

CHAPTER I : INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the research

Fantasy genre is arguably one of the favourite genre in literature. According to W.R. Irwin, based on his works *The Game of Impossible* (1976), he defines fantasy as “the literature of the impossible,” distinguishing it from science fiction (the literature of the possible) and horror (the literature of fear). He emphasizes that fantasy presents events and settings that are wholly imagined and not constrained by real-world logic. This genre is a kind of works that takes place in fictional worlds. These worlds often filled with magic, mythological creatures, and heroes on epic quests. Fantasy enables readers to escape reality and discover new and exciting places. It provides the opportunity to experience adventure and amazement, making it a popular genre among many individuals. Fantasy has evolved to include a wide range of stories, each with its own distinct universe and characters.

In the modern era, the fantasy genre has established itself in four key narrative mediums: novels, films, television series, and games. However, it's also been drawn from several other forms of entertainment. The fantasy subject is so well-known and long-standing that it has become a popular choice among Betway online casino slot creators. Many of the most popular slots feature fantasy themes, as do numerous recent innovations. Elven Gold and War of Gods are among the most popular themed games based on other fantasy media properties. Much more subtly, Led Zeppelin, the greatest rock band of all time, frequently mentioned fantasy. Ramble On uses the

phrases "Mordor" and "Gollum," while the song Misty Mountain Hop also makes a direct reference to the fictional world.

In this research, the writer will focus on the work by J. R. R Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (1954). This book explores themes of heroism, the corrupting nature of power, the importance of friendship, and the struggle between good and evil. Tolkien's complex world-building, languages, and mythology have made this trilogy a cornerstone of modern fantasy literature. The influence is deep, shaping the genre and inspiring some of the works in literature, film, and other media.

The Fellowship of the Ring (1954), begins in the Shire, a peaceful area where The Hobbits live. Frodo Baggins, a young hobbit receives a mysterious ring from his uncle, Bilbo. Soon after, he finds out from the wizard Gandalf that the ring is actually the One Ring, which the Dark Lord Sauron made in order to rule Middle-earth. The ring was formed in the fires of Mount Doom, and Frodo sets out on a dangerous quest to destroy it there. Along with Aragorn, Legolas, Gimli, Boromir, and Frodo's pals Sam, Merry, and Pippin, he is joined by a varied collection of companions known as the Fellowship. The Fellowship encounters many threats and difficulties. Eventually, the group must face collapse and breaks apart.

The man behind this masterpiece was J. R. R. Tolkien, in full John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (1892 – 1973). For most of his adult life, he taught English language and literature, specializing in Old and Middle English, at the Universities of Leeds (1920–25) and Oxford (1925–59). Tolkien amused himself by writing an elaborate

series of fantasy tales, often dark and sorrowful, set in a world of his own creation. He made this “legendarium,” which eventually became *The Silmarillion*, partly to provide a setting in which “Elvish” languages he had invented could exist. But his tales of Arda and Middle-earth also grew from a desire to tell stories, influenced by a love of myths and legends. To entertain his four children, he devised lighter fare, lively and often humorous. The longest and most important of those stories, begun about 1930, was *The Hobbit*, a coming-of-age fantasy about a comfort-loving “hobbit” (a smaller relative of Man) who joins a quest for a dragon’s treasure. In 1937 *The Hobbit* was published, with pictures by the author (an accomplished amateur artist), and was so popular that its publisher asked for a sequel. The result, 17 years later, was Tolkien’s masterpiece, *The Lord of the Rings*, a modern version of the heroic epic. A few elements from *The Hobbit* were carried over, in particular a magic ring, now revealed to be the One Ring, which must be destroyed before it can be used by the terrible Dark Lord, Sauron, to rule the world. But *The Lord of the Rings* is also an extension of Tolkien’s *Silmarillion* tales, which gave the new book a “history” in which Elves, Dwarves, Orcs, and Men were already established.

The fantasy genre is important in both literature and society because it transports readers to imaginative worlds full of magic, mythological creatures, and heroic adventures. It provides a vacation from reality while simultaneously exposing readers to universal themes such as good against evil, the complexities of power, and personal development. Fantasy is a strong instrument for examining human emotions and social concerns through metaphor and symbolism, frequently reflecting real-

world struggles in a more digestible and interesting format. Its eternal popularity comes from its ability to stimulate creativity, build empathy, and create a feeling of wonder, making it a genre that resonates to readers of all ages and backgrounds.

The writer argues that *The Fellowship of The Ring* remains relevant to nowday readers. The fantasy elements in this trilogy have influenced much of modern fantasy literature. In this research, the writer aims to explore the relevance of the fantasy genre based on *The Fellowship of The Ring* by J. R. R. Tolkien. Additionally, the study seeks to identify which elements of the book are still relevant today. To conduct this study, the writer will survey active students from the English Department of Andalas University, using web questionnaires to gather responses regarding their perceptions of the novel and its influence on modern fantasy literature.

1.2 Identification of The Problem

The fantasy genre is popular for the rich world-building, heroes on epic journey, or mythological characters. These elements is keep evolving overtime, and continue to attract readers. *The Fellowship of The Ring* by J. R. R. Tolkien is known as one of the founding works in this genre. But, little is known about how English Department students of Andalas University, as readers, understand this novel and its relevancies in today's fantasy genre. The aims of this study is to analyze the readers' perceptions by looking at how English Department students interact with *The Fellowship of The Ring*. By doing this, the writer can get a deeper insight into English Department students' perspective about *The Fellowship of The Ring* and what makes this novel still relevant according to the readers.

1.3. Review of Previous Studies

To conduct this research, the writer will use several previous studies relate to the topic and theories that the writer raised. First one is from Dennis Werbicki (2018), entitled *Top-Down Processing: A Network Analysis of The Lord of the Rings as a Means of Defining Good and Evil*. In this research, Werbicki analyzes the themes of choice, virtue, and authority in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* using network theory and antithesis structure, which suggests that characters like Aragorn and Gandalf represent unselfishness and humility by rejecting power for the greater good. He criticized the limit of structural analysis, and proposed that network theory and antithesis analysis can work together to give deeper understanding in moral dynamics between the good and the evil. The findings of this research shows that hierarchy and selfish approach that shown by Sauron made his forces vulnerable decentralized alliance of good, which culminated in his death when Frodo destroyed the One Ring. Overall, this research stated the importance of character agents and interconnections and calls for further investigation into the implications of Tolkien's moral framework in today's fantasy genre.

The second related study is from Lili Liu (2021), entitled *An Analysis on the Pursuit of Happiness in The Lord of the Rings*. This article examines the pursuit of pleasure in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* using a psychoanalytic lens, with an emphasis on the characters Bilbo, Frodo and Gollum. It discovers that, while Bilbo maintains his sanity and humanity after inheriting the One Ring, Frodo battles more strongly with its corrupting power, resulting in feelings of alienation and emotional

scars long after the Ring is destroyed. The study emphasizes the opposing influences of helpful individuals like Sam and darker figures like Gollum, demonstrating the hobbits internal tensions as they manage their connections with society and themselves. Overall, this article concludes that knowing and appreciating individual variations, together with a connection to nature, can lead to wisdom, fulfillment, and the restoration of virtues, despite the challenges posed by the Ring's evil.

The third related study is from Mathias Stephan (2016), entitled "*Do you believe in magic? The Potency of the Fantasy Genre*". In this article, Stephan discusses about the potency of fantasy genre. He explores the popularity of the fantasy genre in the recent decades. He starts with how fantasy often paired with science fiction, several awards that give marks for the popularity of science fiction and fantasy in 1955, and how Tolkien introduced "magic" in his novel that makes fantasy more powerful. "By allowing for unlimited imagination, we are freeing the mind from the search for grounding and truth, by providing the possibility of exploring alternatives in the 'safe' environment of fiction. In fantasy, the rules are laid out, and then adhered to. By 'arresting' the strangeness, it limits its impact and, perhaps counterintuitively, gives us grounding in a world in which the rules are less certain, and less universal, than they ever have been before. This is what makes fantasy powerful, and why we all want to believe in magic." (Stephan, 2016). Overall, Stephan successfully proves that fantasy has its relevancies by looking back the history of fantasy itself, how people in the Old English write Beowulf and its popularity,

and how other writer influenced by Tolkien's work. He also believed that fantasy genre is still powerful nowadays.

The fourth one is from Elena Spirovska (2019), entitled "Reader-Response Theory and Approach: Application, Values and Significance for Students in Literature Courses". This article explores the usage of reader-response theory in a literature course for aspiring English language instructors, focusing on its benefits and weaknesses. The theory highlights the reader's role in reading and connecting with literary texts, and how their comprehension is shaped by their personal experiences and viewpoints. The study analyzes students' responses and attitudes using qualitative data from written assignments, personal reflections, and class discussions. The findings attempt to provide practical advice on how to effectively include reader-response theory into tertiary-level literature courses. These suggestions aim to improve curriculum creation and provide more dynamic classroom activities, which enhance teaching tactics and student involvement in literature studies.

The last related study is from Seba Fadhel Abas (2023), entitled "*Analysis of Charles Dickens Great Expectations, Based on Reader-Response Theory*". Abas demonstrates and describes Charles Dickens' novel Great Expectations, focusing on reader narrative, themes, tactics, figures of speech, language, and characters. The research makes use of reader-response theory. It goes into the novel's heart to identify its aesthetic aspects, decorations, and the way of analysis, since this theory sheds light on readers' interaction and involvement with the work and its elements. Reader response theory allows readers to participate in the narrative and literary production.

As a result, this study emphasizes readers' impact on literary works; it demonstrates how readers interact with the text during their analytical journey. This research shows how *Great Expectations*, Charles Dickens' literary masterwork, influenced those who read and analyzed its meanings and lessons. The essay also clearly seeks an identity for the reader and gives him a genuine opportunity to investigate the material with more than one concept. This research contains lots of information regarding Victorian-era imagery, acts and their impact on characters and readers.

1.4 Research Questions

The writer will be focused on the relevancies of fantasy genre today based on the novel *The Fellowship of The Ring*. The writer will conducted this research by asking for others respondents. In this research, there are two questions that the researcher gives to be the limitation of the research.

1. How does *The Fellowship of The Ring* influence English Department Students of Andalas University in understanding the fantasy genre.
2. What makes *The Fellowship of the Ring* relevant to the fantasy genre today.

1.5 Scope of The Research

The research is limited to the reader's responses on the novel *The Fellowship of The Ring*, focusing on relevancies of fantasy genre in the books. The writer tries to find out the readers understanding of the topic. The respondent of this research is the

active English Department student who have read and understand *The Fellowship of The Ring*.

1.6 Objective of The Research

The purpose of this study is to reveal how the readers finds the relevancies of fantasy genre in the novel *The Lord of The Rings* written by J. R. R. Tolkien. The objective of the research is connected to its research questions. To achieve this objective, the writers will make the questionnaire and handed it to the respondedents. The questionairre will be focusing on the readers perceptions and understanding *The Lord of The Rings* in the context of relevancies of fantasy genre.

