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SOCIETY IN J.R.R. TOLKIEN'S TRILOGY  
*THE LORD OF THE RINGS*

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**Abstract**

Through literature, people learn about various people and societies at contrasting times. Writers have continually explored the importance of books in revealing a man's race and the entire world of humankind. Furthermore, it shows the thoughts and feelings of writers of their times. This study utilized descriptive research using Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* as corpus of the study. The literary elements, the kind of society, and generalizations about the society portrayed in the trilogy were analysed using Sociocultural and Marxist theories. The society portrayed in the trilogy is communal, but it gradually shifts to associational because of the effects of the main character's journey. It also portrays a regionalist society with its unique practices, rules, and languages. Furthermore, this trilogy includes various settings that aid in scrutinizing the kind of society it portrays like the Shire, which can be described as a communal society that shows personal and intimate interactions. Industrialization is correspondingly seen in some associational societies caused by alienation among members of the society that later resulted in a slow cultural extinction. Regionalism is also presented with the inclusion of different races, cultures, languages, and practices. With these, some generalizations concluded consist of the nature of humans to want power and the tendency to be greedy, true love, and loyalty among friends, the unification of different races, and the triumph of goodness against evilness, and the effects of war in society. Finally, the trilogy shows that anyone can grow and learn from their experiences to realize their full potential through interaction in society.

**Keywords:**

Tolkien, The Lord of the Rings, Society, Literary Elements

## Introduction

Behind every book is the human being, behind every human being, is the race, and behind every race is the whole world of humankind (Serrano, 2008).

The most significant objective of examining literature is to know the human being and his society. According to De Bonald, as cited by Valvi (2023), society can be expressed through studying literature. Through the books, people learn about various kinds of people in different types of societies and at different times. Writers may correspondingly affirm or criticize the values of the society in which they live, but they write for an audience that can be collectively called the society. Through literature, a writer becomes another person and all other functions that a man can do. Additionally, he creates his characters, his world, and his society. Zala (2013) elaborates on the role of writers in attempting to gain the power to change by speaking about their times. These writers oftentimes reveal their emotions using images and ironies they have observed in their communities. This means that they use literature as a mirror to influence people to change for the betterment of society.

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien is a brilliant philologist who wrote the trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien made his society which he called *Middle Earth*. It was composed of different races and creatures such as hobbits, dwarves, elves, wizards, and human beings. Furthermore, the author showed us that there is a possibility that human beings and different creatures could live as one and with the same rights and that there could be equality despite the differences. All living persons and animals want equality, and this trilogy shows the kind of equality that each desires.

## Literature Review

In examining the society of *The Lord of the Rings*, sufficient discussion of theories is necessary. This literature review assesses various discussions on society, Marxism, and Sociocultural theories which can be implicitly used in the analysis of the corpus.

Ember (1981) recapitulated that society includes social organizations and a complex network of interconnected interdependent and overlapping social relationships. This refers to the group within which human beings can live a common life. The members are expected to influence, interact, and engage in social and meaningful relationships. This will influence them to develop personalities that represent the organization of biological, psychological, social, cultural, and situational factors that underlie a person's behavior. Thus, a member develops personality through social interactions with other members of the society. Moreover, Chinoy (1967) stated that the concept of social relationships is grounded upon the fact that human behavior is oriented in innumerable ways to other persons. Not only do men live together and share common opinions, values, beliefs, and customs, but they also continually interact, responding to one another and shaping their behavior about the behavior and expectations of others. With this, the trilogy *The Lord of the Rings* was analysed using the different theories about society and how the characters interplay together to generalize the kind of society portrayed in the literary work.

Another important aspect of this research is the use of Marxism theory. It is a theory and practice developed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels which advocated public ownership of the means of production and the dictatorship of the proletariat until the establishment of a

classless society. It originally consisted of three related ideas: a philosophical anthropology, a theory of history, and an economic and political program. Marx believed that all knowledge involves a critique of ideas. What uniquely characterizes the thought of Marx is that, instead of making abstract affirmations about a whole group of problems such as human nature, knowledge, and matter, he scrutinizes each problem in the dynamic relation to the others and, above all, tries to connect them to historical, political, social, and economics. In Marx's view, the dialectical nature of society is expressed in class struggle. With the development of capitalism, the class struggle takes an acute form. Two basic classes, around which other less important classes are grouped, oppose each other in the capitalist system: the owners of the means of production, or the bourgeoisie, and the workers, or the proletariat (Selden, Widdowson, & Brooker, 2005).

It is also important to note the role of the Industrial Revolution in using Marxism. It can be said to have made the European working class. In the wake of the revolution, new social relationships appeared. As Ben Franklin once said, time is money. Men consider each other as commodities that can be sold on an open market. Additionally, Littlefield (1962) mentioned that large-scale child labour is also one of the effects of industrialization because little strength or training was refined to tend the machines, women and particularly children ranging in age from six years up were employed in large numbers and mercilessly exploited. Lastly, the mechanization of warfare was also brought about by the Industrial Revolution. A far-reaching consequence was the development of highly efficient mechanized weapons that rendered immensely more destructive and dangerous to civilized progress.

The sociocultural approach, on the other hand, focuses on the relationship between society and literature. The writer who lives in a particular society may portray his society to create his society. Furthermore, sociological critics show us how literature can function as a mirror to reflect social realities and as a lamp to inspire social ideals. Sheldon (1968) additionally states that through literature, we can see our surroundings in a way of enchantment. Many have also used literature as propaganda to expose the reality in every society.

### Research Methods

To further examine the society portrayed in J.R.R. Tolkien's trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings*, textual analysis was employed. Arya (2020) defined textual analysis as a type of qualitative analysis focusing on the ideological and cultural assumptions of a given text. Furthermore, it aimed to gather information on how people understand the world they live in. This research focused on identifying the kind of society *The Lord of the Rings* portrays, and the literary elements focusing on the setting. Moreover, Marxist Criticism was applied to further elaborate the kind of society the trilogy presents. Finally, some generalizations were derived after the identification of the kind of society. To further elaborate, the following research questions were answered: 1.) What settings are used to show this society; 2.) What kind of society does *The Lord of the Rings* portray; 3.) What generalizations about society can be gleaned from the trilogy?

## Results and Discussion

### *Importance of Setting in the Identification of the Society in The Lord of the Rings*

Literary elements are especially important in determining what kind of society the trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings*, portrays. This study, however, is focused on the setting since this will aid in the identification of society. The setting, according to Rosyidin (2008), is the element that reveals the place and the time of the events taking place in the literary works. The trilogy shows the journey of Frodo going to Mount Doom where the Dark Lord Sauron resides. Along this journey are the places the fellowship has gone to, and which are comprised of different inhabitants. The author used regionalism to create his earth. In *Middle Earth*, different races lived in various places and one of the main settings is the *Shire* where Hobbits live. It is described as a simple and innocent place where the only sources of entertainment are gossip, parties, and gifts thrown by Bilbo Baggins. However, the once innocent and peaceful haven was ruined by the industrialization brought by Saruman. Factories were created and greatly affected the Hobbits, especially the emotional and physical aspects of the Hobbits and the Hobbiton. The introduction of the *Shire* establishes the kind of society the Hobbits have. As Ember (1981) has stated, it represents a geographical aggregate having boundaries, similar or consisting of several persons in meaningful interaction and engaged in social relationships. Additionally, Ember (1981) says that a society is placed in a certain geographical state where there is interaction involved. In the trilogy, there is a certain place and interaction between the members of society. Since it is a provincial-like setting, personal interaction is more visible. The Hobbits even have a common place for gossip, but unfortunately, this supposed haven was destroyed.

Another setting highlighted in the trilogy is the *Forest*. This is inhabited by the Ents. Treebeard introduces to the readers the pain the Ents suffered because of what Saruman did to them. The Ents despised him because of what he did to the *Old Forest* where he cut trees and made them as weapons. The Forest played a vital role in the trilogy since it represents nature and other natural things. In the trilogy, Treebeard expressed his disgust towards Saruman who ruined the forest. This is due to industrialization and the worst part was that it was used to create more weapons for war. According to Littlefield (1962), a far-reaching consequence of the Industrial Revolution was the development of highly efficient mechanized weapons that rendered immensely more destructive and dangerous to civilized progress. Though it has brought some advantages, it has also brought many disadvantages. Aside from the mechanization of warfare, it also resulted in the chemical waste produced by the factories that was being thrown into the sea. Hence, the *Forest* reminds us of nature and the need to value it.

*Elrond's house* is another setting in the trilogy. This is inhabited by the Elves. This is where the fellowship stayed and met Gandalf and Bilbo again. Different races also hold their meetings here. This symbolizes a place for unity where they talk about the need for peace. To attain peace, there must be unity first among the members of the society. This is shown in the trilogy when they convened and came up with a fellowship consisting of members who represented each race. This demonstrates the friendship and trust between the inhabitants of Middle Earth.

*Amon Hen* is also known as the Hill of Sight where Frodo decided to continue the journey alone after Boromir tried to take the ring from him. Frodo thought that if the fellowship went with him, they might be killed. Hence, this was where the fellowship ended. From the name itself,

Hill of Sight symbolizes the enlightenment of Frodo which also represents his love for his companions.

*Gondor* is the realm of the men in Middle Earth where the other members of the fellowship ended up after being separated from the fellowship. This represents men's vulnerability and their need for other races to fight their enemies because men did not possess supernatural powers.

*Mount Doom* is where the *One Ring* needed to be destroyed since this is where it was created. It is a symbol of the beginning and end. It symbolizes the beginning since this is the reason why the war started. The ring is created here which caused misery among the inhabitants of Middle Earth. From the name itself, once the ring is destroyed, greediness for power would also end. In a society, the root of a conflict causes the people around to be in chaos.

### ***Society in The Lord of the Rings***

There are diverse types of societies categorized by different sociologists. Herbert Spencer labelled two types of societies as militant and industrial; Sir Henry Maine distinguished between a society based on status and one based on contract; Ferdinand Tonnies differentiated *Gemeinschaft* (community) from *Gesellschaft* (society); Emile Durkheim contrasted societies held together by mechanical solidarity and those held together by organic solidarity; Howard Becker has identified two types as sacred and secular; and Robert Redfield employs the categories of folk and urban society. Each of these pairs of categories calls attention in diverse ways and with varying emphasis to approximately the same social and cultural differences. This can be brought together as communal and associational societies. A communal society is characteristically small, with a simple division of labour and consequently only a limited differentiation of roles. The social roles are inclusive rather than segmental, social relationships are personal and intimate, and there are comparatively few subgroups other than family and kinship units. Because members of a communal society generally perform inclusive rather than segmental roles, they necessarily interact with one another in a wide variety of contexts. Social relationships are therefore long-lasting, inclusive, and intimate or personal. They take on intrinsic significance rather than being instrumental; they are valued for themselves rather than for other ends. The reciprocal expectations of persons involved in these primary relationships are diffuse and generalized, one must live up to standards of respect, loyalty, affection, or love.

On the other hand, associational society is characterized by a marked division of labour and a proliferation of social roles. The social relationship tends to be transitory, superficial, and impersonal. Individuals associate with one another for limited purposes, and social interaction tends to be confined to the specific interests involved. Such relations are fundamentally instrumental; they are important not in themselves but for the goals or ends that they bring closer to realization. As a result, there is less possibility of strong emotional involvement with other persons than in primary relationships (Chinoy, 1967).

Another differentiation of society comes from Macdonald (1991). These are agrarian and industrial societies. In agrarian societies, most occupations are carried on within the home, the development of large industrial machinery, however, led to the creation of factories. Individuals who had worked primarily within the family became industrial workers linked to many others only by economic necessity. Lost in the process were many traditional values,

beliefs, and customs that had guided agrarian life for centuries just like the associational society.

Chinoy (1967) further added that the distinction between communal and associational society also provides the basis for a historical interpretation of modern society. The long-run trend, some students argue, has been from communal to associational society. The growth of cities, the presumed decline in the importance of the family, the multiplication of associations and the extension of bureaucracy, the weakening of tradition, and the lessened role of religion in everyday life are all adduced as evidence of transformation. It is presented in the trilogy how the Hobbits continually interact by going to the Ivy Bush, an inn, where they convene, gossip about people, and how they love simple things like gifts, eating, and laughing. At the beginning of the trilogy, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, it shows how the Hobbits liked to gossip and even had a common place for it—the Ivy Bush, a small inn where there is the host, old Ham Gamgee. Thus, the trilogy portrays a society from communal to associational. However, more instances are purely communal since it has three parts and the act of traveling from one place to another makes it change from communal to associational. It is evident when at the beginning it focused on the society of the Hobbits, especially the ones living in the Shire. They are described as keen-eared and very conscious of themselves that they do not want to be seen. They are also very delighted with gifts and parties. They also have one work they know and that is shoemaking. Furthermore, they similarly act just like human beings, fond of simple jests always which is a rule for them. Since the Shire is small, they tend to interact personally. This is one of the characteristics of a communal society. According to Chinoy (1967), communal society is characteristically small, with a simple division of labour and consequently only a limited differentiation of roles. Aside from that, the social roles are inclusive rather than segmental, the social relationship is personal and intimate, and there are comparatively few subgroups other than family and kin. This is presented in the trilogy since the characters are more intimate and interactive with others unlike in cities. If it is compared to other people in the past, they tend to walk just to go to a place to visit as shown how they go to The Ivy Bush just to hear stories about the adventures of Bilbo.

It is also important to note that a society cannot exist without its culture. In the trilogy, some practices are presented to show the society they have. Each race has its own rules and practices. For example, the Hobbits value family ties as vital. As stated in the trilogy, they are clannish and reckoned up their relationships with great care. They even drew long and elaborate family trees with innumerable branches. This is evident in this text from the first book,

All Hobbits were, in any case, clannish and reckoned up their relationships with great care. They drew long and elaborate family trees with innumerable branches. In dealing with Hobbits, it is important to remember who is related to whom, and to what degree (Quoted from *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Tolkien, 1994).

Another practice of the hobbits was the giving of gifts. Instead of the usual practices of today, the celebrant must give gifts. Based on the text from the book, it explicitly states:

He [Bilbo] gave away presents to all and sundry---the latter were those who went out again by a back way and came in again by the gate. Hobbits give presents to other people on their birthdays. Not very expensive ones, as a rule (Quoted from *The Fellowship of the Ring*, 1994, Tolkien, 1994).

Another important aspect of a society is the existence of a government. A society is also governed not only by its rules but by the government itself and the ones governing it. The Shire's counterpart for police officers is the *Shirriffs* who do not wear uniforms and focus on beasts rather than the people who were the ones to be protected. Mentioned in the book:

The *Shirriffs* was the name that the Hobbits gave to their police or the nearest equivalent that they possessed. They had, of course, no uniforms, only a feather in their caps; and they were in practice rather haywards than policemen, more concerned with the strays of beats than of people (Quoted from *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Tolkien, 1994).

*The Return of the King* displays how the Shire was drastically ruined. The once communal society turned into an aristocratic society where the Chief's Men took all the crops, food, etc. Frodo and his companions were shocked by this since they thought of the shire as innocent and free. According to Chinoy, the associational society is characterized by a marked division of labor and a proliferation of social roles. The social relationship tends to be transitory, superficial, and impersonal. Individuals associate with one another for limited purposes and social interaction tends to be confined to the specific interests involved. It was also evident why some traditions were lost because of the lack of communication. It further caused alienation among the members of the society which was caused by the capitalism and industrial society which later emerged. As mentioned by Macionis (1991), alienation is the experience of powerlessness in social life dominated by capitalists and dehumanized by their jobs, workers find little satisfaction in their lines. Furthermore, the development of large industrial machinery led to the creation of factories. This resulted in individuals who had worked primarily within the family becoming industrial workers linked to many others only by economic necessity, and unfortunately, lost in the process were many traditional values, beliefs, and customs.

The last part of the book shows how the Shire was industrialized which caused many Hobbits to work for the factories. When Frodo was still there, no one was controlling the Hobbits, but when they came back, someone was controlling the Shire to the point that they were not recognized by the one who was guarding the gate that served as a boundary. How they interacted in the past was different since they were busy with their work in the factory which also caused the foul environment which the fellowship never thought the Shire would ever adapt.

The feeling of alienation was also implied in the trilogy. Ben Franklin said that men consider each other like commodities that can be easily sold and bought. This is presented in the trilogy when the Ents were sold to be used as weapons during the war where Saruman and Sauron were competing for power. In this act, many were affected especially the culture and traditions of the living beings in the Middle Earth. Moreover, Gollum was also exiled in a cave because of his greed. His temptation of the ring caused him to hide away from his kin because he was afraid that the ring would be taken away from him. Saruman also did the same when he betrayed his friends by being an ally to the Dark Lord which in turn made him alienated from the others as he concentrated on looking for the ring and betraying the Dark Lord when he would eventually get the ring. He also manifested a cruel trait by making *Wormtongue* his slave. He continually abused him and treated him like an object to order around. Saruman was once one of the scholars, but he became so greedy that he forgot all the values and the good intentions he had once. It was the knowledge about the ring that ate him up. This shows that the industrialization caused people to alienate themselves and lose their culture.

Thus, the trilogy presents a society that changes from communal to associational. It has different settings which also changes the kind of society it deals with. The notable change in society is because of the changing of the environment and the creation of new things brought by the industrial societies. As Chinoy reiterated, the growth of cities, the presumed decline in the importance of the family, the multiplication of associations the weakening of tradition, and the lessened role of religion in everyday life are all adduced as evidence of this transformation.

### ***Generalizations about Society in The Lord of the Rings***

From the trilogy, there are many generalizations about the society that can be gleaned. Some of these are the nature of human beings to want power and the tendency to be greedy, true love and loyalty among friends, the unification of different races, the triumph of goodness against evil, and the effects of war on society and its people. The Hobbits in the Shire were not perfect. They had some flaws, but the innocence of the Shire was undeniable though they were considered by Gandalf as naïve. The place was also free from industrialization at the beginning, but it was ruined by Saruman the Grey. Fortunately, Frodo and his companions came back and fought Saruman to regain Shire. This shows the bad nature of industrialization. It destroys Mother Nature and even human beings, themselves, are ruined. Industrialized society also causes alienation among the members of the society. Another result of industrialization is the mechanization of warfare. This is why war never ends because of the never-ending creation of weapons.

Another generalization is the tendency to want power and to be greedy. This is one of the main themes of the trilogy. Since the *One Ring* possesses the magical power that could control the people of Middle Earth, some wanted to use it for their own sake. Some of the characters may not be human but the author used other races to show the reality that human beings are by nature greedy. It just depends on how each fight this want by his own will. Like Frodo who fought his desires for the ring and his innocence which is common to the members of his society. Greed made Gollum kill his dear friend, *Deagol*, and betray Frodo and Sam. This shows how a person loses sanity that he can even kill his friend for want of something precious. In this, the trilogy presented that greed will never be an advantage to anybody. It kills not only physically but mentally and socially. Chinoy said that it is important in a society that individuals interact, and, in addition, it was shown in the trilogy how Gollum was left in isolation because of his greed. Materialism was one of the reasons why he became alienated from society. Furthermore, Arnold as cited by Bate (1952) said that the commonest of commonplaces tells us how men are always apt to regard wealth as a precious end itself. Greed furthermore made the Black Riders slaves of Lord Sauron. They were once kings, but they preferred to be devoured by the *One Ring*, so they became slaves and searched for it and left their being great kings. The author presented in the trilogy that even the great, when devoured by great greed, would eventually succumb. Greed excuses no one as the human being is by nature greedy. No one will be eaten up by greed if one knows limitations. This is agreed upon by Taflinger (1996) when he iterated that there is a powerful biological basis for greed and an even more powerful social basis because humans are considered cultural and social animals, not just individuals.

During the world war, greed is largely exhibited. If the leaders can control and know their limits, war will never happen. Peace may reign instead of spilled blood and corpses. Greed made Saruman leave to be an intelligent wizard in search of the *One Ring*. This shows that intelligence is not a factor to measure how one can deal with greed because even the most

intelligent person succumbs to being greedy. Bate (1952) stated that practicing culture with the use of its spiritual standard of perfection to repute wealth as machinery, but not only to consider it as machinery. In war, most of the ones who patronize it are those who are well-learned, which is ironic because they should be the ones to use their knowledge to spread peace and serenity. Hence, the trilogy portrays that greed knows no boundary. For poor, rich, and intelligent human beings, greed may arise if one does not know how to control and know limitations. It also shows that these kinds of people exist. Travers (2014) likewise said in his article blog that because of greed, Europe and the rest of the world started the war 100 years ago. Furthermore, greediness takes over the lives of the people of today making it one factor of a bigger problem that the world suffers from.

The sacredness of true love and loyalty is likewise significant. Healy (2017) posited that loyalty is necessary in family relationships, including friendships and it should further be the basis for social or civic commitments toward others. In the trilogy, Sam's true love and loyalty to Frodo made him decide to continue the journey on his own. If he did not possess these two things, he might have used the *One Ring* for his reasons but because love triumphed over him, he continued the journey. In war, it is particularly important to have a loyal ally because if one does not have one, there will be no success no matter how good or how strong the strategies are. It will only cause a downfall. It cannot be avoided that there will be a traitor amid a war, for these two seem to go along with each other. The traitor may have been tempted because of greed.

Kleinig (2015) argued that loyalty can be considered a virtue; however, it also tends to be vulnerable to abuse. In the trilogy, for instance, the nine kings who succumbed to the power of Dark Lord Sauron betrayed their subjects. Gollum betrayed the trust of Frodo by attempting to take the ring. Love and loyalty further made Sam accept the responsibility of being the ring bearer. These made Sam also accept the responsibility with good intentions because in the first place, if he did not possess any, the War of the Rings would never be finished. Love for peace in Middle Earth made different creatures convene and look for a solution to the present situation of the land. The trilogy showed that love is the greatest gift of all. If one has all the love, greed will never arise. In this, the author wanted the readers to know the essence of love and loyalty.

One of the unique ideals in the trilogy is the unification of different races to fight Lord Sauron. There are Elves, Dwarves, Wizards, Hobbits, and Men. This is a unique element of the trilogy, especially for the idealists. It will not hurt if people imagine a place like Middle Earth. The trilogy wanted the people to see how unity leads to peace. Those races helped one another to attain peace, so, why can the present world not do it? Today, different races fight because of power. When the author wrote it, it was the time when the world was in chaos. This may have led Tolkien to create inhabitants who loved each other- may or may not be of the same kind. What is important is love.

Additional generalization is the triumph of goodness against evilness. At the end of the trilogy, the *One Ring* which corrupted some souls had finally been destroyed along with the evil characters. This shows how the author used the trilogy to show that amidst the evil that surrounds the world, goodness will always reign at the end of the day. This triumph will not be successful without the integration of crucial factors that a society should possess. Aside from the triumph of good against evil, the author presented the idea of the evil of some other characters, aside from their great enemy, Dark Lord Sauron there are many enemies the

fellowship encountered. This only shows that many enemies are surrounding Middle Earth. The trilogy wanted to show that one will never know what will happen because the world is full of evil.

Lastly, not everyone can cope with the aftereffects of war. In the trilogy, it was a relief when everything came back but for Frodo, he could not forget the experiences he had in the war. Every year he got sick when the anniversary of his attack came. Frodo's struggle did not stop even if the war stopped. Frodo's war was against him. It means that when a writer writes, sometimes it is a creation based on the environment he is in and the time and the happenings in that era. The ending of the novel shows the major effects of war on some people. Sometimes it is more painful after war because the memories and pain will always re-appear. It does not mean that when the war ends, the pain it brought also ends. In the real sense, war never really ends. The greatest war is against oneself. In the trilogy, Frodo has a war that never ends. For him, he cannot move on if he stays in the Shire where once he thought the haven was but after the war, all he must remember is the pain during the war. Every year that passed reminded him of the pain he suffered.

In the trilogy, it was portrayed that the Mordor was in the southeast part and the Shire was in the northwestern part. This placement in the Middle Earth seems to be like the true English society. This exhibits that a real society was used as an inspiration to create Middle Earth. The Second World War shook the foundations of British society much more than the first. The strain on manpower and the call for industrial adaptation was much greater: evacuation and the development of the war industry required much more migration disturbance of family life: bombing from the air was on a quite different scale, in both its physical and its psychological effects. All classes, rich and poor alike, of both sexes and all ages, were drawn much more completely into the struggle (Cole & Postgate, 1961).

It illustrates how the British society was greatly affected by the effects of war. War ruined everything. Status was not exempted, from rich to poor, everyone was affected. This only shows how war ruins everything a society has. The foundations of a society are easily corrupted by war. From the presentation in the trilogy, the author wanted to impart to us that in the real world, one will never be certain of the things that will happen. Every literary work is the result of a complex interaction of social and cultural objects. It is in any case, not an isolated phenomenon (Sheldon, 1968). Negussie (2022) further elaborated that one of the factors in leading a war is seeking to gain control of the resources of others. Other factors causing war are the political aspect of influencing others regarding a trivial matter and the social tensions when a group seeks dominance towards others.

The trilogy was written out of the things that were happening in the real world. The subject matter used by the author was phenomenal. It can always be seen and felt, from the past, in our present, and the future. The greed for power, evil, and the corruption of morals are always present in every society. As Bate (1952) elaborated, *"It is almost too much to expect of poor human nature, that a man capable of producing some effect in one line of literature, should, for the greater good of society, voluntarily doom himself to impotence and obscurity in another"*.

The author furthermore used Frodo to show the readers that in oneself there is a journey to take. In the trilogy, Frodo travelled physically up to Mordor but figuratively, the journey he

took was an initiation for him or a 'rite of passage'. Rite of Passage, according to Larson (2014), is a literary device coined by the anthropologist Arnold van Gennep which means to describe those rituals that mark significance in the life transitions of individuals in a society. This is best described in the trilogy, when Frodo was just an innocent Hobbit but throughout the journey, he realized the world outside that there were many things he had to learn. He knew pain, betrayal, and other emotions known to man. He was initiated from being an innocent to a knowing and experienced Hobbit. In the end, he did not stop traveling, instead, he went on an endless journey, because he could not stay in the Shire anymore since he always remembered the pain he suffered throughout the journey. Even if he returned to the society he belonged to, the journey he took affected his perceptions. This is evident in this conversation between Frodo and Sam towards the end of the last book.

Sam said, "I thought you were going to enjoy the Shire, too for years and years, after all you have done". Frodo replied: "So I thought too, once. But I have been too deeply hurt, Sam. I tried to save the Shire, and it has been saved, but not for me." ("Quote by J.R.R. Tolkien, 1994: "But I have been too deeply hurt, Sam. I tried ...")

Society is also greatly affected by the aftermath of war. Not only the individuals suffer, but society, too. According to Murthy & Lakshminarayana (2006), because of war, communities and families are often destroyed which leads to the disruption of the development of the socioeconomic foundations of the different nations concerned. Furthermore, this also includes the long-term physical and psychological effects on the people affected. In the trilogy, the socioeconomic foundations of Shire completely suffered because of the war. The once innocent Shire was infested with foul factories that emit foul chemicals into the water. The trilogy is used to show the reality of society the Middle Earth. It also shows that the society is the same as the real society though the author created a different world. According to Selden, Widdowson, & Brooker (2005), a reflection of reality or consciousness not merely of objects but of human nature and social relationships is what people naturally possess. Aside from that, people are always aware that the work is not itself reality but rather a special form of reflecting reality.

## Conclusion

This study aimed to show the kind of society portrayed in J. R. R. Tolkien's trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings*. Sociocultural and Marxist Criticisms were used to find out what kind of society the trilogy portrays. In doing so, literary elements and devices that are implicitly presented in the trilogy were determined first. Through this, the society portrayed was described and, lastly, the generalizations about the society were then enumerated.

*The Lord of the Rings* recounts the journey of the Hobbits, including Frodo Baggins who was left with the *One Ring* owned by the Dark Lord. The kind of society portrayed in the trilogy shifted from communal to associational society. The trilogy followed a journey so there were many societies presented. One of these societies was the Shire, where most of the Hobbits lived. In this society, the Hobbits were innocent and naive but generous and simple creatures. They had simple pleasures where they usually ate six times a day and enjoyed parties.

Accordingly, the society portrayed in the trilogy was from communal to associational. The trilogy started with the establishment of the society of the Shire which was presented as a provincial-like setting which made it a communal society. One of the characteristics of communal society was shown in the trilogy which was the intimacy and personal relationship

the Hobbits had in the trilogy. However, since the trilogy shifted from place to place, society also changed along the way. It changed from a communal society to an associational society where relationships were purely transitory and impersonal.

Literary elements and devices assisted in determining the kind of society the trilogy presented. The elements, such as the setting, characters, symbols, and themes, make it easier to analyze the trilogy. Setting is a particularly important literary element to describe a society. The society presented in the trilogy was dependent on the places the story took but the main setting was the Shire. It was where the Hobbits lived. It also presented the society of Hobbits but was characterized just like human beings. Society was innocent but had flaws. The Hobbits tended to be jealous but easily swayed when bribed.

Regionalism, flashbacks, and rite of passage were also some of the devices used to show society. Some generalizations about society were also presented. The trilogy also presented some individuals comprising the society as evil and some good. The effect of industrialization was also presented in the novel as it ruined not only the physical environment but also the people themselves. It caused alienation among some members of the society.

Amidst the evil atmosphere, some of the people also value love and loyalty. Frodo and Sam did not leave each other except at the end of the trilogy where Frodo went to the Grey Havens leaving Sam behind. As Healy (2017) posited loyalty is necessary in family relationships, including friendships and it should further be the basis for social or civic commitments. Lastly, in a society, everyone would grow and learn, and those experiences would teach one to realize their full potential through interaction in society.

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