobbits faced the scary world filled with demons and terrors that seemed to discuss modern time issues, facing great crises and holding a heavy burden to fulfill a promise (W. H. Auden, 1967, p2.3.4).

3.2. Taoist Features in The Lord of the Rings:

Tolkien balanced the feminine and masculine traits of his characters by giving them the same qualities. For example, wisdom and experiences were given to Galadriel and Gandalf as the old people who experienced many things in life. Another example is bravery, honor, and motivation were given to Eowyn the shield maiden of Rohan and Aragorn, without any doubt in the Battle of the Pelennor, Eowyn killed Nazgul "the witch king". Tolkien made a balance of opposite traits which is something have never been done or written about and it is not easy for modern writers to combine between masculinity and femininity, strength and beauty, femininity and

bravery. Arwen and Legolas have been balanced in the way of Elves by symbolizing the beauty of the elven realm (letters, 172). Also, they are open-minded and friendly with non-elves mainly these were the most famous and loved characters in the book. Thus, the characteristics of the characters in the book are balanced according to the Taoist Law of Balance and a full picture of Tolkien's male characters will only introduce the real man of his time. Masculinity traits in Aragorn are well-balanced because he is protective when it comes to the ones he loves in which it gives a good masculine vibe of safety and care. In Peter Jackson's three films the emotional side of positive masculinity that is suppressed in this time was shown without any shame or criticism. The scene of Boromir's death proved this point when he is shot with an arrow, Aragorn runs to him and says "I do not know what strength is but I swear to you, I will not let the White City fall," Boromir sighs comfortably then he grabbed his sword and put it on his shoulder and responds "I would have followed you, my brother. My captain." (The Two Towers Film scene). Boromir's death from the novel: 'Farewell, Aragorn! Go to Minas Tirith and save my people. I have failed. 'No!' said Aragorn, taking his hand and kissing his brow. 'You have conquered. Few have gained such a victory. Be at peace. Minas Tirith shall not fall.' Boromir smiled. 'Which way did they go? Was Frodo there?' said Aragorn. But Boromir did not speak again. Alas!' said Aragorn. 'Thus passes the heir of Denethor, Lord of the Tower of the Guard. This is a bitter end. Now the Company is all in ruin. It is I that have failed. Vain was Gandalf's trust in me. What shall

I do now? Boromir has laid it on me to go to Minas Tirith, and my heart desires it; but where are the Ring and the Bearer? How shall I find them and save the Quest from disaster? 'He knelt for a while, bent with weeping, still clasping Boromir's hand.' Also, they kiss each others' foreheads and hug and cry in front of each other, it is like the real friendship of the old days (Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers).

Furthermore, the perfect Dao personality is the Lone Wolf or the sigma (male and female), a sigma is a deep thinker, smart, hard to get, loyal, he/she has his/her own style, silent and mysterious. Man does not necessarily have to be Alpha and a woman is not obliged to be Beta in order to create balance. Harmony starts from the inside and from making peace with the inner self then it flows like water from the inside to the outside to shape the personality of the person (Prakhar Verma). Galadriel is a good example of *Yin* and a sigma female because she is self-reliant, independent, mysterious, and powerful (Anna Scheucher, 2022). In *The Two Towers*, Sam Wise described how impressed he is at Galadriel's power saying:

“But perhaps you could call her perilous because she's so strong in herself. You, you could dash yourself to pieces on her, like a ship on a rock; or drowned yourself, like a hobbit in a river. But neither rock nor river would be to blame” (JRR Tolkien, p.357).

It is as if he wants to say that despite her apparent strength, it is considered nothing because it is infinite. Sam's respect for her is

evidence of prestige and greatness and this is the black dot traits in *Yin*.

In Taoism there is a feminine white dot in the black masculine which it is exhibited to some male characters who have positive masculinity in Tolkien's the lord of the rings. Some of Tolkien's men spend their times travelling to discover new places and accomplish victories and success to be narrated later. However, they do not only have masculine traits but do have a feminine side and they praise friendship and they are not afraid to share physical contact, they show their emotions, hug and kiss each others foreheads (Beatriz Domínguez Ruiz, Universidad de Granada and kimmel, 45). *The fellowship of the ring* is the first movie released and the first of the three of the books written by Tolkien in 1954. It consists of the hobbit Frodo who should take the ring to Mordor and his fellow hobbits Merry, Sam, and Pippin; two Men, Aragorn and Boromir; Legolas the Elven representative; Gimli the Dwarf warrior; and Gandalf the grey wizard. Some male characters will be examined to observe the feminine traits. Sam is one of the friends of Frodo who has a deep love and care for him, his words gives a feeling of parenthood or a big brother. His friends from the shire share their emotions whenever they feel his suffer, sadness, and pain. Frodo is passive, emotional, and always saved by one of his friends because he does not know how to use a sword. However, Merry and pippin are more like children than

feminine and Merry looked after his brother like a mother especially in hard situation.

'Lean on me, Merry lad!' said Pippin. 'Come now! Foot by foot. It's not far.'

'Are you going to bury me?' said Merry.

'No, indeed!' said Pippin, trying to sound cheerful, though his heart was wrung with fear and pity. 'No, we are going to the Houses of Healing.' (The Return of the king, chapter 8).

Sam did not leave the side of Frodo until the end when they returned home together after destroying the ring and defeating Sauron. Taoism considers friendship as a praised relationship between humans and John Minford claimed that Friendship is an age-old theme of Taoism, especially “predestined” friendship, the wordless sharing of Heart-and-Mind that suggests friendship from a previous lifetime, a shared experience of the Tao. (Fontmarty, lieu-dit Mato Caudo, Languedoc, July 2018)

Galadriel and Gandalf have Taoist wisdom, Lao Tzu had visions of how to live peacefully, with a close connection to nature, the universe, and all of humanity. One of the main things he taught was to be more flexible, and to flow with life, not against it (Nancy Schwab, 2016).

Verse 76:

A man is born gentle and weak.

At his death, he is hard and stiff.

Green plants are tender and filled with sap.

At their death, they are withered and dry.

Therefore the stiff and unbending is the disciple of death.

The gentle and yielding is the disciple of life.

Thus an army without flexibility never wins a battle.

A tree that is unbending is easily broken.

The hard and strong will fall.

The soft and weak will overcome.

The flow with life theory means that nature inspires the human being and he can take his guidance from it like those who do Tai Chi, they know the wisdom of “Trees”. Trees are soft, flexible in life but they become fragile and dry in death. Flexibility is a gift for Spirituality, thinking, and emotions. Humans lose themselves when they lose something they put energy and effort on like money, relationship or anything precious to them. “Forget the rules, and flow in which way life takes you” (Tao Te Ching). Galadriel and Gandalf have a deep mental connection, they talk telepathically when they know that it is necessary and misunderstood. She kept her promise when she came to help him against Sauron (The Desolation of Smaug). They know their limits and both share the old knowledge of magic and history. Gandalf once said: “It is not our part to master all

the tides of the world, but to do what is in use for the succor of those years wherein we are set, uprooting the evil in the fields that we know, so that those who live after may have clean earth to till. What weather they shall have is not ours to rule.” (Gandalf) Galadriel also said: ““Even the smallest person can change the course of history.” (Lady Galadriel)

Tolkien’s traditional view of love and romance is another Taoist point in *the Lord of the Rings* and specifically in the relationship of Arwen and Aragorn. Arwen who sacrificed her immortality for love is main character and a strong symbolism of Yin of the Dao in her purity, innocence, and courage. She respected the vision of her father Elrond who warned that if she marries Aragorn and goes somewhere else there will be death. He wanted her to go to Lothlórien and she traveled there as he instructed her. She only turned back because she had a vision of her and Aragorn having a child and she did not go straight to Aragorn but she went to her father first, to tell him about her vision and to tell him that there is life too, and not death. She is distantly related to Aragorn as a star-crossed love match in the elven traditions and Taoism because she gave Aragorn love and he gave her strength and this is how the perfect love should be (*The Fellowship of the Ring*).

Legolas and Tauriel in “*The Hobbit*” when gollum (originally named Sméagol or Trahald) escaped the prison of Mirkwood. In *the Lord of the Rings*, the Fellowship of the Ring, Legolas attended the

council of king Elrond and informed him that his father, King Thranduil sent groups of elves on a mission to look for him. Fans know that Legolas loves Tauriel but put the mission of his father first because the man must leave his love contemporary for bigger responsibilities including his love. After all, staying does not make the world save his self with the magic of love because sometimes sacrifice is needed and decisions needs to be taken (Elena Tiriél, 19 Jun 07).

In *The Silmarillion*, Melian was a Maia and the wife of Elu Thingol or Elwe lord of the Teleri, they become king and queen of the northern kingdom Doriah (*Silmarillion*, Chapter4). They have a daughter names Luthien who married Beren after the death of her father. The *yin* is Melian beautiful sensitive lady with a magical voice, “Then an enchantment fell on him, and he stood still, and afar off beyond the voice of the lomelindi he heard her voice, and it filled all his heart with wonder and desire.” Thingol as *yang* was attracted to Melian the *yin* because of her femininity and her soft voice.

“He forgot all his people and all the purpose of his mind...and there Melian stood, and out of the darkness he looked at her, and the light of Aman in her face.” She spoke no word; but being filled with love Elwë (Thingol) came to her and took her hand, and straightway a spell was laid on him... ” (*Silmarillion*, Chapter 4)

Melian’s songs are enchanted and it seems like a love from first sight, he fell in love with her voice before seeing her face. The magic of the voice is possessed by women from the past, and scientifically

woman's gentle voice attracts men. As it is explained before *the Yin* (Melian) and *the yang* (Thingol) are oppositely compatible because the Chi energy is balanced.

3.3. Conclusion:

Based on the findings, *The Lord of the Rings* and Tolkien's other works adopt a Taoist view that characters including females, Galadriel, Arwen, Eowyn, and even males like Aragorn and Frodo are balanced. Many Taoist features have been successfully extracted in this great novel after analyzing the female and male roles. The founded features are: wisdom, friendship, health and immortality, beauty and strength, the perfect Dao personality. Tolkien's traditional view of love and romance is another Taoist point in *the Lord of the Rings* and specifically in the relationship of Arwen and Aragorn. There were many great examples of ideal relationship between both genders like, Gandalf and Galadriel. The joint strength of women and men of middle earth encouraged them to overcome the obstacles of life and led them to victory in war in the battle of the five armies and the return of the king.

General Conclusion

Taoism proved that Female characters in *The Lord of the Rings* are balanced in the aspect of opposite traits like yin yang. For example, Galadriel or the lady of the light is beautiful and strong, holy spirit with good people and dark against evil people (Tolkien). This study does not claim or defend Tolkien but opens the eyes of women to see the protective and respectful females in his works. This research presents the results obtained from the analysis of Taoist philosophy and feminist literary criticism of masculine and feminine characters in *The Lord of the Rings*. The elements of *Yin-Yang* preceded in the simplicity of both genders, Galadriel and Gandalf are more applicable to this feature. The women and men of middle earth are much more than just feminine and masculine characters in a story written in the 20th century. They have the ideal traits of care, love and friendship, passion, and unity every human desire in life, the characteristics that nowadays societies feel ashamed to show. There is no shame in expressing feelings and flaws in Taoism because yin and yang have flaws and thanks to them there is acceptance and acquiescence. Both females and males share healing, gardening, taking care of kids and doing housework together (Bilbo Baggins lives alone and takes care of himself). Both genders are able to show courage, strength, and wisdom in the face of any enemy and any problem without struggles or conflicts, for example: Elrond, Legolas, Frodo Baggins, Sam wise, and Rosie Cotton. Females should be feminine whether they are feminists or ordinary women because femininity is power. In Taoism, high value woman have a stable flowing feminine energy and

psychologically speaking, low feminine energy causes many troubles in woman's life. Some females with low feminine energy have low self-esteem, anger issues, depression, and they struggle to communicate with others. Some Taoist features that exist in *The Lord of the Rings* are health, wisdom and immortality and it is adapted to the elves because they can meditate for hundreds of years and see visions about the future. Masculinity in Tolkien's works is positive according to the analysis of the texts. The feminist theories from a point of view are necessary but in some specific cases such as the abuse and marginalization of women. After analyzing *The Lord of the Rings* from the point of view of feminism, it is argued that feminists' literary criticism went wrong in gender values because this fantasy work does not contain any oppression. American civilization's downfall is when every civilization is free to express itself. The downfall of the human ideal will get them to fall or flight whether they go back to the barbarian age and fight or stop fighting and go back to the golden age and everyone manifest his civilization.

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