

NICHOLAS WANBERG

# The Human Race Vs. the Minorities

Racism, anti-racism, and intelligent  
non-humans in the world architecture  
of speculative fiction



NICHOLAS WANBERG

## The Human Race Vs. the Minorities

Racism, anti-racism, and intelligent  
non-humans in the world architecture  
of speculative fiction

ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

To be presented, with the permission of  
the Faculty of Information Technology and Communication Sciences  
of Tampere University,

for public discussion in the auditorium B1096  
of the Pinni B building, Kanslerinrinne 1, Tampere,  
on 20 June 2023, at 12 o'clock.

## ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

Tampere University, Faculty of Information Technology and Communication Sciences  
Finland

*Responsible  
supervisor*

University Lecturer  
Maarit Piipponen  
Tampere University  
Finland

*Supervisor and  
Custos*

Professor  
Johannes Riquet  
Tampere University  
Finland

*Pre-examiners*

Associate Professor  
Meghan Gilbert  
Guttman Community College  
City University of New York  
United States of America

Associate Professor  
Ebony Elizabeth Thomas  
University of Michigan  
United States of America

*Opponent*

Associate Professor  
Meghan Gilbert  
Guttman Community College  
City University of New York  
United States of America

The originality of this thesis has been checked using the Turnitin OriginalityCheck service.

Copyright ©2023 author

Cover design: Roihu Inc.

ISBN 978-952-03-2948-8 (print)

ISBN 978-952-03-2949-5 (pdf)

ISSN 2489-9860 (print)

ISSN 2490-0028 (pdf)

<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-03-2949-5>



Carbon dioxide emissions from printing Tampere University dissertations have been compensated.

PunaMusta Oy – Yliopistopaino  
Joensuu 2023

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Starting a dissertation is a bit like starting a quest. One takes what skills one has, gathers available resources, and sets forth on the journey, come what may. Nevertheless, one rarely undertakes such quests alone, nor do quests succeed without the helpers and boons obtained along the road. More friends, family, acquaintances, and colleagues have aided my dissertation trek than I could hope to list here. I shall endeavor to outline some of the main cast, while those I must leave out should know that their contributions and support are no less appreciated. I fear others may be surprised to find themselves mentioned, as I only realized later what a profound impact their small acts or comments have had on my adventure.

First, I would like to thank my guides, my ever-patient supervisors Maarit Piipponen, Jarkko Toikkanen, and Johannes Riquet, without whom I would surely have lost my way. Their wisdom and experience have helped to shape this dissertation at every step. Special thanks are also due to the Finnish Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy Research (Finfar). Their members have provided encouragement, support, and fellowship and have been ever-ready to challenge and test my readings across numerous workshops and conventions. Jyrki Korpua deserves special mention here, as his knowledge of Tolkien has been a constant asset across numerous workshops and encounters. Also among the Finfar ranks, special thanks must go to Merja Polvinen, who, along with my master's thesis supervisor, Maria Silenius, effectively acted as my quest giver. Merja's and Maria's timely counsel provided much-needed direction during the transition from my master's studies, and without their help, I might never have begun this journey at all. Special thanks from the early years of my research also belong to Adam Roberts, Stefan Ekman, and Farah Mendlesohn. Adam Roberts kindly reviewed an early draft of my research plan, and Farah Mendlesohn provided feedback after a conference and shared a draft of a paper in progress, each helping steer the early course of my project in small ways. Meanwhile, Stefan Ekman counseled me at and around several early conferences on points of good research practice, which helped me avoid many amateurish missteps and embarrassments. As my research progressed, I have had the privilege of conversing with and soliciting feedback from scholars at dozens of

conferences and workshops across Finland, Scotland, England, and the United States. I owe them my gratitude, even if I was often remiss in not learning their names. I have also had the privilege of associating with fellow doctoral candidates from the Doctoral Programme in Languages at the Faculty of Information Technology and Communication Sciences at Tampere Universities. Their fellowship and support have been invaluable.

I owe a debt of a different sort to the University of Tampere Foundation, the Faculty of Communication Sciences, and the same in its later incarnation as the Faculty of Information Technology and Communication Sciences. Each has provided financial support for conference- and research-related travel and thus made many of the prior contacts possible. I am also indebted to the faculty for the financial support of a six-month employment contract, which considerably sped the formulation of my first complete draft. My appreciation also goes to the United States Library of Congress staff, who agreed to digitize their archived film copies of *The Empire Strikes Back* and *The Return of the Jedi* ahead of my visit there so that I could view the original *Star Wars* trilogy in their unedited format. Further thanks go to the Library of Congress's IT staff, whose timely response to a network failure enabled my goals to be carried out successfully, despite the narrow window of my visit. I must also thank Brit Farstad, editor of the forthcoming book, *Populating the Future: Families and Reproduction in Speculative Fiction*. Some portions of the text and analysis in this dissertation are reproduced with her generous permission from my chapter in that publication.

Last but by no means of least consequence, I would like to thank my friends and family for their patience, encouragement, and support. Many acquaintances have politely inquired about my dissertation and listened indulgently to my ramblings. Some friends have even accepted copies of drafts. They may be pardoned if they never finished reading them. Most of all, however, I must thank my immediate family, especially my wife, Marjut, who has done more than any other to aid my efforts logistically, emotionally, and financially. None of this would have been possible without her support.

Tampere, 23 November 2022

*Nicholas Wanberg*

# ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the intelligent non-humans of speculative fiction, interrogating their relationship to the social construct of “race.” It seeks to provide a framework for answering questions about whether a given fictional group is racial and the degree to which making claims about intelligent non-humans contributes to real-world inequality and oppression. To accomplish these goals, the dissertation examines the most popular works of speculative fiction from the twentieth century with supporting examples from elsewhere throughout the genre. It analyzes those works with a focus on their world architecture, defined here as the collection of all details about the world and the events therein that can be established by an appeal to the text. It compares the world architecture of each work to real-world ideological frameworks, showing how the works reflect and renegotiate contemporary ideologies in structuring their fictional worlds.

The analysis proceeds from establishing the link between intelligent non-human creatures and “race” to exploring the ends to which texts deploy that link. This process begins in chapter three, which compares numerous fundamental traits of various non-humans to contemporary beliefs about human races. It further explores parallels between beliefs in racial hierarchies and the underlying logic of racial mixedness. It establishes that the texts define intelligent non-humans in terms strongly reminiscent of those used by contemporary racists to define human racial divisions. It further reinforces this claim by an appeal to features such as racial taxonomy and “new racism” to show that as racist beliefs have evolved over the century in the real world, the portrayal of intelligent non-humans in speculative fiction has evolved to match.

Chapter four takes the pattern of representation established in chapter three and extends it, drawing on concepts from Whiteness studies. By exploring concepts such as normativity, enterprise, gendered relationships to light and dark, color coding by pigmentation, and reproductive anxieties, chapter four reveals further nuance to the hierarchies established in chapter three. In particular, it shows the hierarchies extending in muted form between genders and humans of different skin tones. Many

of these uses of Whiteness come despite attempts by the same texts to work against them. The chapter takes initial steps in exploring the use of racialized non-humans by arguing that using Whiteness to rationalize the hierarchies of the fictional world reinforces its use in rationalizing real-world hierarchies.

Chapter five finally explores the deployment of this racialization by considering the anti-racist strategies each work engages with. Each work involves itself with a variety of relativist, universalist, and practice-oriented anti-racist strategies. Each involvement shows the willingness of the works to negotiate these strategies and a critical awareness of those strategies' strengths and shortcomings. At the same time, the works show a productive ("producerly") complexity, and I discuss how each engagement leaves opportunities for selective ("guerilla") readings. This openness ensures the ideological compatibility of the works with a wide audience by remaining open to interpretations across a broad range of the political spectrum.

Ultimately, the dissertation establishes sufficient ground to answer final questions, such as whether a given work might be considered "racist" or "anti-racist," a question it tackles based on various foci and meanings. Any answer as to whether the works are "racist" regarding human beings must be highly qualified. However, there is an undeniable "yes" to whether they are "racist" regarding intelligent non-humans. Intelligent non-humans are constructed in racial terms, while humans mainly exist in a normative position relative to them. Among humans, differences appear regarding enterprise and participation in gendered Whiteness. Nonetheless, these are patterned rather than explicit, and no inherent differences are directly ascribed to humans based on skin tone, while some are openly denied. At the same time, each work is undeniably anti-racist, yet this anti-racism and racism coexist comfortably and without contradiction, as each work opposes certain features of or associated with racism while casually embracing more fundamental aspects. This complexity and openness to race is typical of popular speculative fiction and shows that race matters, even when it does not exist.

Keywords: racism, speculative fiction, non-humans, world architecture, whiteness, anti-racism



# CONTENTS

Acknowledgments .....	i
Abstract .....	iii
1 Introduction: Approaching Racism Through Intelligent Non-Humans .....	7
1.1 The Big Questions in Racism and Speculative Fiction.....	7
1.2 The Importance of Studying Racism in Speculative Fiction .....	10
1.3 Studying Racism, Popular Culture, and Speculative Fiction.....	21
1.4 Notes and Structure of the Dissertation.....	35
2 Colored Blueprints: Racism and World Architecture .....	38
2.1 Defining “Intelligent Non-Humans,” “Racism,” and Related Terms .....	38
2.2 The Rules of Fictional Worlds.....	50
2.3 Critical World Architectural Analysis .....	52
2.4 Ideological Frameworks.....	56
3 The Changing Face of Twentieth-century Racism .....	61
3.1 Finding Early Links Between “Race” and Fantasy “Races” .....	61
3.2 Twentieth-Century Racism: Its Adaptation and Concealment .....	64
3.3 Racial Determinism Among Intelligent Non-Humans .....	71
3.4 Intelligent Non-Humans and Racial Hierarchy .....	87
3.5 Intelligent Non-Humans: Miscegenation and Taxonomy .....	96
3.6 New Racism and <i>Harry Potter</i> .....	107
4 Encoded Whiteness: Hierarchy and Concealment .....	116
4.1 Whiteness: To Be Human or Only Human.....	116
4.2 Whiteness as Default: Normativity and the Power of Being Invisible .....	131
4.3 Enterprise: Power, Leadership, and Initiative Through Whiteness .....	151
4.4 White Men: Bearers of Agony .....	163
4.5 White Women: Angelic, Ethereal, Pure .....	174
4.6 Color-coding: When Light Makes Right.....	193
4.7 Whiteness and the (Re)Production of Droids .....	199

5	The Rhetorical Strategies of Anti-Racism .....	212
5.1	Anti-Racism in Popular Speculative Fiction: Equal When We're Not All the Same .....	212
5.2	Relativism vs Universalism.....	220
5.2.1	Relativism: "We're talking about a different breed of being" .....	220
5.2.2	Universalist Anti-Racism: "It's the same all over. . . blood is counting for less everywhere." .....	244
5.3	Practice-Oriented Anti-Racism.....	249
5.3.1	Diversity Management: "Peregrin shall go and represent the Shirefolk." .....	249
5.3.2	Anti-Nazism: "All that 'right to rule' rubbish, it's 'Magic is Might' all over again." .....	255
5.3.3	Anti-Slavery: "That's not on! . . . You're setting them free when they might not want to be free!" .....	259
5.3.4	Particularist Anti-Racism: "Duties ill-befitting the dignity of my race. . . I am not a house-elf." .....	271
6	Conclusion.....	275
7	Works Cited.....	282

# 1 INTRODUCTION: APPROACHING RACISM THROUGH INTELLIGENT NON-HUMANS

## 1.1 The Big Questions in Racism and Speculative Fiction

As J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* approaches its conclusion, the titular protagonist, Harry Potter, experiences the loss of his godfather, Sirius Black. Sirius's death affects Harry profoundly, but most of his schoolmates remain unaffected. Indeed, due to the clandestine nature of Harry and Sirius's relationship, most are unaware of his loss. These circumstances lead to a sense of alienation between Harry and his peers. In one scene, looking around at his schoolmates, Harry is described as feeling "as distant from them *as though he belonged to a different race*" (*Order* 754, emphasis added).

The simile employed in this passage takes for granted the existence of distinct groups of individuals, termed "races," between which exists a metaphorical gulf. This distinction is strong enough and well-known enough that the text can employ it by metaphoric extension, perhaps even hyperbole, to describe an extreme form of alienation between people of the same race. This expression would strongly suggest racism if it referred to supposed human variations, as though Harry were to say to himself, "I feel so alone, it's almost like I'm the only White<sup>1</sup> person here." In context, however, this interpretation is unlikely, especially considering that many of Harry's schoolmates would not be described as "White." He is, at this moment, surrounded by persons who could be constructed as

---

<sup>1</sup> The capitalized "White" and "Black" are employed in this dissertation at many points to distinguish the ethnoracial classifications (here capitalized) from the colors of the same name (not capitalized). This distinction is to reduce the ambiguity and slippage between the concepts. White people are not white any more than Black people are black, and I add the orthographic distinction here for clarity and to avoid contributing to that common misrepresentation. I do not extend this to direct quotations from other sources; in such cases, I maintain the source's original capitalization. There has been some concern over whether capitalizing "white" in addition to "black" is appropriate, as some see the capital B as adding prestige to a historically subjugated position. For a fuller discussion of the merits and concerns of this and related positions on the matter, see Kwame Anthony Appiah's article, "The Case for Capitalizing the B in Black." My choices here focus exclusively on clarity and not in an attempt to show additional respect to any particular group through orthographic distinction.

belonging to a different “race.” The narrator never associates this supposed difference with feeling “distant.” On the contrary, many of those students form close relationships with Harry throughout his time at Hogwarts.

Taken in context, this metaphor is far more likely to refer to so-called “fantasy races,” groups of intelligent, non-human creatures who inhabit fantasy worlds. Within the fictional world of the *Harry Potter* series, such creatures exist in many varieties. Moreover, this supposed “distance” between groups often appears genuine. Bill Weasley summarizes this gap succinctly when he warns Harry about goblins<sup>2</sup> in book seven, saying that they are “a different breed of being” (516) about whom “no one can understand” without long, firsthand exposure (517). He suggests that the closest one can get to “friendship between wizards and goblins” is for the witch or wizard to have “goblins [they] know well and like” (516).<sup>3</sup> This difficulty in understanding and inability to form strong relationships marks a social and psychological distance between wizard and goblin “races.”

Such creatures, and their equivalents, populate the fictional worlds of many forms of speculative fiction. Fictional works construct these intelligent non-humans with numerous differences from “mainstream” humanity. These traits are almost always innate and distinguish members of one hereditary sub-group from another. At the very least, general parallels to “race,” in the sense of the real-world social construct, are undeniable, yet whether the analogy in *Harry Potter* cited above is racist hinges upon whether these divisions *are* racial. Assessing the ideological implications of this stance requires understanding the degree to which such portrayals relate to racism. At the same time, the relationship of these “fantasy races” to actual human groups within a given work, and the ends to which that work mobilizes those differences, can tell us a great deal about its overall ideological construction. Are goblins and elves “races” in the same sense as human beings? Does making such claims about them help propagate similar claims about real human groups? Are they

---

<sup>2</sup> Tolkien’s works make frequent but not wholly consistent use of capital letters to indicate racial distinctions, while *Harry Potter* does not. In the interest of consistency, and because there is no particular ambiguity in referring to “hobbits” versus “Hobbits,” I will abstain from the capital letter for the names of fictional races. In Tolkien’s works, I frequently refer to humans as “humans” rather than, following Tolkien, with the capitalized “Men.” I write all other group names, such as “wookiees,” “elves,” “centaurs,” “hobbits,” and so forth, in lowercase.

<sup>3</sup> How this differs from human friendship is unclear in context, but the text implies it to be a lesser social bond. Most likely the goblins will not “know well and like” the human in return. For a more extensive discussion of the diegetic logic of innate psychological difference, see chapter 3.

deployed in such a way as to contribute to real-world hierarchy and oppression, or does their portrayal help to undermine existing power structures?

In this dissertation, I examine the diegetic logic of the world architecture of several well-known works of speculative fiction, namely *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, the *Star Wars* films, and *Harry Potter*, while providing examples from numerous other works for context. I ultimately argue that the works construct intelligent non-humans within frameworks that engage strongly with contemporary racisms, although some engagement with older racism occurs. Nonetheless, these ideological engagements are not one-sided. Each of the works also engages with *anti*-racism, employing, critiquing, and responding to different forms of anti-racist discourse in ways that, at times, show a critical awareness of anti-racist discourses and shed light on the strengths and shortcomings of different approaches to anti-racism. This mixed engagement creates a productive series of contradictions and openings for readers to engage selectively with the text to produce diverse meanings, concepts I will discuss under the rubric of Fiskian producerliness and guerilla readings in chapter five. Even while pursuing these goals, the works position these intelligent non-humans relative to humanity in ways that define certain groups (prototypically<sup>4</sup> but not exclusively humans) in terms usually reserved for representations of Whites in mainstream media. By reinforcing the hierarchy through this positioning, the works draw lines between and among human groups and tacitly support real-world social hierarchies. Through this analysis, I hope to paint a more detailed, if necessarily still incomplete, picture of how racism informs the world architecture of popular speculative fiction, sometimes in highly covert or complex ways.

In this dissertation, I take the most widely consumed works of anglophone speculative fiction from the twentieth century as my primary objects. These are J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, George Lucas's *Star Wars* series, and J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. For *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *Harry Potter*, I restrict my attention to the main written works – specifically *The Hobbit* and

---

<sup>4</sup> I make periodic use of Eleanor Rosch's prototype theory throughout this dissertation, as explained in the article "Natural Categories." This is closely related to Ludwig Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblance. For a good overview of prototype theory in the context of related concepts, see the introduction to George Lakoff's *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind*. In simple terms, natural categories are organized around a central concept ("prototype"), and membership in these categories is a "fuzzy set" defined by how closely members resemble the prototypical member rather than by filling a set of criteria.

*The Lord of the Rings* among Tolkien's works<sup>5</sup> and the seven books of the *Harry Potter* series – excluding other franchise materials. My attention to the *Star Wars* franchise focuses exclusively on the films, giving primary attention to the original trilogy but drawing comparisons to other major films as they become relevant to a given discussion. As of the writing of this dissertation, these films include *Star Wars* episodes I-IX, *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*, and *Solo: A Star Wars Story*.<sup>6</sup> Examples of other works of speculative fiction, ranging from films and literature to electronic and non-electronic role-playing games, will appear for context.

## 1.2 The Importance of Studying Racism in Speculative Fiction

“Racism” has been studied in academia at least since the term came into general use in the 1930s (Rattansi 4). Nonetheless, our understanding of racism is still incomplete. Scholars have described racism over the years as being “chameleon-like” (MacMaster 2) or “amazingly elastic” (Rebollo-Gil and Morass 381), subject to a “conceptual inflation” (Miles 3) and buried in “metonymic elaborations” and “coded signifiers” (Solomos and Back 27). To this day, anti-racist efforts seem only partially effective, described as “always trying to catch up” (Hage 125). The social impact of this inability to “catch up” has become all too clear: racism seems to be making a comeback if, indeed, it ever declined. Racist political movements have become perennial, and insistently racialized concerns over immigration, refugees, and international terrorism, protest riots, and “Corona racism” have helped to ensure that racism remains as critical a concern today as it was in the aftermath of the Second World War.

---

<sup>5</sup> I often refer to “the works by Tolkien” or “Tolkien’s works” as a shorthand way of grouping together *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. I do this for convenience and lack of a better reference. Readers should not mistake this reference as implying a focus on Tolkien as an author. My interest is in the two books, especially in the fictional worlds they seek to describe, rather than in Tolkien himself. This analysis does not reflect his beliefs, worldview, or authorial intent. Neither do I examine his legendarium as a whole.

<sup>6</sup> The *Star Wars* films, including the original trilogy and the prequels, have undergone significant changes since their original releases. In order to situate this research accurately in its historical context, I focus on the original screen versions here except when otherwise stated. All notes on the original trilogy have been checked against the original versions using the copies in the United States Library of Congress archive. I have checked references to the prequel films against fan-produced lists of known changes across subsequent releases of the films. For convenience, however, the time stamps used in citations of dialog are based on the easier-to-access DVD copies of the films, as cited in the bibliography.

Meanwhile, speculative fiction has risen from relative obscurity at the turn of the twentieth century to become one of the largest and most profitable genres of mass media today. Among the productions of this genre, the *Star Wars* franchise remains particularly prominent. According to an estimate by *Fortune* in 2015, before the release of the latest batch of films, the *Star Wars* franchise was already worth roughly 42 billion dollars (Chew), a figure that has since nearly doubled, reaching 70 billion (Bhagchandani). This measure covers the franchise's monetary gains in box office revenue and home entertainment sales, toys and merchandise, video games, intellectual property value, books, tv series, licensing fees, and collectible resale markets. Spread across all these areas, the franchise's size and ongoing potential cultural impact are unmatched.

The *Harry Potter* series, meanwhile, has become the bestselling book series in history (Hypable).<sup>7</sup> As of 2017, it has sold over 500 million copies (Rusli, Hypable), and the series' first book is officially available in 75 languages.<sup>8</sup> By the same metric as *Star Wars*, *Telegraph Reporters* cites a value of 25 billion dollars for the *Harry Potter* series (*Telegraph Reporters*). *The Lord of the Rings* franchise is older but less heavily merchandised, with an estimated value of around six billion (Chew). Nonetheless, using the same metric that ranks the *Harry Potter* series as the bestselling book series of all time, *The Lord of the Rings*, sold as an omnibus edition, ranks as the bestselling single book of all time.

I selected these works because of the presence of intelligent non-human creatures and their unmatched popularity. Their wide distribution and popularity were essential in their selection for two reasons. First, when considering works that may have a far-reaching impact on society, those works which are the most widely

---

<sup>7</sup> Lists of bestselling works in history tend to omit works with a strong religious, political, philosophical, or ideological basis, so no attempt is made here to claim that the *Harry Potter* series has outsold, for example, the Red Book or the Bible. This statistic also takes a combined count of all sales for each book. When taken individually, the books are outsold by several other competing works, although they still rank very high.

<sup>8</sup> A common statistic claims that the *Harry Potter* series has been translated into 80 different languages, 79 prior to October 2017 (Rusli), with the 80<sup>th</sup> being Scots (jkrowling.com). This does not appear to be accurate. As linguist, fan, and collector Potterglot has pointed out, while already limited to official translations, not all books have been translated equally. Furthermore, despite claims by both Rowling's website and the publisher, Scots is not the 80<sup>th</sup> language but the 79<sup>th</sup> translation (in addition to the original English) (Potterglot "Bloomsbury"). Many official translations have been in the same languages, so the actual number of non-English languages made officially available is 74, and only for the first book, although many unofficial translations into other languages exist, the inclusion of which would make the number much higher (Potterglot "The List").

consumed have the most significant potential for a broad impact, having interacted with the largest possible audience. Second, while a given work might still become very popular while being outside the ideological mainstream, its likelihood of reaching the peak tier of popularity, owing to the lower rates of private or public endorsements, should be at least somewhat diminished. This hypothesis resembles John Fiske's suggestion that popular works cannot break entirely with the ideological mainstream (*Understanding* 105). It "may be progressive or offensive, but can never be radically free from the power structure of the society within which it is popular" (106). By looking at works from the peak tier of popularity, I hope that they link more closely to the various dominant ideological positions in their societies at their highest periods of distribution.<sup>9</sup>

For each franchise, I also focus on the originating works. This focus makes it easier to compare the works and their period of origin. Derivative works must negotiate both the popular ideologies of their own time as well as the contents of the original. For example, Peter Jackson's recent *Lord of the Rings* film trilogy accounts for both early 21<sup>st</sup>-century sensibilities and the contents of Tolkien's novels. While analyzing that negotiation would be fruitful, it produces results that are not as easily comparable to an analysis of the books.

That said, these works' ideological messages are not internally uniform. As Fiske argues,

Popular culture is contradictory: It is shot through with contradictions that escape control. Those who accuse it of being simplistic, of reducing everything to its most obvious points, of denying all the subtle complexity, all the dense texture of human sentiment and of social existence, are applying inappropriate criteria and blinding themselves to where the complexities of popular culture are actually to be found. (*Understanding* 96)

While a dominant, often highly nuanced position may define the world architecture of popular works, it is not the only one present. As I discuss in chapter five, these works set themselves apart from many less popular works by their openness to multiple, often-contradictory readings. Being ideologically compatible is not about

---

<sup>9</sup> It should be emphasized that these are only weak trends. Many other factors also influence popularity and to different degrees, and these works have been ideologically troubling to many audiences during their largest periods of distribution, from those who deplored the escapism of *The Lord of the Rings* to those who complained about the militarism of *Star Wars* or certain Christian groups, particularly in the United States, who objected to the presence of magic in *Harry Potter*. Nonetheless, opposition to these works has not been mainstream, as evidenced by their broad consumption.



matching a *single* hegemonic discourse but about being open enough to allow readings from *across* the contemporary political spectrum. Choosing widely distributed works, therefore, increases the chance of finding engagements with numerous ideological positions. Nonetheless, the works achieve openness without being vague, instead embracing a complex, self-contradictory specificity, a nuanced dominant architecture containing dissenting elements the architecture cannot entirely control.

However, these criteria limit the works' selection in several fundamental ways. Perhaps the most significant, given the subject of this research, is that White authors (or a White perceived-auteur in the case of *Star Wars*) created all these primary works. This trend is not representative of creators of speculative fiction more generally, despite a commonly purported lack of Blacks involved in science fiction and related genres (Russell 256). The findings of this research should not be too broadly generalized. For example, Melzer describes Octavia Butler as writing speculative fiction from a perspective that favors Otherness in interactions between humans and intelligent non-humans (39), something very different from the human-normative standpoint I describe in chapter four. Many authors, including some who are not White, such as Butler, Samuel R. Delaney, and N. K. Jemisin, have successfully subverted at least some of the patterns I describe here. This trend goes at least as far back as the lesser-known science fiction of W. E. B. Dubois (Joo). This analysis is of a *dominant* discourse, but it is *not* of the *only* discourse.

Being widely read or viewed does not, of course, alone prove that these texts are influencing their readers. However, in analyzing literature based on Western conceptions of the Orient, Edward Said posited that “texts can create not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe” (*Orientalism* 94). At least two studies consider the effects of reading the *Harry Potter* series specifically on the attitudes and views of readers in a way that is relevant to this study. In the first, Vezzali et al. use “a structured intervention based on reading passages related to prejudice” taken from the *Harry Potter* series and find that the readers (Italian elementary schoolchildren) have “improved attitudes toward immigrants” following the reading compared to a control group of children, who “read passages unrelated to prejudice” (107). According to Vezzali et al., the study provides “initial evidence regarding the effectiveness of reading the stories of Harry Potter on the improvement of out-group attitudes for participants who identify highly with Harry Potter” (107). Whatever the ideological position of *Harry Potter* is under close

inspection, some elementary school children may feel more sympathetic to out-group members due to reading selected parts of the story. A second, broader study by Diana C. Mutz, analyzing reader voting habits, draws a similar conclusion. According to Mutz, the books’ “messages of tolerance for difference and opposition to violence and punitive policies appear to be influential in altering *Harry Potter* readers’ policy views, as well as their support for Trump, even after controlling for their impact on policy attitudes” (728). Put more generally, the more *Harry Potter* books a person had read, the less positively they were likely to appraise Donald Trump. Specifically, as Mutz explains, “[e]ach book that a person has read lowers their evaluation of Donald Trump by roughly 2–3 points” (725). Mutz attributes this to the difference in stance between Donald Trump’s rhetoric and the ideological positioning of the series concerning “1) the value of tolerance and respect for difference; 2) opposition to violence and punitiveness; and 3) the dangers of authoritarianism” (723).

In the first study, notably, excerpts are deliberately selective, and both groups of students read examples from *Harry Potter*. This pattern lends credence to my thesis in chapter five about selective “guerilla” readings. The same text can produce different outcomes simply by choosing which details to emphasize. In the second study, there is room for interpretation of the causes of the trend. While Mutz makes a good case for *Harry Potter* influencing reader voting habits, the data might also make sense if Trump supporters tended toward poor literacy, therefore being less likely to start or finish a book series. Likewise, growing pressure among fundamentalist Christian communities in the United States to not read *Harry Potter* may have influenced the data, as such groups tended to favor Donald Trump. Nevertheless, these factors only mitigate the degree of impact, and it remains likely that some influence may have taken place.

Regardless, each study shows clear examples of the *Harry Potter* series influencing reader views. In each case, reader views change *away* from prejudiced treatment of out-group members, not toward such. As I will argue in chapter five, each of the works engages not only with racism but with numerous anti-racist strategies. They engage with these strategies productively, critiquing or negotiating them in ways that leave openings for alternative readings, particularly “guerilla” readings, in which readers pick and choose details to arrive at their preferred message (Fiske *Understanding* 105). The latter is transparently at work in Vezzali et al.’s study. Again, hand-picked extracts from the *Harry Potter* series show a different impact from

other hand-picked extracts of the same works, showing influence directly from this sort of guerilla selection. Among the forms of anti-racism, *Harry Potter* also engages with anti-Nazi anti-racism, which it strongly endorses. This form coincides with rejecting the same attitudes Mutz identifies as overlapping between the rhetoric of Trump and Voldemort. If such influence is verified, it becomes urgent to investigate what other ideological messages might reside in the texts. Unfortunately, I have found no study considering the effect of speculative fiction on reader beliefs regarding Whiteness or racial essentialism. However, I will establish links between such notions and the texts across chapters three and four. I hypothesize that such themes involve the same influence as out-group treatment and support for authoritarian policies.

Despite the motivation toward better behavior, the reification of essential differences I elucidate in chapter three and the tropes and social ordering of the fictional worlds leverage many of the same appeals as racial ideologies. Albert Memmi claims that “we are all tempted by racism” (23) and that “[o]ne could conclude, parodying Descartes, that the temptation of racism is the most commonly shared thing in the world” (122–23). What motivates individuals toward racism has been unclear and is likely complex, possibly overdetermined in many cases. However, scholars have put forward many possibilities. All of them, I would argue, are carried by fiction that makes use of essentialized varieties of intelligent non-humans to perform the narrative and social roles, compared to humans, of hierarchically “lower” (or even “higher”) “races.”

Most striking among these possibilities is how this hierarchy itself provides one of the key motivations that many scholars cite. Racist ideas justify the preeminence and privilege of a single group, and the personal advantages for members of that group are substantial. Edward Said argues that the very notions of racism “made it axiomatic by the middle of the nineteenth century that Europeans always ought to rule non-Europeans” (“Zionism” 218). Likewise, beyond encouraging oppression, such motivations can hinder work to lessen it. Miguel M. Unzueta and Brian S. Lowery argue, “White Americans may be motivated to avoid conceiving of racism as an institutional phenomenon because this conception is associated with an increased awareness of the advantages associated with belonging to the dominant racial group” (1491). Racism creates a comforting worldview that shelters its holders from threatening conceptions, such as an awareness of their privilege.

Nonetheless, this appeal goes beyond the dominant group and can extend to relatively subordinate groups. Each may seek to improve their position most easily, not by challenging the hierarchy but by attempting to establish themselves on a higher rung within it. Albert Memmi describes this effect as “the astonishing racism of the oppressed themselves.” Memmi asks, “Why would a victimized person attack another in that same way? Simple: for the same reasons as the others and to satisfy the same urges. Upon whom can European workers stand to make themselves a little bigger, if not the immigrant worker, the North African but also the Italian, the Spanish, and even the Polish?” (136) The lower-class workers Memmi described were willing to oppress others racially to secure their hierarchical standing, asserting their Whiteness rather than seeking solidarity among the lower class. Richard Dyer states, “Because whiteness carries such rewards and privileges, the sense of a border that might be crossed and a hierarchy that might be climbed has produced a dynamic that has enthralled people who have had any chance of participating in it” (20). A fundamental appeal of racism is its ability to exalt even the oppressed person by elevating their position and improving their relative status by further subordinating those it might place below them. Dan Rubey argues for this same appeal at work in *Star Wars*, saying, “Luke is on the bottom of the power and age hierarchies, but he is on top in the race hierarchy. He is human, as opposed to the non-human races, and most importantly, as opposed to the robots.” This motivation manifests in the wish-fulfillment appeal of all the works of speculative fiction studied here. Each presents a hierarchical world in which human characters (predominantly White and male) find themselves virtually thrust to the top.<sup>10</sup> Harry Potter begins at the bottom of many similar hierarchies to Luke, yet his rise is much the same. Aragorn likewise begins as an obscure and unpopular figure, tolerated and mistrusted by the people of Bree. Nonetheless, his “natural” place in the world’s hierarchy eventually dramatically asserts itself. The appeal of racism as a key to power is even stronger in superordinated groups whose hierarchical position it solidifies.

Another closely related motivation for adopting racist beliefs is how they act as justification. This justification can be either for cruelty and oppression or for reaping the benefits of living atop the racial hierarchy. Memmi discusses this at some length, declaring that “the feeling of guilt is one of the most powerful engines of the

---

<sup>10</sup> It is worth noting that in Tolkien’s works, Men (humans) are not the top of the race hierarchy, yet the story ends nonetheless with their triumph, as other races leave Middle Earth of their own accord, are driven out, vanish, or are exterminated. The result of the tales is very much a world in which humans, and particularly white humans, rule.

racist operation. Racism presents itself as one of the primary means of combating all forms of remorse. That is why both privilege and oppression make such heavy use of it” (139) and ultimately concluding that “[u]nderneath its masks, racism is the racist’s way of giving himself absolution” (180). William Wright describes much the same phenomenon in the colonial period, where

the Whites/Europeans found a way to keep the horrors of their behavior, the violation and severe perversion of their lofty universal idealities and morality and the destruction they wrought from their own perceptions and understanding. A way to keep the contradictions of their loftiness and lowliness from totally ravaging or exploding their personalities and desiccating their civilization was to devise strands of racist beliefs that produced ameliorative racist protection, such as racist thinking, racist social behavior, and racist psychologies that all functioned to deprecate the humanity and human status of other people to facilitate and justify moving against them. (26)

One might say that racism made the unconscionable more palatable to the conscience. The same mitigation of guilt and offer of absolution appears in various groups being oppressed, repressed, or even exterminated in each of the works of fiction studied here. The eradication of orcs, for example, is portrayed as cruel but necessary within the architecture of their fictional world. All the works excuse and even demand acts like these from the powers-that-be because of the natures of the beings they inflict them upon. Furthermore, this justification works for both acts of open cruelty and reaping privileges due to past and present inequality. Dan Rubey identifies this appeal and ties it to *Star Wars*, writing that “the robots and the Wookie [sic] perform another function in the fantasy system of STAR WARS. They serve as non-competitive, non-sexual comrades and friends, one of the chief emotional satisfactions of racism.” The heroes of each work benefit enormously from the hierarchies they live in, whether in getting helped by a wookiee who does not compete for medals, promotions, or the girl or receiving a house-elf’s servitude. Even then, the texts excuse the heroes from blame for the arrangement because such service is innate in their subordinates.

Scholars also describe racism’s appeal in other ways, such as longing for an idealized past and desiring to reclaim it. Memmi describes the process in which “a future seen as a projection of the past is amalgamated with a past reconstructed as a function of the future. It is both a regret for not living in that past state of grace and a desire to recapture it” (66). The past-oriented chronotopes of all the works I study also match this, with medieval and pre-medieval themes set against new technology in each case. There is always a desire to reinstate a traditional order at the expense

of new technology, whether in defying Saruman's industrial advancements, restoring the Jedi knights and destroying the Death Star, or contrasting the wizarding world with the advancements of Muggles. These idealizations of past *ways of living* mesh easily with idealizations of a past *social order*. Even as the works reject technological advancement and appeal toward a past state, they also envision racially ordered societies existing in a harmony that never occurred in reality but which racist ideologues have often been keen to imagine.

In summary, Memmi has suggested that “[t]he racist explanation is, on the whole, the most opportune. It is effective, agreeable, even satisfying to the point of euphoria, as the psychologists say. It reassures and it flatters, it excuses and fortifies, it reinforces one's sense of collective and individual self” (134–35). Speculative fiction carries this appeal of a world ordered along racial lines. Reader response studies such as those cited above verify that audiences of fictional works can accept ideological appeals from what they read and treat that material as, on some level, descriptive of the real world. As to how it occurs, in *Knowledge, Fiction and Imagination*, David Novitz argues extensively that readers, through imagination, gain knowledge from fictional texts. This gaining of knowledge, according to Novitz, entails propositional knowledge, attitudes and values, skills, and experience (119–20). Novitz does not see this as generally being an automatic process, however:

An uncritical reader may simply assent to such a hypothesis and so come to believe a certain proposition about our world. This does of course happen. More critical readers, however, will assess the hypothesis either in terms of the extent to which it coheres with their established beliefs, or by tentatively projecting it on to the actual world. If, in the latter case, it is supported by the readers' experiences – that is, if it enables them to negotiate the world more successfully and to make sense of objects and events in their environment – they will adopt it, believe it, and in the light of corroborating experience, will gradually come to regard it as knowledge. (131–32)

In other words, critical readers (and I suspect *most* readers are critical to at least this degree) accept new knowledge from fiction insofar, and only insofar, as it fits with their existing knowledge and helps explain their existing preconceptions about the world. Even young readers with less existing knowledge and preconceptions will still be critical in this way, but their limited experience will inevitably narrow the scope. This meshes with the findings of a pair of studies by Greg Philo and Miller et al. (cited in Barker and Petley 19–22). Gordon Lynch summarizes the results of these studies in very general terms, saying that

there are reasonable grounds for suggesting that such representations do indeed matter. Research on audience responses have suggested that people are likely to adopt the way of understanding the world that is offered to them through the media unless they have some other experience or way of interpreting the world that contradicts this media perspective. (89)<sup>11</sup>

Marek Oziewicz argues for this effect *specifically* in the context of young adult speculative fiction. As Oziewicz summarizes,

our affective and cognitive circuits are tightly interrelated, with the affective being primary to the cognitive. Learning occurs, and is retained in memory, not merely when facts are remembered, but when a certain degree of empathetic identification and engagement with the story is achieved. Social knowledge that is the domain of fiction is far more complex than “factual” knowledge. Obviously, social knowledge also involves “facts,” but its acquisition is infinitely more cognitively stimulating than the acquisition of factual knowledge. To understand why a character did something presents a cognitive and interpretative challenge that exceeds simply remembering what the character did. (10–11)

Oziewicz builds on Novitz’s analysis to argue that fiction (in this case, young adult speculative fiction) allows learning some types of knowledge better than non-fiction due to the empathetic identification with the characters. Pedagogists have leveraged this learning from speculative fiction. For example, Ambelin Kwaymullina’s young adult novel, *The Interrogation of Ashala Wolf*, was released “alongside educational materials like study guides, discussion questions, and tips for classroom use” (Rix 237). Kwaymullina explicitly presented the speculative novel as a way to teach young adults about racism, law, and Indigenous Australians’ lives.

Racism’s explanatory powers, while misleading, are nonetheless powerful, as history has well demonstrated. That racism can function as a way “to negotiate the world more successfully and to make sense of objects and events in [one’s] environment” has been well established. Generations of Europeans and European diaspora have used it to explain their world and rationalize their dominance, and many upon whom they inflicted the ideology have internalized it. If the above claims are accepted, speculative fiction *can* increase the likelihood of readers accepting racist beliefs *when and only when they do not have prior knowledge to the contrary*. As the works studied mainly target teenagers and young adults, the likelihood of them not yet possessing that knowledge is higher than for adults, so the possibility remains very real. This prior knowledge may take many forms, but as history has demonstrated,

---

<sup>11</sup> John McDowell echoes (and further cites) this claim (11).

even those with first-hand experience as victims of racism have been apt to accept and internalize some of its tenets. Even such lived experiences may be insufficient to constitute prior knowledge contrary to the idea of essential racial differences. Readers are diverse, with a multitude of different life experiences. However, as individuals across a wide variety of periods, societies, and backgrounds have accepted racist ideas historically, there is every reason to suspect that a large variety of readers, particularly younger or inexperienced readers, remain open to such ideas today.

Still, preventing the themes under discussion here from having a real-world contribution to the spread of racism is not a matter of banning books or films but of educating their audiences, a process in which this research participates. It is more than just an aloof commentary; it represents an intervention in an ongoing cultural process. Helen Young argues that

[o]ne of the reasons that the myth of biological race has persisted so long in Western society long after it was scientifically disproven is that it is constructed discursively and its discourses of human difference are built into both society and culture. [. . .] For that education to be successful it cannot be *only* formal and scientific, but must also be received from the world around us, including popular culture, which has its own forms of pedagogy even if they are not enacted in formal classrooms. (191)

It is crucial, then, that we recognize the way popular culture encodes these norms. Only by informing our understanding and production of cultural artifacts can we enable educational efforts against racism to make real progress.

Lastly, and perhaps as a secondary note, I should stress that this understanding is critical to the *artistic value* of speculative fiction. As I will argue in chapter five, speculative fiction is not an aloof, escapist genre with no grounding in real-world issues, and pretending that race is irrelevant to speculative fiction would only exacerbate this common misrepresentation. Toni Morrison states that “[a] criticism that needs to insist that literature is not only ‘universal’ but also ‘race-free’ risks lobotomizing that literature, and diminishes both the art and the artist” (12). This research does not represent a denigration of speculative fiction. Instead, it represents an acknowledgment of its complexity, its nuance, and its intricate artistic engagement with social issues.



### 1.3 Studying Racism, Popular Culture, and Speculative Fiction

Gandalf describes “hobbit lore” to Frodo Baggins as “an obscure branch of knowledge, but full of surprises” (*Lord* 47). Easily dismissed as irrelevant by those focusing on “high art,” popular speculative fiction nonetheless offers unique insights into the life and culture of its time. I hope to join with many scholars before me in showing that studying popular speculative fiction can provide keen insights into society, human nature, art, and literature.

As will be discussed further in chapter five, popular culture has the potential to engage with numerous ideological positions, including racist and anti-racist ones. Its engagement with racism, furthermore, need not be one of simple transmission. It can “illustrate and explore political theory and historical events” (Ruane and James 7) and can be “a site where the construction of everyday life is examined” (Helfenbein 502). It can also be “political, to examine the power relations that constitute this form of everyday life and thus reveal the configurations of interests its construction serves” (Helfenbein 502, citing Storey 16). It “can help us to be more critical and move away from our a priori beliefs and open up to new points of view” (Ruane and James 8, citing Nexon and Neumann 12). Further, popular culture has the potential to “perform subtle emotional work that richly engages the nonreflective aspects of white privilege” (Sullivan 15).

Not specifically geared toward any ideological position, popular culture has the potential to both transmit and challenge widespread beliefs, often doing both simultaneously and to varying degrees. Producers of popular cultural artifacts do not always or even usually seek an ideological agenda but rather “draw on the stories, characters, and ideas that they hope will resonate with the greatest number of people” (Williams 680). They can reinforce certain aspects of culture and ways of perceiving identities and actions (680). That “the myth of biological race” has been “constructed discursively and its discourses of human difference [built] into both society and culture” has been part of this process and has been one of the reasons racism has been so persistent in Western culture (Young 191). However, popular culture is not only “the locus for the expression of racism” but also “a site where the efficacy of racist images can be challenged” (Solomos and Back 157). Racism is inseparable from larger culture (Solomos and Back 26), but cultural products provide the means to challenge it. Indeed, they must because, again, as Young argues, for anti-racist education to succeed, “it cannot be *only* formal and scientific, but must

also be received from the world around us, including popular culture, which has its own forms of pedagogy even if they are not enacted in formal classrooms” (191). This research thus joins with other studies of racism and popular culture in helping to address a vital need for open and informed discourse between racism, anti-racism, and popular culture.

Speculative fiction scholarship, more narrowly, has also been a fertile ground for discussions of racism. Numerous studies address broad stretches of speculative fiction, typically with a focus narrowed to some sub-group such as “science fiction,” “fantasy,” or “film.” Examples of these from the last fifteen years include the chapter on racism in Adam Roberts’s *Science Fiction*, Adilifu Nama’s *Black Space: Imagining Race in Science Fiction Film*, Douglas Kilgore De Witt’s “Difference Engine: Aliens, Robots, and Other Racial Matters in the History of Science Fiction,” Helen Young’s *Race and Popular Fantasy Literature: Habits of Whiteness*, Mika Loponen’s *The Semiosphere’s of Prejudice in the Fantastic Arts: The Inherited Racism of Irrealia and their Translation*, Ebony Elizabeth Thomas’s *The Dark Fantastic: Race and the Imagination from Harry Potter to The Hunger Games*, and the edited volume, *Race in Young Adult Speculative Fiction*. Each has provided valuable insights into how racism operates in some part of speculative fiction, ranging from encounters with alien others, literal or symbolic representations of Blackness, or habits of White normativity. Together, they have shown much of the operations of racism in speculative fiction, traced its antecedents and the seeds of its resistance, explored its negotiation through fan culture, and scrutinized its impact in translation. Collectively, such works lay the necessary groundwork and establish ways of understanding race in speculative fiction, which I will build on in meaningful ways. They make clear the central message that “race matters in speculative fiction; whether we realize it or not” (Carrington 2).

This work builds into an important niche, focusing on non-human varieties, how the works construct and employ them, and construct humans relative to them. As intelligent non-humans are frequent features of speculative fiction, I am not alone in attempting to describe them or define their position relative to “race.” Earlier attempts, however, have left important ground still uncovered. Although they have gleaned many valuable insights, they have not addressed the diegetic logic of the fictional works, limiting their insights into some aspects of ideological encoding. Speaking of the house-elves of the *Harry Potter* series, for example, William MacNeil poses the question faced by many trying to interrogate the ideology of speculative fictional texts: “In light of this, where, then, lie the text’s – and, by extension,

Rowling's – sympathies, be they social, political and, last but certainly not least, legal?" (556). For MacNeil, in the *Harry Potter* series, the answer seems to be one of inherent ambiguity, which MacNeil sees as stemming from "philosophical anxieties" about the appropriate place of law, whether as tool or obstacle, in efforts for social change (556, 558). I will argue that the books take a much less ambiguous but more complex stance. The complexity stems from the nuances of the text's engagements with racism and anti-racism and the variety and sophistication of racist and anti-racist discourse.

Many scholars have linked intelligent non-human creatures of speculative fiction to real-world Others in a general sense (Carrington 3), such as Daniel Bernardi's claim that "[a]liens . . . can be said to be always already real world peoples – signifiers of nations, cultures, and identities – simply because there are no real space-time referents for living and embodied extraterrestrials" (12). According to Bernardi, such creatures (or at least aliens) are necessarily representations of real-world peoples simply because they must represent *something* real, and there are no actual aliens upon which to base them. Gwyneth Jones expresses the same sentiment: "As long as we haven't met any actual no-kidding intelligent extraterrestrials (and I would maintain that this is still the case, though I know opinions are divided) the aliens we imagine are always other humans in disguise: no more, no less" (201). Meghan Gilbert-Hickey and Miranda Green-Barteet cast the net still broader, seeing "racial markers . . . displaced by categories of otherness" including "extraterrestrials, cyborgs, telekinetic and intellectual powers, and technological adaptations" (6). According to Elizabeth Ho, such use of "metaphorical race" is "a common strategy in YA supernatural fiction" which "depends on the use of supernatural characters—vampires, werewolves, and the like—to serve, with greater or lesser success, as imaginary solutions to real racial problems" (153). Patricia Melzer likewise describes this pattern of representation as a way of dealing with issues of racism. However, Melzer warns that this method is often ineffective, saying that "[x]enophobia and racism in science fiction are usually transferred onto representations of aliens. These symbolic representations often replace any direct discussion of racism and fail to really address the problem" (80). Sierra Hale suggests that this is because "the futuristic oppression depicted is detached from actual racial oppression and the message is lost" (119). If we take for granted, as Bernardi and Jones do, that such creatures must have *some* real-life referent, then that referent can only be human. If these non-humans appear as members of collective groups, their human referents must also be collective.

Nevertheless, the reference to humanity need not be specific. While I concede that our frameworks for conceptualizing intelligent Otherness are limited to the human, I do not support any implication that fictional groups must *necessarily* be analogs to *specific* real-world groups. Texts construct many intelligent non-humans in reference to other intelligent non-humans from the same genre. Elves imitate other elves and goblins other goblins in a line of heredity that links them only distantly, if at all, to specific human stereotypes. Fictional races need no more be analogs of specific, real-world races than fictional characters need to be analogs of specific, real-world people. Even so, as I argue in chapter three, they remain tied to contemporary concepts of “race,” even as they grow more distant from earlier conceptions of specific races. Intelligent non-humans may be *fictional* races, yet they are races nonetheless.

Past approaches to racialization and the construction of intelligent non-humans have focused their attention on three areas. The three approaches involve 1) focusing on how intelligent non-humans are treated or positioned in society, 2) looking at the way the works associate intelligent non-humans with traditionally racialized features, whether cultural or physical (such as skin tone, religious practices, or mode of dress) or 3) trying to identify the intelligent non-humans as being representatives of or stand-ins for specific racialized groups from the real world. Scholars have employed such approaches with a wide variety of speculative fiction texts. I will discuss several of their works here. However, as there are too many to list concisely, I will give special attention to scholars who work with the same primary works I do here.

In general, all have often fallen prey to certain common pitfalls, such as the tendency to focus exclusively on negative portrayals. Positive and negative traits are both necessarily hierarchical. To say that a group is good at something is to say that they are either *better* or *more reliably* good at it than the other group. To say they generally have some positive aspect is to say that other groups do not have that aspect or do not have it as reliably. Thus a text that describes the various virtues of different groups and makes no mention of weaknesses still lays the groundwork for a world that is just as hierarchically organized and oppressive as a text that only describes negative traits (potentially even more so, depending on the traits). After all, to say that a group is bad at some skill is to bar them from portions of society where that skill is required, but to say that they are best at some skill may be to restrict them

only to that portion of society where that skill is relevant.<sup>12</sup> The assumptions, therefore, which have caused so many of the scholars discussed below to pay attention to orcs and house-elves while sparing little or no attention for groups such as Tolkien's elves, represent a significant shortcoming in speculative fiction scholarship.

The first approach has been to focus on the treatment of intelligent non-humans, either ignoring questions about how their identities are constructed or coupling that analysis with the other approaches. A reading of the treatment and social standing of intelligent non-humans may touch lightly on some relevant traits of those non-humans, but it does not usually consider the degree to which those traits mark them as "races." This approach appears in many works of speculative fiction scholarship. As a typical example, I turn to scholarship discussing the activism of Harry Potter's friend and classmate Hermione Granger, who attempts to campaign for the freedom of house-elves, beginning in book four. Such scholarship generally focuses on her activism's portrayal, sometimes to the complete exclusion of the construction of the house-elves.

Approaches range from applauding Hermione's efforts as an example to young readers to interpreting their portrayal as a criticism of activist agendas. For instance, Roni Natov positions Hermione's activism positively, arguing that, among the protagonists, "Hermione has the most highly developed sense of justice" and that she "alone understands the oppression of the house-elves" (131). Karin E. Westman also positions Hermione as an example for the reader, arguing that "Hermione's criticisms highlight for the reader how a belief in house-elves' servitude may appear 'natural' to those brought up in the wizarding culture, how that belief may be absorbed unwittingly as truth" (327). Marek C. Oziewicz reads Hermione's activism as a "sincere attempt at championing social justice" which "fails" because of the underlying hierarchies of the work contradict it (197, 215). Eliza T. Dresang sees Hermione as rooted in Rowling's own life and her activism stemming from Rowling's history of activism. Despite these roots, Dresang does note that Hermione's activism is "raised to the level of caricature, at least initially" (222). William MacNeil takes a more dynamic approach. While seeming to support Hermione's take on elf rights and rejecting the opposing view, located primarily in the Weasley twins, MacNeil admits this approach encounters a "problem" because

---

<sup>12</sup> For example, the way describing Blacks as "athletic" or "rhythm loving" suggests to some that blacks should *only* be employed in athletics or music (Cole 2).

“the behaviour of the house elves rather confirms than contests the twins’ claims as to their happiness” (555). It is unclear whether MacNeil accepts Hermione’s explanation about the house-elves being “brainwashed” or simply takes note of it (555). However, MacNeil acknowledges Hermione’s position as a target for “political satire” by Rowling (554), ultimately describing such humor as “wear[ing] a bit thin,” beginning “to take on a distinctly Skeeter-esque tone of vitriol, describing Hermione in the least flattering terms” (555) at least during book four (the most recent book as of MacNeil’s article). MacNeil finds similar portrayals in the extreme opposing position taken by “Draco Malfoy’s high caste clique of Slytherin snobs” (554). Nevertheless, MacNeil dismisses the possibility that the Weasley twins, “Jack-the-lad spoofs of the bloke-y, Richard Branson-like public schoolboy” (555), are intended to be the voice of reason. As such, for MacNeil, it “remains unclear . . . precisely why Harry and Ron are unenthusiastic [*sic*] about Hermione’s efforts to combat racism” (555).

On an increasingly critical note, Ann Curthoys acknowledges the presentation of Hermione’s earlier efforts as negatively cast. Still, Curthoys reads that presentation as having been overturned by the conclusion of the series:

In the earlier novels, Hermione’s support for elves’ rights is somewhat mocked, even by her friends, and she is portrayed as possibly a little too zealous, somewhat inappropriate in her fervour, perhaps too politically correct. However, in this final volume, we come to see that perhaps she has a point; indeed, there is a strong suggestion that she has been more or less right about the issue all along. (30)

Katrin Berndt interprets those same events from the concluding book, not as vindicating Hermione but claiming that “Hermione has overcome her initially narrow-minded approach, and . . . developed a truly kind attitude that reflects her disinterested concern about other magical beings” (173). She has learned that the house-elves’ “wellbeing will profit from appreciation rather than from lectures on the blessings of education” (170). Berndt sees Hermione’s earlier efforts as stemming from “her firm belief in democratic values” and not from “altruistic charity” (170). Berndt acknowledges that “Hermione’s form of rebellion is much less welcome and consequently supported by considerably fewer people than Harry’s challenge of Voldemort” (172), at least until the sixth novel. Berndt’s reading, though, is similar to Curthoys’s in Berndt’s argument that “the evil that Hermione’s rebellion insists on attacking is eventually revealed to be not a minor issue that can well be neglected until the major battles are all fought, but an essential component of the menace

looming over the magical world” (172). While seeing their portrayal as initially unsympathetic, these readings take Hermione’s activism as ultimately justified.

I would disagree with the optimistic final reading, however. As Jackie Horne points out, the final sentence of the final chapter (before the epilogue) involves Harry wondering if his house-elf, Kreacher, could make him a sandwich (*Deathly* 749). The character, declared the “defender of house-elves” (*Deathly* 734) by the house-elves themselves, thus earned that status without showing interest in their liberation. It seems a strong indication that their liberation is unneeded. It is Harry’s title, not Hermione’s, which the elves rally behind in the final Battle of Hogwarts. Horne joins other critics in the observation that “[i]n the early volumes of Rowling’s series, as signaled by the humor provoking acronym S.P.E.W., such an institutionally-focused approach to antiracism work is more an object of laughter for the reader than an example of how a reader should act against oppression” (85). “The text,” Horne observes, “like the Hogwarts students themselves, seems to regard Hermione’s politically-based antiracism work as a joke” (86). Meredith Cherland likewise sees Ron positioned “as a man of reason” in his rejection of house-elf freedom, enacting “the binary of male/female and of rational/irrational” in his opposition to Hermione’s irrational pursuits of racial justice (279). As Rivka Temima Kellner puts it succinctly, “Hermione takes the house elf cause seriously, but Rowling does not take Hermione seriously” (378).<sup>13</sup>

These examples all focus on *Harry Potter*, but similar approaches exist concerning other works, such as in readings of the treatment of orcs (Firchow, Tally “Let Us”) or the willing subordination of droids and wookiees and why Chewbacca does not receive a medal (Rubey). This approach is helpful when analyzing the ethics of portrayed responses to Otherness, although it can be misleading when employed without questioning the construction of Otherness. Overlooking the fundamental question of the construction of these non-humans means failing to form a successful case for why the treatments described should be otherwise. Generally speaking, the treatment of many non-human creatures is *justified* within the confines of the fictional world. The killing of orcs, for example, may be cruel, but they are so fundamentally and irredeemably evil that the protagonists have no choice.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, their

---

<sup>13</sup> This suspicion of anti-racism in name, particularly in *Harry Potter*’s social and historical context, and the interplay between positive and negative portrayals of racism in Hermione’s portrayal, are discussed in chapter five.

<sup>14</sup> This contrasts with foes who are not racially evil, such as Grima Wormtongue, Saruman, Gollum, the Haradrim, the Southrons, the Easterlings, the Dunlanders, and so forth, all of whom are offered a

extermination becomes a moral imperative. Likewise, allowing the continued enslavement of house-elves may seem oppressive, but the house-elves would have it no other way. All the heroes can do to ensure their happiness is to see that they are treated fairly within their preferred master-slave relationships.<sup>15</sup> Any argument for better treatment of house-elves or orcs cannot be successfully employed toward the better treatment of our fellow human beings unless the grounds for rationalizing that treatment are exposed. Without this, the underlying differences historically supposed about subordinated real-world groups can continue to be supposed and used as justification for their exploitation and oppression. To argue for the liberation of house-elves, in other words, without examining the underlying world architectural elements that make house-elves happy to serve, would be fruitless since their desire for servitude superficially appears to mark their enslavement as for their benefit. Jackie Horne, at least, wisely couples the critique with the claim that “[f]or Rowling to create another sentient race that truly desires enslavement is dangerous and irresponsible, I would argue; such a creation is far too likely to play into wish-fulfillment fantasies only too common in our own world that other races or nationalities desire to serve our needs” (101). Acknowledging this is an important step forward in understanding how racist ideologies have manifested in works of speculative fiction.

In the second approach, scholars attempt to identify traits, such as coloration, physical features, tropes, or cultural and linguistic practices that have been historically racialized and manifest among the various non-human characters in a given work. This approach seems the least common of the three. However, it retains its merits, worth mentioning here, for it draws meaningful links between racialized portrayals in the real world and fictional ones while avoiding pinning the reading down to hard-to-defend one-to-one correspondences between real and fictional peoples. For example, Yvonne Tasker identifies racialized features in the predator (from the movie series of the same name), citing skin tone, animalistic features, and “dreadlocks.” Tasker uses these observations to argue about racial overtones in contemporary action cinema. A more significant example appears in the work of Daniel Bernardi, who studies patterns of Whiteness, White superiority,

---

chance for redemption. Much the same, in *Harry Potter*, alliance is offered to numerous non-human groups by Dumbledore but not to those who are racially irredeemable, such as dementors.

<sup>15</sup> As I discuss in chapter five, however, there are certain inconsistencies in the behavior of house-elves in *Harry Potter*, which complicate the discourse of willing servitude. Nonetheless, within the limits of their perception and understanding, ensuring the kind treatment, but not the liberation, of house-elves is the limit of the protagonists’ ability to act ethically on their behalf.



and racial oppression implicit in *Star Trek*. Bernardi argues at length that “[i]n *Trek* texts, articulations of race in this regard can be as straightforward as darkening up an alien species in order to make them seem more ominous and threatening. Many evil aliens in *Trek* are dark. It can also involve whitening an alien race so that they appear benevolent or godlike. Almost all divine creatures in *Trek* are white” (12). Bernardi’s observations about skin tone reveal an inherent bias in skin color associations throughout the series. This approach also appears in Chapman and Cull’s observation that “race remained ubiquitous in *Star Wars*” as the creators “raided collections of ethnographic objects and languages to create their new ‘others’. The Sand People used Fijian war clubs; the Jawas spoke speeded up Zulu and Swahili, while the lowlife Greedo used an electronically distorted Quechua dialect of Peru” (168, citing Pollock 179), and “the Ewoks speak a speeded-up ‘Tibetan’” (177).<sup>16</sup> On a more general level, John Rieder claims that in *Star Wars*, “[t]he odd extraterrestrial stands in for ethnic variation in traditional American style, either as a dangerous scum (the denizens of the saloon in *Star Wars*, the bounty hunters in *Empire Strikes Back*) or as the inarticulate sidekick, Chewbacca” (34). Rieder considers general tropes as indicative rather than specific physical or cultural correspondence. The same is true of Dan Rubey’s reading, which sees Chewbacca and the droids as filling a role usually reserved for “Indians and blacks.” Perhaps more general still is David Meyer’s observation that Chewbacca’s relationship with Han Solo stems in part from a long tradition (citing Leslie Fielder) of pairing a white hero “with a non-white [non-human] male to allow the development of an intimate alliance without homoerotic overtones” (101, brackets in original). Each example offers crucial insights into the work they study. Nonetheless, they only touch the surface of the ideological encoding in their works. Because they look at the evaluative aspects of those features they see represented, they typically become tied down to concerns over positive and negative portrayals (with the resulting limitations discussed above and in chapter five).

The division between the second and third approaches may become somewhat blurred, particularly as scholars may lean toward “scholarly brinkmanship.”<sup>17</sup> If scholars stop short of making the claims of the third approach

---

<sup>16</sup> According to Chapman and Cull, this was confirmed during a viewing with Robin Kornman, a “renowned scholar of Tibet” who indicated that most of the dialog would be translated to “What is this? What is this? It’s a microphone” (177). I suspect this is an oversimplification, given the variety of ewok dialog, but I lack the resources to verify.

<sup>17</sup> Speaking of its use by the authors of *The Bell Curve*, a racist ideological text from the 1990’s, Howard Gardner refers to scholarly brinkmanship as a process where “the authors come dangerously close to

(that the non-humans directly stand in for some particular human group), they may yet phrase their claims to encourage the reader to draw those conclusions. In particular, scholars may compare the features of a type of intelligent non-human to those of one specific real-world group stereotype, ignoring features that do not match the stereotype, leaving the impression of one-to-one correspondence.

A relatively straightforward example of the latter practice appears in the work of Mika Loponen. Loponen's work offers valuable insights into how different presentations of intelligent non-humans, from Tolkien onward, have used some tropes of racialized caricatures in their construction and how those aspects have affected the decisions of translators. Loponen's primary concern is how translators have accommodated racialized depictions, and the issues I discuss here are tangential to Loponen's larger argument. Loponen skirts the boundary between the second and third approaches when working toward, but stopping short of, the claim that non-humans represent specific real-world groups. Loponen otherwise focuses on racialized features and tropes similarly to other scholars using this approach. Loponen repeats a not uncommon claim in Tolkien scholarship, for example, that "Orcs are mainly described in the books with adjectives or descriptive phrases that were commonly used of African blacks in colonial literature" (65). This claim is technically valid, save for the word "mainly": Orcs are not exclusively, or even primarily, characterized in those terms. Loponen forwards the impression that they are by citing repeated references in *The Lord of the Rings* of orcs as "black" or "swart."<sup>18</sup> As I will discuss in chapter four, orcs with those skin tones are the exception rather than the rule. Loponen's citations imply otherwise in part through limited context. For example, Loponen claims that "[t]he first time the protagonists actually encounter orcs in Moria, they are introduced as 'large and evil: black Uruks of Mordor' (Tolkien 2009: 342), and the orc chieftain's 'broad flat face was swart' (Tolkien 2009: 343)" (65). Gandalf's complete statement reads: "'There are Orcs, very many of them,' he said. 'And some are large and evil: black Uruks of Mordor'" (316). The full quotation reveals that most of the orcs present did not fit the description. Rather, the "black Uruks of Mordor" are a specific variety of orc, one

---

embracing the most extreme positions, yet in the end shy away from doing so" which "encourages the reader to draw the strongest conclusions, while allowing the authors to disavow this intention."

<sup>18</sup> Loponen also cites other features, such as cannibalism. Tolkien's orcs are not *technically* cannibals, because unlike their recent film counterparts, they do not eat other orcs, and they treat accusations that they do as a grave insult (*Lord* 436), but they do eat humans. However, while accusations of cannibalism have a long history in racist and colonial discourse, they are not associated exclusively with Africans. I focus on skin tone here for brevity, and because it is the most distinctly "African" feature.

that was more threatening, perhaps, but in the minority among the orcs present in that scene. The chieftain's traits are exceptional, and while the use of dark skin to make him seem more evil, fearsome, or dangerous reflects poorly on the racial politics of the novel, it does not describe orcs in general. Loponen approaches such a claim but stops short of it, marking an affinity for, but not quite an embrace of, the third approach.

Stopping short of the third approach is less common than embracing it. Working within that approach, scholars seek allegorical readings. They consider the stereotypes used to characterize intelligent non-humans in the works. They then compare them to the stereotypes used by ideologues to characterize different human groups.<sup>19</sup> When a matching stereotype appears, scholars identify that group as a stand-in or proxy for the real-world group. When none appears, they assume that racial ideologies are not a factor in the presentation of the fictional group. Among the limitations of this approach is that such analyses are often controversial, failing to establish a consensus. While they may generate considerable discussion, such debate rarely produces new insight or proceeds beyond the original question. A fictional group one critic sees as matching a certain stereotype may contradict the stereotype in the eyes of another critic, and the differences sometimes seem irreconcilable.

Part of this irreconcilability stems from the stereotypes themselves. Real-world racial stereotypes are unstable over time and across societies, and different versions of a given stereotype may have contradictory elements. Thus a given portrayal of a non-human group might match one version of a widespread stereotype that the author is familiar with but contradict another with which they are not. Likewise, it may be an approximate match for multiple, similar stereotypes applied to different groups. For example, some stereotypes and caricatures of Jewish men portray them as bearded, while others portray them as having stubbly double chins, and no portrayal can easily include both. Further, Jewish men are not the only group whose stereotype includes beardedness. Portrayals of Jews as greedy, cowardly, or duplicitous may also be commonplace, but such traits are not unique to those stereotypes. An easy example of these contradictions entering into the debate over non-human proxies appears in Andrew Howe's discussion of whether Jawas or Wookiees in *Star Wars* are representations of Mexicans, a claim based on a stereotype

---

<sup>19</sup> These may not always be racial groups. For example, Kellner discusses house-elves as stand-ins for oppressed women. Racial stereotypes are the most employed by far, however, and are the focus here.

of Mexicans tinkering with cars. The critics Howe describes are obviously familiar with such a stereotype, while Howe is not, causing Howe to dismiss their claims (13). More troubling still is that, given the variety of stereotypes to choose from, it might seem inevitable to some that *any* fictional portrayal ought to correspond to *some* stereotype, an observation that, if true, would rob the discovered parallels of significance.

A similar problem occurs with the blind spots produced by such an approach. An inability to narrow down a given portrayal to a real-world stereotype does not, I hope to demonstrate in my analysis, mean that racial ideologies are not at play. Even so, this assumption often follows implicitly from many of the arguments of scholars working within this approach. Many vital insights are missed by this exclusion, as scholars dismiss highly relevant works of fiction as irrelevant to the study of racism based solely on this assumption. Examples of this approach abound, and *Star Wars* scholarship is particularly ripe with those who choose this approach. The highest-profile discussion of this matter surrounds the character of Jar-Jar Binks from the prequel trilogy. The dominant position describes Jar-Jar as a stand-in for a Jamaican or Caribbean character, likely because of his voice actor's ethnic identity. However, it is far from the only position, and African or African-American analogs have also been ascribed. William Brooker summarized numerous positions on this matter, recognizing that Jar-Jar is "widely described in the on-line and North American press as an offensive caricature of Caribbean, Jamaican or African-American culture" (15). When discussing the matter at a conference, Brooker found that academics overwhelmingly supported the position (15). Brooker argues that the connection is unfortunate and not necessarily apparent to all viewers. Even so, Brooker's study showed that the position becomes difficult to ignore for viewers once it is pointed out (26–30).

Andrew Howe disagrees, arguing that no aspect of Jar-Jar's appearance or mannerisms links to the Caribbean in any way, save that Ahmed Best, his voice actor, "did project an accent that could easily be associated with a specific geographical region" (18–19). As linguistic analysis shows, this is a conclusion based on knowledge of the actor's ethnicity over evidence from the film. Comparing the linguistic features of Jar-Jar's speech to those of Caribbean English shows no similarities, except for those which Caribbean English shares with mainstream American English. At no point does Jar Jar employ FACE vowels, GOAT vowels, h-dropping, zero indefinite articles, zero past tense markers, zero plural markers, or

similar traits.<sup>20</sup> Extending from Howe's arguments with this correction, there is no aspect of Jar-Jar in the films that conclusively links him to the Caribbean in any way.<sup>21</sup>

Others have made similar claims about other characters from the prequel films, but less frequently. For example, Watto has been identified as "an anti-Semitic stereotype, whether of Jewish or Arabic culture" (Brooker 15). Howe summarizes other sources that place him as either Arabic, Jewish, or Italian (Howe 20) and again disagrees. According to Brooker, the nemoidians "were accused of exhibiting stereotypically 'Japanese' accents and behaviour" (15). Howe generalizes to "East Asian," including Chinese, among additional sources and makes a good argument for these identifications being "even more tenuous" (19).

Evidence of the same approach appears regarding the original trilogy, with an equal lack of consensus. Taylor compares the Ewoks to the Viet Cong (X, 281), and Howe cites several more making the same comparison (13). Andrew Gordon cites an interview given by George Lucas and Chewbacca's relationship with Han Solo<sup>22</sup> to identify wookiees as Native Americans. Likewise, Howe cites claims that wookiees (as well as Jawas) are representative of Mexicans, rejecting both readings based on a lack of evidence, including a lack of evidence for the existence of the matching stereotype (13).

---

<sup>20</sup> I performed this comparison based off a case study description of Caribbean English performed by the British Library, using BBC interview recordings as a reference. The article was originally published here: <https://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/sounds/case-studies/minority-ethnic/caribbean/> The website has since been updated, however, and the article was replaced by a rewritten version of the article, which can be found here: <https://www.bl.uk/british-accent-and-dialects/articles/caribbean-english>. The latter version lists fewer features, but still supports my claim, and similar comparisons can be made with any description of Caribbean English, of which many are available. I invite those who lack sufficient linguistic training to view any number of recordings or YouTube videos available depicting Caribbean English, as the difference between those speech patterns and those of Jar-Jar Binks are fairly obvious even to the untrained ear.

<sup>21</sup> Here is a prime area, however, where the second approach listed here might provide insights, even ones not acknowledged by the approach I now use. While Jar-Jar does not show any signs of being Jamaican, he is built within tropes that are typical of ethnically stereotyped characters, including primitive technology, a strong accent, foolishness and, as discussed in chapter five, the Willing Slave trope. It is my belief that audiences recognized these tropes and many of them assumed that *some* stereotype must be in play. An awareness of the identity of the voice actor coupled with a lack of familiarity with Caribbean English leads audiences easily to believe in the existence of a Caribbean stereotype that they are not personally familiar with. Comparing Jar-Jar to dominant tropes of ethnic minority characters is revealing here, but comparing him to specific stereotypes simply misleads.

<sup>22</sup> Gordon cites Han's last name ("Solo") and his tendency to be a loner as being like the Lone Ranger, thus marking his sidekick, Chewbacca, as Tonto, who was a Native American.

Tolkien scholarship contains more interesting examples, in addition to much of the same, such as in the perennial debate about whether dwarves are representative of Jews (for recent examples on each side, see Vink, Brackmann). One essential work is Dimitra Fimi's *Tolkien, Race and Cultural History: From Faeries to Hobbits*. In the chapter on race, Fimi extensively compares many of the portrayals in Tolkien's work and racial beliefs from the century leading up to their publication, an approach with many similarities at that level to the one used here. For example, Fimi successfully notes the tripartite division among the three groups of Men (and further of White Men) and links it to Victorian and early twentieth-century racial beliefs (144–45). Fimi further recognizes the same three-part division among hobbits (145) and elves (143). However, Fimi ultimately discards the hobbit and elf parallels, concluding “that it is mainly Men in Tolkien's invented world who are described through late Victorian and early twentieth century ideas of ‘race’” (163). I am left to conclude that Fimi's work reaches this conclusion based on this same underlying assumption about one-to-one correspondence, that if no direct parallel to specific real-world groups appears, racism is not at play.<sup>23</sup> Were it not for this assumption, it would have been easy to extend the analysis to non-humans.

The division among hobbits, for example, is explicitly biological and hierarchical, with one group forming the leaders and chiefs, another the middle class, and the third the working poor. Moreover, each hobbit group links explicitly to a single non-hobbit group (in descending hierarchical order, to elves, men, and dwarves, respectively). Specifically, “[t]he Harfoots had much to do with Dwarves in ancient times,” “[t]he Stoors . . . were less shy of Men,” and “[t]he Fallohides . . . were more friendly with Elves than other Hobbits were” (*Lord 3*), which implies that this use of racial divisions extends much further than among hobbits. Even if the various hobbit sub-groups are not specifically stand-ins for specific human groups, the basic logic of racism is very much at work in their portrayal. Fimi's work uncovers many levels of racialization implicit in Tolkien's world. Still, it misses some aspects because it adheres to these assumptions.

---

<sup>23</sup> Fimi also dismisses the distinction between Men and Elves, specifically, as being spiritual rather than biological, and therefore not racial (142–43). I would disagree on this reason for disqualifying the distinction as being racial. As Susannah Heschel notes, race “is not about biology or physiology or anatomy alone, but about the spirit of a person and a collective people” (6), a point that was especially true of the early twentieth-century racism that Heschel focuses on and which was contemporary to Tolkien's writing. For my further reasons for including permanent, hereditary, group-affiliated distinctions such as this under a racial heading, see my definition of race in chapter two.

Existing scholarship considering intelligent non-humans in speculative fiction and their connections to racial beliefs has left open questions about how “world architecture,” the structure and rules of the fictional world, can construct intelligent non-human groups as fictional “races” in their own right. These approaches have produced valuable insights, particularly those looking at social relations and reflections of racialized features or traits. However, these works have not adequately addressed how racism encodes at the level of the world’s architecture. I seek to fill that gap with a detailed analysis of racist ideological frameworks’ role in the various stories’ world architecture.

## 1.4 Notes and Structure of the Dissertation

Identities are complicated, although often less so in fiction than in reality. Race, gender, social class, and countless other identities intersect and permeate one another in many ways. When relevant, I will make every effort to show sensitivity to the complexity of various identities and distinguish between racial identities and pertinent other identities for my analysis. However, there are many cases where, at first glance, I may appear to conflate particular identities, particularly race and class identities. I must stress that race and class identities sometimes experience slippage in this analysis, not because the distinction is irrelevant but because the works I study often do not distinguish between them. Class, in many cases across these works, is overdetermined by race to the point of one-to-one correspondence between them, with a class made entirely of a single race and that race only belonging to that class. In Tolkien’s works, for example, social class among hobbits often remains stable across generations (Ruane and James 23), save for a few isolated cases, such as with Samwise Gamgee (discussed in chapter five), and the same is true of other races. The ruling classes of any group also often have ancestry that is somehow racially distinct from the common folk. Likewise, in *Star Wars*, all droids are enslaved. In *Harry Potter*, races like goblins, centaurs, and house-elves are each a social class unto themselves. I will discuss deviations from this at some length. Nevertheless, the conflation of race and class in the works (and sometimes race and gender among races who only show examples of one gender within the works, such as dwarves, centaurs, and veela) is too common to make this clarification at every point when it becomes relevant to the discussion.

I will begin this effort by laying the groundwork for the analysis in chapter two. I explain my approach, especially around the concepts of world architecture, diegetic logic, and ideological frameworks, followed by the definitions of intelligent non-humans, race, and racism I use in this research. I explain my understanding of world architecture and how it relates to related concepts, such as “world-building,” and to its use by previous scholarship from which I adapt the term. I explain the idea of diegetic logic relative to it. I then examine the concept of ideological frameworks and use an earlier example from Linnaeus to show how I will apply such frameworks in this dissertation. Finally, the concept of racism is especially fraught. I devote considerable time to establishing my definition and addressing other scholars' concerns about my preferred approach. The analysis will then consider that encoding in terms of racism and intelligent non-humans, first establishing the encoding of race, then Whiteness as race's invisible counterpoint. Finally, it considers the diverse ends to which these constructions can mobilize via racism and anti-racism.

Chapter three begins putting the approach into practice, showing how the works encode race via intelligent non-humans. I challenge notions that racialized presentations in speculative fiction are due exclusively to the inherited practice from the genre's foundational works. Comparing the diegetic logic of each set of works to the changing racist ideological frameworks across the twentieth century, I show that the world architecture of each exists in dialog with earlier racisms by proxy of their engagement with the conventions of their genre *and* with the specific racisms of their times. Never perfect reflections of contemporary ideologies, each nonetheless engages with, modifies, and selectively reproduces elements of contemporary racist discourse through its use of intelligent non-humans in its world architecture. As significant shifts occurred in racist discourse during the twentieth century, the presentation of intelligent non-humans in popular speculative fiction has correspondingly adapted, showing evidence of an ongoing dialog with contemporary racisms rather than an unreflective borrowing from their predecessors. This ongoing dialog pushes the parallels between “real” and fantasy races beyond the realm of coincidence and cements the racialized nature of intelligent non-humans.

Chapter four then takes the analysis a step further, showing how the works have portrayed intelligent non-humans relative to racial beliefs and how their relationship to the humans in the works further negotiates modern racism. It employs insights from Whiteness studies and builds off of scholars such as Adalifu Nama, who argues for the existence of “the symbolic presence of blackness in SF



films where it is not readily apparent” (11). Building on these studies, I argue in chapter four for the symbolic presence of Whiteness, which runs throughout all the works, even when it appears not to do so, but with graded borders, allowing partial participation in Whiteness to a variety of beings and identities. This graded representation of Whiteness overlaps cleanly with race, species, and gender and creates an implicit hierarchy in which the White human male protagonists stand supreme. Because this graded hierarchy overlaps neatly with real-world identities, I argue that this representation reinforces real-world hierarchies even more directly than the non-human portrayals in chapter three.

Finally, in chapter five, I extend from the earlier-identified patterns of racialization and look at the uses of these patterns. I examine the works’ engagements with various forms of *anti-racism*. With this aim, I give special attention to how the works encode contradictory messages and open themselves to alternative readings. Following the work of John Fiske, I show how each acts as a producerly text, encoding its preferred meaning while reluctantly revealing opposing messages. These alternative messages open the texts up to guerilla readings, allowing readers from diverse ideological backgrounds to find their preferred messages and thus securing the works’ broad, popular appeal. I demonstrate this encoding regarding several forms of anti-racism, which I group loosely under the headings of relativist, universalist, and practice-oriented anti-racism.

Overall, this study hopes to show how the works of popular speculative fiction analyzed here use intelligent non-human creatures to engage with racism and anti-racism. These engagements take diverse forms, reflecting, renegotiating, and sometimes challenging dominant discourses. They work from a basis of racial essentialism, adapted to the specific racisms of their times, and they engage with graded representations of Whiteness, in which they allow different measures of participation to those with different, more-or-less “White” identities. However, on this basis, they attempt to develop an anti-racist project, engaging and renegotiating various approaches to anti-racism while being critical of others. This latter engagement shows the strengths and weaknesses of some of these forms of anti-racism. At the same time, their engagements leave openings for opposing readings, as the works are replete with surprising synergies and productive contradictions, and dissenting voices manifest throughout their narratives.

## 2 COLORED BLUEPRINTS: RACISM AND WORLD ARCHITECTURE

### 2.1 Defining “Intelligent Non-Humans,” “Racism,” and Related Terms

To understand the relationship between racism, intelligent non-humans, and world architecture, all three concepts will need to be defined. This chapter explores those definitions and briefly explains how it will employ them in the forthcoming analysis.

The category of “non-human” is acknowledged here as a social construct, even within the fictional realms where it is employed. This pattern inescapably resonates with how racist discourse constructs some race groups as *non-* or at least *sub-human*, despite their biologically human natures (Brown). As such, I define membership in the category using primarily social criteria. Many groups I discuss here may be “human” in the biological sense, as they can demonstrably interbreed with human beings and produce fertile offspring. Others may be humans who have experienced some alteration. Others still have no connection or resemblance to humanity beyond their intelligence. Being constructed as “non-human” while still being biologically human is most common in *Harry Potter* and Tolkien’s works, while *Star Wars* constructs cleaner anatomical and physical boundaries. The identity of some creatures, such as werewolves, may be constructed as human or non-human differently in different contexts. Intuitively enough, being an “intelligent non-human” for these purposes requires being constructed as *something other than human* and as *intelligent*. The level of construction for intelligence here is first and foremost at the level of the world architecture, and only secondarily the construction performed diegetically by the characters. A being that behaves as though it possesses intelligence is treated as intelligent here, even if the characters remain unaware of its intelligence and treat it as though it were not. If other evidence is lacking, the characters are otherwise considered reputable sources as to the intelligence of other creatures. The level of intelligence of beings in the real world is considered irrelevant.

For this study, I consider a creature a non-human if the works' use of "human" does not include them or if their humanity is significantly qualified, such as being a "part-human."<sup>24</sup> In *Harry Potter*, then, for this study, witches, wizards, muggles, and squibs are all considered human. Centaurs, giants, merfolk, vampires, and even werewolves (among many others) are considered non-humans (although werewolves remain liminal). In *Star Wars*, "humans" include characters referred to as such and all those who are not visually distinct from humans. Labels used for different groups follow these visual cues in all cases, so "Jedi" is not a human/non-human distinction, but being an "ewok" or "wookiee" or "dug" or "droid" follows with a set appearance in each case. Thus, those groups and all other visually physically distinct groups without labels are considered non-humans. In Tolkien's works, "Men" (in the genderless sense used in the works, usually but not reliably capitalized to distinguish it from the adult male "men") acts as the human group, despite not being referred to directly as "human."<sup>25</sup> This equivalence is clearest in Tolkien conflating "Men" and "Big people" with the plural first-person "us" (referring to narrator and reader) during *The Lord of the Rings* (1, 2). As we have ample indication that the narrator is a modern human speaking to a contemporary audience, I accept that "Men" are humans as we know them, and other groups are distinct therefrom.

Similarly, rather than employing some measure of absolute intelligence, I consider non-humans intelligent only if the narrative portrays them as such. For this, I look for features that traditionally denote human<sup>26</sup> intelligence, especially the ability to produce or comprehend complex language. The distinction is most ambiguous in *Harry Potter*. In *Star Wars* and Tolkien's works, creatures seem to have full intelligence or none. Prototypical creatures of full human-like intellectual ability exist in *Harry Potter* as well. This group would include creatures such as goblins, who are clever, possess excellent accounting skills, and are fully fluent, if not in a human language, then something like "Gobbledegook" (*Goblet* 387), and have a society, complex identities, et cetera. Less central members of this category will also receive some

---

<sup>24</sup> Note that the term, along with the sometimes-pejorative "half-breed," is employed without consistent meaning in *Harry Potter* and does not indicate any particular relationship to humanity. Creatures who have one human parent (such as half-giants), who used to be human (such as werewolves), or who have body parts resembling a human's (such as centaurs) all become referents of the terms "part-human" and "half-breed" at different points.

<sup>25</sup> Only one token of the lemma *human* appears in the books and appears as an adjective. For a discussion of that token, see chapter four.

<sup>26</sup> Specifically, because my intent is to compare them to *human* races. Thus, machine intelligence or other forms of animal intelligence are not relevant to the type of construction I seek to analyze.

consideration, extending as far as creatures like hippogriffs, who are intelligent enough to understand various verbal instructions and recognize insults but cannot grasp concepts like a need to go into hiding. These appear to have human-like intelligence but to a lesser degree than adult humans (Buckbeak, indeed, seems to have intelligence at the level of a small child). The exact degree of owl intelligence is unclear. However, they can count, read, follow complex instructions, are capable of being insulted, and are conscious of social status, so they are likely more intelligent than hippogriffs. Nevertheless, it is unclear if they are as intelligent as adult humans.

Beyond distinctions *between* humans and non-humans, it will also be necessary to distinguish *among* different human and non-human groups. For this distinction, I turn to the concept of “race.” In the real world, race is a social construct. To understand this discussion, however, it is imperative to recognize that being a social construct is not the same as being “not real.” “Race is very much socially and culturally real” (Mukhopadhyay et al. 13). In the United States, as in the rest of the world, it “continues to play an important role in determining how individuals are treated, where they live, their employment opportunities, the quality of their health care, and whether individuals can fully participate in the social, political, and economic mainstream of American life” (Smedley and Smedley 23). “Race” is a phenomenon that affects people's lived experiences worldwide (Mukhopadhyay 12). That impact is not through biology but social relations, often stemming from a *belief in* biological distinction. When I refer to “race” in the real world, I specifically refer to the *construction* of biological difference.

The construct of “race” refers to distinctions that many presume to represent distinct, permanent, entirely hereditary subgroups of humanity. “Distinct,” in this case, means that individuals are members of only one group or sub-group, with no overlap between groups and no unclassified individuals. Such ideologues presume that even those of mixed birth could be defined unambiguously by their mixture if it were fully known. Permanence and heredity distinguish race from many other social categories. Culture, citizenship, and religious affiliation can be changed and are not inborn or hereditary; identities that change with those factors are not racial. However, when those identities appear as hereditary and permanent, such that, for example, discourse constructs a person who practices Christianity but whose parents are Jewish as “a Jew,” the constructed identity is very much racial.<sup>27</sup> Being “entirely” hereditary, in this case, distinguishes racial divisions from, for example,

---

<sup>27</sup> This criterion is inspired by a similar distinction made by George M. Fredrickson (*Racism* 6–8).

biological sex and similar traits, which might assist in group classification but which all offspring do not inherit (a childbearing family may produce children of any sex or gender). Typical constructions treat children as members of a given race if both parents are also members. Lastly, I define races as *groups* of *humanity*. Many personal traits are hereditary but not considered markers of membership in a *group*, and I do not consider non-human animals as races.

Despite such claims from racist ideologues, racialized social identities in the real world are not distinct, immutable, or entirely hereditary. Instead, discourses construct them for a given context.<sup>28</sup> Nonetheless, fictional worlds are not dependent on the accuracy of the worldview their authors attempt to recreate. In the fictional worlds I study here, fits with this definition of “race” are more precise, although I must note specific nuances. First, I must necessarily wave the requirement of “humanity” concerning racial divisions, substituting “intelligent creatures.” As noted before, in many cases, the intelligent non-humans I analyze are “human” in the biological sense in that they can interbreed with humans and produce fertile offspring. Their identity as “non-humans” is merely a social construction. As I will argue through most of this dissertation, even when they are *not* technically “human,” these groups’ differences are consistent with the construction of racial groups. The boundary between those non-humans who are and are not biologically compatible with humans does not bear any significance to these patterns of representation. Secondly, presuming the biological reality of racial groups in the real world would require qualifying the notion of permanence with the idea that races must have come *from* somewhere, usually via divine intervention (as in most earlier monogenetic theories) or environmental factors (as in most later polygenetic ones).<sup>29</sup> In fictional worlds, race changes sometimes appear via supernatural intervention, causing changes to racial identity within a single generation. These include the events that created different subdivisions of elves in Tolkien’s works or wizards bitten by werewolves in *Harry Potter*. Similar patterns hold elsewhere in speculative fiction, such as becoming a vampire in the *Twilight Saga* or Strawberry the Horse becoming a winged horse in *The Chronicles of Narnia*. In each case, the change occurring qualifies

---

<sup>28</sup> For many fine examples of this contextual construction of racial identity, see Stephen Middleton’s “The Battle over Racial Identity in Popular and Legal Cultures, 1810–1860”.

<sup>29</sup> It is a surprisingly common presentist misunderstanding of polygeneticism and monogeneticism that these get reversed. After all, current notions of evolution suggest that humans all derive from a common ancestor. Historically, however, it was biblical accounts that most often tied humans to a common ancestor (Adam via Noah) for European theorists. Polygenesis came to the fore only with the decline of biblical literalism (Fredrickson, *Racism* 66).

the idea of race being permanent. However, in each case, the change is irreversible and hereditary, affecting both the individuals and their offspring,<sup>30</sup> marking the new identity as permanent and hereditary and, therefore, still racial. Thirdly, some creatures, such as droids, are created by non-droid parents. Nonetheless, their identities are still defined by birth (creation) and remain fixed throughout their lives, and while they rarely reproduce, they can only produce other droids. The same is true of clones in the *Star Wars* prequels.

Following these qualifications, I define *racism* as the belief in the existence of *races* and the belief that races represent essential divisions of humanity, meaningful beyond their status as a social construct.<sup>31</sup> This meaningfulness may derive from belief in differing temperaments (such as having different desires or psychology), abilities (such as intelligence or athletic prowess), permanent social ties (such as inborn culture or religion, group loyalty, or shared culpability over the actions of other group members) or metaphysics (such as the presence of a soul), to name only a few possible factors. Physical features are relevant only when they are not the defining trait of racial divisions. To say that all Black people have dark skin is circular reasoning, not racism. To say that all Black people have curly hair is, in addition to being incorrect, to espouse essentialist ideas about race and, thus, racism. By extension, the term “racist” refers to anything, be it a person, discourse, organization, or similar, which espouses racism. “Racial discrimination” is used loosely to refer to practices that derive from racism. I structure my definition to delineate racism’s boundaries such that concepts like “cultural essentialism”<sup>32</sup> are considered members of the category, along with more prototypical forms of racism, such as White supremacy. At the same time, I exclude concepts like “height racism,” “age racism,” “religious racism,”<sup>33</sup> and sexism. However, this does not imply that these terms represent either accurate or acceptable notions.

---

<sup>30</sup> In the case of werewolves in *Harry Potter*, it is never confirmed whether the children of werewolves inherit the condition, but prior to the birth of his child, Lupin expresses confidence that they will. Again, werewolves remain liminal.

<sup>31</sup> Again, being a social construct does not mean race is not “real.” Believing in racial divisions that are *only* socially meaningful is not racist.

<sup>32</sup> Concepts George Fredrickson claims, citing the example of South African apartheid, “can do the work of racism based squarely on skin color or other physical characteristics” (Racism 3–4).

<sup>33</sup> In the sense of non-essentialist religious bigotry. When religion is treated as an inborn and immutable trait, racism may still be very much at work.

Defining racism is not so straightforward a matter that one can assume consensus from readers' prior knowledge or intuition. As Susannah Heschel argues, although various academic "fields are certainly united in being against [racism,]" there exists only "minimal consensus on definition" (4). Tony Jefferson joins other voices calling to abandon the term entirely, citing that it is "politically loaded" (131). However, being "loaded" is very much a reason the term is unavoidable. "Racism" will not disappear from political discourse any sooner than the ideology it refers to. Academics will thus need to contribute to and inform such discussion. While Ali Rattansi, among others, suggests that "public and academic debates should move away from simplistic attempts to divide racism from non-racism and racists from non-racists" (2), expecting public debates actually to do so would be, at best, unpardonably naive. This is to say nothing of the need in scholarship to define one's object of study nor of the sheer impracticality of working to oppose racism without being able to state what one is working against. Individuals will continue to make these binary distinctions. These distinctions should be informed by scholarly knowledge to whatever degree possible. As Michael Omi and Howard Winant note, "the absence of a clear 'common sense' understanding of what racism means has become a significant obstacle to efforts aimed at challenging it" (70).

For some, racism is too complex a matter for a simple definition. Ali Rattansi, for example, argues regarding racism that "[b]revity and accessibility are not good enough excuses for oversimplification" (1), and John Solomos and Les Back similarly argue that "unitary or simplistic definitions of racism become hard to sustain" (27). They justify this argument by the way "[r]acism manifests itself in plural and complex forms" and "metonymic elaborations" through "coded signifiers" (27). That contemporary racisms have adapted to allow their champions to deny accusations of racism at all, they rightly argue, means "that racist discourses need to be rigorously contextualized [. . .] situated within specific political, cultural, social and economic moments" (27). This claim echoes Omi and Winant's that "there can be no timeless or absolute standard for what constitutes racism, for social structures change and discourses are subject to rearticulation" (71) and that "[t]oday, racial hegemony is 'messy'" (75). Jefferson similarly describes racism as meaning "so many different things to different people" as not to be worth defining (131), and Robert Miles claims that the term had become, by "the late twentieth century, a term of political abuse" (1). Rattansi goes so far as to propose "that one of the main impediments to progress in understanding racism has been the willingness of all involved to propose short, supposedly water-tight definitions of racism and to

identify quickly and with more or less complete certainty who is really racist and who is not” (3). The situation has become complex enough that Goldberg (xiii) argues in favor of referring to the plural “racisms” rather than “racism” in the singular.<sup>34</sup>

Nonetheless, I contend that overcomplex definitions make accusations of racism easier to avoid. Meanwhile, having no definition leaves control over definitions of what is and is not racist in entirely the wrong hands. It is precisely because of this unwillingness to define what racism is that the term has been able to be put to such strained uses. To cite one of Solomos and Back’s examples, for some “new right commentators anti-racism” has come to be seen as “another form of racism” (114). Many scholars have used complex definitions of racism to try to account for the complexity of racism itself. Unfortunately, as I will show, adding complexity to a definition has the effect of narrowing the range of the definition, causing it to miss the complexity of racist practice rather than accounting for it. Such definitions are easier for racist ideologues to escape without abandoning harmful ideas or behaviors. If racism is defined with numerous criteria, racists need only disqualify themselves (or pretend to disqualify themselves) based on one of them. As the number of criteria increases, the change required to “not be racist” decreases.

The inclusion of racial hierarchies as a criterion provides an excellent example of this. The establishment of or support for racial hierarchies has been a feature of most definitions of racism. Goran Štrkalj treats hierarchy as something explicitly distinct by introducing a separate term for the belief in such (130), but this approach has been rare.<sup>35</sup> Fredrickson, for example, includes a requirement that racism “directly sustains or proposes to establish *a racial order*” (*Racism* 6), much like Omi and Winant’s approach, which requires one to “demonstrate a link” to “social structures of domination” (72). Ruth Benedict’s definition takes similar assumptions when it refers to the “congenital inferiority” and “congenital superiority” of different “ethnic groups” (97). These definitions have included hierarchy for a long time, such that it has appeared as a qualifying criterion. However, as racist discourse has come to be “coded in a language which aims to circumvent accusations of racism” (Solomos and Back 18), ideologues have exploited this criterion as part of this

---

<sup>34</sup> The singular form is not avoided in this dissertation. Nonetheless, the plural is used when it becomes necessary to refer to multiple varieties of what might be considered *racism*.

<sup>35</sup> I do feel that Štrkalj’s choice to treat a belief in hierarchies as a separate, or at least potentially separate, phenomenon may be stretching the matter slightly too far, given how closely connected the two concepts are. Nonetheless, insofar as hierarchy is not included in a *definition* of racism, I find myself in full agreement with Štrkalj.



circumvention. Just as claims of innate and permanent cultural difference have become a substitute for color or “race,” hierarchy denials have formed a prominent part of standard evasions.<sup>36</sup> Claiming that members of groups, even racially marked ones, are “equal but different” or “just as good, but ought to be allowed to flourish in their native environment” are typical approaches, which are no less racist for their supposed denial of inequality. These claims of equality may covertly form justifications for actual inequality. However, it would be a mistake to think that hidden inegalitarianism needs proving to identify the claims for what they are. Hierarchies may be a commonplace, even universal, feature of racism. As I will argue below, they may sprout inevitably even from the most seemingly benign racist claims, but they are not a *defining* feature. Racism without hierarchy, if it could exist, would still be racism. Those who claim racist beliefs but denounce hierarchy are still racist.

Other features can also narrow the scope of definitions of racism, causing them to miss the complexity of racist practice and creating loopholes to excuse racism. Power has, for example, been a frequent qualifier, assuming that only those with the ability to discriminate are truly capable of racism, a point that has often been contested (Omi and Winant 73). Assuming that members of minority groups lack the power to discriminate or would only discriminate against members of other groups itself espouses a form of racial essentialism and does not reflect historical or contemporary reality. Omi and Winant cite attempts to reverse the racial order as equally racist (72). Furthermore, racism can be present among those subordinated groups in a way that reinforces the existing order. One example is self-constructions of Black masculinity that portray it as incompatible with academics (Haddix 341), as Black men self-stereotype and limit themselves academically, restricting their economic potential. Similarly, Omi and Winant refer to “self-hatred or self-aggrandizement at the expense of more vulnerable members of racially subordinated groups” (73).<sup>37</sup> Constructions of Blackness, mediated by Blacks, for example, can act independently to establish and reinforce beliefs in essential difference, giving rise to or reinforcing existing social inequity. Scholars such as Rebollo-Gil and Moras see racism “as a problem of Whiteness” (382). Omi and Winant disagree, claiming that “[t]here is nothing white about racism” (72). Taken as a belief system that permeates

---

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, Robert Miles discussion of denials of hierarchy as a part of “new racism” (63).

<sup>37</sup> They provide the example of collaboration between Black elites and White supremacy groups, as discussed by E. Franklin Frazier. Memmi (136) and Dyer (20) also discuss the embrace of racism by relatively subordinated groups.

all corners of society, Whiteness is seen here as a problem of racism, not vice versa, and while it is a significant problem, it is far from the only one.

A third criterion that scholars may employ is that of attitude or intent. Garcia champions this position most clearly, basing a definition of racism *exclusively* on the claim that “racism, in its root, consists in racial disregard or even ill-will” (13). To Garcia, an individual who holds beliefs about race need only be “racist” if those beliefs are associated with feelings of hostility: “a connoisseur of races may be foolish and may tread on dangerous ground in thinking that races are real and that some are better than others, but this is inadequate reason to burden her with the severe moral judgment that she is a racist” (5). Garcia is wary of the term due to concern over the culpability of individuals to whom the “racist” label applies, reserving it for those guilty of moral shortcomings, not simply misinformed. Racism (in the sense here of racial beliefs), when acted upon, necessarily and by definition involves some degree of discrimination.<sup>38</sup> Even a statement as supposedly benign as “Asian Americans are naturally entrepreneurial,”<sup>39</sup> which Garcia finds unproblematic (11), when acted upon, will change the decisions of customers, employers, and investors in ways that can have genuine impacts on living people, particularly those who are, by extension, not “naturally entrepreneurial.” The resulting change in focus of purchasing, hiring, and investing habits can create or exacerbate social and economic inequalities. Thus the institutionalized forms of racism Garcia shows some passing concern for can be very much fueled by racism, defined as belief, without even the faintest spark of disregard or ill will.

Others include such criteria for defining racism, such as how Fredrickson cites the requirement that racist actions or feelings be “hostile or negative” (*Racism* 1). The idea that racism necessarily involves discrimination or unkindness to some degree represents one of the most oft-evaded criteria in lay definitions of racism. Using Alberto Urquidez’s example, “Blacks are subhuman” is easily discernible as a common racist claim. Like Urquidez, I would argue that it is racist by its content (235). Its nature does not change if the speaker treats it as a tragic disability on the part of Blacks, about which others must show sensitivity and restraint, or if it should

---

<sup>38</sup> In the root sense, one discriminates based on race when allowing the distinction to influence decisions.

<sup>39</sup> Garcia’s example derives from Omi and Winant’s work, where they contrast that phrase with the claim that “Many Asian Americans are highly entrepreneurial” (71). This approach agrees with Omi and Winant’s assessment that the latter is not racist, while the version cited here, that “Asian Americans are naturally entrepreneurial,” is (72).

“be used to justify the benevolent treatment of blacks” through what Urquidez has called “Millsian paternalism” (236). Nor does it change because the individual has friends from the same group, warm feelings toward them, or a history of positive relations with some group members. Another example of racism trying to avoid diagnosis via this loophole appears through ideologue Dinesh D’Souza’s notion of “rational discrimination” (286). This idea places the burden of ending discrimination upon subordinated groups. According to D’Souza, employers and policymakers are justified in discriminatory behaviors against American Blacks as long as many Blacks continue to engage in “bad” behaviors. This means of trying to make all group members equally culpable for the actions of some is undeniably racist, yet D’Souza claims to make this assertion without ill will. Whether the ill will is present, attempting to assign shared blame is sufficient to identify the belief as racist.

This is not to say that those who are merely ignorant need to be personally condemned, as Garcia fears. Condemnation should rightly fall on such beliefs,<sup>40</sup> not *necessarily* on individuals who harbor them without hostile intent. Yes, the application of the term “racist” to “a person, institution, policy, action, project or wish [. . .] is to present it as vicious and abhorrent” (7), as Garcia argues. However, if that person can be persuaded, the institution enlightened, the policy changed, or so forth, the label no longer applies. The person who once believed in racial distinctions is now not a racist. Indeed, this definition helps satisfy a requirement for defining racism Tony Jefferson puts forward, arguing that such a definition “will need to be meaningful to people so labelled, [sic] not least because individuals cannot change if they refuse the label” (121). If we define racism as a specific, clear set of beliefs, being a racist becomes a state of being (the condition of holding those beliefs) rather than a permanent identity. Providing this easy identification and an easy escape (denouncing the beliefs) makes the desired change possible while allowing means and motivations for racists to work toward correcting the underlying problem.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> Acting on such beliefs, of course, is also harmful and should be discouraged (condemned), at which point the distinction about condemnation may appear to break down, as it would be irrational to expect people to hold beliefs and not act on them in any way. Nonetheless, beliefs can change, which can change future actions.

<sup>41</sup> Becoming convinced of facts and then reconciling those facts to one’s lifestyle and attitudes may, in most cases, entail a great deal of change. Indeed, Ruth Benedict has pointed out that even convincing a person regarding facts may not be enough to change belief. As Benedict says, “the literature of racism is extraordinarily inept and contradictory in its use of facts. Any scientist can disprove all its facts and still leave the *belief* untouched” (97). Here again, the definition of the problematic object does not imply an understanding of the solution to the problem. Further research is still required to better understand and counter racism.

In a move similar to Garcia's, some scholars attempt to define racism relative to intent, irrespective of action or attitude. Again, the question of culpability arises here, with concern that some individuals may hold the given set of beliefs in relative innocence. For such cases, Appiah suggests using the term "racialism," which would describe those who hold such beliefs without reference to whether or not those individuals had the intent to subjugate or oppress members of other groups ("Racisms" 4). Fredrickson later picked up the term, coining the term "romantic racialism" to refer to the appearance of such a set of beliefs about other races during the Romantic period, which did not, at least necessarily, "sanction a belief in their inferiority or justify enslaving them or discriminating against them" (although Fredrickson later takes a more cautious stance on the term) (*Racism* 154). Fredrickson argues that "racialists do not become racist until they make such convictions the basis for claiming special privileges for members of what they consider to be their own race, and for disparaging and doing harm to those deemed racially Other" (*Racism* 154). This distinction has continued to crop up in the work of later scholars, such as that of Štrkalj, who adds another distinction, namely "racial hierarchism" (130), to describe those who believe in a hierarchy of races, but who may or may not have an intent to discriminate or even, implausibly, a belief in the racial distinctions themselves. Miles takes a similar stance with a different choice of terms, stating that racism "presupposes a process of racialisation but is differentiated from that process by its explicitly negative evaluative component" (79). While some of these distinctions have appeal, in theory, belief alone, without the harmful intent, can and *will* result in some degree of discrimination. Belief always leads to and is only discernible through action. There may thus be little difference, from the perspective of oppressed persons, between a racialist and a racist who attempts to be subtle. Paradies makes a similar point, saying that although intent is "certainly an important factor in assigning moral culpability and/or reparations for privileging/oppressive acts, it is not a sufficiently clear phenomenon by which to define the notion of privilege/oppression" and that defining racism or other forms of oppression in such a way "fails to recognize that oppression is systemic in society and is unwittingly and unconsciously (re-)produced by many actors who have no racist intentions whatsoever" ("Defining" 147). This point is crucial for the study of racism in speculative fiction: It is neither authorial intent nor textual didacticism that allows these works to reproduce racist ideologies, but it is the "unwitting and unconscious" reproduction of this oppression that concerns us here.

Attempts to avoid the stigmatized term, such as identifying certain ideologues as merely “racialist,” should be treated with caution. While it may be true that individuals labeled as racist “cannot change if they refuse the label” (Jefferson 121), the fact that the term is stigmatized is also the primary motivation for that change. One must convince an individual who accepts an identity as a “racialist” that being a “racialist” is undesirable before they will correct their beliefs. Thanks to this stigma, individuals convinced that specific ideas are “racist” should have more than sufficient motivation to denounce those ideas and adjust their worldviews accordingly. Of course, one may convince the “racialist” that they are mistaken. Still, there is a risk of individuals accepting “racialism” as a valid, alternative school of thought without the stigma of racism and continuing even more openly in past practices than before. The stigma attached to racism is a powerful tool for social change, hard-earned by decades of educational and activist programs. It should not be abandoned lightly, despite the complications it may produce. It is better to have individuals deny racism with flimsy justification than to embrace it openly but deny its unethicalness.

Nonetheless, while using ostensibly negative characteristics to portray racialized Others has been significant, even positive traits contribute to racial oppression. For example, Mike Cole points out that such “attributes will probably ultimately have racist implications, as in ‘they are good at sport’, which may have the subtext that ‘they’ are not good at much else; or ‘they have a strong culture’, where ‘they’ are taking over might be a subtext” (2). Similarly, Memmi writes that, in racist discourse,

the most admirable qualities are transformed into defects. The Jews have an intelligence that has been sharpened by hardship; yes, but then, they are too intelligent, which only makes them more dangerous. Is the Jew accommodating and inclined toward conciliation? No, he is obsequious; it is a ruse. Are Black people endowed with a sense of rhythm? It is the proof of their unfitness for more noble pursuits. The softness of women is only a result of their natural passivity, their lack of combativity. Nothing of the prey of these attacks is safe from this systematic machinery of dark defamation. (54)

Each of these examples is simply a case of using traits that seem positive on the surface but act as cover for something inherently negative. In fiction, many groups, such as Tolkien’s elves, are portrayed positively with little or no reservation. Even in such cases, though, I would argue that any positive trait is necessarily hierarchical, contributing to inequality simply by being positive. For example, Tolkien describes elves as having keen hearing. This trait necessarily implies that other groups have

poorer hearing than elves or have good hearing less consistently, even when it does not imply something negative about the elves. Any positive trait elves have other groups must lack or not have as consistently. Many a racist ideologue has gone to great lengths to expound Whites' positive qualities, which seems straightforwardly racist. To go to great lengths expounding the positive attributes of Blacks or Asians or so on, however, is only to do the same thing in a more covert form, delineating their place in the social order according to their traits, regardless of how desirable that place is. Furthermore, traits themselves may be hierarchically valued. For example, if racists describe one group as "natural leaders" and another as "rhythm-loving," it is easy to see which will end up with a higher place in the hierarchy. Those groups that are assigned positive traits of relatively higher value will receive more benefits from the racial order than those whose positive features are of lesser importance.

As I will partly demonstrate during this dissertation, racism is a highly complex phenomenon. Nonetheless, as I argue here, complexity in the object of study does not imply complexity in its definition. The definition of racism above provides a reference point for understanding critical methodological decisions in the analysis, such as including positively portrayed groups. I should stress further that while some features are excluded here from the definition of racism, they are acknowledged as common, sometimes universal, or even inevitable attributes of racism and form crucial aspects of the analysis ahead.

## 2.2 The Rules of Fictional Worlds

When Dolores Umbridge first comes to Hogwarts, she delivers a speech to the student body, which Harry describes as sounding "like a load of waffle" (*Order* 193). Hermione informs him, "There was some important stuff hidden in the waffle" (193) and explains some of the hidden messages of Dolores's speech. Speculative fiction is far from "waffle," but it also has hidden meanings and agendas. Understanding the rules that govern fictional worlds can tell us much about the ideologies underpinning their construction. This section will focus on how I, like Hermione with Dolores's "waffle," will attempt to find the "important stuff" hidden in speculative fiction, an effort focusing on the rules, the diegetic logic, of each world's architecture.

The rules that govern the world are often detailed and explicit in the fictional worlds designed for games, particularly role-playing games. Someone asking what it means to be a goblin in *The World of Warcraft* may receive lengthy treatises on goblin history and culture – their wars and dissensions, how they gained their cunning, their former enslavement – as well as a statistical breakdown of goblin strengths and weaknesses. The latter will include discretely quantifiable advantages relating to alchemy, agility, intelligence, and special powers that showcase their engineering prowess (e.g., “rocket belts”). The same is true of questions about playable creatures in other roleplaying games. Further rules may also be necessary for the operation of magic and technology, ordering societies, quantifying individual skills, combat, politics, physics, and social interaction. These rules define the worlds of games as systems rather than representations, making them distinct from the fictional worlds of books and movies I study here. In the imaginary worlds of stories, no such rules technically exist. Authors (and, to a lesser extent, auteurs) exercise complete control over their fictional worlds. Nothing stops them from ending (or beginning or continuing) their tales with twists that utterly defy common sense.

The rules of these fictional worlds, then, do not exist any more than the imaginary worlds that contain them. Nonetheless, there are diegetic *fictional* rules, which readers and audiences presume to exist with the same level of presumption they make about the worlds.<sup>42</sup> Until the work specifies otherwise, we readers assume the fictional world, for example, to operate with mundane forces, like physics and psychology. Alongside those, it may also operate based on fantastic forces, such as magic, the Force, or the power of Sauron. We assume these forces to work based on specific, diegetic rules. If something violates those rules, we may update our understanding of them or cry, as with Han Solo, “That’s not how the Force works!” (*Force* 01:33).

In that sense, it is not meaningless to ask “What does it mean to be a goblin?” in Tolkien’s works or *Harry Potter* any more than it is to ask the same in terms of *The World of Warcraft* or *Dungeons & Dragons*. Fictional worlds assume a set of rules about

---

<sup>42</sup>Exactly to what degree readers and audiences make presumptions about the existence of, suspend disbelief about, engage in games of make-believe with or otherwise engage differently emotionally with works of fiction when compared to real life is a matter of open discussion across several disciplines. I will make no attempt to engage with or resolve such debates here. It will suffice for the purposes of this research simply to note that readers accept fictional worlds on some level in their engagements with fiction and fictional rules are part of that acceptance, a position compatible with all models I know of for explaining readerly engagements.

how the world works, rules which operate in various ways relative to our own, either through imitation or as an alternative. It will become this dissertation's work to ask questions such as “What does it mean to be a goblin?” “What does it mean to be an elf?” “What does it mean to be a droid?” and so forth. The following sections will discuss how those rules can be discerned and understood through concepts such as world architecture and diegetic logic and how those rules operate relative to real-world ideologies.

## 2.3 Critical World Architectural Analysis

In a 2016 article, Stefan Ekman and Audrey Isabel Taylor speculate about a possible new approach to the academic study of fictional worlds. Among their notes, they describe the metaphor of “world architecture” to refer to the overall design and structure of fictional worlds (12). According to Ekman and Taylor, a critic writing from this perspective “does not follow or examine the actual building process, but analyses and interprets the resulting edifice – the imaginary world – from a structural, functional, and aesthetic point of view” (12). World architecture is distinct from concepts of “world-building,” which may focus “on the ontologically oriented analysis of ‘creating’ a world or on the cognitively informed approach emphasising ‘making sense’ of worlds” (Roine 5) or see world-building as “as a communicative and rhetorical practice in relation to concepts like fiction and storytelling” (12). Thus the critical distinction is between process versus product. “World building” is the practice or process whereby imaginary worlds form in the minds of authors and readers. “World architecture,” as I define it here, is the collection of all details about the world that can be confirmed by appealing to the text, emphasizing the relationships between details. Ekman and Taylor describe the critical approach to world architecture as a perspective in which “[h]ow the world is structured, how it functions in relation to stories set in it, and what its aesthetic properties are become critical avenues of exploration” (Ekman and Taylor 12). While my approach does not employ dimensions of structure, world/story relationships, or aesthetic properties, it uses Ekman and Taylor’s notes as a starting point. It encompasses Ekman and Taylor’s notion of “world architecture” as an approach to “critical world building.” It focuses on “dynamic interplay” in considering the interrelationship of various world elements.



Unlike Ekman and Taylor's recommended approaches (9), this work includes the story's events as a part of the imaginary world. When considering the relationships between elements in the world architecture, characters' actions, occurrences in the plot, and historical events preceding the plot all reveal parts of the works' underlying logic and ideological perspectives. They engage in this same interplay as other world architectural elements. As such, I treat things that happen in the fictional world as very much a part of the fictional world itself. Further, my work does not focus on the relationship of structure to stories (as I do not treat them as distinct) or on aesthetic properties. Instead, I relate the structure to real-world ideological constructs, as explained hereafter.

The world architecture is all elements that can be verified by an appeal to the text, but appealing to the text does not reveal the same elements to all readers. A closer reading can resolve many such disagreements. However, readers may occasionally engage with specific elements differently, leading to different conclusions. For example, Hagrid's accent differs sharply from that of his neighbors and coworkers, despite holding his position at Hogwarts for over forty years and being educated there previously. Farah Mendlesohn points out that the distinction has sharp class markers (166). If one interprets his accent based on other elements in the world, one might conclude that Hagrid must not have much intimate social contact with the rest of the Hogwarts staff. His accent might remain distinct because he keeps to himself and relies on social circles outside the school. Such an observation leads to insights into the social hierarchies and boundaries at Hogwarts. Mendelsohn reads it instead as an attempt to represent the real world, implying links between accent and social class, with the latter being a relatively fixed identity feature. Hagrid's accent then remains distinct because the text presupposes that lower-class identities are permanent and associated with an accent, regardless of later influences and environmental factors (including changes of profession). Either presents potentially valuable insights into the ideologies of *Harry Potter*. The world architecture is the same, but the reader's perspective will determine which reading appears.

In some cases, selective reading is necessary to reach conclusions, avoiding details contradicting the desired reading. In others, multiple interpretations are valid, even considering the whole of the world's architecture. In chapter five, I will note openings for "guerilla readings" (to use Fiske's term again), but my readings will strive for the latter. I will notice openings for multiple valid interpretations where I

can. Often these hinge on whether I interpret elements as representatives of real-world counterparts, fantastic elements about which one suspends disbelief, or elements that form part of the logical extrapolation of the story.

This distinction is essential since a work of fiction that portrays characters belonging to racialized groups will typically have those characters' traits and behaviors interpreted as logical extensions from their personality and other aspects of their identity, often including race. These are not elements about which one expects suspension of disbelief. In each case, the portrayals will be subjected to reader scrutiny, analyzed for how they match the real world and whether they follow logically from the story's existing elements. Writers who build world architectures within racist frameworks will be quickly detected and assessed based on their apparent ideological positions. A reader who sees racialized<sup>43</sup> humans in a work of fiction can and generally will identify them as such.

Nevertheless, a work that includes intelligent non-human characters necessarily requires some suspension of disbelief. While it may be challenging to convince a reader to suspend disbelief and imagine a world where, for example, black people have certain traits and features, it is relatively easy to persuade a reader to apply that suspension to elves. After all, there are no real-world elves to compare, and no explanation generally appears for *why* elves are a certain way, so there is neither a real-world referent nor a logical chain to scrutinize. Who then can say that elves should not be exactly as described, however they are described? The ideological frameworks within which the works construct elves and other intelligent non-humans thus go unmarked for most readers. This trend creates one strong case for the necessity for a critical world architecture analysis, especially in the case of speculative fiction. Speculative fiction creates an opening for encoding ideological positions, including racist *and* anti-racist positions, which may not be available in mundane fictional works.

Other critics have observed this phenomenon, although describing it differently. For example, Young has suggested that

Fantasy is a useful sub-set through which to explore popular culture . . . because its inherently non-mimetic nature creates a space which is at least nominally not “the real world” and is therefore safer for cultural work around fraught issues such as . . . race.

---

<sup>43</sup> Note that White characters are typically not overtly racialized. Part of White privilege is the ability to appear as “only” human, rather than as a human of a certain race. For more on this, see chapter 4.

This is not to suggest that the imagined worlds of Fantasy are separate from reality, but rather that the inclusion of an impossible element – magic, dragons, and the like – constructs rhetorical distance between one and the other. That rhetorical distance can be merely escapist and allow a work to not overtly engage with difficult questions, but, like other speculative genres – Science Fiction and Horror – Fantasy has the potential to make us look at our world in new ways, to reconsider attitudes and assumptions. (2)

According to Young, using such elements creates a “distance” between the real and fictional world, avoiding direct scrutiny and allowing (but not mandating) the avoidance of overt ideological engagement. While I agree that elements about which belief is suspended avoid scrutiny, this does not imply a “distance” that allows some works to be “merely” escapist. Any fictional world, speculative or otherwise, contains elements with a given relationship to one another. The selection of elements, their arrangement, and their relationship *necessarily* suggest a particular order, logic, and structure of the world. That way of ordering the world is *inescapably* ideological. *All* works of fiction are ideological, no matter how “escapist” they may be.

Those relationships, the space “between” the elements of the world architecture, are laced with usually-unspoken reasoning and assumptions. This complex web of relationships is what I refer to here as the *diegetic logic* of the works. This diegetic logic can take many forms. The diegetic logic concerns fundamental relationships between elements, such as which can coexist, which naturally lead to others, and the assumptions about the world which underpin those relationships. The diegetic logic is often naturalized, assumed by both readers and critics to operate identically in the real and fictional worlds. Readers and critics examine it only occasionally and unsystematically, usually when the diegetic logic fails to match the laws of the real world in some overt way. For example, when Darko Suvin claims that science fiction “takes off from a fictional (‘literary’) hypothesis and develops it with totalizing (‘scientific’) rigor” (18), Suvin recognizes differences in scientific knowledge between eras. However, Suvin acknowledges no subjectivity and personal bias to this extrapolation. In fact, diegetic logic inhabits an *intensely* ideological space, allowing writers, even at times unintentionally, to encode highly sophisticated worldviews within the unspoken relationships of their text. This encoding is particularly obvious as multiple works with the same speculative and mimetic premises rarely have the same extrapolative conclusions. Compare, for example, all the fictional works describing secret, supernatural societies. Finding more than a handful whose societies have vaguely similar social structures will be challenging. For

example, comparing the Ministry of Magic from the *Harry Potter* series to the Volturi of the *Twilight* saga suggests different assumptions about human nature and how a powerful group of individuals, left outside the regular social order, will choose to organize themselves. The main task of this analysis is to interrogate those relationships, to discover the works' underlying assumptions about the world.

## 2.4 Ideological Frameworks

However, understanding world architectural elements in fictional works is only the starting point of this or any study that employs them. In this section, I outline the concept of ideological frameworks, particularly racist ones, and explain how I will employ those frameworks to produce a robust analysis. I will begin by explaining the concept of racist ideological frameworks through an example, then give some general examples of how I will consider modern racist ideological frameworks via the works studied.

In a discussion of conceptual frameworks and the oppression of women, Karen Warren and Duane Cady define conceptual frameworks as follows:

A conceptual framework is a set of basic beliefs, values, attitudes, and assumptions which shape and reflect how one views oneself and one's world. It is a socially constructed lens through which we perceive ourselves and others. It is affected by such factors as gender, race, class, age, affection, orientation, nationality, and religious background. Some conceptual frameworks are oppressive. An oppressive conceptual framework is one that explains, justifies, and maintains relationships of domination and subordination. When an oppressive conceptual framework is patriarchal, it explains, justifies, and maintains the subordination of women by men. (Warren and Cady, cited in Patil 16)

More than just a set of stereotypes for understanding individuals, conceptual frameworks involve "basic beliefs" about "one's world" and inform our understanding of how the world operates on numerous levels. The patriarchal frameworks described above may include any number of beliefs about the nature of women or men, basic operations of gender (including whether it is binary, a spectrum, or whether it exists along more than two dimensions), relations among genders, including sexuality, hierarchies, and ideal roles. They may further entail corresponding beliefs about race, class, politics, religion, and other associated "beliefs, values, attitudes and assumptions." I will favor the term "ideological framework" over "conceptual framework" here as a personal preference when not

referring simply to “frameworks.” “Conceptual framework” in this context smacks too strongly of euphemism, as though the frameworks contained only aloof “concepts.”

The racist ideological frameworks I describe here are “oppressive conceptual frameworks” that explain, justify and maintain the subordination of individuals based on their ascribed racial identities. These frameworks include beliefs about traits and descriptors used to distinguish between and describe racial groupings and the nature of race, its origins, effects, and implications. It also includes, for example, ideas about total divisions and subdivisions, racial genesis, the source of racial distinctions (whether from genetics or spiritual difference), and the effects of racial mixing. As history has progressed, racist ideological frameworks have become increasingly complex, rising to their peak of complexity and confusion with the height of scientific racism during the early twentieth century. Because of this complexity and confusion, illustrating racial frameworks is much easier using an older example.

For maximum clarity, I offer the framework provided by Carl Linnaeus in *Systema Naturae* (1756) as a preliminary example. This comparatively succinct framework divides races according to criteria which it summarizes in only a few lines of text. As part of the classification of living beings, Linnaeus created four distinct sub-varieties<sup>44</sup> of human beings: “Americanus,” “Europeanus,” “Asiaticus,” and “Afer” or “Africanus.” Each of these varieties was described similarly, as follows:

- The *Americanus*: red, choleraic, righteous; black, straight, thick hair; stubborn, zealous, free; painting himself with red lines, and regulated by customs.
- The *Europeanus*: white, sanguine, brown; with abundant, long hair; blue eyes; gentle, acute, inventive; covered with close vestments; and governed by laws.
- The *Asiaticus*: yellow, melancholic, stiff; black hair, dark eyes; severe, haughty, greedy; covered with loose clothing; and ruled by opinions.
- The *Afer* or *Africanus*: black, phlegmatic, relaxed; black, frizzled hair; silky skin, flat nose, tumid lips; females without shame; mammary glands give milk abundantly;

---

<sup>44</sup> The first edition contains four divisions of humanity, termed “varieties” (*homo variat*) not “races.” These four divisions are what are being discussed here. Later versions add a fifth division of “monstrous” humans (*homo monstrosus*), which might be seen as an early attempt to apply racial criteria to speculative beings. These are not discussed further here, but it certainly emphasizes the separation between so-called “armchair anthropologists” and the people they studied that Linnaeus would attempt to extend the analysis to classify creatures such as satyrs (*homo satyris*) based on the same methods.

crafty, sly, lazy, cunning, lustful, careless; anoints himself with grease; and governed by caprice.<sup>45</sup>

The specifics are not important here, but astute readers will already notice that Linnaeus's classifications follow a consistent pattern in the form of:

*Variety name:* skin color, dominant humor, posture; physical traits, often including hair or eyes; temperament or personality traits; attire; primary motivation.

Thus in the third entry, the variety was named "Asiaticus," with skin color "yellow," dominant humor "melancholic," posture "straight," physical traits of "black hair, dark eyes," temperament described as "severe, haughty, greedy," with attire being "covered with loose clothing" and a primary motivation as being "ruled by opinions." There is some slight variation among the descriptions, such as with *Africanus* containing the features "females without shame; mammary glands give milk abundantly" between the physical traits and the temperament, with no corresponding details in other varieties' descriptions. Nonetheless, the same basic format continues all the way through.

These traits represent the types of qualities Linnaeus identified as distinguishing different human "varieties." Were we to identify a non-human group as a speculative fifth race (or fifth "variety") under these criteria, we would not look for correspondence to one particular group (although such would be possible). Instead, we would look for given traits that match the same general framework. For example, if dwarves were described throughout a work as being "ruddy skinned" and "choleric," with "sturdy postures," having "thick, wiry hair and beards," "hardy, stubborn and with love for beautiful objects," "dressed in metalwork," and being "governed by tradition," they would not match any of the four varieties. Nevertheless, they would still be a variety (a race) in the Linnaean sense. On the other hand, if there were a group distinguished from mainstream humanity by having blue skin and psychic powers but no ears or other audio receptors and no other differences, they would not qualify as following criteria of racial categories as employed by Linnaeus. They would not be a fictional "race" but a fictional group of some other type. While the works could directly reflect or avoid these frameworks, they generally negotiate or resist them, turning them toward their own ends. Beyond establishing whether a group is "racial," this approach can be used with other

---

<sup>45</sup> Translator unknown.

frameworks, as I demonstrate in chapters four and five, to explore how the text mobilizes the group's racialization to different ends.

Nevertheless, as I noted, later racist frameworks are more complex and less consistent. A multitude of voices has established such frameworks without a clear consensus. As such, there is no canonical list of racial attributes for twentieth-century racism to which I can appeal. It is impossible to delineate even a consensus opinion for scientific racism across all areas at the beginning of the century, let alone a complete framework for popular racism at any point. Instead, I rely on previous scholars who have investigated different *aspects* of racism to identify general racial beliefs and some individual concepts that uniquely mark particular periods. Chapter three will focus firstly on general common traits of racism, such as innate, immutable, and hereditary temperaments, abilities, et cetera, and group hierarchies. It will secondly consider several aspects of twentieth-century racist frameworks specific to certain periods, namely beliefs about racial taxonomy, miscegenation, and discourses built around cultural essentialism, as well as corollary beliefs about social orders and interracial relations. By comparing these frameworks to the presentations of intelligent non-humans in the various works, I hope to show that such representations follow racist frameworks more generally. I also hope to show that such representations have changed over time to match changes in popular racist discourse, showing that speculative fiction's engagement with racist frameworks has been dynamic and ongoing.

Chapter four will fill the blind spots of the previous analysis. In that chapter, I will compare humans' presentations and their relationship to intelligent non-humans with frameworks established by Whiteness studies. With this chapter, I hope to provide additional insights into patterns of representation among fictional intelligent non-humans and draw further links between those presentations and racist discourse. This framework allows for investigating Whiteness in the works, showing how the tropes and positions of Whiteness have been graded and helped to underpin the hierarchical ordering of the fictional worlds. The various means of engaging with Whiteness collectively reinforce the fictional hierarchies and implicitly those in the real world. They show the strongest link between the texts and real-world oppression, as they support features that rationalize real-world White superiority.

The final chapter, chapter five, builds off the previous sections to highlight the complexity and depth of the ideological construction. Drawing on John Fiske's notion of producerly texts, it draws on anti-racism frameworks, showing how the works can encode conflicting or contradictory stances on the same anti-racist practice. The works engage with several forms of anti-racism, either by employing their strategies, portraying their diegetic practice, or encoding the worldviews implicit in their approaches. They engage with these anti-racist rhetorical strategies through employment, adaptation, and criticism. While they do so, they reveal alternative voices, which readers may latch onto for resistant ("guerilla") readings.

The frameworks addressed in chapters 3-5 differ in form and content. The framework I consider in chapter three is most akin to the framework described above by Linnaeus, concerned with beliefs about races and the types of traits and features those beliefs entail, save that it is necessarily more fragmentary per the discourse of the period. In chapter four, however, the framework changes in both respects, being concerned firstly about Whiteness rather than the concern with racial Otherness implicit in descriptions of "races," which descriptions tend to exclude Whites. Secondly, where chapter three concerns specific traits and ideas, chapter four concerns itself foremost with patterns of description and what those reveal about subjectivity within the fictional worlds. Chapter five then takes as its content *anti-racism*, as opposed to racism or Whiteness, and its focus is on rhetorical strategies rather than traits or patterns of description. There will be inevitable slippages between these foci, as the forms and the contents of each chapter's framework are not wholly dissociable. One cannot speak of Whiteness without racism, for example, nor speak of patterns of description in complete isolation from the things described. Even so, each chapter will remain largely distinct in its analytical strategies. Chapter three takes a uniquely historical perspective. Chapter four gives the most significant attention to links with real-world inequality. Chapter five concentrates on Fiskian producerliness. In doing so, these prove that intelligent non-humans are racialized, that humans occupy a normative position akin to Whiteness, and that these features mobilize in meaning-producing ways concerning racism and anti-racism. At the same time, each will showcase the utility of approaching fiction, especially speculative fiction, through a focus on world architecture.



## 3 THE CHANGING FACE OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY RACISM

### 3.1 Finding Early Links Between “Race” and Fantasy “Races”

During my teenage years, a friend became involved in a game of *Dungeons & Dragons* hosted by another group of acquaintances. Finding the gameplay enjoyable but perhaps the campaign’s plot somewhat lacking (which involved a mix of generic fantasy tropes and various anime references),<sup>46</sup> he encouraged me to try the concept so we could have our own campaign. I would be the game master, while he and other friends would act as players. Lacking the funds to purchase the steeply-priced rule books, we somehow determined that it would fall to me to make up a set of rules for our game. After all, how hard could it be?

Having only very vague concepts of how such a game would operate, the process proved quite challenging. Even so, we managed to cobble together several different sets of rules over the years and play multiple homebrew campaigns with varying levels of success. As I said, my sources of inspiration for game mechanics were minimal and did not include any actual role-playing game rule books from existing systems. However, I did have some previous experience with things deriving from such rule books, including a video game called *Baldur’s Gate*. The game’s mechanics being a simplified version of *Dungeons & Dragons*, one of my major takeaways from it was its character creation process. I understood this to involve rolling multiple dice and choosing a “race” and a “class” along with various cosmetic details. It was particularly the race selection that caught my interest, although I was to include selections of class in most of my early games and, at first, threw dice more often than was entirely appropriate. *Baldur’s Gate* offered numerous choices for race, including elf, gnome, human, half-elf, dwarf, and halfling. Each of these modified the player’s stats (their strength, intelligence, charisma, or so forth), along with specific other abilities. I played with this concept for many years, inventing all-new

---

<sup>46</sup> As I understood it, the main story involved a king who had been assassinated by an evil wizard and a group of adventurers who were sent to gather the Dragon Balls from around the world to bring the king back to life.

racers for my fantasy games and adapting all manner of mythological creatures as possible “race” selections for my players.

It was another year or two before I began considering the possibility of employing human “races” in this same mode. No one taught me racism explicitly, and I often heard others speak against it. Nonetheless, I was sufficiently immersed in common stereotypes via media representations to consider allowing players to play, for example, an Asian, African, or European human, and having their starting stats modified accordingly.<sup>47</sup> If an elf would have +2 dexterity and -2 constitution, why not an Asian human get +1 intelligence and -1 strength, or an African get +1 constitution or strength and -1 intelligence? In my defense, I recognized something deeply offensive in this notion and never brought up the mechanic for consideration by my players. However, I can see in hindsight that I was already gaining an awareness of, at an earlier age, a fundamental connection between the way we think of fantasy “races” in speculative fiction and the way we conceive of “races” of human beings. I have come to realize this connection has haunted the pages of speculative fiction texts for at least the last century and, to some extent, much longer.<sup>48</sup>

“Fantasy races” and “alien races” are, and perhaps have been for as long as the term “race” has described them, precisely that. Throughout the twentieth century, such creatures have always existed in reference to, even if not in exact correlation to, “races,” as popular and scientific racist discourse has conceived them. This chapter describes that connection regarding *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, the *Star Wars* films, and the *Harry Potter* book series. It reviews how the framework of popular racist discourse has evolved over the last century and shows how each work has, in turn, engaged with and negotiated that discourse through intelligent non-human characters. It will analyze this engagement concerning racial determinism, racial hierarchies, miscegenation, racial taxonomy, and relationships to “new racist” discourse. The prior themes – racial determinism and racial hierarchies – show the core or most common elements of racist thought in the works while displaying subtle variations that parallel changes in popular racist discourse. I argue that each work

---

<sup>47</sup> Here again, note Young’s argument about the need for anti-racism from all sources rather than simple pedagogy. Having been taught against racism, even if in terms that were very vague about what racism actually *was*, I had pedagogical backing against it. Nonetheless, media representations were ubiquitous enough for me to consider this mechanic briefly. In fact, stereotypes in popular media were my only source for these stat adjustments.

<sup>48</sup> Some similar themes can, for example, be seen at least as far back as Charles Kingsley’s *The Water Babies, A Fairy-tale for a Land Baby*, published in 1863.

deploys its presentations of intelligent non-humans in a way adapted to contemporary sensibilities while adopting or negotiating elements typical of racist discourse contemporary to its period of production and distribution. In addition, the *Harry Potter* series, in particular, and possibly to a lesser extent the *Star Wars* films, preserves some elements which appeared in Tolkien's works but were not typical of later racist discourse. I argue that this preservation is due to genre connections. These connections are most apparent in the two more overtly fantasy works. This tendency demonstrates a connection between the world architecture of the fictional worlds and racist discourse, *both* contemporary *and* traditional, which is too strong to be dismissed as mere coincidence. Modes for imagining and Othering real-world groups have operated in parallel with the most commercially successful attempts to imagine Othered, fantastic groupings in fictional worlds.

Earlier scholars have tended to emphasize only links to past racist thought and practice. For example, Mika Lopenen claims that such portrayals “tend to be the result of the influence of earlier authors and publishers on the development of the jargon and concepts of the genres” (*Semiospheres* 2). Helen Young's book similarly makes its “central argument . . . that Fantasy formed habits of Whiteness early in the life of the genre-culture, and is, in the early decades of the twenty-first century, struggling to break them” (10). I have elsewhere echoed this claim, linking portrayals with racial resonance in *The Chronicles of Narnia* to earlier works. Various other individual attributions like this are available,<sup>49</sup> such as Kathryn Strong Hansen's linking *Artemis Fowl's* portrayal of intelligent non-humans to “those employed in older examples of the fantasy genre” (50). As comforting as this depiction is, however, trying to excuse genre works as “unconsciously” or “accidentally” replicating earlier racist portrayals does not explain many of the nuances of these representations. I will demonstrate, particularly in the latter part of this chapter, that many elements of the portrayals of intelligent non-humans in *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *Star Wars*, and *Harry Potter* are typical of racisms contemporary to their production and distribution. It is insufficient simply to reference an older genre tradition. These works have done more than blindly replicate older discourse. Each is also intimately engaged, consciously or unconsciously, with negotiating the bigotries of its own time, and we must acknowledge that engagement to understand

---

<sup>49</sup> A minority of scholars argue for the reverse in narrow cases. For example, Rebecca Duncan has contended that *District 9* offers a commentary on contemporary South Africa rather than an analogy about history in its use of alien “prawns” to fill roles similar to those subjected to racialized alterity in different ways and times in South African history. I argue here that engagements with contemporary racism are generalized and tend to coexist with the influences of older works.

the larger picture of the ideological engagements of these works. As earlier scholarship has successfully established links to earlier discourse, the weight of my analysis in this section will be on contemporary links.

## 3.2 Twentieth-Century Racism: Its Adaptation and Concealment

Histories of twentieth-century racism in the United States and Great Britain often portray it as a period of decline. While there is some truth to this, one should not overstate the diminishing of racism in the public sphere. True, Jaime Loke was correct in summarizing the American situation: where once racism was part of the mainstream, informing virtually every aspect of the social order, today,

[t]hough Americans are far from living in a color-blind society, Americans have come a long way in publicly sanctioning the denial of minorities' rights and equality. Overt racism is now either illegal or mostly frowned upon. The civil rights movement resulted in laws enacted to protect minorities from discrimination. Affirmative action was used to cultivate more diverse public places. (236)

Likewise, Richard Dyer has pointed out that “[b]efore the middle of [the twentieth] century, few white people seem to have hesitated to call themselves white and to speak of belonging to the white race. This leaps out at one now, since in our time it is only extreme right and racist discourse that has an acknowledged and clear concept of a white race” (55). Similar progress has occurred in most Western countries. Despite this, the story of how this change came about bears significant nuance, and racism, if increasingly taboo and ostensibly litigable, is far from extinct. Recent years have made this increasingly apparent through racialized concerns over refugees, the “free speech” protests and counter-protests of the Trump era, “corona racism,” the George Floyd protests, and other ongoing challenges. Like Sauron and his One Ring before the events of Tolkien’s stories, racism lives on. Indeed, it remains as dangerous as ever. Those who neglect to confront that danger do so at the peril of all.

In 1937, the year of *The Hobbit*’s first publication, racism in Western countries was still very much in vogue, hegemonically informing popular perceptions of human beings across all societal levels. Nonetheless, scientific racism had already received its first major challenges, including the publication of *We Europeans: A Survey of “Racial” Problems* by Julian Huxley and A. C. Haddon in 1935. This text called for abandoning the term “race” entirely in scientific literature, recommending the word

“ethnic group” be used in its place. In 1941, Ashley Montagu made an even stronger claim, declaring the concept of race meaningless during a meeting of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists. This claim carried over to Montagu's book, *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race*, published in 1942 (Brattain 1393). However, such claims were outside academic consensus, while non-scholarly texts still wholeheartedly endorsed the most extreme beliefs in racial difference. In a discussion of school textbooks from the time, Michelle Brattain cites one text published in 1938, which claimed that “each race thinks very differently from all other races. That is why the Eastern (Oriental) and the Western (Occidental) peoples find it difficult to understand each other” (1391). Many ideologues saw races as inexorably tied to a native geographical region (Torres and Kyriakides 40).

Beliefs in fundamental differences in intelligence, ability, morality, psychology, culture, skills, and temperament formed a large part of racist claims. Earlier beliefs posited even more profound physiological differences. Mark Smith traces the evolution of beliefs in non-visual sensory indications of race and their influence on social policy until the mid-twentieth century. Such beliefs include what Huan L. Hsu and others call “olfactory racism” (115), a belief that different races have distinct smells. These extended to beliefs that Whites in the United States could identify Blacks through virtually all senses, ranging from sounds of voice to flavor (Smith 5). Ideologues believed Blacks to have thick, tough skin that was less sensitive (18) and different flavors, making them more appealing to predators (42). Beliefs in Black smell were still strong enough to constitute a hypothesis worth testing in several scientific studies from the 1930s to 1950s (81). While such beliefs may have lost currency in the latter half of the twentieth century, “many aspects of olfactory racism continue in the languages of both current political leaders and in the bowels of the Internet” (Kettler 23).

Supposed racial traits, already complex and oft-contradictory, became even more so when one tried to ascribe them to individuals whose descent included multiple racialized groups. During the interwar period, social scientists both in Britain and the United States accepted that racial mixing was “disruptive” and their offspring “likely to be ‘problem people’” (Furedi 27). For over a century, ideologues portrayed such unions as a source of racial degeneration (Bland 67). When it came to constructing the nature of “mixed” individuals, though, interwar scholars generally turned to theories of “maladjustment” and “disharmony” (two terms that essentially amounted to the same concept) to explain the traits of the resulting

offspring (Furedi 27; Bland 67–68). Maladjustment theory drew on sociological accounts of colonialism, which tended to “psychologise dissent” (Furedi 30) by blaming the colonial condition on the inability of native peoples to adapt to Western standards (27). For mixed-race persons, an unwillingness to accept their place in the hierarchy was considered a pathology (Torres and Kyriakides 74). Maladjustment claimed that such people became “racially conscious, anti-white or unstable,” as their condition “underlined a mental state that was problematic” (Furedi 27). Ideologues described such individuals as experiencing “‘spiritual instability’, ‘intensified self-consciousness’ and ‘restlessness’” (33). While even some eugenicists from this time would hold that the offspring of such unions were not necessarily inferior to either parent, such claims were not mainstream during the interwar period, nor did they significantly influence public policy (Bland 69, 75).

However, such beliefs did not apply equally to all groups. Until the 1940s, many British “eugenicists, anthropologists, biologists and geneticists (groups not necessarily mutually exclusive)” (Bland 67) subscribed to beliefs in different levels of racial alliance. According to these beliefs, groups that were “closer” together in terms of their evolutionary criteria would benefit from interbreeding, while groups that were more “distant” in evolutionary terms would not (67). Many contemporaries linked this sense of proximity and distance to the fertility of offspring (Torres and Kyriakides 41, 53), and being a “half-caste” child of the latter category was formally recognized as a form of disability in several British contexts (Bland 74–75). Non-academic accounts of mixed race tended toward the polemic and “deliberately insulting” (Furedi 37).

The end of World War II, the example of the Nazis, and the discovery of the Shoah,<sup>50</sup> <sup>51</sup> however, were to profoundly impact perceptions of racism, discrediting its more extreme manifestations and forever after becoming inextricably implicit in any conversations on the subject.<sup>52</sup> These events created immense pressure for individuals to distance themselves from beliefs commonly associated with the Nazi regime, including overt racial prejudice and condemnation of racial

---

<sup>50</sup> The oft-preferred Hebrew word for the better-known term “Holocaust.”

<sup>51</sup> While knowledge of the injustices of the Nazi regime leading up to World War II drew a significant amount of protest, it is difficult to overstate the shock value of the discovery of the full scale of the Nazi atrocities, which only became fully apparent after the war, and the influence that knowledge had on future policies and public opinion.

<sup>52</sup> See: Solomos and Back 49; Borstelmann 31; MacMaster 167, 169, 170; Fredrickson, *Racism* 2–3, 128, 132; FitzGerald and Cook-Martín 16–17.

mixing. Among the immediate responses was the 1950 UNESCO statement on race, titled “The Race Question,” which declared, among other things, race to be a “social myth” (Beaglehole et al., “Race Question” 8) and there to be “no evidence that race mixture as such produces bad results from the biological point of view” (9). This declaration has often “been cited as evidence of just how influential the new universalist, antiracist consensus had become in the postwar life sciences” (Brattain 1389).<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, the statement experienced such harsh criticism from contemporary scholars that within a year, UNESCO called together a second group to revise it, producing a new version titled “Statement on the nature of race and race differences,” which significantly weakened its stances (1388). Perhaps most significant was recanting the dismissal of race as a “social myth” and reaffirming its biological significance. According to the revised version, “race” was “unanimously regarded by anthropologists as a classificatory device providing a zoological frame within which the various groups of mankind may be arranged and by means of which studies of evolutionary processes can be facilitated” (Borgman et al., “Statement” 38). As the directors of the UNESCO project found, “little consensus existed beyond agreement about the wrongness of Nazism” (Brattain 1387). Scholars from the mid-twentieth century often focused on rejecting Nazi-styled applications of racism while supporting the continued use of more foundational racist beliefs.

A clear example of this appears in the book *Race and Racism* by Ruth Benedict, which aims to clarify the difference between “the facts of race and the claims of racism” and to show that the two are “poles apart” (vii). Benedict argues that “it is no paradox that a student may have at his tongue’s end a hundred racial differences and still be no racist” (vii). Like others of the time, Benedict’s work stops short of the broad rejection of racist tenets found in the original UNESCO declaration, instead focusing on distancing itself from Nazi-styled racism. Racism was already becoming stigmatized, but it would still be some time before the academic community at large was ready to reject its full tenets. After all, “the empirical genetic science of 1950 was not very different from that in 1940, when the possibility that there were innate differences between races, and that crossing them might have deleterious consequences, was still a respectable hypothesis” (Fredrickson, *Racism* 128). The exact date when scientific consensus began solidifying in opposition to racial beliefs is difficult to pinpoint. It primarily consists of a gradual transition from a negligible minority of voices opposing racism to, in the present day, a negligible minority supporting it, but Thomas A. Guglielmo and

---

<sup>53</sup> Brattain (1389) offers a lengthy list of examples of scholars making this claim.

Earl Lewis consider the most significant transition to have occurred between roughly 1930 and 1965 (168).

While academics would fight a long battle in sorting fact from fiction over the following decades, progress against racism in the rest of the public sphere was as much a political as a moral or intellectual matter. For example, much of the civil rights progress in the United States traces to the influence of foreign powers. In World War II, German and Japanese wartime propagandists produced materials criticizing American race relations (Borstelmann 36). Given how the nations in question “were hardly good candidates for promoting the cause of racial equality” (36), their appeals may have been of limited effectiveness. Even so, such criticisms were still able “to weaken American claims to moral superiority” (36). Because of these criticisms, U.S. policymakers, as early as 1944, acknowledged racist practices as contrary to national interests (Fredrickson, *Racism* 129). While much of the progress made after the war is attributed, rightly, to the efforts of civil rights activists (Guglielmo and Lewis 169), it drew “crucial support” both from public reactions against the Shoah and from efforts by Soviet propagandists abroad (Fredrickson, *Racism* 3). The Soviets and their allies “delighted in publicizing news of American racial discrimination and persecution” (Borstelmann 75). In the competition to convince the newly decolonized African and Asian nations of the value of American-styled capitalism over Soviet communism, racism “became a national embarrassment” (Fredrickson, *Racism* 3), “the comparison of American racism and Soviet, and, by extension, communist, racial tolerance” becoming “during the Cold War one of the most sensitive areas in US politics” (Bonnett 49). Marxist ideology was, at least on paper,<sup>54</sup> color-blind, and ambassadors from the newly decolonized nations found themselves treated far better on visits to the Soviet Union than those to the U.S. capitol area (Fredrickson, *Racism* 130). U.S. policymakers expressed great concern over this developing public image (129–30). Cold War embarrassments directly motivated many early efforts at halting discrimination in U.S. public spaces (130). Downplaying America’s racism and projecting it onto their enemies allowed White Americans to protest racial discrimination and become increasingly tolerant of the changes involved (Borstelmann 31). The civil rights movement ensured that

---

<sup>54</sup> Alastair Bonnett argues that “far from being eradicated, racism in the U.S.S.R. was ignored or recategorised. It is one of the telling historical ironies of national anti-racism that the collapse of many of those governments who proclaimed their territories most free of racism (that is, the communist regimes of Eastern and Middle Europe) was followed by both the exposure and rapid development of racist movements” (52).



injustices in the United States and other nations<sup>55</sup> could not be hidden from outside eyes. The civil rights acts represented a desperate attempt to finally live up to the standards the country ostensibly<sup>56</sup> sought to champion.

Striking such a firm blow against racism, however, not only contributed to racism becoming increasingly taboo but forced it to adapt and change. In one change described by MacMaster, the new legislation<sup>57</sup> regarding race “reify[ed] the very concept that some were seeking to dissolve” (171). Race became a formal legal category, endorsed at the national political level, rather than discarded as “a social myth” as in the first UNESCO declaration. Perhaps more significantly, this legislation joined with various political movements to unify and codify (such as through census questions) racial categories. As Guglielmo and Lewis point out, although some apparently “white” groups would have been socially subordinated in the U.S.A. before the Second World War, “[b]y 1965 . . . racial divisions among Europeans had disappeared, leaving groups such as Italians, Poles, and Jews . . . facing no societal disadvantage whatsoever on account of their race” (169). Other groups would similarly unify in subsequent years, first under the “Black Power” movement, then other movements following its example, such as “Yellow Power” or “Red Power.” Previously divided segments of the population joined under collective headings with more political influence, making their grouping less complex or ambiguous in the popular imagination (Meagher 194–214). This merging of categories mirrored a change in scientific discourse that began during and before the Second World War, as some scientists and intellectuals began focusing their understandings of race groups into three broader categories: Caucasoid, Negroid, and Mongoloid (Guglielmo and Lewis 170, Anderson 14). As a result, both racists and the racially oppressed envisioned themselves within a new, simplified ontological scheme. By the end of the 1970s, where once racist discourse organized the world into races and sub-races with increasingly complex divisions, it now divided humans under a smaller number of larger headings. These often included such general groups as Europeans, Africans, East Asians, and Native Americans.

---

<sup>55</sup> Although this is most often discussed from the U.S. perspective, other Western nations experienced similar anxieties concerning local racism compared to the apparent example of the U.S.S.R. For an example from the United Kingdom, see Bonnett 68.

<sup>56</sup> Whether or not this had been a legitimate goal is a matter of debate and perspective. To quote Mark Anderson, “From a Black Power perspective, racism was not a conflict between creed and practice but a systemic feature of U.S. culture and society, saturating its institutions” (171).

<sup>57</sup> MacMaster speaks in a European context, especially of the U.K. and France, but similar legislation also existed in the United States and elsewhere.

Because of these shifts in law and public opinion in the United States and Europe, those seeking to promote racist ideals in the 1980s or beyond could not simply revive older biological notions (Omi and Winant 123). Instead, racist ideologues, including the “new right” of Great Britain in the 1980s and 1990s, had to adopt what has been termed “new racism” (Solomos and Back 18). Much the same transpired in the United States and France around the same time (Fredrickson, *Racism* 141). This form of racism asserted that “it is natural for people to prefer to live amongst ‘their own kind’ and therefore natural for people to discriminate against those not considered to be part of that common community” (Miles 62). It sought to “dispense with a notion of biological superiority/inferiority, and to formulate a notion of the Other as being naturally different in cultural terms and having a natural ‘home’ outside Britain” (63). While this form of racism has been called novel for its emphasis on culture over biology and its “special ties” between “race, culture and nation” (Gilroy 268), biology and culture were synonymous in much nineteenth- and twentieth-century racism (Heschel 12), and the use of culture together with biology dates back centuries (Cole 2). What separates “new racism” from earlier forms is not the reference to culture, per se, but the exclusion of references to biology. In new racist discourse, racism is “coded within a cultural logic” (Solomos and Back 27), and culture is described “along ethnically absolute lines” (Gilroy 266) and translated “into a pseudobiological property of communal life” (266). This discourse coincided with a broader trend in which the fear of being labeled as “racist” made many individuals hesitant to draw attention to race or skin tone in daily interactions (Apfelbaum et al., “Learning”). New racist discourse used “code words” (Omi and Winant 118, Solomos and Back 123) to avoid direct references to such things as “race” (Gilroy 265–66, MacMaster 194), skin tone (Wright 110) or hierarchy (Gilroy 266), maintaining this same distance but avoiding the subject of race.<sup>58</sup> At the same time, these color-blind approaches (see chapter five) coincided with a tendency to locate racism only with extreme racist groups, such as the Klan (Frankenberg 170). Such rhetorical shifts seek to enable the speakers to avoid accusations of racism (Gilroy 267, Solomos and Back 18, MacMaster 194). Even so, as George Fredrickson argues concerning the South African use of such discourse, the results show little difference (*Racism* 3–4). As Ruth Frankenberg puts it, “belonging to an ethnic group came to be understood more behaviorally than biologically (although, since a cultural

---

<sup>58</sup> Continuing to talk about race while avoiding the terminology distinguishes new racism from color blindness. Color blindness avoids the subject of race entirely, treating it as though it did not exist. New racism acknowledges race obliquely and continues to address it. For a broader discussion of color blindness, see chapter five.

group continued to be understood in terms of descent rather than practice, one could add that biology continued to underwrite conceptions of identity” (13). Even with traditional references to biology removed, new racist discourse preserves the fundamental belief in absolute, immutable differences between racialized groups. As I argue in chapter two, that core belief allows racism to persist, even when its elaborations and specific practices are pruned or disguised. Fittingly then, it is with that fundamental belief that I begin my analysis here.

### 3.3 Racial Determinism Among Intelligent Non-Humans

To demonstrate my point about the ongoing links between racism and the world architecture of these works, I begin by looking at how determinism among intelligent non-humans parallels contemporary racial beliefs. The history of intelligent non-human presentations in speculative fiction tells a similar, albeit equally nuanced, story to racist beliefs across the same period. As with racialized groups in the real world, intelligent non-humans are consistently ascribed innate traits, although the exact traits, and the language used, differ considerably.

Resistance to this trend is almost always partial. For example, throughout Orson Scott Card’s *Enders Game*, humans have narrowly avoided extermination by an alien race they refer to as the “buggers.” However, virtually everything the populace knows about the “buggers” is a social construction, significantly divorced from the creatures’ actual natures. Regardless, the creatures *do* have racially innate traits, simply different ones, which the end of the book and later installments in the series reveal. Identifying another form of resistance, Joshua Yu Burnett analyzes Nnedi Okorafor’s *Zahrah the Windseeker*, in which the titular protagonist is born with dreadlocks and vines on her head, leading to ostracism in her community. Burnett argues that, in the text, “race is a social construct. . . being born with dreadlocks and vines is a basically meaningless social marker that is given social significance, much like dark skin’s social significance in our real, racialized world” (199). Nonetheless, the text contains intelligent non-human creatures, like “Greeny panthers” and “Greeny gorillas,” who, Burnett notes, have deterministic natures and reflect racial stereotypes from the real world (191). Further, even if Zahrah’s Otherness begins as a social construct, it ultimately encompasses supernatural (magical ability) and psychological (wanderlust) traits that are not socially imposed. Even works like these

that focus on social construction ascribe deterministic, non-socially constructed attributes to intelligent non-humans.

Of the works I analyze, Tolkien's are the most overt regarding determinism. As Tom Shippey writes, speaking of *The Silmarillion*, "people are their heredity" (185). Tolkien's works define characters by their ancestral identities through familial lines and larger racialized collectives. The distinction between race and family ancestry is often unclear and likely irrelevant. The prior manifests in many ways, including Bilbo's self-characterization of his Took and Baggins ancestries to Bard's ability to understand the thrush because of his descent from Lord Girion of Dale and Aragorn's various aptitudes as Isildur's heir. However, this bears qualifying for *The Lord of the Rings* suggests that the Took and Baggins families belong to different hobbit sub-races (3). Likewise, Bard understands the language of the thrushes because "he was of the *race* of Dale" (*Hobbit* 300, emphasis added), not merely because of his descent from Lord Girion of Dale. Similarly, Aragorn attributes his various abilities to being "of the race of the West unmingled" (*Lord* 950) rather than being Isildur's heir. One cannot easily distinguish between the racial and the merely genealogical in the books. Therefore for this study, I treat references to traits of clans, families, and other genealogically bound groups in Tolkien's work as claims about races.

Regardless, references to traits of larger, more explicitly racial groupings are far more numerous. Of particular note is the prologue to *The Lord of the Rings*, titled "Concerning Hobbits, and other matters," which dedicates almost the entirety of its twenty pages to describing the various attributes of hobbits, their culture, language, history, and the geography of their homeland (1–20). This prologue follows strongly on a tradition that developed in eighteenth-century travel writing and "shaped the institutional forms of ethnography that emerged at the turn of the twentieth century" (Riquet 120). In this tradition, narrative texts were preceded (or followed) by lengthy descriptive passages detailing the region's people, geography, and culture. Like many such texts, this prologue (as well as other parts of Tolkien's works) elaborates upon biology and culture in equal measure, typically in equally absolute terms. Even the most ostensibly cultural traits, such as the hobbit appreciation of mushrooms, are marked in *The Lord of the Rings* as universal and utterly distinct from other races. When the narrator declares that "Hobbits have a passion for mushrooms, surpassing even the greediest likings of Big People" (100), it makes clear that even the hobbit who liked mushrooms the least still favored them more than the "Big Person"

(human) who liked them best, dividing even food preferences along absolute racial lines. While other groups do not have an entire section dedicated to their description, similar details about them nonetheless emerge throughout the text.

*The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* are not perfectly identical in their patterns of ascription, but they have much in common. Both explicitly describe racial groups as having unique skills, abilities and constitutions, behaviors, temperaments and moral dispositions, styles of craftsmanship, and even distinct smells and flavors. Racially-bound skills, abilities, and constitutions include traits as diverse as hardiness and the ability to heal quickly to talent at woodsmanship or to move quietly and cross snow without leaving footprints. Behaviors, meanwhile, are portrayed as so deterministic that Gandalf, perhaps because of his “hobbit lore” (*Lord* 47), can know that Bilbo is the right person for a job simply thanks to a good knowledge of his forebears. This assurance comes despite not having seen the fifty-one-year-old Bilbo since Bilbo’s childhood and having considerable evidence to the contrary. Something similar happens with the dragon Smaug, as the narrator describes his actions and abilities in detail as being those of dragons in general, with the implication that knowledge of “dragon lore” is the key to whether or not characters successfully predict those behaviors.

Deterministic behavior of killing and eating other intelligent beings (in the case of dragons or trolls) certainly has moral implications. However, in Tolkien’s works, race can be more broadly morally deterministic. While many races in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* contain a mixture of good and evil characters, others have a clearly stated moral disposition, which universally dictates the moral alignment of their members. This disposition may be evil, as in the case of the goblins, who “are cruel, wicked and bad-hearted” (*Hobbit* 83), or less often good, as in the case of the wood elves, who are “not wicked folk” (206) or elves in general, where being an elf is equated with being “Good People” (207).<sup>59</sup> The texts also assign temperament traits to less obviously good or evil races. Some may link them with a particular virtue or vice, such as dwarves being “calculating folk with a great idea of the value of money” (258). Others may be of more neutral moral weight, such as the ents not being “hasty” (*Lord* 464).

---

<sup>59</sup> It is worth noting that elves being universally good does not carry over into Tolkien’s legendarium as a whole. Nonetheless, they are explicitly declared as good in *The Hobbit*, and nothing in either of these two books contradicts that claim.

Craftsmanship styles are deterministic to the point of being diagnostic, allowing one to tell something about a craftsman's racial identity from his or her work, whether in smithing, architecture, tunneling, or similar skills. This may involve eliminating candidates, such as recognizing that a tower was not made by trolls (*Lord* 196), or specifically identifying the race of the crafter, such as the ability to recognize on sight blades made by "High Elves of the West . . . in Gondolin" (*Hobbit* 71). In other cases, the racial identity of the crafter is affixed as an adjective, as though it were necessary to know that it was an "*elvish* arrow" (*Lord* 290, emphasis added) that pierced a wolf's throat rather than an arrow made by some other group. It is fair to note, though, that before the council of Elrond, Glóin refers to crafting secrets the dwarves have lost (223). Although not the most likely explanation in context, especially for things like the different tunneling styles of hobbits, elves, dwarves, and goblins, this does leave room for an interpretation in which *some* differences in craftsmanship may be due to secret techniques which groups do not, but could, share across racial boundaries. Even then, most such differences seem attributable primarily to hereditary racial character.

Following "olfactory racism," these distinctions draw from biological differences so profound that members of different races taste and smell differently. Differences in smell and taste are so significant that even Bilbo, with his untrained nose and no former exposure to elves, can immediately recognize upon entering Rivendell that the area smelled "like elves" (*Hobbit* 66). Smaug can use a horse's flavor to determine the race of its former rider (271).<sup>60</sup> Both texts also have races with especially tough skin, mirroring beliefs about Blacks, at least from the United States (Smith 18). It is worth noting that there are also some metaphysical differences, not discussed in full detail in these books but demonstrated by certain races interacting differently with the ring or the unseen world and by suggestions about differing fates in the afterlife. Nonetheless, one must turn to the rest of Tolkien's legendarium for full detail on the latter.

Individual voices are likewise racially distinct. While the texts ascribe general features to many voices, voices are most explicitly *racially* distinct in four cases, where vocal qualities alone identify an individual as a member of a certain race. This first occurs when the hobbits encounter Glorfindel, at which point they notice that "[h]is speech and clear ringing voice left no doubt in their hearts: the rider was of the

---

<sup>60</sup> Notably, Shelob is said to consider orc meat to be less appealing than that of other races. This inverts the beliefs I cite above, where hierarchically lower races were thought to taste better to predators.

Elven-folk. No others that dwelt in the wide world had voices so fair to hear” (204). The second and third occur upon the fellowship arriving in Lothlorien. The elves there identify Legolas not merely as an elf but as part “of their Northern kindred” (333), first by hearing his speaking voice and then by hearing him sing. In the same scene, Sam and Legolas also identify the elves by the sound of the elves’ voices (333). In the last case, Merry and Pippin avoid being crushed by Treebeard in Fangorn Forest because Treebeard heard their voices before he saw them and thus could tell they were not orcs (453). In each case, the characters’ voices are distinct enough from members of other races that listening to them is enough to classify them correctly. Interestingly enough, these vocal distinctions appear *more noticeable* than the differences in appearance. The hobbits saw Glorfindel before his voice marked him as an elf, and Treebeard says that he would have mistaken the hobbits for orcs at first glance had the sound of their voices not given them away. As was believed in attempts to identify passing Blacks in the United States from the same period and earlier, vocal qualities in *The Lord of the Rings* are racially diagnostic (Smith 5).

Such features appear across both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Even so, the latter text goes beyond its predecessor in several areas, additionally defining creatures by their natural home environments, personal preferences, vocal qualities, and psychology and on a more explicit level. For example, although various characters express appreciation for native environments that are not their own, it is generally considered unthinkable for a character to settle long-term outside their native region. The hobbits express an ongoing desire to return to the Shire once their quest ends, despite acknowledging places such as Rivendell as generally better in all ways (964). Aragorn treats this desire as inevitable, saying that “the tree grows best in the land of its sires” (952). This desire is similar to the “sea-longing” (855) experienced by elves, which draws them constantly back to the lands in the West. The only exceptions to this pattern are those non-elven characters permitted to sail into the West (1007, 1055). These exceptions are particularly *noted* as exceptional, however. In Bilbo and Frodo’s case, it is because of the need for healing after their long bearing of the ring. In Gimli’s case, it is marked as only a rumor, which if true would be “strange indeed” (1055) for numerous reasons, which include both Gimli’s nature explicitly as a dwarf and his hosts’ natures explicitly as elves (1055), indicating that his migration opposes the racial characters of all involved. The closest anyone comes to resisting racial predisposition to homelands comes in a section of dialog between Merry and Pippin, discussing the mountain heights around Minas Tirith:

“Dear me! We Tookes and Brandybucks, we can’t live long on the heights.”

“No,” said Merry, “I can’t. Not yet, at any rate. But at least, Pippin, we can now see them, and honour them. It is best to love first what you are fitted to love, I suppose: you must start somewhere and have some roots, and the soil of the Shire is deep.” (852)

Merry’s addendum of “not yet, at any rate” and his use of the word “first” suggest the possibility of one coming to love and appreciate a land that is not their native land. Even then, his reference to “what you are fitted to love” suggests essentialism in this attachment to place. Even if a hobbit *could* love the mountains, which Merry does not commit to, loving the land of the Shire is what they are “fitted to.” As with real-world races thought “best suited to specific geographical areas” (their ancestral homelands) (Torres and Kyriakides 40), the intelligent non-humans of *The Lord of the Rings* have regions from which they derive, which they are hereditarily “fitted to love” (852).

Personal preferences along absolute racial lines extend beyond an attachment to one’s homeland. For example, Bilbo describes elves as having an “appetite for music and poetry and tales” comparable to the hobbit fondness for food (231), which he exaggerates to the point of saying that elves would be “able to thrive on speech alone” (263). Several characters make similar claims about dwarves and a fondness for being in the presence of stone (520, 526), which numerous other details about their race reinforce. In particular, this includes the bargain between Gimli and Legolas about visiting the caves around Helms Deep and Fangorn Forest on their way home after the war, which contrasts the dwarven love of stone with the love of forests by Sylvan elves.

Some of this determinism also echoes claims of strong psychological differences referenced in the earlier section. For example, when Gandalf attempts to prove to Frodo that Gollum is closely related to hobbits, he offers the following evidence:

“It is true all the same,” replied Gandalf, “About their origins, at any rate, I know more than hobbits do themselves. And even Bilbo’s story suggests their kinship. There was a great deal in the background of their minds and memories that was similar. They understood one another remarkably well, very much better than a hobbit would understand, say, a Dwarf, or an Orc, or even an Elf. Think of the riddles they both knew, for one thing.” (*Lord* 53)

We never see concrete evidence of dwarves, orcs, elves, or hobbits failing to understand one another when speaking the same language. Despite this, Gandalf



takes the same assumptions as the text Brattain cited in the earlier discussion when he posits an easy ability to understand one another as a sign of racial kinship. Even knowing the same riddles is somehow an indication of biological kinship, as though a dwarf or an elf could not have learned hobbit riddles. Note again that it is not evidence of cultural similarity but biological kinship! The use of “even” in the phrase “even an elf” suggests that elves are easier for hobbits to understand than dwarves or orcs, which might hint at a closer racial kinship between hobbits and elves than between hobbits and orcs or dwarves.

Similar assumptions underpin discussion elsewhere in the texts, such as in Rivendell, when Bilbo challenges Lindir to recognize which lines of a poem Bilbo composed himself and which are Aragorn’s. Bilbo puts the distinction in explicitly racial terms, saying, “If you can’t distinguish between a Man and a Hobbit, your judgement is poorer than I imagined. They’re as different as peas and apples” (230). Indeed, his simile of “peas and apples” marks the difference as one of biological type (not even of species or genus but different orders), further emphasizing the degree of difference. Neither Lindir nor any other at the party (including such authoritative figures as Elrond and Gandalf) challenges the assumption that lines of poetry written by Men or Hobbits are so different as to be distinguishable by someone with experience. Lindir excuses himself from telling the lines apart simply by his lack of experience with “Mortals” (230). However, as the text later reveals, he could not tell because it was a trick: the whole poem was written by Bilbo, without any additions by Aragorn (231). Thus the scene further indicates a profound psychological difference between the races.<sup>61</sup>

As Rebecca Brackmann notes, though, at least concerning dwarves (although this also applies to other races, as discussed in chapter five), the presentations in *The Lord of the Rings* focus on more ostensibly positive traits than those in *The Hobbit* (Brackmann 95). This pattern strongly parallels the general desire, enhanced after the Second World War, to distance oneself from the Nazi-styled implications of racist beliefs. Casting racial differences as positive distances the text from discourses where “lesser” races are to be subjugated or removed, and racial mixing can only have negative consequences.

---

<sup>61</sup> Contrasting earlier versions of the scene further draws out this feature of the world architecture. As Corey Olsen summarizes, in the original scene, the elves do guess, suggesting that only two lines were Bilbo’s and the rest Tarkil’s (an early version of Aragorn), showing the distinction as possible by successfully discerning it (187).

It is especially worth noting that, on those rare occasions when a member of a given race acts contrary to what their racial nature would seem to indicate, it is specifically marked as a sign of previously unknown complexity in their racial nature rather than a challenge thereto. An example appears when Frodo shows courage that Gandalf would not expect of hobbits. Gandalf responds not by praising Frodo but by praising hobbits for being more courageous than he realized (61). Racial determinism is, in these two books, completely inescapable.

*The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* employ racial determinism in multiple ways that mirror a specifically *contemporary* form of racist discourse. Their claims are more open, explicit, and detailed than later works. They imitate claims about racial odors, flavors, voice, skin thickness, and profound psychological differences. Nevertheless, the claims in the books fall short of their contemporary racist frameworks in the particularly noteworthy area of intelligence. Claims about high or low intelligence among different groups are scarce and rarely direct. Hobbits are attributed a “fund of wisdom and wise sayings” (*Hobbit* 92), while the lords of the Eldar are “Elven-wise” (*Lord* 216), and there exists a reference to “the wisdom and sadness of the Elder Race” (792), again referring to the elves. Trolls in *The Hobbit* are “slow in the uptake, and mighty suspicious about anything new to them” (53). No reference indicates high or low intelligence, per se, but they mark closely related traits. *The Lord of the Rings*, focusing on positive attributes, even undermines the latter, referring once to “clever” trolls (43), showing low intelligence not to be a universal troll feature. These comparatively tangential references to intellectual difference seem weak in a pair of books so explicitly deterministic as these, and the lack of a more explicit intellectual hierarchy feels significant. This lack marks a step short of contemporary racist discourse, where such claims were frequent and direct. It shows an avenue whereby Tolkien’s works resist and renegotiate contemporary discourse.

Racist ideologues have presumed many of these traits in order to legitimize real-world injustices. Those who assume racial barriers to understanding and communication have hesitated to pursue interracial friendships or relationships. Employers have rationalized unequal hiring practices with assumptions about innate skills, ability, or temperament. Assumptions about racial scents have played a decisive role in legitimating segregation. Presumed ties to a “natural” homeland have contributed to racialized immigration policies. Beliefs in racially-determined behaviors, especially regarding sexuality and violence, have contributed to ostracism, harsher prison sentences, and even lynching. Beliefs in innate moral dispositions

have helped rationalize more extreme and widespread forms of violence. Focusing on positive portrayals may be nominally progressive compared to the alternative, but as I argue in chapters two and five, such beliefs still contribute to hierarchy and injustice. Tolkien's works stand out from their time in avoiding intelligence hierarchies. However, they include traits that can, have, and continue to contribute to violence and oppression in the real world through Othering, legitimizing hierarchies, and justifying violence.

While less pronounced, such determinism carries on into the *Star Wars* trilogy, most clearly evidenced through the character of Chewbacca, the wookiee. The *Star Wars* text is comparatively light on direct exposition (compare six hours of film, only part containing text or dialog, to the over a million words of the *Harry Potter* series, for example). Nonetheless, the films find the chance to expound on Chewbacca's racialized nature at several points. For instance, in *A New Hope*, Han Solo warns C-3PO and R2-D2 aboard the Millennium Falcon that it is "not wise to upset a wookiee" as wookiees are known to "pull people's arms out of their sockets when they lose" (0:57). He ascribes such behaviors to Chewbacca by race (species) rather than personality. Similarly, C-3PO in *The Empire Strikes Back* apologizes for Chewbacca's lashing out at Lando, saying that Chewbacca is "only a wookiee" (1:38). Such behavior is inevitable on account of Chewbacca's wookiee identity. The films further reinforce this characterization by less explicitly racial characterization, including Chewbacca's temper, keen sense of smell, physical strength, attire (he is nearly nude), choice of weapons (styled after a crossbow rather than a firearm), and inability to resist the allure of raw meat (demonstrated on the moon of Endor). Given the lack of other wookiees and these traits not appearing among non-wookiee characters, viewers may easily read such features as aspects of the wookiee racial profile.

Unlike Tolkien's more explicit racialization, the full scope of types of traits that can be deterministic in *Star Wars* is a matter of subjective interpretation. There is, though, some indication that the works omit certain features of the earlier racial determinism. For example, in *Star Wars*, creatures frequently appear off of their ancestral homeworlds with no implicit desire to return to them. This shift from determinism linking the individual to a racial homeland is not necessarily anti-racist in origin but indicative of a different racism. According to John Rieder, in *Star Wars*, "[t]he odd extraterrestrial stands in for ethnic variation in traditional American style, either as a dangerous scum (the denizens of the saloon in *Star Wars*, the bounty

hunters in *The Empire Strikes Back*) or as the inarticulate sidekick, Chewbacca” (34). This “American style” of “ethnic variation” links to numerous racial stereotypes. However, it is less prone than its European counterparts to tying individuals inexorably to a racial homeland,<sup>62</sup> which makes *Star Wars* distinct, in that respect, from the earlier works by Tolkien. Similarly, while the Force appears to be hereditary, it does not follow species lines, possibly suggesting a lack of metaphysical difference between races (although references to the Force related to living things might mark a metaphysical distinction between droids and biological creatures). By linking racial classification to class and criminality more than foreign lands, *Star Wars* connects more strongly to a Cold War American racism than to the World War II era and earlier British racism with which Tolkien’s works engage. It engages with contemporary racisms, in other words, rather than inheriting strictly from an earlier tradition. Losing the belief in belonging to an ancestral homeland may deny anti-immigrant politicians one rhetorical tool among many, but the larger picture of determinism, insofar as we can discern it, continues to provide resources for rationalizing the worst forms of racial oppression.

The *Harry Potter* series, on the contrary, provides plentiful descriptions of racial characteristics, through which it is clear that its racial determinism is likewise strong. It also preserves most types of attributes from Tolkien’s work, including some that do not seem to have survived in general racial discourse, possibly emphasizing the genre ties that preserve some of the more archaic forms. Still, not all are explainable by appealing to Tolkien’s works. How the *Harry Potter* series presents these racial characteristics is typical of more recent forms of racist discourse, being less explicit and more set apart from “real” racism, marking an ongoing engagement with contemporary discourse. Unlike in Tolkien’s works, for example, in the *Harry Potter* series, the text comments reliably<sup>63</sup> on innate group differences comparatively rarely, just as such differences are less explicit in later racist discourse.

---

<sup>62</sup> After all, Whites in the U.S. cannot claim that their ancestors lived there first. Whites and Blacks arrived more-or-less simultaneously, and Indigenous Americans were there long before.

<sup>63</sup> Unsupported comments about racial differences are plentiful in *Harry Potter*, especially from characters such as Lord Voldemort, the Malfoys, Cornelius Fudge, Dolores Umbridge, or Xenophilius Lovegood. I do not consider such claims here. I restrict my focus to traits ascribed by the narrator or supported by diegetic evidence. Note that even otherwise sympathetic characters can show bias, and the most villainous characters can be correct at times. Thus, I only give minimal weight to the general reliability of the speaker, focusing instead on traits encoded within the world architecture. Many of the speakers with unsupported claims form part of *Harry Potter*’s caricatures of extreme racism, although some, such as the claims by the Lovegoods, depict a more general sort of delusion. Parallels between Xenophilius Lovegood’s beliefs about “germumbles” and more overtly racist beliefs, such as Umbridge’s beliefs about centaurs, are not made explicit in the text.

Nevertheless, such differences inform many aspects of the world and wizarding society.

For example, the low intelligence of trolls is only mentioned once by Ronald Weasley (*Philosopher* 127) yet persists as an assumption throughout the stories. For example, Fred and George Weasley claim that speaking Troll is just a matter of pointing and grunting (*Goblet* 82). Trolls later appear to communicate with one another in precisely this way (*Prisoner* 199). Other evidence comes from the use of trolls as a generic example of a stupid creature by Hermione (*Order* 397) or “Troll” being the name of the lowest possible grade on the O.W.L. assessments (278, *Half-Blood* 100). Likewise, there is only one general claim about a trollish predisposition toward and capacity for violence, again by Ron (*Goblet* 374). Nevertheless, the text reinforces this through trained trolls acting as security (*Prisoner* 199, *Order* 579, 597), a violent anecdote with Hagrid running “inter a couple o’ mad trolls on the Polish border” (377), and the tapestry across from the room or requirement. The latter depicts a failed attempt to teach trolls ballet, resulting in the teacher being clubbed (344, 345). That the teacher’s name is “Barnabas the Barmy” (344, 345) implies that the effort was foolish (“barmy”) from the start, suggesting a fundamental incompatibility between trolls and ballet rather than a failure of his teaching skills. The narrator, focalized through Harry, notes the smell and unpleasant appearance of the first troll Harry encounters (*Philosopher* 129). Comments such as Ron’s about not wanting to end up with “a pair of trolls” (*Goblet* 344), referring to unattractive women, generalize the observation, as does his joke about a snatcher being “definitely part troll, the smell off [sic] him” (*Deathly* 382). Such features normalize the racial characterization of trolls, weaving it into the fabric of the world (literally in the case of the tapestry) to characterize the trolls in racial terms without drawing attention to that racial encoding.

Together, this and other implicit characterization of trolls provides background for understanding statements like when “Harry thought Flint looked as if he had some troll blood in him” (*Philosopher* 136), which are otherwise unelaborated. We do not know what about Flint made Harry think he had troll blood (the text does not explain further). However, we can read enough into trolls’ nature to make general assumptions about size, smell, appearance, intelligence, and a predisposition to violence. Trolls are also difficult to stun (*Order* 637). *Harry Potter* also puts extra distance between the voice of the narrator and these assertions: all claims of innate difference are left to the voices of individual characters, seemingly

allowing the story as a whole to write them off as personal biases, yet as described above, the narrative actively supports and reinforces each claim.

As these examples indicate, differences in intelligence are, surprisingly, *more* explicit than in the earlier texts, and they are not limited to trolls (*Philosopher* 128, 185, *Prisoner* 164, 267, *Goblet* 390, *Order* 605). The trolls, at least, preserve the distinction in smell (*Philosopher* 129, *Deathly* 382), and giants have “toughened skin” (*Half-Blood* 561). There are likewise differences of temperament which, if not as often remarked upon, are at least as strong as those in *The Lord of the Rings* when they appear explicitly (*Prisoner* 88, *Goblet* 90, 372, 374, 381), with many more implicit examples, for example of goblins (*Philosopher* 50, *Deathly* 509). Differences in natural homes are also present. For instance, house-elves only “come with big old manors and castles and places like that” (*Chamber* 28). Giant spiders “like the dark and the quiet” (206), and Firenze’s classroom was magically transformed for him “in imitation of [his] natural habitat” (*Order* 530).<sup>64</sup> These works differ from the two books by Tolkien only in that they link different creatures to a particular kind of environment, not to a specific geographical location.

Much like the smells mentioned above, as in the two books by Tolkien, races in *Harry Potter* are again distinguished by vocal qualities, although it seems less drastic a difference. For example, when a goblin’s voice, previously described as speaking not “in any human language [Harry] had ever heard . . . a rough and unmelodious tongue, a string of rattling, guttural noises” (*Deathly* 294) comments on his situation, his voice becomes “rougher and *less human* as he said it” (296, emphasis added). His voice becoming “more” or “less” human indicates a clear human/non-human distinction of vocal quality. The goblin’s voice is thus non-human, even if its distance from humanity varies. The text reinforces this through repeated descriptions of distinct vocal qualities among various non-human characters. These include the “harsh croaky voice” (*Goblet* 433) of one of the merfolk guards and the “screechy noises that the merpeople made when they were above water” (438), which somehow become English beneath the surface, along with repeated references to high pitched elf voices. Notably, however, the goblin’s voice was able to become “less” human, which suggests that the degree of racial distinction in the voice of the goblins is not entirely fixed (no graded distinctions appear in *The Lord of the Rings*,

---

<sup>64</sup> It is also worth noting Firenze’s use of the zoological “natural habitat” rather than the more anthropic “homeland” or similar. This further links him, and centaurs in general, with non-human animals, emphasizing their subordinate hierarchical position via allusion to the human-over-non-human-animal hierarchy in more general discourse.

implying that the difference is at least weaker in *Harry Potter*), yet it does not seem ever to become completely human. Furthermore, unlike with elves in *The Lord of the Rings*, Harry and Hermione do not identify the goblins by their voices alone. They only recognize the goblins' racial identities upon hearing their names (*Deathly* 295). Vocal qualities in *Harry Potter* are distinct but not diagnostic.

Several types of differences in abilities (usually only magical) are also explicitly noted (*Goblet* 94, 402, 596, *Order* 637), as well as desires, at least among house-elves (*Goblet* 161, 198, 211, 233, 330–33, 467), who also have a distinction of constitution (466). In addition to the different abilities of certain groups mentioned above, magic itself seems to distinguish between members of different races, at least in the case of Hagrid and the polyjuice potion, further suggesting a metaphysical dimension. When checking for possible impostors, Lupin declines to check Hagrid because “[t]he Polyjuice Potion is designed for human use only” (*Deathly* 70) and thus could not disguise a human as the half-giant Hagrid. Not only is this one potion useful only for becoming human but there is an implication that no equivalent potion for part-humans does or even could exist. Otherwise, it would be necessary to check Hagrid. Thus, magic may transform one individual into another or cross the border between the animate and inanimate and vice versa (as per most transfiguration lessons). However, it cannot change a human's racial identity (at least between human and non-human). Gender, age, and living/non-living status are barriers made permeable through magic, but some racial barriers are too fundamental to transgress. Notably, Fleur Delacour, whose grandmother was a veela (*Goblet* 270), can and does use the polyjuice potion to imitate a full-blooded human (*Deathly* 51). Part-humans can become humans via magic, temporarily, but not the other way around. The point here is not that the racial boundaries are fundamentally magically absolute, although some are, but that they are magically significant at all. The ability to temporarily become human but not to temporarily become non-human may tell further of the status of humans as generic beings compared to the specificity of non-humans (a point discussed in more detail in chapter four). Still, it is notable that this runs contrary to traditional patterns of transgressing racial boundaries. As Mark Smith argues, it has typically been the privilege of the dominant group (Whites) to suspend rules and boundaries, enabling them to cross over into racialized spaces and identities (through passing) and then return at their leisure. The reverse has been denied to members of racially subordinated groups, although the historical prevalence of passing as White suggests this denial has been ineffective (6–7). That humans are easier to turn into via magic reinforces the status of humans as generic, as

transformations turn individuals “just” into humans, while the opposition to beliefs about passing distances *Harry Potter* from older discourses, linking it more concretely to its own time.

The text only attributes racial craftsmanship to goblin metalwork and elf-made wine (*Order* 380, *Half-Blood* 29, 456). Goblin craftsmanship derives from certain trade secrets they could share with other races (*Deathly* 488) and is thus cultural rather than racial. On the contrary, house-elves seem unlikely to keep any secrets from their masters, let alone the secret to good winemaking, meaning the latter *is* probably racial. As with other traits, this trend of racial craftsmanship is similar to its use in Tolkien’s work, only less detailed and explicit. Racial craftsmanship is diagnostic in the *Harry Potter* series, at least for goblin-made items. However, the difference is mostly only discernible by goblins, as evidenced by the confusion in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* over the sword of Gryffindor and the copy made to replace it. Here again (as with voice or ties to a homeland), determinism remains but in a weakened form.

This weakening is most apparent with behavioral determinism, which still exists in the *Harry Potter* series (*Chamber* 16, 206, *Goblet* 124, 390, *Order* 380) but with vital qualifications. In most cases, while the racial identity of group members compels them to act in a certain way, they can also resist. House-elves, for example, are compelled by their natures to follow their master’s commands, protect their reputation, and keep their secrets. Despite this, house-elves frequently disobey indirect orders, finding loopholes in instructions or otherwise performing behaviors against their nature (such as speaking badly of their masters). In cases of all but the most indirect resistance, the elf so resisting must punish themselves for disobedience. Their resistance remains, nonetheless, although they still cannot disobey direct instructions. Elves such as Dobby and Kreacher can create considerable problems for their respective masters, despite being supposedly unable to oppose them. Similarly, Aragog, when he declares that it would be his “instinct” to harm humans, also clarifies that he has managed never to do so out of respect for Hagrid (*Chamber* 206). Trolls can at least put their violent instincts to use as guards (*Prisoner* 199, *Order* 579, 597) (although this requires a wizard to train them).

Creatures may act unusually for their race, although these cases are typically highly qualified. Dobby desires freedom and wages, for example, unlike most house-elves. When offered employment by Dumbledore, though, Dobby haggles



Dumbledore down, insisting on being paid *less* and getting *less* vacation time than what Dumbledore initially tries to offer (*Goblet* 330–31) because “Dobby likes freedom, miss, but he isn’t wanting too much, miss, he likes work better” (331). Most notable here, however, is Hagrid’s giant half-brother, Grawp. Giants are said to be inherently violent (374). This fact is demonstrated by how they are driving themselves to extinction by killing one another (*Order* 377–78) and by wizards not needing to hide them from muggles, as any muggle seeing one will not survive (375). Despite hysteric skepticism even from characters like Hermione (617) and Ron (621–22) and having an awful start at it (612–14), Grawp is eventually able to learn enough of the norms of human society to attend Dumbledore’s funeral without incident (*Half-Blood* 600, 605). This is a far cry from being a creature who would instantly bring death to any muggle that happened across his path. He later fights in the Battle of Hogwarts (*Deathly* 626, 732–33) and participates in the festivities afterward (745).<sup>65</sup> While not *usually* resisted, racial determinism of behavior in the *Harry Potter* series *can* be resisted in some instances and to certain extents, which is at least a significant step away from the determinism deployed in Tolkien’s works.

The racial moral dispositions referenced in the two Tolkien books also resurface in the *Harry Potter* series. No race is universally good, but some *are* evil to varying degrees. These dispositions are most evident at the extreme, with the dementors, who are so evil that even Dumbledore, eager though he is to extend an olive branch to many different groups to rally support against Voldemort, opposes all alliance with them (*Goblet* 511) even after Voldemort’s first defeat. This point he reemphasizes at Voldemort’s return, warning Fudge that “[t]hey will not remain loyal to you . . . Voldemort can offer them much more scope for their powers and their pleasures than you can!” (614). Although Fudge does not listen, Voldemort agrees, calling them his “natural allies” (564). The dementors ultimately turn to Voldemort’s side, just as Dumbledore predicted. Beyond the dementors, there are others branded as “Dark creatures” (*Order* 88), but this includes giants: Dumbledore sees giants as redeemable, and Grawp, a giant, fights against Voldemort rather than joining him as

---

<sup>65</sup> Notably, Grawp’s change falls in the tradition of native conversion narratives. His adoption of the dominant culture in this sense *does* go against discourses that see culture as biologically innate, but at the same time, such discourses reinforce the cultural divide and emphasize the superiority of the culture converted to. The case of Pocahontas, whose conversion to Christianity and marriage to John Rolfe, according to Heike Paul, “advertised Native American acceptance of the superiority of the English culture” (98), serves as a prime example. Conversely, stories of settlers adopting native culture were “hushed up” (98).

other giants do. Overall, racial moral dispositions are not as strong in *Harry Potter* as in the two Tolkien books, but they are not altogether absent.

Perhaps most surprisingly, there seems to be evidence of underlying psychological differences among the creatures in the *Harry Potter* series, even to levels strongly reminiscent of the differences in *The Lord of the Rings*. The goblins exemplify this difference most explicitly. As indicated in chapter one, Bill Weasley describes goblins as “a different breed of being” (*Deathly* 516), about whom “no one can understand” without long, first-hand exposure (517). He hints that the closest one can get to “friendship between wizards and goblins” is for the witch or wizard to have “goblins [they] know well and like” (516). This lack of understanding strongly reflects the mentality indicated in the text Brattain cited above about distant races having trouble understanding one another. It also manifests elsewhere in the books, such as when Bagman explains his difficulty communicating with a group of goblins in book four, complaining that they do not even use “sign language another human could recognise” (*Goblet* 387). This supporting evidence, together with Bill’s authoritative position and the fact that similar claims he makes are also supported (such as his explanation of goblin property laws), suggests Bill’s claim of a fundamental psychological gap between humans and goblins is reliable. At least between these two groups, this claim about profound psychological differences hindering communication still pops up in *Harry Potter*, long after its currency had diminished in contemporary racial discourse. This feature ties the work to older traditions, even while *Harry Potter*’s other aspects have more in common with later racist discourse.

Overall, non-human determinism in *Harry Potter* is notably progressive compared to Tolkien’s works, although less so than to its own time. It retains features from Tolkien’s period that did not have high currency during the late twentieth century, marking some engagement with older discourses. It also preserves a hierarchy of intelligence that Tolkien’s works lacked or did not emphasize. At the same time, it crucially weakens many of the most severe aspects of racial determinism. For example, links to native homes are only about environments rather than specific locations. Individuals can resist behavioral determinism, and only one type of creature is irredeemably evil. Still, for all its token progressivism, it is difficult to imagine this framework significantly improving oppressed individuals’ lives compared to Tolkien’s. The possibility of being an exception that proves the rule will matter little if racists presume the rule rather than the exception. Determinism

remains a relatively stable feature across this period. However, the manifestations of that determinism vary in ways that typify their respective periods, Tolkien's works being the most detailed and explicit and *Harry Potter* employing a "show-don't-tell" approach to racial characterization.

### 3.4 Intelligent Non-Humans and Racial Hierarchy

As I will discuss in more detail in chapter four, whenever there is a ruler in speculative fiction whose rule encompasses a variety of human and non-human races, that ruler will almost always be human. This trend is emblematic of a broader tendency toward racial hierarchies in speculative fiction. In some cases, such as in C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*, these hierarchies may be self-conscious and explicit, forming a direct chain from God to humans to intelligent non-humans to non-sapient animal life. Others may require closer reading to discern, as displayed by Kathryn Strong Hansen's reading of the *Artemis Fowl* series. In other cases, the works may disavow racial hierarchies, such as among the three intelligent races of Mars in C. S. Lewis's *The Space Trilogy*, even while allowing other racial hierarchies to persist (such as in the subordination of the Martian races to the *eldila*, who are subordinate to the *oyéresu*, who are subordinate to *Maleldil*). Not all works of speculative fiction featuring intelligent non-humans need to arrange their races hierarchically, but most do, and the works here are no exception.

The hierarchies in each set of works follow a progression that correlates with developments in real-world racist discourse. The hierarchies of Tolkien's works are elaborate, naturalized, and relatively easy to decode. Those of *Star Wars* are less complex. While parts remain naturalized, I contend that other aspects of the hierarchy are gradually displaced throughout the original trilogy, becoming qualities of the villainous empire (totalitarian and socialist in contrast to the democratic and capitalist heroes). With this link, *Star Wars* distances itself from associations between racism and capitalism, much as the civil rights acts in the U.S. sought to undermine Soviet propaganda by suppressing the racism endemic to U.S. society. Meanwhile, the *Harry Potter* series also maintains naturalized hierarchies, but references to these are so subdued that it is difficult to work out the full details. At the same time, the villains impose a non-naturalized hierarchy, which distracts from the naturalized

hierarchies, allowing the series to pay overt lip service to an anti-racist agenda<sup>66</sup> without making fundamental changes in the world architecture, much like similar practices in new racism.

According to Dimitra Fimi's reading, the only place where Tolkien's works list a complete formal hierarchy is in the recitation of the poem by Treebeard to Merry and Pippin (141).<sup>67</sup> However, there are other places where portions of a larger hierarchy are indicated or implied. These do not always match the order from the brief list in the poem, although they differ only in the relative ranking of men and dwarves. One clear example is the listing of hobbit sub-races in the prologue to *The Lord of the Rings*. The first sub-race is the "Harfoots," who were "the most normal and representative variety of Hobbits, and far the most numerous" and who were "browner of skin, smaller, and shorter" and who "longest preserved their ancestral habit of living in tunnels and holes" (3). These are the lowest hierarchical branch, being both brown-skinned (an unfortunate tell-tale of lower hierarchical position in Tolkien's works), numerous, and clinging to their primitive ("ancestral") dwelling places. In the middle are the "Stoors," who are larger than the Harfoots and dwell by rivers (3). The clear leaders of the hierarchy are the "Fallohides," who "were fairer of skin and also of hair" and "had more skill in language and song than in handicrafts," were known to be "somewhat bolder and more adventurous" and "were often found as leaders or chieftains among clans of Harfoots or Stoors" (3).<sup>68</sup> In addition, each of the hobbit sub-races has ties to another of the "free peoples," namely the Fallohides (highest) with elves, the Stoors (middle) with humans, and the Harfoots (lowest) with dwarves, tying them into the larger implicit hierarchy between those races. Fimi's observations about the tripartite divisions of humans in Tolkien's work and their links to different real-world human groups, as discussed in chapter one, further indicate these broad hierarchies. More extensive attempts to elaborate the great chain of being in Tolkien's legendarium appear in the works of Jyrki

---

<sup>66</sup> This is not the only way this or the other works engage with anti-racist strategies. For a broader discussion of that engagement, see chapter five.

<sup>67</sup> The poem supposedly contains a list of all living creatures, though Treebeard only recites parts of it during the scene, and hobbits are initially missing. Although the text does not say as much, Fimi interprets the order as being hierarchical.

<sup>68</sup> This latter group explicitly includes the Masters of Buckland and the Took, while the prior, Harfoots, implicitly include the Gamgees due to such hints as Gaffer's residence or Samwise's brown skin (699). The racial identity of the Baggins family is not completely clear from these two books alone, other than that they are probably not Fallohides. That Bag-end is a hole in the ground may suggest that they are also Harfoots.

Korpua (64–75) and Leslie Donovan (96–97). It is sufficient for the arguments here to note that the hierarchy exists.

From the earliest scholarship on the films, critics have observed racial hierarchies in *Star Wars*. For example, Dan Rubey notes that

[t]he structures of racism in STAR WARS form an alternative, parallel hierarchy, so that the hero who is oppressed and inferior in one system can be superior in the other. Luke is on the bottom of the power and age hierarchies, but he is on top in the race hierarchy. He is human, as opposed to the non-human races, and most importantly, as opposed to the robots.

J. P. Telotte makes a similar observation, seeing the droids epitomizing the mechanical and logical forces that are also at work in the Death Star, helping to emphasize the hierarchy of human over non-human (and living over non-living) (220–21). This same reading would carry on through most scholarship on the first films, through such readings as Peter Lev's that

[a]lthough Star Wars presents a dozen alien races, it assumes pre-eminence of humans. Both the Empire and the rebels are led by humans; most of the aliens are relegated to the "freak show" of the spacefarers' bar. Even Chewbacca, the one alien among the small group of heroes, is shown as Han Solo's sidekick. In this film, man [humans] is the measure of all things. (30)

However, scholars like Lane Roth or Cyrus Patell see the droids as "an ethical index" (Patell 154) and their adverse treatment associated with unsympathetic characters and favorable treatment with sympathetic characters. Nevertheless, even these scholars describe the droids' construction as hierarchically inferior, whether treated as children (Roth 3) or as manifestations of technophobia (Patell 154). The low status of the droids, in particular, is especially highlighted during the films, from their status as enslaved beings, the cantina owner's cry of "We don't serve their kind here!" (*A New Hope* 00:43), to the ability of their biological masters to have the droids' "memories erased" (00:23). Particularly striking is the way they can be "deactivated" (presumably the droid equivalent of being killed) for trying to save their lives with an escape pod (00:06) or how, even after proving extreme heroism, they may be replaced just for looking "a bit beat up" (01:39). Even if not scrapped for injuries taken while risking their lives in the line of duty, they receive no credit or recognition for their service. Those organizing awards ceremonies will not even wait for them to arrive before beginning the proceedings, letting them slip into the back partway through (01:53). The droids echo this sentiment throughout the franchise. For

example, C-3PO claims natural superiority over R2-D2 in Episode II due to his greater understanding of humans (*Attack* 01:33), a claim to superiority that hinges on a pre-existing belief in human superiority. The low status of droids is naturalized throughout the films, even among the more recent productions, save for *Solo: A Star Wars Story*.<sup>69</sup>

What those readings fail to notice, however, is that the films gradually displace the hierarchy among biological creatures over the course of the original trilogy with a systematic distribution of aliens across settings. Andrew Howe sees this imbalance as “a multicultural statement about race and power” in which “it is only in areas of lax governmental control that racial minorities can exist unmodified by race-based expectations” (13–14). Such a reading focuses on the presence of aliens in Mos Eisley compared to their relative scarcity elsewhere, a point related to Diana Sandars’s observations about the marginal status of humanity in the spacefarer’s bar (54).<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, the situation is more complex than aliens in the slums and humans in the seats of power. Non-humans and non-Whites<sup>71</sup> are increasingly shown in areas of wealth and status, but only in areas outside Imperial control.

---

<sup>69</sup> The latter film differs in allowing an open questioning of the hierarchy by at least one character. The socially conscious droid, L3-37, loudly and repeatedly protests the enslavement of droids by their biological masters, even while most of the time misdirecting those protests toward Lando Calrissian, who treats her as a person to a degree not found among most other characters in the franchise (and whom she implies to be romantically interested in her). This protest reaches its climax when she leads a slave revolt of droids and wookiees in the mines of Kessel before her body is destroyed in the fighting. Her mind, or some portion of it, is copied over to the computer of the Millennium Falcon, where she presumably remains for the remainder of the films, preserved and acting as the navigator but unable to speak, her protesting voice literally silenced.

<sup>70</sup> There are similar depictions of Jabba’s palace, also on Tatooine, in *Return of the Jedi* and in the use of human slaves on that world in the prequel trilogy, which may suggest that on Tatooine, in general, humans occupy lower status positions. Nonetheless, this would still follow the reading of Tatooine as a racially-inflected slum.

<sup>71</sup> I use the term “non-White” by occasional necessity. When possible, I refer to human characters who are not White using the acronym BIPOC (Black Indigenous Person/People of Color) instead of non-White to avoid defining BIPOC humans simply by the absence of Whiteness. Nonetheless, when discussing the specificity of Whiteness, I find it frequently necessary to fall back on the term “non-White.” At times, this is because “BIPOC” does not apply to some or all of the individuals I discuss, who may include groups of non-humans. At others, it is because the operative aspect uniting the discussed characters is not their status as BIPOC characters so much as that they are not White, and their non-Whiteness itself is topical. In the latter cases, and for much the same reason, I must echo Richard Dyer’s conclusion: “Reluctantly, I am forced back on ‘non-white’” (48).

Beginning with the introduction of the mining colony of Bespin in *The Empire Strikes Back*, the films gradually come to show racial hierarchies as not naturalized but rather characteristic of the Empire. From the first arrival of Han, Leia, C-3PO, and Chewbacca on the landing platform, the film emphasizes the racial egalitarianism of the colony,<sup>72</sup> beginning with the greeting of the colony's dark-skinned leader, Lando Calrissian (BIPOC characters had been conspicuously absent up to this point).<sup>73</sup> Behind Calrissian marches a light-skinned henchman with mechanical attachments (possibly a cyborg) and six uniformed guards. Although not all guards' faces are visible, the four that are show a diverse range of physiognomic features, including characteristically East Asian, African, European, and Latin American. This mixture indicates to the viewer that they have left the all-White world of the first film behind and now enter a multi-ethnic setting.<sup>74</sup> This mixture of ethnic markers continues as the group traverses the colony, now accented by the addition of numerous instances of short, non-human creatures. The latter wander the halls or act as laborers or technicians throughout the following scenes, sometimes socializing among themselves or their human counterparts. While the non-humans still do not have equal status with the humans, this is somewhat counteracted by the addition of a high-status non-human through the character of Yoda and further corrected in the next film. In *The Return of the Jedi*, the high-status Jabba appears, and the Rebel Alliance contains numerous BIPOC and non-human characters. Many in the alliance are in leadership positions without a clear hierarchy, including the newly-promoted General Lando Calrissian and the non-human Admiral Ackbar. The Imperial forces remain all-human, all-White, and all-male throughout (Princess Leia appears as a high-ranking female member of the Alliance in the first film, while another female of unspecified but presumably high rank appears in *The Return of the Jedi*).

---

<sup>72</sup> The use of the term "colony" here appears to have stronger ties to the American self-conception as a former colony of the British Empire than it does to the colonial project more generally. In that sense, the film's creators use the word "colony" in the context of an "Empire" as a bastion of egalitarianism without conscious irony.

<sup>73</sup> It is not the case, as David Meyer suggests, that Black characters appear only in the colony and nowhere else in the original trilogy (102). Numerous BIPOC characters, including Blacks, appear fighting on the rebel side during the Battle of Endor, where Lando also fills a major role.

<sup>74</sup> Specifically, a multi-ethnic setting in the American style, emphasizing those ethnicities most represented in the United States' populace. Adilifu Nama sees the symbolic value of Blackness in the later films as heightened by its conspicuous absence prior to this scene (31). This contrasts with the earlier representations which link the then all-White rebellion to American democracy. Such whitewashed representations play on a vision of the U.S.A. as an essentially White, monoethnic country, a condition which has never actually existed in American history.

Further, the first film marks the Rebellion as democratic,<sup>75</sup> and *The Empire Strikes Back* identifies the Empire as socialist.<sup>76</sup> This perspective opens up several possible *new* readings. First, contextualizing the Rebel Alliance as egalitarian and the Empire as racist reinforces readings of the cantina scene in the first film, with the aliens not as a naturally criminal element but as a *marginalized* and *oppressed* element within the Imperial-controlled and -occupied Mos Eisley Spaceport.<sup>77</sup> At the same time, the position of Chewbacca as a sidekick is shown not to be the only possible position for a non-human, with high-status non-humans such as Yoda and Admiral Ackbar interacting with human characters as equals or superiors. Additionally, comparing this to contemporary frameworks, we see a pattern of egalitarianism and discrimination in the original *Star Wars* trilogy, which has democratic/socialist associations which are inverted compared to the claims of Soviet propagandists. In the films, egalitarianism is found only among the capitalist<sup>78</sup> and democratic heroes, not among the villains of the socialist Empire.<sup>79</sup> Using the capitalist/socialist divide to characterize the two parties in the conflict parallels the contemporary conflict between capitalist and socialist powers (particularly the United States and the Soviet Union). However, it also leads to an ideological bind in which capitalism is somewhat problematically linked with egalitarianism. Furthermore, this projection of racism

---

<sup>75</sup> Darth Vader addresses Princess Leia, one of the chief figures in the rebellion, as “Senator,” tying her to the “Imperial Senate” which is announced as being dissolved later in the film, and which is identified as the “last remnant of the Old Republic.”

<sup>76</sup> When discussing the status of the mining colony, it is revealed that they are not part of the “Mining Guild,” which is treated as synonymous with being under the control of the Empire, and the lack of membership of which means that the colony risks being “shut down” if the Empire finds out about them. They are thus illegal for being a free market institution, rather than allowing themselves to be controlled by the government. A scene filmed for but later cut from *A New Hope* was to make this even more explicit near the beginning of the film, in which Luke’s friend Biggs announces that the Empire “has already started to nationalize commerce in central systems.” The scene in question is now publicly available via the latest blu-ray release of films, as well as around the internet. Note that despite this, not all readings of the films have seen the Empire as representing the U.S.S.R. See, for example, Chris Taylor’s *How Star Wars Conquered the Universe* for a reading of the Empire as the U.S.A., the ewoks as Viet Cong, etc. This link was not lost on Soviet reviewers, however, who called *The Empire Strikes Back* “reactionary” (Shaw and Youngblood 35) and described *Star Wars* as displaying a “class hatred of socialism” (Chernenko, cited in Shaw and Youngblood 56). I am unique in situating this socialist/democratic polarity in the context of racism.

<sup>77</sup> Even under such a reading, however, Adilifu Nama’s observation about the “overpowering display of nonhuman difference as spectacle” and its resonance with racial representation (29) should remain a strong consideration.

<sup>78</sup> Even Han Solo’s status as a “smuggler” can be seen as an act of capitalist resistance against an oppressive, anti-capitalist regime, as can the extremely prosperous capitalism of the mining colony, compared to the oppressed, police-state poverty of Mos Eisley.

<sup>79</sup> For a broader discussion of links between *Star Wars* and Cold War politics, albeit without discussion of racism, see Nick Desloge, “*Star Wars*: An Exhibition in Cold War Politics.”



onto the political Other serves to obfuscate racism domestically, which obfuscation may have served to aid the rise of new racist discourse during the following decades. Despite its later publication, *Harry Potter* also engages even more heavily in the deflection of racism onto enemies (political or otherwise), far more than Tolkien's works.<sup>80</sup> Still, *Harry Potter* engages much more strongly with aspects of new racist discourse than it does with earlier racisms.

Much like in new racism, with its superficial denial of traditional racist elements, *Harry Potter* has a differently mixed relationship with racial hierarchies. Given its popular reception and the praise for its democratic values, it may seem a stretch to say, as Farah Mendlesohn did, that "Rowling's world of fantasy is one of hierarchy and prejudice" (177). Nevertheless, there is some definite truth to the claim of hierarchy at the level of world architecture. Even ignoring the hierarchies of class and family hereditarianism that Mendlesohn outlined, the *Harry Potter* series' world shows a hierarchical racial order. Nonetheless, working out a complete chain of being can be challenging because the hierarchy is often inexplicit. Indeed, it may be that an elaborate chain of being does not exist, and the hierarchy is as simple as "wizards on top, everyone else on the bottom." At the *very least*, a naturalized hierarchy places wizards above house-elves and muggles.

There can be no question that the books support the enslavement of house-elves as natural and morally justified. As mentioned in chapter one, many scholars note that the narrative supports house-elf enslavement, that it satirizes Hermione's attempts to oppose it, and that the final sentence of the final chapter (not counting the epilogue) shows Harry still being comfortable accepting the services and servitude of his house-elf (*Deathly* 749).<sup>81</sup> There is an overt moral lesson about treating the inferior elves with love and respect, but there is no indication that they can or ought to be wizardkind's equals. Even when not stated directly, wizards and house-elves have a hierarchical relationship. Like other aspects of racism in new racist discourse, this hierarchy is skirted around in discourse but fully functional in practice.

---

<sup>80</sup> For further discussion on this matter, see chapter five.

<sup>81</sup> Dissenting opinions to this reading are noted in chapter one, although such readings typically assume a positive portrayal of Hermione's activism based on shared values rather than a close reading of the house-elf situation.

The situation with muggles is much the same. Just as “house-elves are slaughtered” (488) under Voldemort’s regime, so are muggles subject to “mass” killings (*Half-Blood* 17), and the latter gets far more attention in the text. Likewise, as the house-elves’ position under status quo wizarding rule is better but still greatly oppressed, so is it with muggles. Outright muggle killings are illegal, and the ministry can prosecute using magic to tease or torment them, a practice called “muggle-baiting” (*Order* 140). Nonetheless, many other muggle abuses, through direct action or casual neglect, are wholly permissible. Quite revealingly, this includes allowing muggle deaths by giants to keep them from revealing the giants’ existence to the world (*Order* 375). Putting up “muggle-repelling charms” around sensitive areas (375) seems to be warranted by a wizard sporting event (*Goblet* 87) but not by the giants’ easy-to-locate habitat, only the latter of which puts muggles in danger.<sup>82</sup> Like the droids of *Star Wars*, muggles are also subject to casual memory erasure, a practice the protagonists not only observe and benefit from but in which they actively participate (*Deathly* 167). Notably, on rare occasions, witches and wizards will also use the charm on one another, an act which, except when performed against Dark Wizards, is either morally condemned or performed at great need, in contrast to the more off-handed use of the spell against muggles.

Even characters who are supposedly fond of muggles, a position finding prototypical representation through the character of Mr. Weasley, express their fondness through an exoticizing paternalism, maintaining a distanced position that is benevolent but still non-threatening to the hierarchy. Arthur Weasley protects muggles from killings and muggle-baiting. Despite this, he remains on friendlier terms with the Obliviators (the Ministry of Magic’s team of muggle memory erasers) than with any muggles. Arthur knows very little about muggle lives, culture, or technology. Most of what he does know about them is in some way subtly or even overtly wrong, and he shows no interest in trying to improve their standard of living or social position. For example, Mr. Weasley will happily experiment with muggle medicine (*Order* 448–49). However, he seems unaware or uninterested in the fact that the sort of life-saving miracles performed regularly in the magical world by an

---

<sup>82</sup> One could try to conceive why wizards do not use muggle repelling charms around the giants, such as the possibility of the giants moving, a shorter duration of the charms, or lack of resources. In any case, the wizards could be doing *something* to protect the muggles, which would save *some* muggle lives, but from Hagrid’s explanation, they do not and have no need to. The secrecy of magic has more value than the lives of muggles, which in turn have little enough value as not to be worth the efforts required to protect them.

ordinary school nurse remain hopelessly out of reach for the most well-connected muggle.

Unlike the hierarchy of wizards over house-elves, the hierarchy of wizards over muggles *is* stated explicitly and repeatedly, but only by unsympathetic characters, who abuse the hierarchy by using their superior positions for oppression and murder. Furthermore, drawing attention away from the naturalized hierarchies of *Harry Potter* is at least one non-naturalized hierarchy, that of pure-blooded wizards over part-blooded and muggle-born wizards. This latter hierarchy is far more explicit than the naturalized hierarchies, and numerous sympathetic characters soundly and repeatedly reject it while considerable evidence contradicts it. Opposing those who favor this hierarchy provides an acceptable substitute for resisting the everyday oppression of muggles or house-elves. A fuller discussion of this appears in chapter five. For now, note that this deflection of racism onto “real” racist groups to draw attention away from other forms of oppression represents another point of common ground between *Harry Potter* and new racism. This emphasis resembles a late-twentieth-century approach to racism. New racism pays lip service to an anti-racist agenda, even while promoting anti-egalitarian ideals of its own.

In the *Harry Potter* series, characters do not accept the natural hierarchy in all its points. By contrast, characters throughout all *Star Wars* films (save for *Solo: A Star Wars Story*) take the position of droids for granted, as do characters in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* with their hierarchies. True, no one ever challenges the relative position of wizards compared to muggles. However, house-elves and goblins seem to feel superior to each other, and goblins reject their subordination by wizards. The house-elf Winky shows this in her concern about Dobby being taken before “the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures, like some common goblin” (*Goblet* 90). The goblin Gornuk does something similar with his complaint about being asked to fill “Duties ill-befitting the dignity of my race,” citing that he was “not a house-elf” (*Deathly* 296). There is some evidence that centaurs may consider themselves not only separate from but perhaps superior to wizards (*Order* 665), and they and goblins at least resent the relatively high position of wizards in the present social order rather than seeing it as natural. Much like the weakening of determinism discussed above, this change may represent a genuine, if selective, weakening of the hierarchical order compared to the other works.

Nonetheless, all three works include a naturalized hierarchy within their world architecture. These hierarchies manifest in specific ways that speak to race and hierarchy discourses from their respective periods. None of these hierarchies are wholly explicit, but they become increasingly covert in the later works, to the point that some hierarchy details are difficult to discern. *Harry Potter* resists naturalizing other aspects of its hierarchy, allowing characters to challenge some of its manifestations openly. Meanwhile, the racial hierarchies of *Star Wars* show a tendency to deflect racism as a trait of the socialist enemy via the evil Empire rather than with the democratic and capitalist heroes, paralleling or inverting many Cold War discourses on racism in international politics. Despite this variation, each hierarchy rationalizes the social superiority and inferiority of affected groups, perpetuating patterns of subordination and oppression. Even beyond these changes, some features of the works experience an even more fundamental shift from work to work, just as in 20<sup>th</sup>-century racist discourse. For an example of those more dramatic changes, I turn in the next section to how these worlds' architectures use concepts of miscegenation and racial taxonomy.

### 3.5 Intelligent Non-Humans: Miscegenation and Taxonomy

Determinism and hierarchy shift gradually across the twentieth century. More dramatic has been the shift in beliefs about miscegenation and racial taxonomy. Looking at these latter features can show more starkly how these works negotiate the discourses of their time. Indeed, these world architectural features point toward clear and dramatic changes in racist discourse across the twentieth century and mark these works as being in dialog with the specific racisms of their day. Furthermore, the ideas that underpin changing portrayals of mixed ancestry become more positive over time. However, I will argue that each relies on racial determinism and invites discrimination against real-world people with identities constructed as “mixed.”

Mixed intelligent non-human characters, especially part-humans, but occasionally mixtures of non-humans, appear in diverse speculative fictions across various media. *The Chronicles of Narnia*, for example, included Prince Caspian's mentor, Doctor Cornelius, who was part-human, part-dwarf, while the White Witch, Jadis, was part-giant. *Star Trek* introduced the half-human, half-vulcan Spock as a prominent bridge crew member during *The Original Series*, launching a trend that would eventually include half-humans such as half-betazoids or half-klingsons.

*Dungeons & Dragons* introduced half-elves and half-orcs (separate races that were both half-human) in the first edition of *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, and both races have been series staples ever since. Piers Anthony's *Xanth* series is worth special note, as its "love springs" and "accommodation spells" have allowed the interbreeding of highly physically diverse creatures, such as humans and horses (which explains the origins of centaurs). Each time, mixed individuals have adopted traits from both parents, but how they have inherited these traits varies significantly. Exceptions are rare and (when race-mixing is not impossible, such as different groups being genetically or physically incompatible) involve sidestepping the question, such as with the approach employed in *The Elder Scrolls* franchise. In that franchise, groups can interbreed, but the offspring always inherit the mother's race, maintaining race purity even in interracial unions.<sup>83</sup>

While *Star Wars* leaves us to assume a scenario where race mixing is impossible,<sup>84</sup> the other works follow clear patterns. Helen Young notes that "[h]ybridity in Middle-earth is treated negatively, to the extent that it can be most accurately termed miscegenation" (24). She is acute in noting that "whether intermarriage weakens or strengthens a people – or their ruling dynasty – the concept itself depends upon the existence of fundamental and meaningful racial difference in the first place" (25). As discussed previously, meaningful racial differences are necessarily hierarchical and lead to discrimination. The fact that racial mixture is meaningful is, thus, quite telling of the place of racial tropes in the world architecture. Even then, the specifics are perhaps even more telling, and there are crucial differences *between* the two works by Tolkien, which tell of the chronological gap between their writing. Each form has specific implications for real-world discrimination.

---

<sup>83</sup> Motivations for this variety of approaches vary beyond resonance with dominant discourse. For example, in *The Elder Scrolls*, keeping races pure simplifies game mechanics, keeping all characters to set templates for stats and appearance.

<sup>84</sup> There are no hints about the existence or physical possibility of mixtures between humans and non-humans or different species of aliens. The only reference to romantic interchange is Leia's comment in *The Empire Strikes Back* about how she'd "just as soon kiss a wookiee" (0:06), which expresses the undesirability of the union through hyperbole. Maz Kanata expresses a physical attraction to Chewbacca in Episode VII, but there is no indication of the attraction being reciprocal, the union being physically possible, or the pairing being fertile. The lack of mixed-race children may be telling of the racial politics of the original trilogy insofar as the topic is avoided, but no claims can be made about the natures of such children.

Originating in the interwar period, *The Hobbit's* primary example of a mixed-race character, Bilbo Baggins, is presented in a way that strongly resonates with the beliefs of that period. However, it diverges in several ways, at least when read in isolation from *The Lord of the Rings*. Bilbo's ancestry is a mixture of "Baggins" (either Harfoot or Stoor) and "Took" (Fallohide) descent. While these lines may not seem wildly divergent, each is characterized very strongly, with the Baggins family consisting of content, stay-at-home, respectable hobbits, each so reliable and predictable that "you could tell what a Baggins would say on any question without the bother of asking him" (*Hobbit* 12). The Took, on the contrary, were adventurers and travelers and old acquaintances of Gandalf. It was rumored that "long ago one of the Took ancestors must have taken a fairy wife" and said that there was "something not entirely hobbitlike about them" (13). Given his ancestry, it is fruitful to compare Bilbo's portrayal to the interwar framework of maladjustment. As previously discussed, maladjustment theory portrayed mixed-race people as racially conscious, anti-White, unstable, restless, and experiencing intensified self-consciousness. Many of these traits find strong resonance in Bilbo's depiction.

Of these, instability is the most obvious in Bilbo's case. Bilbo initially "looked and behaved exactly like a second edition of his solid and comfortable father." Nevertheless, the narrator warns he "got something a bit queer in his make-up from the Took side, something that only waited for a chance to come out" (13–14). As the story progresses, these contradictory natures manifest in an almost textbook example of disharmony. Bilbo experiences conflicting urges at numerous points, which the text explicitly attributes to the different families. For example, when "something Tookish woke up inside him" (28), "the Took side had won" (32), when he felt "Tookishly determined to go on with things" (36), "the Baggins part regretted what he did now" (32), or his "Tookishness was wearing off" (42). These interactions are couched in the language of conflict and occasionally of psychic disorder, such as in Gandalf's description of Bilbo getting "funny queer fits" (31) or how he "shuddered; and very quickly he was plain Mr. Baggins of Bag-End, Underhill, again" (29).<sup>85</sup> The conflict is particularly pronounced initially, as the long-dominant Baggins heritage loses ground against the Took side. The latter compels

---

<sup>85</sup> Gandalf, in the prior case, may have been making up stories to cover Bilbo's cowardice, although it is not clear if that is all that is at play. In the latter example, it is interesting to note that "Mr. Baggins of Bag-End, Underhill" is a title that equally describes Bilbo or his father. The Baggins family predictability and Bilbo's being a "second edition" of his father leaves the impression that the two men are interchangeable. This reinforces Shippey's claim about equivalence between people and their ancestry.

Bilbo to join in the adventure. As the story concludes, we see the tables reversed during Bilbo's journey home, as "[t]he Tookish part was getting very tired, and the Baggins was daily getting stronger" (354).

Bilbo's restlessness, self-consciousness, and racial-consciousness are also notable. Bilbo frequently experiences dissatisfaction in numerous circumstances. These include his repressed desire for excitement at the tale's beginning – as evidenced by his slip of the tongue when talking to Gandalf ("Bless me, life used to be quite inter—I mean, you used to upset things badly") (17) – his longing for peace and domestic comfort after departing, and his yearning to go on adventures again afterward (cited only in *The Lord of the Rings*). Likewise, most references to Took and Bagginses are couched as Bilbo's self-assessment, suggesting a self- and racial-consciousness. He is also keen to assess others in racial terms throughout the book, e.g., sniffing at "all this dwarvish racket" (50) or noting the smell of elves (66).

Bilbo, however, fails to display anything comparable to an "anti-White" attitude during *The Hobbit*. Bilbo may still be, in whatever sense, White, but a near equivalent to anti-Whiteness would be a bias against (White) humans (see chapter four). Unlike other mixed-race individuals discussed later, Bilbo shows no signs of such. Bilbo's mixed racial ancestry is not cast in explicitly negative terms, regardless of how troublesome such internal conflict would likely be in reality. Whether Bilbo is overall helped or hindered by his particular racial mixture is hard to say. On the one hand, his Baggins ancestry serves him well for many long years before he departs on his adventure, helping him earn his place of respect in hobbit society. His Took ancestry proves indispensable throughout his adventure. On the other hand, the Baggins heritage hinders his performance on the adventure, undercutting the respect of the dwarves for a long time until Bilbo finally proves himself, and his Tookish adventurousness costs him a great deal of respect in the Shire once he returns home (363). It is unclear how "functional" Bilbo's mixture is then. With only Bilbo as a detailed example of a mixed-race individual, reading *The Hobbit* alone does not clarify whether degrees of racial alliance are relevant to its world architecture. Comparing the parallel between Bilbo's presentation in *The Hobbit* and contemporary discourse about mixed-race children, we find Bilbo to have a very deterministic mixture, strongly reminiscent of interwar maladjustment discourse. Bilbo lacks only an anti-White attitude, and there is insufficient evidence to know whether degrees of racial alliance are at play.

Nonetheless, beliefs in such effects have had strongly negative implications for mixed-race individuals in the real world. Even with anti-Whiteness omitted, many described traits carry a strong stigma, especially psychic instability. Bilbo has no control over his conflicting natures and cannot willfully call upon the desired ancestry to cope with a relevant situation. Instead, the effects of his ancestries thrust themselves upon him, seemingly at random. This instability undercuts his suitability in every domain. A pure-blooded Took would have been a more helpful adventuring companion, and a pure-blooded Baggins would have been a more respectable neighbor. At the story's end, though, Bilbo's work to avoid the conflict that arises after the dragon slaying may be an attempt by the text to mitigate the negative consequences of his mixed ancestry. While the text does not explicitly ascribe Bilbo's efforts to his Baggins heritage, his motivations tie strongly to his desire for home comforts, which could hint toward non-Tookishness. Such a reading would suggest a higher good accomplished by a mixture of Baggins and Took ancestry than either alone could have done. However, this mitigation is weak and only points to the strength of one (fictional) mixture in one very unusual situation. Most condemning is the way Bilbo "got something a bit queer in his make-up from the Took side, *something that only waited for a chance to come out*" (13–14, emphasis added). Said aspect of his make-up waited for over fifty years. A belief in such factors allowed racists to assume the worst stereotypes of any person of mixed ancestry and in direct contradiction to all prior evidence. No matter how "perfect" their behavior, it would always be possible to imagine another influence, just waiting for the "chance to come out."

*The Lord of the Rings*, published over fifteen years after *The Hobbit*, tells a different story. The later work contains numerous characters of mixed racial ancestry. Elrond is still present but in a slightly more significant role, and the text reveals more about him than in *The Hobbit*. Bilbo appears in a diminished role, yet another character like him appears: his nephew, Frodo. Frodo's parents were a Baggins and a Brandybuck. Brandybucks are a Fallohide family like the Tookes (4), which links Frodo's and Bilbo's ancestry closely, but the link goes further. Frodo's grandmother on the Brandybuck side was a Took who married into the family, through whom he and Bilbo are first cousins on Bilbo's mother's side (23). Additionally, Frodo's Baggins father was Bilbo's second cousin on his father's side (23), so the ancestry is functionally identical. In addition to Frodo and Elrond, several other mixed-race groups are displayed, including Elrond's children, the dúnedain, the uruk-hai, and the "half-orc" men who served Saruman. Together, they



paint a much more complex picture of what it means to have “mixed” ancestry in Middle Earth.

The first thing that stands out compared to *The Hobbit* is that Frodo’s new take on being half-Baggins/half-Fallohide is a significant change from Bilbo’s presentation. Frodo shows none of the overt signs of instability that Bilbo experienced. Although he shows signs of wanting hobbit comforts or grand adventures, particularly early on, these are never attributed to his lineage or shown as separate personalities competing for dominance. He likewise does not show any exceptionally high level of self-awareness or awareness of his or others’ racial identities, at least not beyond other characters, and indeed, much less than some.<sup>86</sup> Only others ascribe Frodo’s classification according to his parentage (22, 38), and never Frodo himself. The only feature of the aforementioned interwar framework Frodo demonstrates is the feature that Bilbo lacked, as Frodo once confesses to having had a bigoted view of humans, even if only after being convinced of its inaccuracy (214). That Frodo overcomes this loose approximation of being “anti-white” suggests a lack of innateness to the characterization.

None of the other mixed-race characters shows signs of the internal conflict Bilbo demonstrated. The half-orc/half-human uruk-hai and the half-elf/half-human dúnedain both show signs of being self- and racially conscious. They frequently refer to their racial identity and that of others, even though the more humanlike “half-orcs” of Saruman, along with Elrond and his children, do not. The uruk-hai, meanwhile, are anti-White, marking this with the racial slur “Whiteskins” (439, 441, 442), referring to the light-skinned, blond-haired Rohirrim, specifically reviling them for their Whiteness rather than their humanity. This term represents the only time any character is reviled for their skin tone in any of the works, making the incident particularly noteworthy.<sup>87</sup> Only the mixed-race uruk-hai and *not* the pure-blooded goblins employ this term, even though both are present at each usage. Anti-Whiteness thus may be specifically employed here as a trait of racially mixed characters, keeping with the interwar tradition.<sup>88</sup>

---

<sup>86</sup> Bilbo remains particularly race-conscious during his scant appearances, but with Frodo as a counterpoint, this now reads more easily as a personal quirk of Bilbo’s, rather than a feature of mixed hobbit ancestry.

<sup>87</sup> The closest other approximation comes from the use of the term “strawheads” by the Dunlanders to revile the Rohirrim by focusing on their blond hair.

<sup>88</sup> While not discussed in larger detail here, speculative fiction, especially from the first half of the century, often includes the larger threat of declining European or European-like powers in the face of

While abandoning conflicting internal desires represents a step forward in presenting mixed-race characters, adding “anti-White” attitudes might represent a shift back toward interwar positions. Still, the larger patterns in these presentations show a generally progressive side. Despite Númenórean degeneration through miscegenation (238), their degeneration manifests only after many generations (1023). In the first generation, the offspring of mixed unions necessarily *benefit* from their mixed status, either rising to the level of the hierarchically higher parent or being an improved version of the hierarchically lower parent. In the case of Elrond, for example, he is half-human and half-elven, yet he is, for almost all purposes, an elf.<sup>89</sup> The same is true of his descendants, although they also gain the ability to renounce their elven natures forever and become mortal humans if they desire (1010–11), an ability elves lack. On the other side, Elrond’s brother, Elros, was human for almost all purposes, as were his descendants (1010). Even so, they retained significant advantages over ordinary humans, including increased lifespans (950, 1011) and possibly other gifts (426, 742, 845). Despite this, they do *not* possess the ability to change their mind and become elves. Mixed characters can only voluntarily move down the hierarchy, not up.<sup>90</sup>

---

conquest by racialized Others. These may be darker skinned, southern, or eastern evil forces (when not completely alien) and reenact reverse colonization fears. Such fears were not inherently racial, but they often tied to racial anxieties about the purity, viability, and survival of the national racial stock and the fear of it being supplanted by a new, stronger racial stock. Such beliefs also dovetail neatly with the belief in anti-White sentiments being held by those whose ancestry was impure and link these works to a contemporary, oft-racialized anxiety. For a good survey of works of reverse colonization fiction that predate *The Hobbit*, including many works of speculative fiction, see Stephen Arata’s “The Occidental Tourist: Dracula and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization” (623–27).

<sup>89</sup> In all but name. Elrond, it should be clarified, is never referred to as an “elf,” but he is hierarchically equivalent to other elves, and he is a revered member of their community and a bearer of one of the elven rings of power (1005). Jyrki Korpua sees his status as being because of his divine background, having maiar and eldar ancestors in addition to human (48). While this might explain his high status among elves in part, I would contend that his position among them at all comes because the valar gave Elrond a choice about to which part of his ancestry, human or elven, he would belong. He “chose to be of Elven-kind, and became a master of wisdom. To him therefore was granted the same grace as to those of the High Elves that still lingered in Middle-earth” (*Lord* 1010). His brother, who shared the same ancestry, chose differently. Elrond was thus elven-equivalent by the valar’s intervention and not by his maiar ancestry. The same pattern follows even with characters not offered this choice or subject to visible intervention by the valar.

<sup>90</sup> This point contrasts with *Harry Potter*’s polyjuice potion, discussed above, which allowed part-humans to impersonate full-blooded humans but not vice versa. Tolkien’s version follows closer on a trend identified by Stephen Arata in late-Victorian fiction, in which “[t]he ability to ‘pass’ works in only one direction: Westerners can impersonate Easterners, never vice versa” (639), a trend Arata found to be subverted in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*. Here again, individuals can travel seamlessly down the hierarchy but not up it.

The offspring of humans and elves are either equivalent to elves (the higher parent) or improved versions of humans (the lesser parent). The same holds for human and orc interbreeding. The “half-orcs” of Saruman are functionally men (the higher parent) and often pass as such, despite some mild visual markers (176, 981, 992), while the uruk-hai are improved versions of orcs (462, 524). In this light, it is easiest to read Frodo Baggins as a half-Fallohide/half-Baggins who was functionally equivalent to a Fallohide. This shift toward such results of interbreeding, instead of conflicting racial natures, still relies on a racial hierarchy. However, it brings the works’ position in line with the minority interwar positions that held that mixed-race children were not necessarily inferior to their higher parent. It also brings the position better in line with the postwar dismissal of racial eugenics and miscegenation taboos.

Nevertheless, all mixed-race groups in Tolkien’s works are either new or declining. Elrond has no immortal grandchildren (although later mortal descendants through Arwen), and neither Bilbo nor Frodo marries or has children. While the offspring of mixed-race unions may benefit from their status, there is room to suggest that mixed races are less fertile or less viable long-term in Tolkien’s works. Just as some contemporary ideologues, such as Robert Knox, believed about mixed-race humans in the real world (Torres and Kyriakides 41, 53), hybrids in Tolkien’s works may be doomed to extinction.

Still, in Tolkien’s work, some forms of interbreeding are received more positively than others. The narrator celebrates “three unions of the Eldar and the Edain [Elves and Men]: Lúthien and Beren; Idril and Tuor; Arwen and Aragorn” (1010), while the unions of diverse hobbit lineages are a source of gossip and discontent (22–23, 38). The union of men and orcs, meanwhile, is described by Treebeard as “a black evil!” (462). The differing receptions of these unions roughly correspond to the non-human groups’ moral dispositions and their offspring’s tendency to manifest traits such as anti-Whiteness. There is thus reason to suggest that the different groups may have been more or less closely “allied” in the racial sense, drawing on pre-World War II beliefs about such alliances. Even so, suggesting that hobbits of different varieties were less closely allied than men and elves seems less intuitive. It may be that the gossip and discontent among hobbits is just a matter of “all hobbits” being “clannish” (7). Frodo’s anti-human bias may be everyday bigotry rather than something inborn, a point supported by the fact that he seems to overcome the bias. That the unions among hobbits are uncelebrated may likewise be

because they are more commonplace. Following such a reading, it would only be men and orcs who would be distantly allied and thus produce socially disruptive offspring. Regardless of where one draws the line, however, evidence suggests that degrees of racial alliance are at play in the miscegenation mechanics of *The Lord of the Rings*.

Putting the readings together, it seems reasonable to conclude that traits such as anti-Whiteness do not manifest in *The Hobbit* because the only mixed-race characters are from “closely allied” unions. As such, features from interwar positions appearing in *The Lord of the Rings*, which do not appear in *The Hobbit*, do not indicate backtracking toward older stances. Instead, they suggest retention of older positions in *The Lord of the Rings*’ world architecture, which do not manifest in the earlier work because they are irrelevant to the story. Thus, interwar positions on miscegenation inform *The Hobbit*’s world architecture through the character of Bilbo Baggins. *The Lord of the Rings*, written mainly during the war and published soon after, keeps many of these positions while abandoning elements of conflicting personalities and aligning itself to the more progressive interwar and more mainstream postwar positions. The transition between the works shows responsiveness to the changing racial politics of the day.

While *The Lord of the Rings* shows a more progressive take on racial mixing than the interwar position, it still does not wholly contradict many of the assumptions of eugenic policies. After all, the higher race can gain no advantage from miscegenation, yet over time, future generations of improved versions of the lesser race can ultimately supplant them, which still constitutes a form of degeneration, and such degeneration appears to occur in Tolkien’s world. Individually, being not *necessarily* inferior to the higher parent leaves significant room for interpretation. Racists can always assume that a *given*, mixed-race individual is *personally* inferior or that mixed-race individuals are *usually* inferior and so discriminate against them freely. Mixed individuals in a society operating on such beliefs *can* likely expect better treatment than those living with the interwar framework. Even so, this later framework is insufficient to offer them equality. Beliefs about close or distant racial alliances do little more than establish an additional hierarchy among mixed-race persons, privileging some while further subordinating others. The social outcomes of Tolkien’s world reflect this.

The next fifty years provided ample time for taboos against anti-miscegenation to solidify and move into the mainstream. Even into the beginning of the twenty-first century, however, many “researchers continue to find lower ‘white’ acceptance of intimate ‘black’/‘white’ relationships than of other forms of social integration” (Beeman 691). In a content analysis of randomly selected films from 1980 to 2001, Angie Beeman finds that heterosexual Black/White mixed-race couples in movies (already rare, in only 1% of all surveyed films) (706) are less likely to establish successful relationships by the film’s end than all-Black couples and drastically less likely than all-White couples (698–99), along with other differences in levels of emotional versus sexual intimacy. This portrayal “reinforces the historical taboo against interracial intimacies” (707). Interracial relationships tend to be of shorter duration, less central to the story, and less associated with “warm” emotional expressions (699–703). Still, some such factors are influenced more strongly by the race of the male than their mixed/non-mixed status.

In keeping with this, the interracial relationship we have the most insight into in *Harry Potter* is between Hagrid’s parents. The few details we learn of the relationship are along the same lines: The relationship ended when Hagrid was a baby, and there may have been a lack of emotional intimacy (Hagrid’s mother, as a giant, “wasn’ really the maternal sort”) (*Goblet* 372). Wizard/muggle relationships seem similarly rocky in all documented cases. In the least of these, Seamus describes his muggle father discovering his wife’s magical nature as a “nasty shock” (*Philosopher* 93). Severus Snape’s muggle father and witch mother constantly fought (*Deathly* 667). Dean Thomas’s father abandoned the family and disappeared when he was a baby (*Deathly* 295), and Voldemort’s muggle father left his witch wife before Voldemort was even born (*Half-Blood* 244). In this way, *Harry Potter* reproduces anxieties over the viability of interracial relationships. Even so, if interracial relationships are perilous, there seems to be no material harm to the offspring of such unions. Half-blood wizards and part-humans suffer no ill effects and have no more relationship difficulties than others.

*Harry Potter*’s mixed-race characters take the form of two half-giants, Rubeus Hagrid and Olympe Maxime, and the women of the Delacour family, who are part veela (*Goblet* 270). Frameworks of maladjustment and disharmony mostly had vanished from contemporary discourse by the end of the Second World War, and no resonances of them appear in *Harry Potter*. None of the mixed-race characters in *Harry Potter* experience conflicting desires or heightened self- or racial-consciousness.

No anti-Whiteness appears, and anti-wizard attitudes are generally associated with centaurs or goblins, not mixed-race individuals. Taking another step beyond Tolkien's system, Hagrid and Olympe are equivalent to their hierarchically higher parents (humans) in all essential respects *and* have several distinct advantages from their hierarchically lower parents (*Order* 637, *Half-Blood* 561). The same is true of the Delacour women, who are competent witches but inherit their beauty – and some supernatural “charm” (*Goblet* 348) – from their non-human ancestors.<sup>91</sup>

Whereas Tolkien's works align themselves to a less-dominant discourse of their time by putting miscegenation in a not-necessarily-negative light, in *Harry Potter*, such interbreeding offers only advantages to the children, even if preserving the basic framework of hierarchy and racial difference. Such a position still invites the stereotyping of mixed-race individuals regarding their ancestry but denies the possibility of degeneration. This approach puts mixed-race individuals in a higher place on the racial hierarchy than Tolkien's works, but the hierarchy itself goes unchallenged. Nonetheless, *Harry Potter* suggests that mixed relationships are inadvisable, albeit by showing such relationships as challenging and rarely successful, rather than the unions as having detrimental effects upon offspring or the population's genetic stock. Despite its limits, this progression of increasingly positive portrayals of mixed-race status shows a definite change that parallels contemporary discourses.

Another similar change occurs concerning racial taxonomy. As racist ontologies simplified during the middle of the twentieth century, so did those of intelligent non-humans, moving from a tiered division of races and sub-races to a single-level division in which each race was a race unto itself with no sub-categories.<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>91</sup> These readings rely on an assumption of a human-over-non-human hierarchy in *Harry Potter*, which I believe is justified within the world architecture as I see it. However, as I note earlier in this chapter, the hierarchies between wizards, giants, and veela are not explicit. If one read wizards as the lower hierarchical parent, this would not be different from Tolkien's uruk-hai or dunedain, simply imitating the lower parents but with advantages gained from the higher parent. Nonetheless, I believe that the wizards' intelligence and magical prowess are valued more highly in the narrative than strength, size, or the ability to turn into fire-flinging bird creatures. Further, as discussed in chapter five, the tropes and positions of Whiteness in the works point to a superior position for wizards.

<sup>92</sup> Exceptions to the latter can be found, of course, but it has been my personal experience that late-twentieth-century, speculative fiction taxonomies of intelligent non-humans, which include subdivisions, overwhelmingly involve sub-varieties of elves. The division of elves hints at a direct genre lineage to Tolkien's work, showing an example of the more oft-noted influence of earlier works in shaping later racial representations within the genre. Where such influences are not found, and even

As noted, Tolkien's works employ three sub-races of hobbits, several of elves, multiple varieties of dwarves, three or more sub-races of White humans, and various non-White human groups, including Southrons, Easterlings, and Pukel-men. By the time *Star Wars* was released, this trend in speculative fiction had almost entirely vanished. There are no sub-varieties of wookiees or ewoks, for example. The only subdivided group in *Star Wars* is droids, which exist in various makes and models, despite being part of the overarching category of "droids." Still, this latter may derive more from frameworks for conceptualizing machines than human beings. In *Harry Potter*, even this distinction is gone completely, with all groups belonging to just one general heading with no internal subdivisions. Even "house-elves," despite the "house-" affix, seem to be the only kind of elf. A possible exception might appear among owls, as different owls belong to multiple varieties, but these distinctions seem purely cosmetic. They likely do not reflect essentialist differences, showcasing the real-world variety in owls rather than any racial sub-division. At no point are any of Hedwig's traits, for example, explicitly ascribed to snowy owls, only (usually implicitly) to Hedwig in particular or owls in general, so it seems unlikely that such differences have a racial character.

Level of complexity should not be mistaken for level of detail, of course: *Harry Potter* and *Star Wars* have a wider variety of races than Tolkien's works. Indeed each perhaps has more than Tolkien's books have sub-races. However, in a move typical of popular speculative fiction across this time, they forgo further dividing their groups into smaller sub-groups. Just as general racial discourse dropped the use of sub-races, so has speculative fiction classified intelligent non-humans under a single level of headings. Here again, there is a distinct shift in how speculative fiction has conceptualized intelligent non-human races, which parallels more general changes in racist discourse. It provides strong evidence for these works of speculative fiction being in dialog with the racist discourses of their own time.

### 3.6 New Racism and *Harry Potter*

One final, noteworthy area that connects the *Harry Potter* series to its own time is "new racism." Tolkien's works show little hesitation about throwing around words like "race" or "blood" or in making references to "higher" or "lesser" beings,

---

in many cases where they are, taxonomies tend to be single-level, engaging with contemporary frameworks rather than with older frameworks by proxy.

speaking of races “declining” or clearly emphasizing a variety of skin tones. Much as in “new racist” discourse, though, in *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter*, much of this terminology is conspicuously absent, despite the consistent use of the same concepts to organize the world. As has already been shown to some extent through earlier discussion, the *Harry Potter* series has a unique relationship with race, one that keenly reflects and negotiates the same themes as “new racism.” It is a relationship in which race constantly reveals itself, yet rarely overtly and while avoiding key terminology, casting racism as the domain of extremist groups. Some of the employment of this strategy differs between its use by *Harry Potter* and by “new racists,” showing how the works negotiate contemporary discourse rather than blindly reproducing it. Still, the core rhetorical strategies show many similarities.

The language of the *Harry Potter* series, for example, has a curiously systematic relationship with making references to skin tone. On the one hand, the text makes little hesitation, for example, in describing the pallor of various light-skinned characters, whom the text may refer to as having “sallow” or “pale” skin or so on. It likewise makes no hesitation about identifying Black characters as such, casting Blackness as a general descriptor of their identity without direct reference to their skin (noting that they are Black but not that they are black). On the other hand, the converse of either never occurs. For example, the narrator refers to Angelina Johnson as a “black girl” (*Goblet* 230, *Order* 202), Blaise Zabini and Dean Thomas as a “black boy” (*Half-Blood* 137),<sup>93</sup> and Kingsley Shacklebolt as a “black wizard” (*Order* 47, 49). At no point, however, is reference ever made to anyone being a “white girl,” a “white boy,” or a “white wizard,” nor to any other ethnic identity. On the other hand, the narrator may describe some characters’ skin as “pale” or “sallow” or have face or hands described as “white,” likewise, but never refers directly to darker-colored skin.<sup>94</sup> Thus non-White characters with skin tones lighter than “black” must be inferred from things such as naming conventions, with supporting evidence such as hair color, as neither their ethnic identity nor skin is ever directly referenced.

---

<sup>93</sup> Dean Thomas is described as a “black boy even taller than Ron” during his first appearance in the American version of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*. Dean is omitted from the scene entirely in the UK version, including his description as “black” (*Philosopher* 91). No other descriptions of Dean refer to his skin tone or ethnic identity in either version. No evidence exists for whether Dean’s description was dropped from the UK version or added in the US version, so it is difficult to interpret this discrepancy.

<sup>94</sup> The narrator describes Madame Maxime as having olive skin. The term refers to a spectrum of light-brown skin tones and could be read as a non-White skin tone, thus making it an exception to the pattern by being referred to directly. Given Madame Maxime’s French origins, however, it likely refers to a Mediterranean skin tone, a light brown still generally treated as within the spectrum of White.



The use of nationalities in adjective form (such as “French” or “Bulgarian”) works much the opposite as the identity/descriptor pattern with skin tone. National adjectives, of which there are many, are used almost exclusively with American and European nationalities. The narrator describes individuals from elsewhere with other constructions, such as “a penfriend at a school in Brazil” (*Goblet* 78), or more often, does not describe them at all. An exception appears for Egypt, but only for *ancient* Egyptians, while modern characters hail “all the way from Egypt” (*Goblet* 96) rather than being “Egyptian.” Appropriately, the only remaining exception is one instance of “Japanese” related to Mr. Dursley’s “Japanese-golfer joke” (*Chamber* 19). This joke is presumably a form of racist humor, suggesting that this avoidance of national adjectives is related to a broader concern about appearing racist. After all, the only person to violate the pattern does so while acting racist.

These descriptive patterns are not necessarily a direct reflection of “new racist” discourse beyond the refusal to refer to “white” as an identity. However, it reveals hesitancy about making identifications that may have racial implications. White characters, belonging to a default, “non-raced” group (see chapter four), may have their skin tone referred to freely, while non-White characters may not, as this might tie them to an identity that is “raced” and thus approach the language of racist discourse. As for why Black characters can be referred to as “black” and not other non-White groups, there might be any number of possible explanations. The most plausible seems to be a lack of viable options for referring to the different identities unambiguously while still being appropriately distanced from the language of racism. As Dyer has pointed out, “[i]n some political contexts for some periods, black has been an acceptable term, but those who do not feel included under either black or White have seldom been happy with red, yellow or brown as alternatives, preferring instead national or geographic terms” (44). For many characters, using such “national or geographic terms” (e.g., “Asian” or “Indian”) in place of racial terms might imply unintended or untrue things about the backgrounds of these characters while using similar color terms (“Red” or “Yellow” for example) or other descriptors (e.g., “colored”) would smack of racism. Without more specific physical descriptions, this leaves only Black characters able to be referred to as such and others unable to be explicitly described.

This peculiar pattern in the descriptions, and the resulting ambiguity surrounding the ethnic identity of some characters, is most pronounced in its contribution to debates around the “Black Hermione” interpretation. Following the

dark-skinned Noma Dumezweni's casting as Hermione in the London performance of *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* and author J. K. Rowling's Twitter claim that dark-skinned Hermione was "canon," considerable fan debate arose around whether "Black Hermione" had been the original intent and whether it fit the text in retrospect. Hermione's descriptions follow the patterns for White characters, lacking a direct reference to her as a "black girl" and including four references to her face being "white" (*Prisoner* 293, *Goblet* 116, *Order* 645, *Half-Blood* 375). It also includes incidental references that imply a light default skin tone, such as her being "very brown" after her vacation in Southern France (*Prisoner* 46).<sup>95</sup> This trend indicates that, at least, the reading was not the original intention, and as such, I must read her as White within the definition of world architecture I employ here. However, the persistence of these debates is a testimony to the description patterns used by the series. The avoidance of referring to light-skinned characters as "white" is consistent with "new racist" discourse and late 20<sup>th</sup>-century discourse more generally, as observed by Dyer above.

Similarly, in the *Harry Potter* books, the word "race" itself (in the sense used here, not in the sense of "running a race") appears only eleven times and only in two books (*Order* 104, 380, 531, 667, 754, *Deathly* xi, 296, 296, 488, 506, 506). One appears

---

<sup>95</sup> Uses of "white" for her face are most often indicative of fear, as well as possibly of contrast to her dark surroundings in one instance, and not necessarily of her skin tone, although the text does not seem to use such descriptions with characters who are not also light-skinned. Many of Rowling's early sketches also depict Hermione as light-skinned. The use of "very brown" is most difficult to dismiss. English use of "very" with color is reserved exclusively for things that are not usually that color, while things that are already that color tend to take the comparative adjective form, in this case, "brownier." The description of Hermione as being temporarily "very brown" is not easily compatible with a reading of her as normally brown-skinned. Nonetheless, while the textual evidence all points toward a light-skinned Hermione, none of it is decisive. Even the lack of a direct reference to her as a "black girl" is inconclusive, when one compares characters such as Lee Jordan, who was described as "a boy with dreadlocks" on his first appearance, and who never is described as "black" or has his skin tone described, but whose hairstyle may indicate that he is a dark-skinned character. Further, this does not mark later texts with a dark-skinned Hermione as violating canon. For example, references to werewolves up to the end of the second book, including Tom Riddle describing Hagrid trying to raise werewolf cubs under his bed at school or rumors of werewolves in the Forbidden Forest, suggest a different sort of creature from Gilderoy Lockhart's account of the Wagga Wagga Werewolf. While the version of werewolves settled on was not the most likely interpretation of many earlier references, it did not directly contradict the earlier texts, although it may imply bizarre things about Hagrid or previously unknown complexities in werewolf reproduction. It was thus within the author's scope to make it canon for the later books. Even if Hermione's skin being dark is not the most likely interpretation, a reading of Hermione as dark-skinned does not directly contradict the text, and so later works are free to establish her skin tone more concretely without a need for retcon. Regardless, for purposes of this work, which examines only the seven-book series, Hermione will be considered as White, in keeping with her descriptions within those works.

in the epigraph to *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, a quote from *The Libation Bearers*, and contextually refers to “the human race” outside of a speculative fiction context. As such, it is not “race” in the sense of races of humanity (or non-humans). A second is the ambiguous use in the example cited at the beginning of chapter one, in which the narrator compares Harry’s alienation from his classmates with the inherent alienation between those of “a different race” (*Order* 754). The nine remaining uses all come from character dialog. All but one of these uses links the term with the mistreatment of non-human groups by wizards (the exception is Firenze talking about fortune-telling). In all but two, the speaker is a member (or part-member in the case of Hagrid speaking about giants) of the group in question (the two exceptions come from Hermione discussing the validity of Griphook’s claims about wrongs done to goblins by wizards). When such discussions about the treatment of non-humans occur in the absence of members of the non-human groups in question, which they often do, the term is markedly absent.

It seems reasonable to infer from the diegetic logic that, within the fictional world of the stories, the word “race” is somewhat taboo, just as it is in new racism, avoided in polite conversation by members of privileged groups, lest others brand them as “racist.” Members of non-human groups may use the term freely, and they do so almost exclusively in conjunction with discussion of racial oppression. In some cases, speakers attempt to claim redress from or place blame upon members of privileged groups who were not personally responsible for their ills (such as Harry and his companions). In such cases, the term represents what contemporary discourse refers to as “pulling the race card,” i.e., “bringing race into a situation or conversation where it previously did not exist and in which it does not belong” (Lewis 635, citing numerous others). The text seems to suggest that non-human characters who use the word “race” in this context, like some individuals pointing out racial injustices in the real world, are “exploiting race to their own advantage” (636) rather than genuinely being the victims of oppression. That the two uses by a human both occur in the dialog of Hermione (the activist caricature) seems only to reinforce this impression.<sup>96</sup>

While this pattern in the word “race” might parallel new racist discourse, new racism’s hesitation in employing other terms, such as “blood,” is not mirrored in the *Harry Potter* series. Sympathetic and unsympathetic characters alike make

---

<sup>96</sup> This usage is particularly notable in the context of anti-racism and strategic essentialism, which I will discuss in chapter five.

attributions of “blood” in the works. However, sympathetic characters use the term almost exclusively in the first two books. In them, Harry suspects Flint of having “troll blood” (*Philosopher* 136), Hagrid refers to the Malfoys as “bad blood” (*Chamber* 51), and the narrator describes the Dursleys as having “not a drop of magical blood in their veins” (9). This usage seems to suggest an unconscious hereditarianism, which becomes self-conscious, beginning with the introduction of the term “mudblood” near the beginning of the second book. At that point, the balance shifts, with references to blood (outside of the literal sense) being made almost exclusively by less sympathetic, openly-prejudiced characters and used by sympathetic characters almost exclusively when discussing the beliefs of the other characters. Sympathetic characters focus their use on discussing “blood” in the sense of familial relationships. For example, Hagrid talks about how “blood’s important” (*Order* 498),<sup>97</sup> and Dumbledore repeatedly uses the term when talking about Harry’s mother’s sacrifice and how its protection extends through her sister, Petunia (736–37). The only time a sympathetic character uses “blood” in the racial sense after the early sections is when Hermione attributes Hagrid’s resistance to stunning spells to his “giant blood” (*Order* 637). *Harry Potter* imitates the strategies of new racism in this respect then, but only *after* becoming self-conscious about the hereditarian claims that marked the first and early second books.

It is somewhat surprising that even the caricatured racists of the work, such as Lord Voldemort, Dolores Umbridge, or the Death Eaters, also avoid using the word “race.” This avoidance may be a point of realism in *Harry Potter*, as the new racists are likewise shy of the term (Gilroy 265–66, MacMaster 194). Nevertheless, as we have seen, the more overt racists in *Harry Potter* are certainly *not* shy in making references to “blood” or “breeding” (although they do so mainly concerning the supposed hierarchy between pure-blood, part-blooded and muggle-born wizards). Because they are not, one cannot read the caricatured racists of the work as representing new racism but rather as representative of more extreme racist groups. Interestingly, there *is* a portrayal of new racism in *Harry Potter* related to the pure-blood/non-pure-blood hierarchy through the character of Cornelius Fudge. The politician never references blood or breeding directly but lets such considerations guide his judgment and policies (*Goblet* 503, 614). However, if one considers non-

---

<sup>97</sup> Hagrid’s use is a parenthetical restatement of the word “family” while discussing his parents and Harry’s parents, with a strong subtext about Hagrid’s half-brother. The subtext specifically distinguishes Hagrid’s bond to his half-brother from any connection he might have to other giants, making the use unambiguously familial.

human differences, new racism seems to be the default position in wizarding society, even shared by most protagonists and the narrator. Such characters readily accept innate, hereditary differences among non-human groups, yet each avoids referring to those differences or using the terminology of racism except when absolutely necessary.

The critical difference between new racism in real-world discourse and the corresponding practice relating to intelligent non-humans in the world of *Harry Potter* is that, in the latter case, innate differences among the creatures are real. The world architecture of *Harry Potter* describes, as do all of the works considered here, a world very much like the one imagined by contemporary (in this case, “new”) racists. It does it through a mode very typical of their discourse: one that assumes the existence of underlying difference but minimizes references thereto and stringently avoids the tell-tale language of racism. *Harry Potter* follows distinct patterns in avoidance of explicit reference to certain skin tones and identities, and it shuns all references to higher and lower races<sup>98</sup> and degeneration. Compared to new racist discourse, however, the *Harry Potter* series is relatively open in employing terms like “blood” and “breeding” and in making direct, explicit claims about racial difference, but only through openly “racist” characters after the first book and a half. Even these references are much less common than in Tolkien’s works, written over half a century before.

Tolkien’s work stands out most strongly compared to today, which should not be surprising, given the temporal remove, but nor should one be content to write off Tolkien’s work as a product of its time and leave it at that. Even if its divergence from the mainstream positions is never great, Tolkien’s works gravitate toward the more egalitarian stances of their period, particularly with *The Lord of the Rings*. The latter work focuses on more positive attributes for racialized groups and allows for mixed-race persons who are functionally equal to their hierarchically higher parent. Further, the vision of interracial harmony promoted in Tolkien’s works (discussed further in chapter five) was much further ahead of its time.

---

<sup>98</sup> There is a lone reference by the narrator to “lesser creatures” (*Deathly* 509), but this most likely refers to creatures not constructed as intelligent.

As public and scientific opinion began solidifying against racism across the century, the gap between the dominant egalitarian and racist positions became more pronounced. *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter* continue to encode the more egalitarian positions among the heroes' behaviors and in their presentations of human characters. Nonetheless, they retain elements of mainstream racist discourse from their periods in their world architecture around the portrayals of intelligent non-human creatures. In some sense, this shows *Harry Potter*, in particular, encoding the split in contemporary discourse. Like Tolkien's work, *Harry Potter* rejects the more extreme racist positions of its day, found in White supremacist and Neo-Nazi positions, which it villainizes explicitly. However, unlike Tolkien's works, it aligns with the more moderate and mainstream new racist discourse (at least regarding the portrayal of non-humans). It reserves the more egalitarian positions available from the same period for human characters (see chapter five).

*The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *Star Wars*, and *Harry Potter* construct their intelligent non-humans as "races." That construction is linked not only to past forms of racism through ties to earlier works but also to contemporary ones. It also raises broader issues, many of which I will address in the upcoming chapters. For example, there are hints in this analysis of further complexity than engagement with racism alone. Factors that form parts of *anti-racist* strategies, such as Tolkien's focus on positive portrayals or the tendency to "pull the race card" among several groups in *Harry Potter*, mitigate or exacerbate racist presentations at several points. These works show signs of going beyond engaging with racism and highlight awareness of many forms of anti-racism. That awareness is far more complex than the above analysis might suggest. I will dedicate chapter five to dealing with such issues, showing how the multi-layered engagement with racism and anti-racism operates in the works and opening the works up to selective readings, illustrating John Fiske's notion of the producerly text.

Even more pressing among the issues raised is that this focus on intelligent non-humans has left humans almost entirely unexamined. Interestingly, the texts never apply the determinism mentioned above to traditionally racialized human groups. There is no indication of dark or light skin affecting innate skills, affinities for a natural home, tastes and smells, or so forth (and as I will argue in chapter five, there is some evidence to the contrary). Likewise, any hierarchies between light- and dark-skinned characters are less explicit than those between humans and non-humans. No intermixing of human groups with different skin tones occurs in any of

the works, a point that itself might suggest some lingering anxieties over miscegenation. Nonetheless, without determinism in differently-skin-toned human identities, it is difficult to imagine that such mixing *could* reenact the more damaging ideas about mixed-racial identities.

Extending the analysis to non-White humans would only narrow the blind spot, from leaving humans out of the picture to leaving *White* humans out. It is with the blind spot itself, then, that I concern myself in chapter four. The position of being an unmarked, normative individual is a politically powerful one, which underpins many of the above hierarchies by granting a status of non-specificity and universality to select groups, allowing them, among other things, to lead and be representative of a wide variety of creatures, rather than just being representative of their type. Many characters occupy this position throughout the works, and different characters and groups approach such a position to varying degrees. Obtaining a complete understanding of racial ideologies in these works will require going beyond looking at the “raced” and further examining the place of the “non-raced” groups in the works. That is important because it reveals where the hierarchies and subordination in the real world still appear among humans in fictional ones. I thus move now to examining how Whiteness operates in these works. I will interrogate its concealment and resistance and ask who can be White, when, and to what degree.

## 4 ENCODED WHITENESS: HIERARCHY AND CONCEALMENT

### 4.1 Whiteness: To Be Human or Only Human

Revisiting the example of *Dungeons & Dragons* from the previous chapter, we can see humans set apart from intelligent non-humans through distinctions in game mechanics. In *Dungeons & Dragons*, players roleplay heroic characters in a fantasy setting whose strengths, weaknesses, and abilities are quantified according to game rules and determine their performance in various challenges. As mentioned in chapter three, the race a player chooses influences their character's proficiency in their class (essentially a heroic archetype, such as wizard, fighter, or bard), their statistics (such as strength or intelligence), and their access to special abilities (such as seeing in the dark). Humans, on the contrary, receive no stat modifiers. They have no special powers, and no innate talents guide them toward preferring any particular class. Instead, the advantages they gain focus on versatility or long-term potential. The earliest edition of the game featured maximum power levels and limited class options for most races. In that case, humans were unique in being able to take any class, and no maximum levels applied to them.<sup>99</sup> So-called "demihumans" (non-human characters) possessed natural gifts that made them superior to humans at birth, if only in certain areas. Nevertheless, they would eventually reach the limit of their growth. In contrast, the human characters could continue to increase in power indefinitely.

Later editions remove this difference in potential, focusing on a difference in versatility. For example, there were no differences in maximum potency in the third edition of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Instead, humans had access to more feats and skills and could combine classes with fewer restrictions than other characters. In

---

<sup>99</sup> The very earliest edition of the game did not give specific guidelines for the level advancement of some classes after a certain point, but that edition also specified that there was no theoretical limit (at least for human characters) to what level could be reached. This should not be confused with first edition of *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, which came four years later, in which humans did have a maximum level, albeit one that was much higher than the maximum level for any demihuman.



practice, this meant that while a dwarf character might have advantages playing as a fighter or a paladin yet be disadvantaged as a bard or sorcerer, a human character could be *any* class and play at least competitively compared to other races. The fifth edition (the most recent) continues this pattern while describing humans as being “more physically diverse than other common races. There is no typical human” and as being “the most adaptable and ambitious people among the common races” (“The Human Race”).

For those unfamiliar with the rules of *Dungeons & Dragons*, let it suffice to say that this latter form does not present a game balance problem for individual players. It does not make some players more or less powerful because they chose a character who was or was not human (although the earlier form did), so long as their non-human character sticks to a class that fits their race. However, it *does* signal a distinction between those called “human” and those not so called. This distinction strongly resonates with how those designated or not designated as “White” appear in mainstream Western (i.e., created by Whites) media.

As the previous chapter established, the texts make many aspects of race explicit in their fictional worlds. Essentialist notions underpin a wide variety of traits. Ideas about hierarchy, miscegenation, and racial taxonomy parallel changing racial beliefs in broader society. These features usually describe non-human groups, explaining to human readers how the groups differ from the human norm.

While studying non-humans in speculative fiction provides many insights into the various works’ specific engagements with racial ideologies, such insights are necessarily incomplete. A racialized view of the world includes more than just those groups to whom the texts ascribe racial traits. It also involves implicit description, typically via a group without consciously ascribed characteristics who remains, in their discursive position, essentially “non-raced.” In mainstream Western racist discourse, this group is a fuzzy set category designated “White.” It centers prototypically around those who presume pure descent from specific subsets of northern Europeans. This category is also a fuzzy set in most speculative fiction, centered prototypically around White human beings. Therefore, a proper study of racism in speculative fiction must go beyond the study of non-humans in isolation or explicitly described racial features. To quote Toni Morrison, it must make “an effort to avert the critical gaze from the racial object to the racial subject; from the

described and imagined to the describers and imaginers; from the serving to the served” (90).

This chapter takes up that challenge, seeking to identify the center and probe the boundaries of racial subjecthood in *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *Star Wars*, and *Harry Potter*. I will argue that the fictional worlds encode Whiteness through normativity, dynamism (discussed under the heading of “enterprise” here, essentially encompassing leadership, versatility, initiative, and the ability to surpass one’s limitations), gender portrayals, and reproductive anxieties. These features work together to establish and retroactively justify the hierarchical arrangements in each world. These naturalize normative subject positioning in the real world and extend the hierarchies discussed in the previous chapter to distinguish between differently-raced and -gendered human groups. Parallels between morality and complexion within groups link light and dark skin with good and evil, respectively. They make it easy to draw links to and rationalize real-world racial hierarchies based on the same justifications these texts provide for their fictional worlds. The works unwittingly reinforce the idea that some people (prototypically White male humans) are “normal” while others are specific, bounded, and inherently Other. Proximity to Whiteness directly correlates to hierarchical status in all cases except for elves (Tolkien’s and *Harry Potter*’s). These exceptions generate productive tensions within the texts, as discussed hereafter. My concern in this chapter is less with historical or regional context than in chapter three. It focuses on how these works, still in global circulation, act in an ongoing transnational context to reinforce and validate hegemonic Whiteness’s dominant assumptions and the social hierarchy it legitimates.

At the general level, Whiteness (at least the form of hegemonic, representational Whiteness discussed here) is characterized by its transparency. To be White is traditionally to be nothing, non-specific, a human being without race (Dyer 1–3) or even culture (Frankenberg 196). Much as in *Dungeons & Dragons*, where humans lack any special powers or stat modifiers, White representation of Whiteness focuses on humans who are “just” human, nothing more. At the same time, though, there exists “a specificity to white representation” (Dyer 12), key aspects of which include the ability “to go against type” (12) and to “master and transcend the white body” (23). The abilities of humans in *Dungeons & Dragons* to surpass limits, retain their universality, and not be defined by their race are typical aspects of White representation. Richard Dyer argues that, in White representation, to be White is simply to be human (1), but in *Dungeons & Dragons*, as in most speculative fiction by

Whites, to be human is very much to be White. In other words, White representations of Whites relative to non-Whites closely parallel White speculative fiction's portrayal of human beings compared to intelligent non-humans.

In general racial representation, the “space” of Whiteness is “strategic and not essential,” and “there is movement into and out of whiteness” (Fiske, *Media* 48). Like the boundaries between who is and is not White in more general racial representation, the edges of these representations of Whiteness, as they manifest in speculative fiction, are graded, and various aspects of Whiteness apply to different groups to different degrees. The questions of who can and cannot participate in Whiteness (i.e., enact its tropes and occupy its normative subject positions) and to what degree are thus complex, both in speculative worlds and in the real one. Certain groups are more or less prototypically White. In real-world racial politics, which groups hegemonically qualify as White has varied situationally and over time. In speculative fiction, the boundaries marking who is and is not human are somewhat less ambiguous. Still, Whiteness allows varying degrees of participation to different human and non-human groups, creating a spectrum of representation that strongly resembles White (and non-White) representation in broader discourse.

I structure this chapter to review the primary material through the lens of White representation. The focus here is on White representation of Whiteness, patterns in the self-construction of White identity, distinctions from how non-White identity appears as an implicit foil, and how the construction and representation of the various human and non-human identities reflect those features in the works studied. This focus is distinct from one on Whiteness via a lens of White privilege or White supremacy, with which I will engage only tangentially here. As a larger goal, this chapter seeks to demonstrate the utility of the world architectural approach of this dissertation with an ideological framework that is different from but linked to the representation of racialized persons (specifically substituting the framework of representation of White “non-racialized” persons). Thus while the previous chapter took White representation of non-Whites over time as its framework for comparison, this chapter considers how *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *Star Wars*, and *Harry Potter* have negotiated White representation of Whiteness. This chapter gives less of a central focus to historical differences, instead focusing on Whiteness's manifestations and boundaries. It argues that Whiteness runs strongly throughout the works, continually informing aspects of the world architecture, even when apparently absent (whether concealed or resisted). In doing so, I show how this

graded Whiteness is inexorably bound to each work's racial hierarchies and thus links the subordination of non-humans to that of oppressed real-world people. A particularly potent example of this appears in intersections between light and dark themes with racial motifs. Light and dark bodily pigmentation and the characterization of moral alignment overlap in color-coding members of certain groups, allowing light and dark morality motifs to inform racial readings. Finally, I use a case study of the droids in the *Star Wars* prequel films to link these motifs to reproductive anxieties and racialized immigration politics. I show how these themes and patterns of representation intersect with concerns over sexuality and (re)production, even in works that do not otherwise address sex or sexuality. These play into White fears of being outnumbered by faster-reproducing non-Whites, which the films leverage for dramatic effect. In popular discourse, metaphors such “as waves, floods, queue-jumpers, an influx, an invasion or . . . swamping” appear to describe this effect (Martin and Fozdar 56). These “metaphors are often used to rally exclusionary nationalist sentiment without appearing racist” (56).

White- and human-normative perspectives are not unusual in speculative fiction, just as they are in virtually all mainstream (White-produced) Western media. Even texts that openly attempt to defy White habits of representation may still unconsciously fall prey to their motifs, as in the example of *Dungeons & Dragons* above. It tries to emphasize the physiognomic diversity of humans (“more physically diverse than other common races”) and avoid positing Whites as default (“there is no typical human”), even as it reenacts the same positions across the human/non-human divide. Graphic novels, comics, and webcomics frequently provide another illustration. For example, the webcomic *Namesake* intensely supports marginalized identities, particularly gender, race, and sexuality, and sports a female BIPOC protagonist. The comic also displays shades and subtle hue differences in character skin tones (including green or purple characters, in addition to the real-world human spectrum). Nonetheless, the work visually normalizes White (in this case, white) skin. Only a few of the comic's pages feature full-color illustrations, most preferring grayscale images with splashes of significant colors for emphasis. When not on full-color pages, Whites and only Whites (who nevertheless form the majority of the cast) have pure white, color-of-the-paper skin, all identical in hue. In other words, they have no color. None of the real-world variations in White skin tone appear, and White skin is the same shade as snow, clouds, teeth, and paper. The work shows awareness of the diverse range of possible skin tones among BIPOC, but Whites remain blank and monolithic: an unmarked and generic norm.

In the works I analyze, representations of Whiteness center most prototypically around White humans, save for an exceptional place held by Tolkien's maiar, who appear superlatively White. Human BIPOC participate in several aspects of Whiteness to different degrees across the works, especially in the *Star Wars* films, where their participation is nearly equal, save for some gendered motifs of Whiteness. Their participation is more unequal in the *Harry Potter* series and more still in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Some non-human groups also participate in Whiteness in various ways, though usually less than any human group (although hobbits, for example, may participate to a higher degree than non-White humans in Tolkien's works). Other non-human groups, including orcs, the uruk-hai, and battle droids, are more prototypically non-White. This use of Whiteness mirrors the hierarchies noted in chapter three while reinforcing them and adding nuance. Using these traits to legitimize the hierarchies of these worlds unconsciously legitimizes hierarchies in the real world, where the same traits are supposed in human groups.

The framework of Whiteness explored here is based on a foundation laid by early Whiteness scholars, including Ruth Frankenberg and especially Richard Dyer, and informed by various Whiteness scholars since, each refining or questioning the patterns of representation previously observed.<sup>100</sup> I focus here on the dominant form of White representation in mainstream, White-produced media, a powerful but not universal manifestation of Whiteness. Indeed, Whiteness manifests in diverse ways. Matthew W. Hughey, for example, refers to a "third wave of whiteness studies" ("Hegemonic" 212), which has shown a greater sensitivity to how Whiteness varies with social, historical, spatial, and intersectional contexts. While individual manifestations of White identity may be "embodied quite differently by homeless white men, golf-club-membership-owning executives, suburban soccer moms, urban hillbillies, antiracist skinheads, and/or union-card-carrying factory workers," argues Amanda Lewis (634, citing Rasmussen et al., Kenny, Hartigan), "[i]n any particular historical moment . . . certain forms of whiteness become dominant" (634). These dominant forms, which Hughey describes as hegemonic, are closely tied to the type of representational Whiteness Dyer identifies. This form has dominated White-produced visual media throughout the twentieth century, with roots in antiquity. It

---

<sup>100</sup>It is notable that Dyer's analysis, which predominates here, focused on the portrayals of Whiteness in visual media. In contrast, I focus on *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter* in their written forms. Nonetheless, the descriptions evoked by written media often seek to capture the same images that visual media more directly portray, and written character descriptions in the printed works echo visual depictions of Whiteness. I will note media differences where they become relevant to the analysis.

has influenced other forms of representation, here spanning from film (*Star Wars*) to literature (*The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *Harry Potter*). This is “the unmarked status of whiteness,” which “can be seen in cultural representations such as literature, film, and television, especially those that are created by white people. White characters tend to predominate in such representations, yet they are rarely positioned as specifically white” (Bucholtz 15). This pattern holds throughout the works studied here, and it extends beyond human divisions and across numerous groups whose identities lie outside the domain of the “human.”

Dyer is most oft-quoted for claiming that “[a]s long as race is something only applied to non-white peoples, as long as white people are not racially seen and named, they/we function as a human norm. Other people are raced, we are just people” (1). Put another way, “[a]t the level of racial representation, in other words, whites are not of a certain race, they’re just the human race” (3). Later scholars have described similar notions about Whiteness’s invisibility and unmarked nature (Fiske, *Media* 42, Murphy 249, Cancelmo and Mueller, Brooks and Hébert 307). Jo-Anne Lee (citing Bonnett) notes that the normalization of Whiteness is present in most anti-racist work (18). Whites are able “to live their lives in racialized ways while denying the salience of race generally and not thinking about their own whiteness” (Lewis 638). However, scholars such as Howard Winant contest this point, arguing “that it is no longer possible to assume a ‘normalized’ whiteness, whose invisibility and monolithic character signify immunity from political and cultural challenge” (cited in Sharma 543). Winant bases this on the increased self-awareness of Whiteness highlighted in opposition to affirmative action programs and similar political maneuvers in the post-civil rights era. Nonetheless, as Lewis points out, such awareness is only selective and strategic:

because of their social location (as dominants) whites historically have had the luxury of racializing others without necessarily, except strategically, developing or invoking a strong racial consciousness. Yet they remain an important racial collectivity despite their lack of felt groupness. They are a passive social collectivity that can become, at strategic moments, a self-conscious group (e.g., race riots, choosing a school for children, hiring a new employee). (626)

Hegemonic Whiteness is, by and large, Whiteness under self-erasure, a tendency to “avoid definition and explicit presence,” which John Fiske calls “a key strategy of whiteness” (*Media* 41). Still, it can become self-conscious, particularly in facing so-called “reverse discrimination.” Such may prompt Whites to engage in select forms of strategic essentialism (see chapter five) to defend their privileges and positions.

This tendency for Whiteness (or humanity) to exist as a default, unmarked state, only to resurface and highlight itself when it becomes a “victim,” holds across the various works.

This sense in which Whites appear as “just” human represents only a small part of the insights of studies of White representation, albeit foundational and politically potent. David Lloyd describes this as being “the Subject without properties” equivalent to being the “Subject with ‘unlimited properties,’” which therefore can claim universality, making it spokesman and judge for the “particular, partial” rest of humanity (cited in Yeğenoğlu 54). Fiske refers to Whiteness as “the construction and occupation of a centralized space from which to view the world, and from which to operate in the world” (*Media* 42). Likewise, Ruth Frankenberg writes that “whiteness refers to a set of locations that are historically, socially, politically, and culturally produced and, moreover, are intrinsically linked to unfolding relations of domination” (6). It “constitutes itself as a universal set of norms by which to make sense of the world” (Fiske *Media* 42). Because the dominant – in this case, White – subject is non-specific, positioned rather than defined, it can act on behalf of humanity in general. Thus the High King, the Supreme Chancellor, the Emperor, or the Minister of Magic can only be human. Anyone else could only represent their own groups, but as (White)<sup>101</sup> humans, they can represent everyone.

Two ways of revealing this default status are of particular interest here, namely at the levels of language and determinism. The first of these is, in effect, the level of identity. A White identity is a non-identity: to be White is, functionally, to have left the race entry blank on one’s list of descriptors. Patterns of language manifest this most strongly. “We (whites) will speak of, say, the blackness or Chineseness of friends, neighbours, colleagues, customers or clients, and it may be in the most genuinely friendly and accepting manner, but we don’t mention the whiteness of the white people we know” (Dyer 2). White individuals tend to be identified in everyday discourse by any number of features, such as gender, age, subculture, profession, or social class, i.e., “man,” “woman,” “child,” “punk rocker,”

---

<sup>101</sup> As discussed under the heading of enterprise below, the temporary appointment of Kingsley Shacklebolt, a black wizard, as interim Minister for Magic at the end of *Harry Potter* is an especially noteworthy divergence from this. It suggests a way non-White wizards can participate in a particular aspect of White representation in *Harry Potter*. To a lesser degree, a similar divergence occurs with appointing the BIPOC Lando Calrissian as an Alliance general commanding White, BIPOC human and non-human soldiers at the Battle of Endor. That these exceptions are both temporary nonetheless tells of limitations in the degree of non-Whites participation in Whiteness allowed, even in the most egalitarian of these works.

“policeman,” “beggar.” Whiteness remains neutral, and Whites frequently fail to refer to Whiteness as such (Frankenberg 54–55). Non-White people are more likely to be racially marked in the same discourse, which may include using race as a substitute for other identity markers, i.e., “the Latino,” “an African-American,” or in appending race to other identifiers, but only doing so with non-Whites, such as a “[c]omedy in which a cop and his black sidekick investigate a robbery” (Dyer 2). In each case, racial identity is considered more notable for the non-White person than for the White person. In the prior case, it may take precedence over other aspects of their identity, as though it were more important to know the individual’s race than their gender, age, or occupation. Frankenberg notes the privileging of non-White identity as particularly prevalent with “mixed” individuals:

In common parlance, a person whose parents come from two different ethnic or racial groups will be identified by reference to the nonwhite, subordinate, named, or marked group rather than the dominant and therefore normative white heritage: “She’s part Native American” and “I’m half Jewish” have a much more familiar ring than “She’s part white.” Only if all of a person’s ancestry is nonwhite will the whole be listed, as in “She’s Puerto Rican Chinese.” (98)

This effect is similar to how the idea “of ethnicity is applied asymmetrically across racialized groups. Ethnicity is often treated as obligatory for people of color but optional for whites: terms such as ethnic food in the grocery store or ethnic models in the fashion industry typically refer to cultures and people that are not classified as white” (Bucholtz 6). Likewise, Whites may describe things in language that assumes White skin and associated features as the norm, commenting only on physical characteristics that do not match.

Default status also manifests at the level of determinism. Traditional representations of White people show them as not being defined by their race or bodies and having no traits deriving from being White. By contrast, depictions of, for example, Blackness are accompanied by any number of ascribed characteristics. As Dyer puts it, “Black people can be reduced (in white culture) to their bodies and thus to race, but white people are something else that is realised in and yet is not reducible to the corporeal, or racial” (14–15). As Mercer describes it, such discourse portrays Blacks as “having bodies but not minds” (138, cited in Lawrence 793). White representations, by contrast, see them as defined by their spirits rather than their bodies, whereas non-White depictions associate them with the bodily or bestial. Adilifu Nama notices a similar pattern of representation among science fiction films, ranging from *One Million Years B.C.* to *2001: A Space Odyssey*, in which “white



individuals are paradigmatically representative of humanity and nonwhiteness is animalized” (14). Unlike non-Whites, Whites are characterized as able to transcend and “go against type” (Dyer 12). This notion, however, of “going against type and not conforming, depend upon an implicit norm of whiteness against which to go” (12). Not being defined by traits is not the same as having no racial traits. White traits are simply not mentioned or described (or not with the same frequency as non-White traits). They remain implicit or as the norm against which other traits are defined.

Whites are, in fact, represented as having certain traits, which Dyer identifies as a corollary to the claim that Whiteness “does not reside in a set of stereotypes” (Dyer 12).<sup>102</sup> The character of Whites has traditionally been defined by “energy, enterprise, discipline and spiritual elevation” with bodies that are hard and taut, with stiff joints “often unfavourably compared with the slack bodies of non-whites” (21). This notion of “enterprise” is particularly relevant here. Dyer borrowed the word from its repeated use by Harriet Becher Stowe in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* to describe the character of White men (31). While less openly expressed, the trait would continue to inform the representation of White men in popular, White-produced media into the present day. This vaguely defined trait encompasses a long list of related features, such as “daring . . . steadfastness, . . . capacity to organise, . . . hardness and . . . rapacity” (31), borrowing from Stowe, or “energy, will, discovery, science, business, wealth creation, the building of nations, the organisation of labour (carried out by racially lesser humans)” (31). Frankenberg describes similar traits: “Brilliance, dazzle, the spirit of adventure in the entrepreneurial world, good use of good training, being the progenitor of descendants within the racial group: these emerge as the dimensions of a form of white upper-class masculinity” (83). Dyer sees enterprise as “an aspect of spirit associated with the concept of will – the control of self and the control of others” (31), which is more akin to the definition employed here. It is closely associated with “temperamental qualities of leadership: will power, far-sightedness, energy” (31). In fiction, some characters of either gender are proactive, take initiative, and give orders to others, which are followed. They show their control and enterprise by compelling themselves and others to action. Others do not act but react or take action only when ordered or manipulated. Some characters, in other words, have enterprise, while others lack it, although this is more of a spectrum than

---

<sup>102</sup> The key distinction is that the stereotypes themselves are not so much constitutive of Whiteness as is the transcendence of the limitations imposed by those stereotypes. In other words, a racist stereotype about low Black intelligence might appear to restrict the potential success of Blacks in intellectual labor. Yet, a corresponding racist stereotype about the stiffness of White joints is generally not seen as preventing a White person from excelling as an athlete or a dancer.

a clear dichotomy. For example, Qui-Gon Jinn has a great deal of enterprise, taking initiative, hatching elaborate plans, and exercising authority over other individuals. Jar Jar Binks acts only under orders, never contributes to plans, and never meaningfully commands others (despite a nominal promotion to “bombad general”), showing a notable lack of enterprise.

Scholars have also identified a sexual dimension to the portrayal of Whiteness. Fiske writes, “Whiteness is particularly adept at sexualizing racial difference, and thus constructing its others as sites of savage sexuality” (*Media* 45). Indeed it constructs *sexuality* as savage and other. This dimension sees heterosexuality and reproduction as the crucial means of perpetuating Whiteness but also bears an “implicit racial resonance . . . of sexual desire as itself dark” (Dyer 13). This link implies an essential connection between representations of race and sexuality, in racial affinities for sex and sex as the means of racial production. As Patrice Jones argues, “The sexualization of race is not an after-the-fact flourish but an essential aspect of a concept itself rooted in coercive control of reproduction” (372). Who does and does not reproduce determines which “races” will continue to exist, and reproduction links to sex and, thus, racial darkness. Combined with issues of determinism, this produces concerns over White inadequacies and insecurities over reproduction: “The problem is that whites may not be very good at it [sex and reproduction], and precisely because of the qualities of ‘spirit’ that make us white. Our minds control our bodies and therefore both our sexual impulses and our forward planning of children. The very thing that makes us white endangers the reproduction of our whiteness” (Dyer 64–65). The problem, then, is that the perceived non-Whiteness of non-Whites, their stronger link to their bodies, is thought to make them more sexually driven, producing more offspring and putting Whites at a reproductive disadvantage. This problem leads to anxieties among Whites of being out-produced by non-Whites, coupled with related fears about the rape of Whites (especially White women) by non-Whites,<sup>103</sup> thus corrupting the Whiteness of their offspring and blurring the divisions between Whites and non-

---

<sup>103</sup> These anxieties retain currency into the present day. Rape motifs emerged in India after the 1857 rebellion and were significant in the post-civil war fiction of the USA (Sharpe, cited in Dyer 63). Since then, non-White on White rape has been a “recurrent motif” (Dyer 63). Concern over interracial sexuality was “explicit to the point of psychosis in earlier texts” yet is nonetheless “betrayed” by public responses to films at least up into the early 90s (62). Dyer provides examples of the rape motif in the attempted rape of a White woman by a monstrous gorilla in *Gli Amori di Ercole* from 1960 (216), or the actual (effectively fatal) rape of a White woman by an Indian man in *The Jewel in the Crown* from 1984 (251–52). Ruth Frankenberg’s interviews of White women in the late twentieth century United States show the same anxieties still rampant.

Whites (63). This contributed to what Dyer calls the “conundrum of sexuality for whites, the difficulty they have over the very mechanism that ensures their racial survival and purity, heterosexual reproduction. To ensure the survival of the race, they have to have sex – but having sex, and sexual desire, are not very white: the means of reproducing whiteness are not themselves pure white” (63). This conundrum, in turn, leads to fears of overcrowding or “swamping” (64), in which the faster-reproducing non-Whites out-populate and overwhelm the smaller number of slower-breeding Whites. They may do this via miscegenation (possibly aided by either rape or their superior sexual prowess), mass immigration, or simply reproducing faster than the older inhabitants of the country after arriving (anxieties consistent across both U.S. and U.K. contexts, albeit with different foci and manifestations). This interpretation is central to understanding the gendered aspects of White representation within this model.

Nineteenth-century racist ideologues saw “the civilized European woman” as being “less like the civilized European man than the savage man was like the savage woman” (Stepan 47). This observation stemmed from an analogy of race and gender, in which “the major modes of interpretation of racial traits were invariably evoked to explain sexual traits” (40). Within this discourse, “lower races” were seen as more feminine than “higher races,” and women as racially inferior to men (40). Nineteenth-century racist discourse employed such analogies extensively, claiming commonalities in diverse areas: social standing, bone structure, sexual behavior, brain weights, skull capacity, physical and moral immaturity, and “love of offspring” (45–46). Such discourse had diminished currency in the twentieth century, but it should surprise readers very little that, throughout the twentieth century, speaking of Whites was, first and foremost, to speak of White men. Likewise, Dyer sees portrayals of White masculinity as distinct from those of White femininity.

Interestingly, however, Dyer sees the Whiteness of White men as intricately intertwined with darkness. Dyer argues, “White men are seen as divided, with more powerful sex drives but also a greater will power” (27). These “dark” sexual desires are key to portraying tragic heroism in White men: “Dark desires are part of the story of whiteness, but as what the whiteness of whiteness has to struggle against. Thus it is that the whiteness of white men resides in the tragic quality of their giving way to darkness and the heroism of their channelling or resisting it” (28). The role of White men is thus being tempted by darkness, resisting it, and then channeling it toward

productive ends (the reproduction of the White race via heterosexual relations with a White woman).

Representations of White women have strong tendencies throughout and long preceding the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Such representations trace their genealogy through the notion of “the angel in the house,” a Victorian-era phrase that acted as part of “a hegemonic strategy to keep women submissive, docile, obedient, and humble” (Moghari 51). Still, as Dyer notes, views of White women have been “always contested” and “never simply assented to” (127). “[I]he image of the glowingly pure White woman no longer has the currency it once had,” although it continues to be influential (131). Even before Tolkien’s time, this depiction was already being challenged and renegotiated, even as those challenges continuously existed in reference to it.

In contrast to the sex drives of men, White women are “not supposed to have such drives in the first place” (Dyer 28). Idealized White women (as opposed to corrupt, fallen, or degenerate White women, the latter being a broad category that can include women who are simply lower class) appear through a rhetoric of separating feminine essence from the physicality of bodily existence, including reproductive urges. A woman was to be “a pure vessel for reproduction who is unsullied by the dark drives that reproduction entails” (29). This also may include being unsullied by the biological aspects of reproduction itself, such as Dyer notes (citing Frye) is found in late 20<sup>th</sup>-century Ku Klux Klan discourse, which “etherealised white women to the point that to imagine them having sex and being delivered of children is scandalous and virtually sacrilegious” (29). They likewise remain separate from other, more routine bodily functions, including “sweat, itself connoting physicality, the emissions of the body and unladylike labour, in the sense of both work and parturition” (122), which is “something inappropriate to ladies, that is, really white women, and also an instance of the body’s dirt” (78). Likewise, idealized White women tend to avoid actual dirt, other bodily emissions, blood, and grotesque physical injury.

When studying visual representations of Whiteness, Dyer notes how such depictions (ranging from Renaissance painting to modern pornography) reinforce these distinctions through lighting. For example, in portrayals of heteroromantic couples, the man is “always” darker, less fully lit, with stronger shadows and contrasts (57, 132–33). This emphasizes his association with darkness in addition to

Whiteness, often shown symbolically via dark clothing, an upturned face, and overhead lighting (120). White men may “shine,” as will non-White or lower-class persons, but idealized women “glow,” being more fully lit, bathed evenly in light to eliminate any appearance of sweat or perspiration and adding a halo, often by light from above shining on the hair (78, 122). Blonde hair and white clothing, especially bridal wear, can also accent women’s glow (124), the latter emphasizing the wedding as the “privileged moment of heterosexuality” (124) and the culmination of feminine Whiteness. This glow may be associated with the “extreme representation” of White women, that of the “angelically glowing white woman” (127), an angelic role related to being “enlightened and enlightening” (126) in their relationship with White men.

As the angelic symbolism suggests, light and dark have long held currency as symbols for good and evil in Western society. This is especially true in the fantasy (including space fantasy) narratives I analyze here. However, I believe it would be a mistake to essentialize the dichotomies of light and dark skin and light and dark moral symbols, conflating the two. Discourses surrounding each have reinforced one another but are no more the same discourse than racism and science. Racism appropriating scientific discourse in the past does not make racism and science inextricable. Nonetheless, light and dark’s use for good and evil *does* have frequent racial implications. As Dyer and others note, more morally benevolent characters in visual representation tend to be lighter colored, even within “the same social skin group” (59). Dyer cites Marina Warner’s observations about color contrasts “between an always golden-haired Cinderella and the red, dark and raven-coloured hair of her sisters and stepmother” (59) and John Hodge’s similar observation about the coloration of children’s robot toys (60). Dyer also points out that “[i]n *Dances with Wolves* (1990), a film self-consciously seeking to right the wrongful imagery of Native Americans in the Western, the bad Pawnee people are none the less of distinctly darker complexion than the good Sioux” (60). This represents a distinct overlap between discourses of light/dark morality and light/dark skin tone. Those of darker physical pigmentation appear as more “wicked and/or sensual than fair-haired and light-complexioned ones” (60). Although sensuality tends to be somewhat muted in the works I study here, wickedness is a powerful shared theme. There are occasional, very significant correlations between wickedness and physical pigmentation. Such a link makes it easy for readers to bridge the conceptual gap between the fictional races I discuss here and racialized groups in the real world.

Acting as universal subject, being unfettered by expectations of racial determinism, and so forth are powerful social positions. Still, it should be clear that while participation in Whiteness is desirable to members of a given group, at least compared to the alternative,<sup>104</sup> it is not ideal. While I do not have space to explore the full scope of White representation, with all its ramifications, suffice it to say that not all aspects of Whiteness are universalizing or even positive. As Dyer puts it, “[t]he individuated, multifarious and graded character of white representation does not mean that white culture has succeeded in imagining in white people the plenitude of human potential and is only at fault for denying this representational range to non-white people” (12). Instead, Whiteness associates with a determinism of another sort. There is “a specificity to white representation” (12). It incorporates the position of agent and universal subject, restrictive gendered positioning, coldness, stiffness, and even death through associations between whiteness and corpses, ice, and bones (Dyer 206–23).<sup>105</sup> Beyond its links to docility and submission, representations of White women may also render them as “untouchable, something only to be gazed upon, beautiful but not sexual. This means that whiteness, for women, is inscribed with beauty, but denied an earthly, physical, sexuality” (Turner 577). Women within such a framework are denied their sexuality, becoming “something to be admired, not someone who has sex” (577, emphasis original). At the same time, as I observe here, when texts separate fictional women from darkness and desire, they have diminished motivation for action, further diminishing their agency and enterprise and denying them the heroism implicit in portrayals of White men. The question of who can and cannot participate in Whiteness is thus not a matter of asking how far the works go in their egalitarianism and whether they go far enough but of understanding their engagement with a broader discourse, which itself needs careful questioning. Whiteness is an essentialized aspect tied implicitly to the hierarchy of each world, not an ideal to be sought after.

---

<sup>104</sup> Dyer has described the “rewards and privileges” of Whiteness as having historically “enthralled people who have had any chance of participating in it” (20). For one type of example of individuals seeking to participate in Whiteness and the efforts of established Whites to counter it, see Stephen Middleton’s work on legal disputes over racial passing in the antebellum United States.

<sup>105</sup> Descriptions of Whiteness/whiteness that tie it to coldness and death in *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter* do occur, often in imagery repeated between works. These include the whiteness of the Ring Wraiths revealed while wearing the One Ring or the whiteness of the haunted corpses beneath the water of the dead marshes. Such images recur in the pale visages and red eyes of both Emperor Palpatine and Lord Voldemort, the deathly pallor of Darth Vader without his helmet, and the bodies of the inferi beneath the cold water of the cave in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. These tropes have not been prioritized here, however.

Meghan Gilbert-Hickey and Miranda A. Green-Bartteet write that works of young adult speculative fiction, “despite their seeming progressiveness, focus primarily on white, cisgendered, heteronormative, able-bodied protagonists” (10). As Andre M. Carrington notes, however, “recognizing the ‘underrepresentation’ of a minority group is a common heuristic for discussing racial exclusion,” but “this negative critique can also mark the failure to acknowledge even the existence of Whiteness as a socially significant racial identity” (16). Similarly, looking exclusively at how works of speculative fiction by White authors have characterized non-Whites and non-humans “may reinforce the notion that whiteness is only racial when it is ‘marked’ by the presence of the truly raced, that is, non-white subject” (Dyer 14). Despite Rodolfo Torres and Christopher Kyriakides declaring the “decline of whiteness as a ruling ideology” (36), Whiteness remains in need of constant challenge. Indeed, Whiteness’s multifaceted and covert nature, which they read as a lack of unity and thus the source of its inevitable decline (36, 40), may be one of its greatest strengths. In these works, Whiteness asserts its dominant position through the same rhetorical means as in real-world discourse. Rather than allow this to remain unmarked, it is necessary to interrogate Whiteness in these works. More than making Whiteness visible (Sharma 544), we must actively interrogate the specificity of Whiteness and its implications for real-world inequalities. That specificity encodes equally in real-world discourse and speculative fiction’s world architecture (at least or especially by White authors). Speculative fiction often positions Whiteness prototypically with White humans and positions other groups relative to them.

## 4.2 Whiteness as Default: Normativity and the Power of Being Invisible

*Dungeons & Dragons* is not alone in treating humanity as a generic in creating fantastic worlds. Even worlds with wide varieties of intelligent non-humans tend to organize and describe them around a human norm. For example, the online game *RetroMUD* has almost a hundred playable “race” options in character creation (although only two-thirds are initially available to starting players) and numerous non-playable ones. Playable races range from classic fantasy options like dwarves and elves to non-humanoid creatures like unicorns, dragons, tentacle monsters, and sapient energy fields. They vary in size from foot-tall, pixie-like beings to twenty-foot-high titans and behemoths.

Nonetheless, humans again fill a normative role reminiscent of Whiteness. The website describes humans as “very adaptive and innovative” and similarly “resourceful and innovative,” with phrases like “sheer will” and “tenacity” (“Human”). The race has perfectly rounded stats, balanced magical prowess, an “average” heartbeat, and no listed advantages or disadvantages. Indeed, the notions of “advantage” and “disadvantage” center around the human norm. Thus “cannot ride mounts” is a disadvantage some races have, while no race has a “can ride mounts” advantage listed. Humans can ride mounts, so the human norm is assumed except when stated otherwise. This normativity is escaped only in a few areas, such as human’s “natural weapons” being “extremely poor” (due to a lack of things like teeth and claws) rather than “normal” or “average.” Here, humans define the bottom of the scale rather than the midpoint. Regarding “natural armor,” they are only near the bottom at “weak.” This pattern continues along a spectrum, with races most similar to humans having fewer advantages and disadvantages, more moderate stats, and similar features, and races more starkly non-humanoid having more advantages and disadvantages and more varied stats. Even in a world where humans risk vanishing amidst a sea of variety, they continue to act as the center point: the norm used to measure all.

Constructing fictional worlds through an anthropocentric perspective may be unsurprising, perhaps even expected, given that a human reference frame is the most reliable commonality between creator and audience.<sup>106</sup> Examining how this perspective operates reveals how normative perspectives reinforce implicit hierarchies. It offers insights into how speculative fiction can encode normativity, allowing us to ask questions about who and what is considered normal. More than just reflections of reader and writer identity, the texts normalize identities such as “hobbit,” albeit to a lesser degree than “human,” despite neither implied author nor implied reader being hobbits. Furthermore, the anthroponormative tendencies in Tolkien’s works or *Star Wars* develop alongside descriptions or spatial arrangements (such as ewok- or hobbit-sized homes) intended to avoid human normativity. Whiteness manifests through normative standards in these works, in other words, even when specifically avoided.

Much of the visual media Dyer analyzes normalizes Whiteness through conventions in lighting and composition. Unlike those works, the *perspective* used for

---

<sup>106</sup> For all intents and purposes, a work of fiction created by, for example, machine learning algorithms is still human-produced, simply using complex tools.



descriptions and comparisons is superficially *not* normative to humanity in Tolkien's works and *Star Wars*. For example, when Tolkien's descriptions focus on relative sizes, they generally favor the perspective of the current narrative focalizer or other characters in the scene, not humans. When the narrative focuses on a hobbit or hobbits, things are usually described based on their size relative to hobbits or other creatures in the scene. One can locate a typical example of this in Bilbo's discovery of his sword. The text describes the weapon's size comparing to Bilbo's (the hobbit's) size to its previous owners (trolls): "Bilbo took a knife in a leather sheath. It would have made only a tiny pocket-knife for a troll, but it was as good as a short sword for the hobbit" (*Hobbit* 60).<sup>107</sup> The word "knife" is probably an anthropocentric measure (compare "tiny pocket-knife" and "short sword"). Still, the main points of comparison are the implement's size compared to trolls and hobbits, not humans. Whether it would have been a large or a small knife by human standards can only be discerned with great difficulty and by comparing other descriptions of trolls and hobbits. Human-centered descriptions still appear, especially when the narrative ceases focalizing through a non-human character. For example, when the text explains Gollum's lifestyle in *The Hobbit*, which would have been unknown to Bilbo, it describes Gollum as "a small slimy creature" (*Hobbit* 94). Gollum would be a small creature compared to humans but not Bilbo. This move against anthroponormativity is notable for its contrast to the anthroponormative tendencies I identify hereafter, as the latter appear despite this effort to the contrary.

Due to the difference in medium, *Star Wars* attempts much the same through set design and camera angles rather than through narrative descriptions. For example, the camera's height matches the character when focusing on smaller-than-human creatures, such as jawas, ewoks, or R2-D2. Not so for larger characters: the camera rarely rises to look Chewbacca in the eye. It favors low-angle shots, emphasizing his large stature rather than leveling with him and taking on his perspective. These shots continue to other Chewbacca, even when camera angles avoid othering R2-D2, the ewoks, and the jawas, showing a limit to this resistance to anthroponormativity. Likewise, facilities and architectural structures are also adapted according to their inhabitants, with appropriately sized doors for ewoks and jawas and control panels at a height usable by both sizes of inhabitants in Bespin.

---

<sup>107</sup> While the same description might appear of a human hero wielding a giant's letter-opener, the phrasing would likely be different. As discussed below, the phrase "for the hobbit" rather than "for him" establishes Bilbo's identity as racially bounded and is not mirrored in human descriptions. The point here is that there is an overt effort to resist anthroponormativity, not that it has been wholly successful.

Although most characters are human, the perspective of the narrative makes some efforts to avoid an anthropocentric gaze, at least when dealing with smaller-than-human characters.

*Harry Potter*, on the contrary, describes things routinely from a human perspective when making relative descriptions. Nonetheless, as the narrative focalizer is always human, this still fits with the patterns of the other works. The narrative usually restricts itself to the perceptions of the titular character, Harry. When it varies from this, which it does only four times (in the first chapter of *The Philosopher's Stone*, chapters one and two of *The Half-Blood Prince*, and the first chapter of *The Deathly Hallows*),<sup>108</sup> it is always to the perspective of another human. That the narrator's focus is always on human beings and never on the non-human characters marks a literally anthropocentric perspective. Shifts away from Harry's viewpoint are rare. Two of those times focus on the villains, who generally shun non-humans. The others are from the perspective of muggles or limited third-person perspectives within a muggle community, thus offering no chance for contact with intelligent non-humans. Still, the fact that non-human perspectives do not appear in these cases tells of their lesser relevance to the plot.

Nevertheless, unlike the perspective for descriptions, patterns of marked and unmarked language show a much more normative position for certain groups than others. Just as White people are more likely to mention an individual's race when the individual is not White, so are the descriptions in the various texts disproportionately more likely to mention membership in or connection to specific groups than to others. The texts overwhelmingly favor humanity as the group to pass without direct comment yet favor others unequally. This may relate to common assumptions (White individuals assuming their audience is White and the authors/auteurs of these works assuming their audience is human). However, it still forms a crucial aspect of the normative position of both groups (real-world Whites and fictional humans), contributing to each case's underlying hierarchy. Further, different groups lie outside the normative frame to different degrees, despite all being distinct from the implied reader. These patterns hold of the narrator's descriptions (in the written works) and those in character dialog (in both film and text), including non-human characters. Distinctions between White humans and BIPOC humans are not as evident in this regard. However, this is not likely due to

---

<sup>108</sup> Other apparent shifts away from Harry's perspective are hinted at having been through Harry's dreams and visions.

normativity as it is with the more conscious cultural weight of making references to human individuals by race. For a partial discussion on reasons for referring to characters as, for example, “black” or “white” with different frequencies, see chapter three’s discussion of new racism and *Harry Potter*. Again, considering non-humans and humanity’s relationship to them is revealing since fear of being perceived as racist does not as heavily filter their portrayal. This section establishes the Whiteness of humanity in the works, while later analysis of enterprise more fully reveals distinctions in Whiteness *among* humans.

For an example of this pattern of marked language, take humans in *The Hobbit*. Tolkien uses the capitalized *Man* to refer to humans, rather than the lemma *human*, with the lowercase *man* referring to adult males.<sup>109</sup> Men do not appear in *The Hobbit* until almost halfway through the story, and the capitalized lemma *Man* does not occur until later, during a description of wood elves. In *The Hobbit*, it appears only as a noun in the plural form, “Men,” and only seven times.<sup>110</sup> Never is an individual Man, of which numerous are individually identified, referred to as “a Man” or “the Man.” No adjective form is attested, nor does Man appear as part of a hyphenated compound to suggest something typical of Men, thus granting them

---

<sup>109</sup> The use of *man* for adult males may include non-humans, such as Bilbo Baggins, while *Man* always refers to humans and may include women and children. Some ambiguous uses might suggest that the *Man/man* distinction is not wholly consistent in Tolkien’s books, but it seems to be mostly so. The ambiguity may be further evidence of slippage between the identities of “adult White male” and “generic human being.” The use of a name for humans that is capable of this slippage, rather than a unique term like “elf” or “human,” also reinforces the identity of human males as generic, being “simply (M/m)en” rather than something more bounded.

<sup>110</sup> Some portions of this dissertation contain statistical data, including counts of word tokens and similar information. For the written works, *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *Harry Potter*, these were obtained by converting digital copies of the text into a machine-readable format using OCR, then processing the text via corpus analysis software such as AntConc and Sketch Engine. Some errors inevitably appeared during OCR conversion, and I made efforts to identify and correct these errors manually. However, while the conversion accuracy was overall very high and was further improved by human checking, some small margin of error may remain for some counts, likely under 2% in the worst hypothetical cases, given human proofreading and the current state of OCR technology. This margin is higher than the standard OCR margin for error due to the presence of uncommon words such as “orcs,” which are more likely to be interpreted as more common words, such as “ores.” For other terms, the accuracy should be well above 99%. This margin is small enough not to change the nature of any results. Even so, readers should be aware of this possible imprecision when attempting to apply the same data elsewhere or when duplicating the methods. Counts from film material (*Star Wars*) derive from manual counts from human-produced transcripts, which have been reviewed and double-checked against the original data. Should any errors exist in those figures, they are due only to human oversight. Further, although I acknowledge the appendixes of *The Lord of the Rings* during parts of the analysis elsewhere, they have been excluded from the corpus data as they were not part of the original publication, which may influence specific figures.

material specificity. Further, these tokens mostly appear when Men are linked or contrasted to other groups.<sup>111</sup> Men by themselves do not need identification as such. Men (humans) are only “racial” in the presence of or relating to non-humans, much as “whiteness is only racial when it is ‘marked’ by the presence of the truly raced, that is, non-white subject” (Dyer 14). The humanity of humans is only worth mentioning to show that it is *not* some other identity and never for its own sake.

By contrast, the text identifies other groups much more freely. Elves and goblins also appear intermittently throughout the story. Still, the combined lemmas, *elf*, *elvish*, and *elven*, appear 94 times, far more than the 7 tokens for *Man*, while the lemma *goblin* has even more, with 206. In addition, there are 21 uses of hyphenated compounds beginning with “elf-” (e.g., “elf-friend,” “elf-lord,” “elf-guards”) and one ending with “-elf” (“wood-elf”). 16 hyphenated compounds start with “goblin-” (e.g., “Goblin-town,” “goblin-drivers,” “Goblin-cleaver”). Compounds with *elven* also occur in the form of 24 tokens of *elvenking* and one *elven-king*. These higher numbers strongly indicate that racial identity is much more relevant when discussing elves or goblins than with humans. Likewise, a hobbit and several dwarves are present for virtually the whole story. Even so, references to their racial identities are frequent, even when taken proportionately to their appearances. *Hobbit* has 154<sup>112</sup> tokens, and *dwarf* and *dwarvish* have a total of 334, with 22 hyphenated compounds for “hobbit-” and 10 for “dwarf-.” Being human is much less worth mentioning than being something else.

Similarly suggesting human normativity, all other group-referencing lemmas contain singular noun forms. Individuals may be described explicitly as group members, unlike humans, who are only identified as such collectively. In each case, this will sometimes include referencing the individual by race in exclusion of other identifying features, such as simply being “the hobbit” or “a hobbit” or similarly “the dwarf,” “a dwarf,” “the elf,” “an elf,” “the goblin” or “a goblin.” References to racial identity affiliation may also appear without specific contrast to other groups. For example, when the text describes Bilbo “trotting . . . down more dark passages with

---

<sup>111</sup> An example of this may be found when Thorin says “I speak to the Master of the town of the Men of the lake, not to the raft-men of the king” (*Hobbit* 240). While the racial identity of the raft-men is not indicated in this sentence, the identity of the Men only appears to distinguish them from the raft-men, who are elves. Also, note the distinction between “men” referring to the adult male raft-men, who are elves, and “Men” referring to the humans.

<sup>112</sup> This count excludes references to the book’s title from the title page and front matter of the book, which would add nine.

the yells of the goblin-hall growing fainter behind him” (*Hobbit* 86), the narrator is not contrasting the “goblin-hall” with any other kind of hall. This pattern further suggests that membership in these groups is a more central part of those members’ identities and a more central aspect of things associated with them than for humans. All but *hobbit* also appear in adjective form, and all appear in hyphenated compounds, marking other things as typical of that group, but no such specificity exists for humans. Humans are universal and undefined by any particular cultural or material marker, while other groups are materially or culturally defined.<sup>113</sup> There may be an “elvish blade” (92) or a “goblin army” (165, 338), in other words, but among Men, there are just “swords” and “armies.” If they are specific swords or specific armies, they are specific in a way other than the racial, such as being “long swords” (339) or “the armies of the great King Bladorthin (long since dead)” (279).

*The Lord of the Rings* contains only a few, if crucial, changes from *The Hobbit*. The net result is that humans gain greater specificity, but that specificity acts as a norm for measuring other races. Humans are less generic, in other words, but more literally normative. Among the changes is a single token of the lemma *human*, which appears in a description of the watchers at the tower of Cirith Ungol, said to have “forms human and bestial, but all corrupt and loathsome” (689). Like all tokens of *Man* in *The Hobbit*, this use is generalized to humanity. It also contrasts human and non-human (“human and bestial”). Unlike *Man* in *The Hobbit*, it is an adjective. It constrains humans to certain bodily features, even while leaving them unspecified. At the same time, it positions humanity as the opposite of “bestial.” True, it suggests a merger of “human” and “bestial” features, implying the existence of a spectrum. Still, it positions those concepts as opposite ends of that spectrum. Doing so reinforces the specificity of humanity by emphasizing the separation between human (spiritual, as per representations of Whiteness) and physical (bestial, as per representations of non-Whiteness) nature. Defining humans bodily as a standard of measure marks the most significant departure point between humans’ characterizations in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. The prior work avoids giving

---

<sup>113</sup> Note that things so described are distinctly associated with the group referred to. A “hobbit-hole” is different from a goblin tunnel, for example. Hobbit-holes are “nice cheery places and properly aired, quite different from the tunnels of the goblins” (92). Goblin tunnels, in turn, are distinct from the caves of elves. Elvish caves are “not like those of the goblin-cities; they were smaller, less deep underground, and filled with a cleaner air” (212). Goblin tunnels are also distinct from dwarf mines, as the goblin tunnels are “usually untidy and dirty” (83). The narrator never compares any of these with human dwellings. However, humans are also almost unique in *The Hobbit* for not living in some manner of cave (eagles live in eyries, and Elrond lives in a house, but he is part human, and the elf residents of Rivendell do not have their abodes specified).

specificity to humanity. The latter assumes a specificity that it does not describe but deploys as a prototype around which it organizes or to which it compares other descriptions.

This greater specificity shows in patterns of marked language. Humans appear more prominently in *The Lord of the Rings*, and the text is much longer. Because of this, the lemma *Man* occurs many more times, now with 205 tokens.<sup>114</sup> Further, they are now racially specified more narrowly, with such terms as *rohirrim* (50 tokens), *dúnedain* (28 tokens), *dúnadan* (11 tokens),<sup>115</sup> *haradrim* (9 tokens), *easterling* (8 tokens), *númenorean* (6 tokens) and *woses* (1 token). However, these more specific identities seem less central and are referred to less frequently. *Man* is used several times in the singular form, even to identify a particular individual and favor their racial identity over other aspects of their identity, but this always occurs with “Wild Man” and never without the “Wild” qualification. It is thus more akin to other sub-racial classifications, referring to *woses* rather than more prototypical “Men.” Similarly, *dúnadan* and once indirectly *númenorean* are used in the singular to identify a specific person, but only for Aragorn and only by and in conversation with Bilbo Baggins (for Bilbo’s heightened racial consciousness, see chapter three). Unlike in *The Hobbit*, *Man* will sometimes appear in cases where it is not marking a distinction between Men and members of some other group, and Men, at least collectively, will be referred to as such for their own sake. *Man* is much less generic in this sense than in *The Hobbit*, but as its use in adjectives keenly reveals, it is even more normative.

Just like in *The Hobbit*, *Man* does not appear as an adjective directly, yet unlike in *The Hobbit*, eight hyphenated compounds begin with “man-” or “Man-” (both of which seem to be racial rather than gender references regardless of capitalization). These descriptions are distinct from other hyphenated compounds in their function. They do not mark things as uniquely associated with Men but rather describe other things (usually beings), using Men as a standard of measure or treating Men as a default category, the prototypical member of a group that implicitly includes various non-humans. Examples of the prior involve describing an orc chieftain as being

---

<sup>114</sup> This count excludes references to “Old Man Willow” but includes references to “Wild Man,” a name for the *woses*.

<sup>115</sup> Although I count *dúnedain* and *dúnadan* separately here, the prior is the plural of the latter, so technically a form of the same lemma. “Rohirrim” and “Haradrim” do not appear to have a singular form at all, which is further telling of the normative nature of humanity in individual identity in *The Lord of the Rings*, as no way exists to specify an individual as a (singular Rohirrim). Other equivalent terms like “Men of Rohan” also appear only in the plural.

“almost man-high” (317), the half-orcs of Helms Deep being “man-high” (552), or Treebeard as being “a large Man-like, almost Troll-like, figure” (452). Each uses the default nature of Men as a standard by which to judge other beings rather than trying to characterize Men themselves. Still, the texts grant a limited specificity in terms of the height or shape of Men. Similar is the description of the Balrog as having “a dark form, of man-shape maybe” (321) or four references by Treebeard to “man-food” (547, 559, 560, 560). In the prior case, a vaguely seen humanoid shape could have characterized most of the races Tolkien describes, including hobbits, orcs, elves, dwarves, trolls, or even ents (the latter of whose descriptions never include such things as leaves or branches in *The Lord of the Rings*, which less-humanoid features appeared only in later depictions). In the latter case, the food in question is fit for and eaten by Men, hobbits, an elf, and a dwarf, not just by Men, although it previously belonged to Saruman’s human guards. In both cases, “Man” is a generic reference to a group that prototypically includes Men and less centrally covers others similar to them, once again making human beings the generic type and the standard by which non-humans are judged and measured. Notably, one description exists in which hobbit size is defined compared to dwarves (*Lord* 1), and the above example also compares Treebeard to trolls. However, the case of humans is distinct in that the hyphenated forms of Man appear only for measuring others and not for defining humans directly. There is no “elf-high” or “goblin-high.” If it is true, as Peter Lev claims about *Star Wars*, that in those films, “Man is the measure of all things” (30), it is so much more here. Man is literally a standard of measure in *The Lord of the Rings*.

Human identity may be more specified in *The Lord of the Rings* than in *The Hobbit* but not as much as other racial identities. References to other groups differ between *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* but in less significant ways. *Goblin*, for example, functions identically, save that it only appears nine times, with all other references replaced by the new lemma *orc* (422 tokens, higher than the 205 for *Man*) now with hyphenated compounds instead of adjective forms (an additional 107 tokens compared to the 8 for *Man*). *Dwarf* reappears with 178 tokens and 21 hyphenated compounds.<sup>116</sup> It still appears in adjective form, but the adjective form is now “dwarf” instead of “dwarvish.” *Elf*, *elvish*, and *elven* total 382 tokens, plus 62 hyphenated compounds. *Hobbit* has 675 tokens, but now it appears in adjective form as well (“hobbit”) and has an additional 42 hyphenated compounds, far more than the one hyphenated compound from *The Hobbit*. All still include singular noun

---

<sup>116</sup> The token count for *dwarf* is slightly lower than for *Man*, but there are also fewer dwarf characters than any other group discussed here and more Men than any other group save perhaps orcs.

forms, which act as a substitute for individual names or other identity markers. In all cases, being a member of a non-human group or associated with a non-human group is much more worth mentioning than membership in or association with humanity. Likewise, while Elrond is “halfelven” and there are numerous references to “half-orcs,” there is no “half-human” or “half-Man” attested. In racial mixture, the non-human identity takes priority, just as Frankenberg noted about non-White identities. The use of racial identifiers in the language of Tolkien’s works is thus very much supportive of human beings as a default, unmarked category. *The Hobbit* is slightly more normative to hobbits than most non-human groups, but only by a small margin that vanishes or becomes less apparent in *The Lord of the Rings*.

Despite the efforts to describe things from the focal character’s perspective, as described above, *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* work within a human standard. A weapon may be a pocket knife or a short sword, depending on the viewer, but “man-high” is still a standard of measure for heights, one apparently neutral (not measuring things by any focalizing character’s perspective) but which literally uses “Man” as a unit of measurement. The identities of orcs, by contrast, are highly marked. At the same time, groups like elves, dwarves, and hobbits occupy an intermediate position, hobbits being the closest to the normative one, especially in *The Hobbit*. Again, this resembles the hierarchies described by other scholars discussed in chapter three, save that it places humans in a more normative position than elves. All this, however, obscures the arguably even more normative place of maiar. The highest hierarchical group to appear in either book, the maiar, are generic to the point of nigh-invisibility. The words “maia” and “maiar” do not occur outside the appendices of *The Lord of the Rings*. Nevertheless, the group presumably includes the wizards, Sauron, and the balrog, each a powerful or influential character. They are so generalized that their racial identities are difficult to recognize, a point fitting their place at the top of the hierarchy. The normativity and the naturalized hierarchy in Tolkien’s works easily read as normativity *justifying* the hierarchy or as hierarchy springing naturally from normativity. Either way, the same logic reinforces hierarchical arrangements in the real world, as dominant groups appear less marked than subordinated ones.

Narrowing the diversity somewhat from Tolkien’s fellowship, the protagonists of the original *Star Wars* trilogy include members of three distinct groups, namely humans, droids, and a wookiee. Of these groups, humans are by far the most numerous in the series. The dialog of the original *Star Wars* trilogy contains



only 5 instances of the lemma *human* (rising to 6 with the special edition), 11 of *wookiee*, and 42 of *droid* (including “kanji ta droid” (*Return* 00:14) by Jabba, which is only presumably of the same meaning). This trend suggests a disproportionately low number of references to humans, despite their high representation among the cast.

Quite the opposite of *The Hobbit*, all *human* cases take the adjective form (although two are to “human being,” which is arguably part of a compound noun). Four of the six references to humans come from C-3PO, two of which are him introducing himself as “C-3PO, human-cyborg relations.” The other two are being clever “for a human being” or complaining about not understanding “human behavior.” The references not by C-3PO are to “human forms” (in sensor data), and a token of ironic praise by Han Solo to Jabba the Hutt, re-added in the special edition, calling him a “wonderful human being” (*New Hope* 00:51). Some of these strongly resemble uses of *Man* and *human* as adjectives or hyphenated compounds in *The Lord of the Rings*. C-3PO, for example, is fluent in “over 6 million forms of communication,” the vast majority of which are probably not human or “cyborg” in origin, including several languages he uses in Jabba’s palace or the language he uses to speak with the Ewoks. Nevertheless, he is designated “*human-cyborg relations*,” letting “human” generically fill the role of all biological beings. Likewise, “human forms” are implied in the sensor data only by the presence of a large power generator. In that case, “human” refers to technologically advanced intelligent life, not specifically to humans, per se. Similarly, the behavior that C-3PO identifies as “human behavior” is not distinct from other sapient biological life forms’ behavior and shows another case of “human” standing for “generic intelligent, biological being.” Unlike “elven arrow,” which indicates the specificity of elves, the uses of “human” as an adjective in *Star Wars* emphasize the generic nature of humanity. Interestingly, Solo’s use of “human” to describe Jabba in the special edition scene suggests a conscious<sup>117</sup> irony, specifically making light of this tendency to use “human” in a generic sense when referring to more than just humans.

References to wookiees or droids are much more numerous and typically take the form of nouns. They often appear as a direct reference to an individual in lieu of their name (i.e., “a wookiee,” “the wookiee,” “your droid,” “a droid,” “the droids”). In these cases, non-human group membership is again treated as more relevant than individual identity, showing non-human characters as more bounded

---

<sup>117</sup> Although the scene predates Jabba’s slug-like design, it was nonetheless already clear that he would be a non-human of some kind, probably a hairy one, so the irony was intended in the original version.

by their racial identities than the “raceless” humans. In Chewbacca’s case, characters even make differing distinctions within a single sentence of dialog, such as in Lando’s “What about Leia and the wookiee?” (*Empire* 01:27),<sup>118</sup> Luke’s “You will bring Captain Solo and the wookiee to me” (*Return* 00:23) or Jabba’s “Bring me Solo and the wookiee!” (00:26).<sup>119</sup> The dialog does not reflect resistance to anthroponormativity in visual effects via camera angles, lighting, and set design. It remains normative to humans even when it is not a human speaking. Despite the efforts to the contrary, the place of humans in the hierarchy is reinforced by their normative positioning via the dialog of human and non-human characters, reinforcing the hierarchy/normativity parallel established in Tolkien’s works.

*Harry Potter*, by contrast, is primarily anthroponormative in its descriptions, and its use of racial identifiers is even stronger than in the other works. Despite the overwhelming majority of characters in the *Harry Potter* series being human, for example, and the scarcity of appearances of non-humans, the lemma *human* (122 tokens) appears only half as often as the lemma *goblin* (250 tokens) and less than a third as often as *elf* (406 tokens). Despite the even more marginal status of centaurs in the works, the lemma *centaur* (102 tokens) appears almost as often as *human*. However, racial mixture gives less priority to human identity than in *The Lord of the Rings*. There are nine tokens of *half-giant*, one of *part-giant*, one of *half-werewolf*, but there are also four of *part-human* and one *parthuman*.<sup>120</sup> The latter, however, usually only appears when different kinds of part-humans are referred to collectively. Only once is an individual referred to in the singular as a “parthuman,” otherwise favoring the non-human parent’s race for specification. This pattern shows that the specificity of being human is primarily unmarked, whereas being an elf, goblin, or centaur is almost always worth mentioning. Quite different from *human* or *Man* in the earlier texts, however, the *Harry Potter* series uses *human* as an adjective freely to refer to the material and cultural specificity of being human, even when not having non-humans referring to humans and human materiality (such as centaurs using such phrases as “a human child,” “his human face,” and so forth). Still, these are proportionally far

---

<sup>118</sup> Vader at least dehumanizes more equally, with his line a few scenes later of “Calrissian, take the princess and the wookiee to my ship” (*Empire* 01:34), also reducing Leia to a broader identity, albeit still not a racial one.

<sup>119</sup> All these characters are on a first name basis with Chewbacca, so “the wookiee” is not used out of ignorance of his name or lack of personal familiarity.

<sup>120</sup> Notably, the latter includes creatures like centaurs, vampires, and merfolk, who do not appear to be of mixed racial ancestry, despite laws classifying at least some of them as “Non-wizard part-humans” (*Goblet* 132). The power imbalance implied by the imposition of these labels as legal distinctions is touched on lightly in the next chapter.

less common than with other groups. Humans are not referred to individually as “a human” or “the human” instead of other identifiers, although there is one reference to Griphook being “bound to the humans” (*Deathly* 465). As in the other works, rather than being indicated by race, humans in *Harry Potter* are instead specified in alternate ways, such as gender, profession, or magical ability (“witch,” “wizard,” “muggle,” “clerk,” “driver,” “boy,” “girl”), if not by their actual names. Nevertheless, terms like “witch,” “wizard,” and “muggle” operate in ways reminiscent of discussions of race. They appear much more often in *Harry Potter* than terms for human sub-races in Tolkien’s works (terms for human races do not appear in *Star Wars*). Of them, *muggle* has 524 tokens, *wizard* has 866, and *witch* has 339, suggesting that while there may not be as much specificity to being human, being magical or non-magical has a great deal of specificity.<sup>121</sup> Again, relatively unmarked language corresponds to the hierarchical advantage of humans. This correspondence is further apparent in the lack of clear trends among other races in *Harry Potter*, reflecting its simplified hierarchy (see chapter three).

Comparing the works, we find language use patterns paralleling broader discourse’s normalization of Whiteness compared to non-Whiteness. Just as Whites refer to non-Whites by racial identities but avoid referencing Whiteness, being a particular kind of non-human is more mentionable than being human. Some works show more graded representation in their language: hobbits, elves, and dwarves are less marked than orcs, and *Star Wars* perhaps marks wookiees less frequently than droids. No clear distinction in markedness appears among the races of *Harry Potter*, save for that between humans and non-humans. A normative trend among racial identity ascriptions favors humanity, despite efforts to avoid such in the composition of Tolkien’s works and *Star Wars*.

The normative nature of human status manifests further in attributing racial traits. The texts broadly attribute characteristics to many different groups but never to humans as such, except when using them as a standard to describe other races. Non-human groups have traits and features, in other words, while humans are just

---

<sup>121</sup> *Wizard* outnumbers *witch* for two reasons. First, the text is male-dominated. 80% of third-person singular personal pronouns are male (he/him/his/himself) and only 20% female (she/her/herself). Second, “wizard” refers either to a male or a generic magical individual of either gender, while “witch” refers to magical females only. The prior suggests males being generic (characters more likely to default to male) and more enterprising (more relevant to ongoing events and thus more often appearing in sentences). The latter again suggests the role of universal subject, the position of being *generically* human, aligning itself with men more than with women through the male doubling as the gender-neutral referent.

“normal.” This pattern follows across all the works discussed here but with significant variations. For example, in Tolkien’s works and Harry Potter, while humans do not have traits collectively, certain groups of humans do, usually still relative to an implicit human norm. All of Tolkien’s cases in *The Lord of the Rings* apply to full- or part-blooded descendants of the Númenoreans, which attributions are at least partly due to their non-human ancestry. They thus reinforce by their difference the normative nature of the generic human standard, being not entirely normal only insofar as they are not entirely human.

Cases in *The Hobbit* do not cut such a sharp distinction. The only humans with unique traits or abilities are those “of the race of Dale,” as well as Beorn and his descendants. The origins of each one’s abilities are unspecified. However, the lone power attributed to the members of the race of Dale, speaking with birds, parallels those of Rangers. According to *The Lord of the Rings*, the Rangers “were believed to have strange powers of sight and hearing, and to understand the languages of beasts and birds” (146). That may suggest the presence of Númenorean blood among them (indeed, there are striking similarities even in the physical descriptions of Bard and Aragorn, which might hint at racial kinship) and, by extension, elven blood. This connection would likely also explain their position as the ruling class under Tolkien’s usual hierarchies. As for Beorn, his origins are unknown, but the possibilities are said to include his being a bear which at times took human form, rather than the other way around, which would further suggest non-human origins to the marked traits. Either way, their distinction from human norms reinforces the existence of a human standard, regardless of whether their differences are non-human in origin.

*Harry Potter* and *Star Wars* each diminish the trait-based normativity of humans compared to Tolkien’s works. *Harry Potter* divides humans into three categories: witches and wizards (collectively one category), muggles, and squibs. None of these categories are implicitly non-human in origin, and no group assumes a completely normative position. Muggles, for example, as the first sentence of the first book indicates, consider themselves “normal” (7), being more populous and usually unaware of the existence of witches and wizards. Witches and wizards, meanwhile, look at muggles as exotic Others, judging them by the norms of wizarding society. Squibs are the rarest and not looked upon as “normal” by the standards of either group or squibs themselves (who tend to adopt a wizarding perspective), having a mix of magical and muggle traits. Harry, as the narrative

focalizer, further balances this normativity. Being a wizard raised in the muggle world, he incorporates elements of both perspectives into the narration. Unlike in Tolkien's works, though, the distinctions between different types of humans are exclusively related to the supernatural, without variations of temperament or longevity that sometimes distinguish descendants of the people of Númenor.<sup>122</sup> In *Harry Potter*, humans are set apart only by their ability or inability to do magic and how they interact with magical phenomena (such as whether they can see dementors). However, aside from differences between elf and wizard magic, descriptions of racial traits among non-human groups still focus on differences from a general human norm rather than any particular type of human.

The distinctions made in *Star Wars* are more straightforward in that humans are never ascribed any traits explicitly, yet they are not unique in this exception. Only a few groups have specifically attributed racial traits, leaving humans as only one of many groups that are, from that perspective, privileged to a normative position. Unlike *Harry Potter*, which normalizes humans via ascribed traits but not any *group* of humans, *Star Wars* compels humans to share the spotlight with other unmarked races. *The Phantom Menace* comes closest of any of the films to ascribing humans an explicit racial trait. Anakin explains that he is the only human who can race pods, an ability Qui Gon ascribes to his fast reflexes. This ability marks humans as distinct from some alien races due to differing reflexes. Only thanks to the force's influence can Anakin do what other species do naturally. It is unspecified whether human reflexes are unusually slow, in general, or whether some other groups are abnormally fast, so no distinct normative standard appears. It indicates a specific level of typical human ability but stops short of comparing humans to a non-human normative baseline. While doing this, however, it points directly to a transcendence of the limits of the human physical form, with Anakin performing a task humans should be physically incapable of. Going beyond limits is a different trait of Whiteness in general White representation, which neatly links specificity in traits to specificity in professional opportunities.

Specific traits qualify certain groups uniquely for certain professional roles, further increasing their specificity. As indicated in chapter one, the works rarely

---

<sup>122</sup> This is speaking exclusively about the contents of the *Harry Potter* books. The first *Fantastic Beasts* movie contains a line by Newt Scamander, which asserts that muggle and wizard "physiologies are slightly different" (00:35). Of course, this could represent period bias since no evidence of those differences appears. However, coming from the films rather than the books, these considerations fall outside the scope of this research.

distinguish between race and class, with the prior often overdetermining the latter. Even more than this, for some groups, their racial abilities and temperaments steer them to more or less narrow fields of possible employment. Other groups are less restricted, with their members enjoying a broad range of possible professions. In that sense, those groups whose definition allows for versatility and less limited potential participate more fully in this aspect of Whiteness than those who do not. If they lack the traits that allow another race to excel in a given field, they nonetheless surpass that limit to excel in that field regardless. This broader range of opportunities directly yields power and authority to groups with access to more prestigious positions.

In Tolkien's works, White humans are the most White in this respect, even surpassing the maiar. Light-skinned human beings are seen as farmers, fishers, hunters, beekeepers, horsemen, clerks, soldiers, administrators, kings, healers, housewives, and so forth, to name only a few of the displayed professions. This pattern seems to hold across all White human groups. There is every indication that the professional opportunities for these humans are as broad as the setting allows. In short, their potential is virtually limitless.

We can contrast this with many other groups. Ents are tree herders and nothing else. Their men and women<sup>123</sup> differ in their preferred approach to tree herding, but no individuals vary from their race- or gender-defined roles. Orcs show only the slightest variance, with some being trackers or chieftains, but even this is a distinction of sub-race, not individual potential. Dwarves are almost equally limited. Every dwarf, as near as we can discern, is a warrior, a miner, and a craftsman. While they excel in these areas, they appear to possess no other industry. Food and other things they collectively trade for, even if individual dwarves may be *able* to, for example, hunt, and they have some extra ability at starting campfires (*Hobbit* 48–49). Elves are somewhat more versatile. They seem to encompass most trades collectively, but individual sub-groups are limited in different ways, such as the wood elves, who “neither mined more worked metals or jewels, nor did they bother much with trade or with tilling the earth” (*Hobbit* 208). Nonetheless, even the wood elves

---

<sup>123</sup> Specifically, the “ents” and the “entwives” in another telling case of normativity coded in the language. Male ents are simply “ents,” while females are “entwives,” defined both as a nonstandard (marked) form of ent, as well as by their gendered role as “wives” to the male ents. Similar uses of language can be found among other groups, but less frequently, such as one of the songs Bilbo hears in Rivendell, where the elves sing about “elf and elf maiden” (*Hobbit* 356), identifying male elves as the generic type of elf and elf maidens as a specific, marked case.

have kings, jailors, guards, hunters, and raft-men, showing more variety in their professions than some others. This variety indicates more participation for elves in the tropes of Whiteness than ents or orcs but less than humans. Maiar are somewhat diminished in their Whiteness in this area, appearing as leaders or counselors or otherwise involving themselves in grand historical events but having few career options aside from “dictator” or “wizard” (although these are powerful and enterprising professions). The text tells little of BIPOC humans. Those few identified specifically are either refugees (as in the group passing through Bree), layabouts (Bill Ferny), spies and thieves (the “squint-eyed southerner”), or soldiers, but they also appear capable of being sailors and farmers.

Here again, hobbits come out just behind White humans. Hobbit society encompasses many professions, with fewer limitations than are suggested among elves. The one limitation hobbits have, that some will not work with boats or around water, does not (as with the elves) apply to all sub-races of hobbit. The remaining professions not found in the Shire include more-than-nominal central government positions, police, and shoemakers. These are absent not because hobbits cannot or will not do those things (indeed, they can) but because hobbits do not need them. This lack of need contrasts sharply with the missing occupations among elves or dwarves, who must compensate via trade. Even sub-race characterizations of hobbits around professions are generally hedged with words like “most,” implying that hobbits often cross the sub-racial boundaries in occupations and social roles. Hobbits are at least nearly as unrestricted as the fictional White humans in this respect (and perhaps more than the BIPOC ones).

In Tolkien’s works, female characters of all races seem to have a narrower range of professional options than their male counterparts, mirroring women’s more limited professional options in early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Western society. Females are conspicuously absent in *The Hobbit*: the text refers to only three. One of these is a bird, two are unnamed, and the text characterizes each primarily by their relationship as wives or mothers to more significant male characters (Green 189). While these references do not hint at professional options other than domestic roles, Belladonna Took (Bilbo’s mother) had heroic adventures before marrying (*Hobbit* 13), an activity well outside the domestic sphere. In *The Lord of the Rings*, those few women who appear are generally in highly gendered positions. They also only appear among the more professionally versatile races. Among less-versatile races, women do not appear at all. When the men of the race have many roles, women have few. When men have

few, women have none. Nevertheless, even this limit is surpassed. White humans again demonstrate their resonance with general tropes of Whiteness through Éowyn. Her actions, discussed more fully hereafter, do not end up challenging the professional gender divide. Still, they show the ability of the (White) individual to surpass limits as she temporarily crosses that divide, acting and excelling in a fairly prototypically masculine role as a soldier. White human women retain the ability to be exceptional and achieve a professional versatility that nonetheless still belongs to the men, even as the women chance to participate in it.

Across the *Star Wars* films, there is a broad spectrum of professional versatility. Humans are most obviously versatile, but many other contenders may show similar versatility. The gran, for example, include members such as a pod racer, several senators, a candidate for supreme chancellor, and an employee of Jabba the Hutt. These limited appearances nonetheless suggest a broad spectrum of potential life paths. Groups like the twi'lek also experience a similar variety in their on-screen appearances. Others, such as nemoidians, appear only in specific roles but are not explicitly tied to them. A few, including the Hutts (who are all “gangsters”) and Kaminoans (“cloners”), are expressly confined to a single role. There remains some spectrum of professional racial versatility.

Just as in Tolkien’s works and *Harry Potter*, female characters in the *Star Wars* films are rarer than male characters, but those that appear cover a wide variety of professional roles, many of which are not traditionally feminine. Princesses, politicians, ambassadors, Jedi, dancers, enslaved persons, bounty hunters, administrators, librarians, military leaders, and soldiers are all positions seen being held by women at one point or another. It seems reasonable to conclude that in *Star Wars*, men and women can experience diverse professional options to a similar degree, if not in equal numbers. This diversity parallels changes in professional opportunities for women since Tolkien’s time and points to the relative empowerment of female characters in *Star Wars* as it allows women to adopt some traditionally masculine aspects of Whiteness.

Unlike the earlier works, *Harry Potter* shows professional options existing along less of a clear spectrum, with a vast divide between the lower and upper ends of the scale. In terms of the number of available professions, there is some ambiguity. At the least versatile end, we have creatures such as owls, giants, centaurs, and house-elves, who have only one distinct role each. A few others *may* have more careers, but



it is generally unclear. Goblins, for example, work for Gringotts generically and without specialization, although there are references to goblin smiths; whether these are just Gringotts goblins who are also smiths on the side or whether smithing is a separate job is unspecified. Others have lifestyles that are ambiguous enough to be read in several ways but seem to trend toward the least versatile end, such as merfolk. Less ambiguously, all non-humans have a distinct social *position*, which is professionally affiliated. Goblins work at Gringotts, centaurs live apart from others in the forest and subsist there, as do merfolk underwater, house-elves live in big houses and serve the owners, and owls deliver mail. Again, as he generally is, Grawp should be noted as an exception. Being a groundskeeper's assistant, as he is by the end of the series, is a very different profession from what other pure-blood giants are relegated to, although he achieves this only through the intervention of his half-giant brother, Hagrid, which may suggest that Grawp's ability to surpass his natural limits comes, on some level, through the intervention of an individual with White human ancestry, even if not through his own lineage.

At the other end of the scale, humans fill numerous professions. However, muggles and witches/wizards differ somewhat in their professional choices. Characters identify many muggles as such simply by noting their profession, leaving an unstated assumption that no wizards or witches have that same career. This tendency appears when Hermione indicates her muggle parentage by noting that her parents are "both dentists" (*Philosopher* 146). Similarly, Ron mentions that his extended family is not quite all witches and wizards because "mum's got a second cousin who's an accountant" (*Philosopher* 75). Only witches and wizards can, of course, become aurors, obliviators, and related professions. No human options, then, are entirely limitless (If being an accountant indicates muggle status, Gringotts must have no wizard accountants), but each group of humans seems equally varied. Both are far more varied in their choices than any group of non-humans. Certain groups, such as werewolves, seem to be functionally the same as other humans in this respect (discrimination restricts werewolf job opportunities but not their natural talents and proclivities).

Women are only slightly less numerous than men in *Harry Potter*.<sup>124</sup> They again fill a wide variety of professional roles, as they do in *Star Wars*, perhaps even

---

<sup>124</sup> This is speaking exclusively of the total number of characters. As noted previously, the text spends four times as much time speaking about male characters than female ones. Many female characters exist, but they are generally less relevant to the story.

more so due to the higher number of women available to fill those roles. While a variety of professional roles favors humans more exclusively in *Harry Potter* than in the previous works, full participation in this aspect of Whiteness is less of a gendered affair. The only qualification in *Harry Potter* is that male characters almost exclusively hold the highest adult positions. Females act as seconds-in-command, including Minerva McGonagall as Deputy Headmistress to Albus Dumbledore, Dolores Umbridge as Senior Undersecretary to Cornelius Fudge, Rufus Scrimgeour, and Pius Thicknesse, and Bellatrix Lestrange as Voldemort's "last, best lieutenant" (*Deathly* 737). Women succeed Dumbledore on several occasions. Still, these are all either illegitimate and not recognized by the school, as with Dolores Umbridge (magically barred from the Headmaster's office), or temporary and without an official appointment, as when McGonagall holds the position as acting headmistress in Dumbledore's stead or awaiting the appointment of his successor. The only exception lies with Olympe Maxime, who served as headmistress of Beauxbaton's Academy of Magic, and references to the existence of past Headmistresses of Hogwarts, who do not personally appear in the story outside of portraits. The text identifies only one of these by name. Female participation in this respect is much higher in *Harry Potter* but not precisely equal.

Note that the relatively low standing of female characters in these works rarely links to social forces or deliberate oppression. Although Éowyn is appointed to rule in Theoden's stead when he rides to the aid of Gondor, she never requests to nor is expressly forbidden from joining them (unlike in the recent film adaptation). She asks to join Aragorn, but he declines because he cannot tarry to gain the permission of her liege, not because she is a woman (although she once interprets Aragorn's refusal as such). Indeed, the closest any of the works comes to referencing the oppression of women is Hermione's concern that others expect to do the cooking in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* "because I'm a girl, I suppose?" (293). To this, Ron fairly replies that she is the only one skilled enough at magic (293). In the absence of visible oppression, the subordination of women can only be attributed to women, in these fictional worlds, being naturally subordinate through traits discussed hereafter. While paralleling contemporary oppression, the higher professional specificity of women stems from naturalized subordination in these works' world architectures, not injustice in their societies.

The normative nature of different groups directly contributes to their political, social, and economic power in all cases. As discussed earlier, generic groups

can speak on behalf of all people, not just members of their group, allowing more “generic” individuals to more easily fill positions of authority (discussed further below). They are also less constrained by their race concerning professions or social class. More generic groups rise to prominence in the hierarchy precisely because it is among their options to do so and not among those of others. A group whose members are all tree-herders cannot include kings among its members, nor can a group of bankers have a minister of magic or a group of gangsters an emperor. As the only exception, the maiar retain their power despite the only level of specification that applies to them here, for their professional restriction is that of “wielders of power,” whether that power is social (counselors), political (leaders), or supernatural (wizards and balogs). They retain their place at the top of the hierarchy because the top of the hierarchy is where they are specific *to*. Otherwise, maiar are generic, and power falls to the generic. Even as these works sometimes struggle against normativity, they inscribe it deeply into the structure of their world architectures. It pins up the inequalities which legitimize their social orders. The Whitest groups rise to prominence despite not being identified as White. Indeed, the lack of identification is a key to their power. They are not “White” but simply “normal.”

### 4.3 Enterprise: Power, Leadership, and Initiative Through Whiteness

Beyond being represented as “normal,” Whites have also been defined by several specific traits within hegemonic frameworks of Whiteness. One of the most dominant among these is “enterprise.” Encompassing numerous other features such as industry, daring, leadership, initiative, creativity, and similar traits, “enterprise” seems a catch-all for characteristics prototypically centered around control, whether of the self or others. Enterprising characters are in command of themselves, spurring themselves forward into productive action without needing outside direction. They also command others, naturally assuming leadership positions where they can inspire followers to similar action. In considering who participates in this aspect of White representation, I will examine which characters can plan and show initiative (command themselves) and assume leadership positions (command others, especially those not of their group). The latter links intimately with the issue of normativity discussed above, where being a more “generic” individual enables one to act as a representative for (lead or speak on behalf of) more than one’s own group. Due to their common specificity, a wood elf might make a good representative for

wood elves. However, a generic individual (a White male human or maia) can speak on behalf of *all individuals*. They are simply a person and can thus speak for various, sometimes more specific, people. This notion of enterprise further builds upon the power potential established by the normative position, asserting that the hierarchically elevated individuals are qualified, by their status as generics, to speak on behalf of larger groups and have the skills and natural inclination to do so effectively.

Both aspects of enterprise (initiative and leadership) exist across a loosely defined spectrum, ranging from groups of wholly passive or reactionary characters to those whose members frequently act and occupy leadership positions. Even when characters are active or in leadership positions, some are more active than others. Others exercise their leadership to a greater or lesser degree or over a larger or smaller collective. Characters may further highlight their initiative and leadership roles by disobeying or refusing orders, showing independent thought rather than blind followership, or actively participating in creating plans. Going against orders highlights the actions as demonstrations of individual agency, being according to the *individual's* will and distinctly *not* according to others' will. This disobedience represents a common tactic for displaying the enterprise of different groups and characters. Similarly, making or contributing to plans helps situate the initiative involved in executing the plans with a single individual or group. Therefore, the more active the racial groups' members are in solo action and leadership roles, the more enterprising they are and, by extension, the more they participate in this aspect of hegemonic Whiteness. As with other areas, maia and White male humans prototypically compose the Whitest elements, but other groups participate in this aspect of hegemonic Whiteness to varying degrees. Again, Whiteness shapes the world architecture here, even when it is not immediately apparent. Unlike some other traits, the works do not portray this pattern as a *fantastic* part of the fictional worlds. By including this spectrum and tying it to group identity, especially when it spans human identities, the world architecture of these works implicitly makes claims about the real world. White enterprise in speculative fiction helps rationalize real-world White dominance.

In *The Hobbit*, most intelligent non-human groups take some form of initiative, but the amount of initiative varies between groups and individuals. Only Gandalf's initiative (as a maia) is wholly unqualified. Bilbo shows a great deal of initiative, but he does not begin doing so until halfway through the story, while

before that point, he is swept along by more forceful personalities. Orcs, elves, humans, and Smaug, the dragon, are reactionary forces who only respond when the heroes intrude upon their domain. All these groups become active after and in response to the main characters' actions. Only high elves and spiders remain wholly in a passive/reactionary mode, while Gandalf is the primary source of initiative across the work. Other events are set into motion only by his direct intervention or by the intervention of those Gandalf has set in motion.

Leadership in *The Hobbit* follows a similar hierarchy. As with not showing initiative, only spiders and high elves<sup>125</sup> show no leadership over their group or others, reinforcing their low enterprise. Others all display leadership over their own kind, while Gandalf, Thorin, and Bilbo each at some point provide leadership for Thorin's party. In doing so, they place themselves in authority over at least one individual not belonging to their racialized group. Neither Thorin nor Bilbo ever provides leadership to Gandalf, but they accept his leadership at other times, making the leadership role of Gandalf further preminent. Plan-making is more distributed, as Gandalf, Bilbo, Thorin, Bard, and the Elvenking make plans. At the same time, disobedience to or refusal of orders occurs only with Bilbo (especially in the Arkenstone from the mountain). Thorin rejects Gandalf's authority after discovering the theft of the Arkenstone, but Gandalf issues no orders or council at that time for Thorin to act against. Given Gandalf's authority, few opportunities exist for him to disobey orders (or receive them at all). Gandalf shows the most significant enterprise in *The Hobbit*, with Bilbo taking a close second during the latter part of the tale. Bilbo's enterprise associates explicitly with his Took ancestry, more narrowly than with hobbits in general, further cementing the superiority of the Tookes over general hobbitry. In their approval of the Baggins heritage's extreme lack of initiative,<sup>126</sup> the latter signal low enterprise as a social value.

Even compared to *The Hobbit*, one of the most remarkable things about the portrayal of enterprise in *The Lord of the Rings* is that orcs, so marginal and rarely given voices, manage to display many of its features. Robert Tally Jr. notes that "Tolkien could not resist the urge to flesh out and 'humanize'" orcs at various points in his

---

<sup>125</sup> Elrond is the chief of those who have mixed blood of elves and heroes of the north, but he is not stated to either be one of or have authority over the elves, among whom he dwells. Elrond's authority, though not his racial identity, is revised in *The Lord of the Rings*.

<sup>126</sup> Specifically, they are said to approve of how "you could tell what a Baggins would say on any question without the bother of asking him" (*Hobbit* 12), an exaggerated form of low initiative whereby even opinions are predictable.

stories (17). These peeks into orcish thoughts, motives, and personal lives reveal orcs who have minds of their own, with goals, plans for the future, the potential for leadership, and the seeds of rebellion against their terrible masters, even while these features combine with more overtly negative traits. Orcs show initiative, if to ignoble ends, in their attempts to lay claim to the spoil of captives, such as Merry, Pippin, or Frodo, or in attempts to desert.<sup>127</sup> These acts of initiative stand out because they typically occur against orders and often culminate in lethal violence between orcs. Orcs also show leadership over their own, even orcs of other varieties. However, orc varieties are said to cooperate only under pressure from outside forces, such as the power of Sauron. Left on their own, they would fight among themselves (*Lord* 905). The orcs also make plans, often regarding the disposition of prisoners. A notable planning example appears in a conversation between Shagrat and Gorbag after Frodo's capture in Mordor. They plot to "slip off and set up somewhere on our own with a few trusty lads, somewhere there's good loot nice and handy, and no big bosses" (721). Shagrat shows in a single statement his initiative, ability to disobey orders, capability for leadership, and ability to make plans. Orcs never show leadership over non-orcs, which indicates a somewhat lower level of enterprise than White human males in the same works. Still, they display a very high level of enterprise compared to their engagement with other aspects of hegemonic Whiteness. This difference creates a fascinating tension in their portrayal, rarely found in other works of speculative fiction. While this tension does not contradict Tolkien's hierarchy, it creates a productively depth of meaning of a sort discussed more fully in chapter five.

Orcs are not the only creatures whose enterprise level differs between *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. In *The Lord of the Rings*, humans appear more central in the narrative than in *The Hobbit*, and their enterprise increases correspondingly. White humans (male and female), maiar, and upper-class hobbits show the most general initiative. When they take any significant action, other groups tend to do so at the direction of one of the more enterprising groups' members, usually human or maiar. Elves are more ambiguous in this case, as Elrond, part elf, directs much action yet takes little himself. Pure-blooded high elves carry messages or take action under the direction of Elrond but remain otherwise tangential to the adventure, contributing primarily through gifts, counsel, or some liminal mystic influence. The only wood elf to appear is Legolas, who takes considerable action but is always

---

<sup>127</sup> We do not actually see any orcs deserting, but the reaction of the orcs who discover Frodo and Sam in disguise along the roadside in Mordor takes for granted that desertion is commonplace.

subordinate to a human or maiar leader. Even his joining the quest is only at Elrond's election, continuing the pattern of low wood elf initiative from *The Hobbit*.

Several groups further emphasize their initiative by defying or refusing orders. Gandalf stands out more fully here than in *The Hobbit* through having a superior of his order, Saruman, whom he can now defy. Hobbits rate high in this area, as they do in others, with notable examples of disobedience, such as Pippin's stealing of the palantir or refusing to cooperate with Denethor's planned self-immolation, or Merry's refusal to stay behind when the Rohirrim ride to the aid of Gondor. They also present numerous smaller examples, such as when Frodo's friends (Merry, Pippin, Sam, and Fredegar) refuse to honor his wishes to depart the Shire alone. Humans likewise show the ability to disobey or refuse orders, from outright treason in Grima's case (both against Theoden and later in his killing of Saruman in the Shire) to refusals in the name of other principles, such as Beregon's resistance to Denethor's orders during his madness. This trend does not extend to BIPOC characters, who remain marginal to the story and never rebel against their leaders. However, it does apply to White females, as in the case of Éowyn's refusal to stay behind before the Battle of Pelennor Fields. Members of other groups, such as elves, dwarves, and ents, do not seem to find cause to disobey or refuse orders.

Those who take leadership over those outside their racial group are limited to White male humans and maiar. Elrond presides over the council in Rivendell, but his role appears more as host, counselor, and mediator than leader over the various parties in attendance. Sauron and Saruman lead racially diverse groups, and Gandalf provides leadership to the fellowship or briefly directs the forces of Gondor during the Battle of Pelennor Fields. Aragorn leads the fellowship in Gandalf's absence, and as High King, he has authority that numerous non-human peoples recognize. Elves, dwarves, and BIPOC humans have leadership referred to or shown in which they lead groups composed exclusively of their own kind. Hobbits, on the contrary, are somewhat ambiguous, seen as capable of leadership (over their own) but with less need for it. Several hobbits successfully lead other hobbits occasionally, but by and large, hobbits tend to be in charge of a given activity rather than given general authority. Hobbit politics include only limited government, with mayors who fill ceremonial duties and police who are more involved with stray livestock than stray hobbits. However, thains traditionally organized the defense of the Shire against external threats. Other groups, such as ents, do not appear to have any leadership, even among themselves. Female humans lead only humans and only in the absence

of the ruling lords, as Éowyn does in the absence of Théoden and Éomer. Notably, were they both to fall in battle, the people were to “choose a new lord as you will” (511), possibly suggesting that Éowyn’s rule could not have been permanent.

Galadriel is worth special note here, owing to how scholars frequently have read her as the ruler of Lothlorien (for an example, see Ruane and James). In fact, despite the great power she wields, she declares herself incapable of leadership, crediting all leadership, decision-making, and giving gifts to her husband while disavowing her ability to lead or even advise. She explains that “not in doing or contriving, nor even in choosing between this course and another can I avail” (*Lord* 348). As she characterizes it, her contribution is in the possession, but not the use, of knowledge (348). Elven men lead only other elves, but as an elven woman, Galadriel does not lead anyone.

Members of numerous groups also show initiative or leadership ability by making plans. Frodo and Gandalf plan the hobbits’ initial flight from the Shire, but the hobbits make several new plans in response to changes in the situation and Gandalf’s absence. After arriving in Bree, Aragon makes most plans until they arrive in Rivendell, where humans, dwarves, elves, maiar, and to a lesser extent, hobbits make further plans. At the same time, they discuss the plans of other maiar (Sauron and Saruman). Ents come up with plans during their Entmoot and in arranging the occupation of Isengard. BIPOC humans and females of any race seem to be the only ones not involved in any complex planning. Even Galadriel, for all her contributions, specifically disavows any role in planning, saying, “I will not give you counsel, saying do this or do that” (348).

Across the two works by Tolkien, Whiteness, via enterprise, again reinforces the high hierarchical position of maiar and White male humans. Orcs, however, show relatively high enterprise, but this enterprise, directed toward immoral ends, does not suggest they deserve a higher place in the hierarchy. Instead, the willingness of orcs to organize, at least in small groups, and take initiative in their endeavors only makes them more dangerous and makes their extermination more imperative. Were the orcs like spiders, and thus only threatening when one passes through their territory, one might avoid them, but because orcs have enterprise, they cannot be safely left alone. Their enterprise makes it acceptable and, indeed, *virtuous* to kill orcs when encountering them. Enterprise thus serves to enforce the hierarchy, but how it works with orcs differs markedly from its function with White human males.



Whereas in Tolkien's works, *maiar* outshine humanity, and BIPOC humans are wholly marginal, in the original *Star Wars* trilogy, human beings, White and BIPOC and male and female, show the most initiative. They often take action without receiving outside orders or direction, whether occupying the top positions in the chains of command or acting as free agents. Other characters, such as R2-D2, Greedo, or arguably Boba Fett (not confirmed to be human in the original trilogy), show creativity in pursuing their orders. Even so, they do not act without some direction from their superiors. Jabba is at the top of his chain of command and gives orders, as I will discuss below, but he takes little to no action, as does Yoda. Admiral Ackbar may be at the top of his chain of command in principle (it is unclear), but he follows orders given by the human Lando Calrissian in practice. Other non-human characters, such as C-3PO or Chewbacca, do not even show creativity in following their orders.

Disobedience to orders is a more complex matter in *Star Wars*. Nearly every group in *Star Wars* contains members who are in some way in defiance of law and order, whether they are rebels, criminals, or outlaws of some other kind. Even Yoda is a Jedi and thus hunted by the Empire, and the ewoks eventually join the fight. However, certain characters receive specific instructions and disobey them, including the lead human protagonists: Luke, Han, Leia, and Lando. The only non-human to distinctly disobey an order is R2-D2, who disobeys when given contradictory commands (for example, he chooses to obey Leia's directive to complete his mission rather than follow the instructions of the humans who purchased him on Tatooine or the rules about droids using escape pods). Greedo stands out for at least offering to disobey an order when he offers to "forget" he found Han Solo in exchange for a bribe (00:48), and C-3PO at least initially resists orders by Han and Luke to impersonate a deity to the ewoks (although he eventually yields and complies). Other non-human characters do not refuse direct orders, even if their positioning in the world architecture often implies some manner of defiance to Imperial rule.

Beyond initiative and rebellion, many creatures show enterprise by holding positions of authority over creatures of other types during the original *Star Wars* trilogy. Humans holding authority over droids appear first, followed shortly by Han Solo in a position of authority over Chewbacca, the wookiee (his first mate and thus "Captain" Solo's subordinate). Jabba the Hutt rules a criminal empire populated by a wide variety of creatures, and Yoda holds authority over, at the very least, Luke (although Luke frequently disobeys). As administrator of the tibanna gas mine at

Bespin, Lando Calrissian controls a colony of humans and non-humans. The leaders of the Rebel Alliance are all (or almost all) human, yet the alliance contains humans, droids, and diverse biological species. The only possible non-human leader in the Rebel Alliance is Admiral Ackbar. Ackbar's exact ranking compared to other rebel leaders is ambiguous, but a distinct contrast appears with the subordinates that surround him. Comparing him to his most immediate counterpart, General Calrissian, we see Ackbar with a racially uniform crew (all mon calamari like himself), while Calrissian leads a crew of racially diverse humans and several non-humans. In this way, Calrissian's status as a general leader, rather than a leader only of his own kind, is marked compared to Ackbar, who is first and foremost a leader of his own, rather than a leader of people in general. The only other leader who is more specifically a leader only of their own group is the leader of the ewoks. Sand people, jawas, wookiees, and others do not apparently possess central leadership. Droids are similar in this respect, save that C-3PO, not generally portrayed as enterprising, appears to take a leadership role among the ewoks. However, he does this only under protest and requires direct orders from his master, Luke, to do so, while the only orders he gives are simply relaying those of the male human leads.

The original *Star Wars* trilogy also contains numerous plans, including group planning sessions, developing new strategies on the go, and cases where elaborate plans are suddenly carried out, with only the implication of their being formulated beforehand. Humans, White, BIPOC, male and female, develop the overwhelming majority of these plans, with no particular classification of human being particularly favored, despite only one named female and one named BIPOC character among the cast. In fact, for the first half of the trilogy, planning seems to be Leia's forte. Leia is implicitly involved in the original plans to steal and smuggle the Death Star plans at the beginning of the first film. She is solely responsible for the plan to have R2-D2 bring the plans to Obi-wan and have him deliver them to Alderaan. Once freed from her cell, she begins contributing to the group's escape plans, most notably the retreat via the garbage chute (along with vital tactical assessments, such as correctly surmising that the Empire is tracking them). Leia further participates in planning and coordinating the Death Star attack. In the second film, she plans and organizes operations in Echo Base, coordinating troops, rescue missions, and evacuation.

Nonetheless, her contributions to plans diminish significantly with her departure. This diminishing has been the focus of criticisms that Leia (and in the

later films Padmé) experiences initial empowerment, which gradually wains throughout the trilogy, finally leaving her powerless, which readings others have contested (Merlock and Jackson). Whether Leia *does* experience a loss of agency or the narrative's focus merely shifts more fully to other characters, her early actions show that, in *Star Wars*, female characters *can* also have enterprise. The same is true of BIPOC characters. Lando helps orchestrate the betrayal of Han, Leia, Chewbacca, and C-3PO, then appears solely responsible for planning the double-cross of the Empire shortly thereafter, including (unsuccessful) steps to rescue Han from Boba Fett. He makes further plans leading up to and during the Battle of Endor. Although less surprising, owing to their positions as White male characters in a Hollywood tradition, Luke, Han, Obi-wan, Darth Vader, Emperor Palpatine, and various Imperial and Alliance officers also do considerable planning, though interestingly not to a degree that would overshadow Leia and Lando's contributions.

Considerably less planning occurs among non-humans. Admiral Ackbar plays a role in planning the Battle of Endor, although his leadership seems less effective than Lando's after the attack begins. R2-D2 implicitly makes plans, evinced by his tricking Luke into removing his restraining bolt or his coordination about the hyperdrive with the city's central computer in Bespin. Yoda is also involved in limited planning. He advises Luke regarding Vader's trap or considers the possibility of another hope (later suggested to be Leia) that can be relied upon if Luke fails. Nonetheless, nothing comes of either plan, as Luke discards his first advice, and turning to their second hope is unnecessary. Jabba engages only with rudimentary plans and tricks, while other non-humans show no indication of planning. What little planning non-human characters perform is vastly overshadowed by the human characters' frequent and much more complex planning. Enterprise also secures the hierarchical superiority of humans in *Star Wars*. However, this includes BIPOC and female humans, who display more enterprise in *Star Wars* than in the other two franchises. When considering the potential relationship to real-world oppression, showing White women and BIPOC men as enterprising helps challenge their subordinate role in society. However, showing them alongside unenterprising aliens builds their status on the rationales of White superiority, adding credibility to that discourse. It also leaves BIPOC women conspicuously out of the picture.

Compared to the other works, the Harry Potter series contains a more consistent spectrum of enterprise, with groups at every level. While the exact details of the ranking might vary depending on how one scores or weights individual

features, I have organized the discussion into a loose hierarchy, demonstrating this spectrum. Again, Harry Potter's world architectural structure favors humans, especially those who are White and male. When the various groups in *Harry Potter* are ranked, White humans (male and female alike) come out the highest. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the only enterprise distinction between genders is in top leadership roles. Leadership over members of other groups is rarer in *Harry Potter* than in the other works. Humans usually only exercise authority over non-humans via the Ministry of Magic or, more directly, over house-elves. Voldemort comes to command various creatures, implicitly including some percentage of the goblins in *Deathly Hallows*, even while others "recognize no Wizarding master" (296).

Interestingly, despite their magically-enforced enslavement (indeed, to some extent because of their enslavement) and a cultural mentality that reinforces it, house-elves show a high level of enterprise, just behind the humans. The behavior of some house-elves, particularly Dobby and Kreacher, is often defined more by subverting orders and pursuing their own agendas than by blind subservience to their masters. They undermine their masters' schemes, even once resulting in their master's death. The very fact of their enslavement, that it is so all-encompassing and that their magically constructed position is so intrinsically bound to the notion of their subservience, means that virtually everything a house-elf does in *Harry Potter* functions as either an act of subservience or resistance (the latter implying initiative and enterprise). Further, because good house-elves are rarely seen (*Goblet* 161), house-elves appearing in the stories are almost always signs of the latter.

House-elves only fall behind humans in leadership matters, where they lead their own (with Kreacher's rallying of the Hogwarts house-elves at the Battle of Hogwarts) but never exercise authority over non-house-elves. Dobby and Kreacher show significant initiative in betraying their masters' interests (for Dobby, this was before being freed). Dobby hatches elaborate plans to get Harry removed safely (or at least alive) from Hogwarts and contributes to the planning of the covert Defense Against the Dark Arts classes by suggesting the room of requirement as a classroom. Despite being, in theory, unable to disobey, house-elves can and do disobey with remarkable frequency, merely having to punish themselves for doing so. Still, Rivka Temima Kellner has forwarded a reading of house-elves that would diminish this enterprise, which cites Dumbledore to argue that house-elves "are a product of what one does with and to them" (384). Thus any enterprise some house-elves might possess would only be through the influence of wizards. This *might* explain

Kreacher's betrayal of Sirius (Dumbledore's point) because he was following the spirit of the rule of a previous master rather than his current one. However, no one performed a similar role for Dobby when he undermined Lucius Malfoy's plans. Although both house-elves *were* experiencing neglect or abuse from their current masters, I feel the reading of house-elf initiative remains intact. House-elves show a high level of enterprise.

The spectrum of enterprise continues with goblins, who show less enterprise than house-elves, though only due to a lack of leadership. Even among themselves, goblins show no signs of leadership, the text referencing them such that they appear more like a collective. While no goblin characters undertake any endeavor entirely of their own accord, historical references appear to goblin rebellions (implicitly against wizards). Griphook's actions during his collaboration with the heroes in *The Deathly Hallows* show initiative or at least creativity in following the plan. Either way, Griphook is involved in the planning process. There can be no doubt about goblins' ability to disobey orders, whether through historic rebellions, the abandoning of Gringotts after Voldemort's takeover due to "[d]uties ill-befitting the dignity of [their] race" (*Deathly* 296), or the double-cross of Harry, Ron, and Hermione during the raid on Gringotts.

Centaurs and BIPOC humans rank below even goblins but for different reasons. Centaurs have no clear leadership and do not seem to engage in planning. Still, they show some initiative, such as in Firenze's rescue of Harry in *Philosopher's Stone* and several examples of disobedience, whether in defying Umbridge or the Ministry of Magic or in Firenze's defying his herd in choosing to teach for Dumbledore. Meanwhile, BIPOC humans participate in active resistance and the refusal of orders through membership in Dumbledore's Army or opposition to Voldemort's regime and leadership over other humans (at least with Angelina leading the Gryffindor quidditch team), but not over non-humans. Further, Kingsley Shacklebolt's appointment as interim minister of magic, announced at the end of the series, suggests his leadership over humans and non-humans alike in the immediate future, which points to his capability for leadership, thus enterprise. Kingsley is a comparatively senior auror and a member of the Order of the Phoenix, whose high-profile assignments include being part of the guard sent to help arrest Dumbledore, heading the team trying to catch Sirius Black, and guarding the muggle prime minister. Despite this, he does not ever seem to do anything without orders. Indeed, the closest Kingsley comes to taking initiative is casting the spell to modify Marietta

Edgecombe's memory during the confrontation between Fudge and Dumbledore in Dumbledore's office. Even that is an act following Dumbledore's lead, as Dumbledore emphasizes afterward when he praises Kingsley not for sound planning or clever ideas but for being "quick on the uptake" (*Order* 548) in figuring out what Dumbledore wanted him to do. He does at least show creativity in executing plans, such as in his strategies for misleading his fellow aurors in the hunt for Sirius Black. What sense of initiative BIPOC humans show is often diminished compared to their closest White human counterparts. For example, Lee Jordan's antics are relatively mild compared to the Weasley twins, and Angelina Johnson spends less time plotting and planning as quidditch captain than Oliver Wood did. When Angelina exhibits Wood-like tendencies, others describe her as "channelling his spirit" (*Order* 238), giving Oliver primary credit for the behavior rather than Angelina.

Others with any enterprise level include the giants (who disobey orders, have an internal rebellion, and show leadership over members of their own but no other features) and merfolk (who have leadership over their own only). Most remaining groups, such as trolls and vampires, show no enterprise.

Group enterprise levels correspond directly to their hierarchical rankings in each work, save for the relative enterprise of humans and elves in Tolkien's work, an ongoing exception discussed hereafter. They rationalize those hierarchies while granting dominant groups power to enforce their position and allowing the exercise of power to be their exclusive domain. Examining enterprise levels in detail also reveals distinctions in groups' portrayals that would not be otherwise apparent, especially in highlighting power differences between gendered and racialized groups of humans. Enterprise stands out among the various features for its high level of BIPOC participation in *Star Wars* and White human female participation across the works. However, only White characters are fully enterprising in Tolkien's works and *Harry Potter*. While women in Tolkien's works have diminished leadership roles compared to the men, at least one White human woman shows similar levels of enterprise to the males. This pattern continues more strongly through *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter* with White females whose enterprise is only slightly qualified compared to their male counterparts. Female non-humans have far less enterprise than male non-humans in every franchise. This trend suggests a net diegetic logic in which enterprise is White and male and reinforces the rationale of White male social dominance in the real world. Beyond this, each work's encoding of gendered aspects of Whiteness highlights differences in male and female participation. These patterns

emphasize that even BIPOC male participation in *Star Wars*, higher than in the other works, is still not equal with White human men.

#### 4.4 White Men: Bearers of Agony

Sex does not feature overtly in any of the works I analyze here. It does, though, occur in muted or coded form on several occasions. Furthermore, sexual (or at least romantic) attraction, courtship, and the birthing of children happen in each of the works. Each also features some form of struggle with supernatural desires or influences characterized as “dark.” Taking their places as bearers of agony and struggling against these various desires, experiencing and resisting romantic attraction empowers certain groups. They show their self-control (enterprise) and heroic status by suffering for the greater good. As heroes, they demonstrate their ability to exercise power as well as their worthiness of it. They show they can transcend pain, resist temptation, and forego socially permissible pleasures in the name of some more laudable triumph. They emphasize their superiority over those who do not have such drives or cannot control them. In each case, such drives, and channeling or resisting them, are not exclusively White, male, or even human, although they are predominantly all of these. This feature highlights how masculinity and Whiteness entwine to reinforce the social order of the works and, by extension, reaffirm the same real-world hierarchy.

Superhero comics, in particular, involve numerous heroes who delay, avoid, or diminish their romantic relationships, especially out of concern for their would-be significant other. In those cases, it is usually due to the hero having powerful enemies who might attempt to harm those closest to the hero. Batman, for example, explicitly invokes this reasoning on numerous occasions to justify his status as a loner. He has few friends and fewer romantic prospects, suffering loneliness for the good of those around him.

Many characters experience romantic attraction in *The Lord of the Rings*, although none in *The Hobbit*. In cases where they are not immediately or preemptively mutual, the male experiences attraction first, such as Faramir’s first attraction to Éowyn or Aragorn’s to Arwen. These cases reinforce perceptions of White men as bearers of desire and White women as unaffected. Those not already wedded at the story’s start delay their wedding until the quest’s completion, which resonates with

Dyer's observation about deferring sexual gratification.<sup>128</sup> If the men defer, so do the women, yet the men usually initiate the delay, and the women merely cooperate. The women allow the men to pursue their quests and patiently await the completion of their labors. Humans, part-humans, hobbits, and arguably dwarves participate in the deferral of romantic or sexual gratification. Ents perform a similar pattern, deferring romantic fulfillment in the name of other desires. However, in their case, it points to irreconcilable urges and a tragic separation, as the ents and entwives cannot each live in their preferred environment while also being together. In keeping with this pattern, they sacrifice romantic and sexual fulfillment rather than other desires. Even as the ents long for and seek after the entwives later in their history, there is no hint that they would be willing to give up their forests to be with them, only that they would again invite the entwives to give up their orchards and come to the forests.

These examples contrast with Shelob and Grima Wormtongue, who yield rather than resist physical or romantic desires, thus contributing to their villainy. Roberts ("Women" 476–77) and Peter Damien Goselin, among others, discuss Shelob's parallels to "fallen womanhood" and the sexual overtones of some of her descriptions. Grima lusts instead after Éowyn, having long "watched her under [his] eyelids and haunted her steps" (*Lord* 509). Shelob's lust is thematically connected to her villainy, as her hunger relates to her spawning countless deadly progeny. Grima's is more causally linked, as he takes action in pursuit of his desire, serving Saruman with the promise of Éowyn as his eventual reward, literally being driven to evil and "darkness" by succumbing to his lustful desires. Not mastering their romantic or sexual urges is central to these characters' evil.

These expressions of White masculinity do not appear to be an aspect of any group's identity. Male humans may resist (or fail to resist in Grima's case) sexual or romantic urges, but so do hobbits, half-elves, and ents, as well as the female counterparts in each pairing, who likewise defer the fulfillment of their desires.

---

<sup>128</sup> Also notable here is the tendency to end stories with a wedding in myth and fairy tale (Campbell 100–01, 232). Nonetheless, the tradition is distinct. Heroes in myth and fairy tale across numerous traditions not uncommonly obtain sexual gratification along the journey (here one might cite numerous examples from Irish mythology, for example), not only marriage at the end. Further, while Samwise is effectively rewarded with marriage to Rosie Cotton, he does not quest to obtain that reward. Indeed, he leaves the Shire with the full expectation of never returning, which would foreclose the possibility of marriage to Rosie. He emphasizes his self-discipline (enterprise) and heroism, and thus his capacity to wield power, by abandoning his romantic ambitions entirely in the name of another goal.



Further, an inability to control sexual or romantic urges does not seem to mark any particular group, and most display no romantic or sexual urges at all. Characters in *The Lord of the Rings* may heroically resist or channel their desires, but doing so does not appear to be a marker of racial identity.

Nonetheless, there is another example in *The Lord of the Rings* of dark desires tempting White male characters, who must heroically persevere. The desire for power, embodied in the One Ring, can be seen as a displacement of “dark” sexual desire in a work that does not directly address erotic longing. Numerous characters struggle with its temptations, and its power is explicitly “dark.” Parallels between being the “bearer of agony” and the “bearer of the ring” are difficult to ignore, as both act as at least a general allusion or partial parallel to Jesus Christ.<sup>129</sup>

Characters seen being tempted by the ring are male, with only one exception, although so are most characters in Tolkien’s works. The female character so tempted is not a “fallen woman” but Galadriel, an idealized, exaggeratedly White female figure, readings of whom Roberts summarizes as being “an unattainable, mystic queen, the sexually ‘pure’ wielder of strange magic” (“Women” 474). Shobha Ramaswamy and J. Sundarsingh see Galadriel’s temptation and rejection of the temptation as emphasizing her role in Tolkien’s Christian narrative, showing that she can be the “fatal woman” or “terrible mother” archetype, yet refusing to do so, passing a divine test to reassert her spiritual nature. Curiously, though, only in Galadriel’s case does the temptation take on a sexual dimension, while the men’s temptations seem purely asexual. Her power fantasy includes not only the domination of others but also the power to attract others, describing how she would be “beautiful and terrible as the Morning and the Night” and how “all shall love me and despair!” (*Lord* 356). This act of loving and despairing contrasts with the chaste love of Gimli for Galadriel. Although Galadriel is already married to an immortal man who thus will outlive Gimli by an untold amount of time, Gimli does not despair in his love. His is not a desire to “obtain” Galadriel in any sense, only to admire her from afar. To “love and despair” implies unconsummated *desire*, distinct from Gimli’s courtly love in its ambition to obtain the object of love.

---

<sup>129</sup> For Dyer’s interpretation of the link between White men as “bearers of agony” and the Christ story, see Dyer 15–18. Frodo is not an allegorical representation of Christ, certainly, but his enduring agony and bearing the burden of an evil he was not responsible for bringing about, making personal sacrifices for the good of the whole world, etc., are fundamentally Christlike. I am not the first to note that, unlike Christ, Frodo ultimately succumbs to temptation, and the eucatastrophe must be brought about by other means.

On the contrary, Shelob, whose readings Roberts summarizes as the embodiment of the “monstrous feminine” (“Women” 474) and thus the archetype of fallen womanhood, feels no draw to the ring whatsoever when encountering it. Galadriel’s temptation could appear as the woman’s discovery of her sexual desires and her “fall from whiteness” (Dyer 29). However, in such a case, one would expect the ring to have some draw upon Shelob. Tolkien seems to emphasize Shelob as a counterpoint to Galadriel in how Galadriel’s voice and her gift play a role in Sam’s defeat of Shelob during their journey through her lair (Goselin 4), which gift ends up having very little application outside of Morgul Vale. The reasons for the difference are uncertain but pivotal in the details. The text describes Shelob’s disinterest, saying that “Little she knew of or cared for towers, or rings, or anything devised by mind or hand, who only desired death for all others, mind and body, and for herself a glut of life, alone, swollen till the mountains could no longer hold her up and the darkness could not contain her” (*Lord* 707). Rather than desiring the ring, Shelob only seeks the pleasures of eating, killing, and living. Her indifference to the ring may draw from an overriding lust for food and violence (which lusts link to her reproductive urges), suggesting that she feels no pull to the ring’s power because she has already surrendered to the drive for which the ring is merely a substitute. Alternatively, it may suggest that Shelob has *only* these base urges and, by implication, lacks the creativity or imagination to understand the ring’s temptation. As another alternative, the difference may lie not with Shelob but with Galadriel. Galadriel’s temptation may be personal to her rather than typical of her gender, much as Sam being tempted with a garden or Boromir with power to defend his people. Even so, nothing elsewhere suggests vanity or a desire to be sexually or romantically objectified as a part of Galadriel’s personality. Most likely, the source lies not with Galadriel but with the patriarchal gaze embodied by the male implied author. As a powerful, exalted woman, Galadriel experiences enhancement in all core features, including womanhood and, by extension, as an object of desire. So her beauty is admired by the men who look upon her, including the dwarf, whose usual ideal for feminine beauty likely involves being four feet tall and bearded. A hypothetical Galadriel who has been further empowered (but also corrupted) by the One Ring would thus be further enhanced (and corrupted) in those same features, becoming more beautiful and now an object of selfish, unrequited desire. Shelob, under that reading, would not experience a sexual temptation because she was never desirable. In the latter case, Galadriel’s encounter with the ring might be an expression of feminine, not masculine, Whiteness, as discussed in the section below.

The power to resist the ring neatly reinforces other hierarchies, as the narrative draws on various features of Whiteness to support the racial superiority of certain characters. A key example lies with Denethor and his two sons. Gandalf says, speaking of Denethor, that “by some chance the blood of Westemnesse runs nearly true in him; as it does in his other son, Faramir, and yet did not in Boromir” (*Lord* 742), thus granting a higher blood status to Denethor and Faramir than to Boromir.<sup>130</sup> In keeping with their blood superiority, Faramir and Denethor more easily resist the ring’s allure. Faramir declined to take the ring when it was within his power, and Denethor, while he disapproved of the plan to destroy the ring, showed no interest in using it (795). Certainly, Boromir was exposed far longer to the ring than Faramir or Denethor, and he did not yield until he had been around the ring for longer. Even so, Aragorn traveled longer with the ring than Boromir and showed no sign of yielding to temptation or even being particularly tempted, further emphasizing his superior status. Boromir *is* granted a brief redemption story after his transgression. He confesses his sin to Aragorn and gives his life protecting Merry and Pippin to atone for his act against Frodo. Within the Christian moral framework of the story, that may put him on an equal moral footing with his father and brother, though not necessarily on equal racial footing.

The ring’s temptation afflicts male humans, hobbits, maiar, and one female elf: a group restricted to the top of the race hierarchy. Many of them, particularly Frodo and Samwise, suffer greatly through their struggles with temptation and, through their agony, triumph in the end (if only by divine providence), securing honor as heroes. Many of the same characters also heroically forego romantic attachment until the conclusion of their adventures. Aragorn forestalls his marriage to Arwen (at her father’s behest) and declines the advances of Éowyn. Samwise puts off his pursuit of Rosie Cotton to serve his master Frodo. This pattern reveals strong tendencies toward masculine Whiteness, but it is also spread across various races and with limited participation by females. Nonetheless, the pattern excludes non-White characters, thus emphasizing the heroic and moral superiority of the light-skinned races over the darker-skinned ones.

Examples of heroically resisting romantic or sexual desires also occur in *Star Wars*, but they are more obviously raced and gendered than in *The Lord of the Rings*.

---

<sup>130</sup> The family is of mixed birth. In keeping with other trends in *The Lord of the Rings*, it contains members who are either of improved versions of the lower family or functionally equivalent to the higher family, thus allowing different members of the same family to have different racial classifications. For more information on this trend, see chapter three.

Romantic attraction in the original *Star Wars* trilogy (and the prequels) is limited to the pursuit of White human females. The divide between the original trilogy and the prequels is instructive here. In the original trilogy, three human men show romantic interest in Leia: Luke, Han, and Lando. They all remain on the “light” side at the trilogy’s end, and all forgo pursuing Leia upon seeing her otherwise attached. Even Han, although he pursues Leia after she shows a preference for Luke at the beginning of *The Empire Strikes Back*, ultimately offers to step aside at the end of *The Return of the Jedi* so that she can be with Luke instead of himself. Even though this proves unnecessary, Han demonstrates a sexual drive toward the White human female *and* an ability to master and overcome that drive in the name of other principles. As a BIPOC character, Lando also does this, suggesting that non-Whites share in this feature in the original trilogy.

This example contrasts with that of Anakin Skywalker in the prequel trilogy. Anakin pursues his romantic attraction despite his principles, and this pursuit leads directly to his fall to the “dark” side. Most non-humans in both trilogies show no romantic or sexual desires, but there are key exceptions, both directed at White human females. The first is Jabba the Hutt, who makes lascivious advances toward Leia, dressing her in a metal bikini and, if not raping her, at least committing a form of sexual assault on camera, forcing her body against his and caressing her with his tongue. Andrew Howe notes Schmi Skywalker, following her kidnap by the sand people in *Attack of the Clones*, meanwhile, to have “presumably . . . been sexually assaulted during her month-long captivity,” as the “image of her in the tent, bound and beaten, hearkens back to a cinematic legacy of white women similarly abused by indigenous Americans in *The Searchers* and other Westerns” (13). In each case, the non-human sexual drives displayed are not resisted but motivate the affected individuals toward rape or sexual assault of the targeted White human female. In this way, the works establish White and BIPOC human men’s heroic status and capacity to wield power. At the same time, females remain objects in *Star Wars* rather than agents of desire, and non-humans remain marginal, either without desire or control. Those men who successfully resist or tame their urges stay with the “light,” and those who fail to do so become “dark.”

This desire and resistance pattern strongly parallels the force’s “dark” and “light” sides. The “dark” side of the force tempts characters, who seek to resist, seeking instead after the “light.” The sexual parallels have been noted as especially

strong in this case, particularly in Anakin's transition to the dark side. Roger Kaufman argues that

Palpatine/Darth Sidious engages in what I can perhaps best describe as a *seduction* of Anakin to the Dark Side. For bait, he uses the promise that he can teach Anakin how to use the Force to bring Padmé back to life if she were to die, though Anakin's libidinal energy quickly shifts away from ObiWan and Padmé toward Darth Sidious, as evidenced by how Anakin uses almost the same words to swear loyalty to the Sith Lord he not-so-long-before had expressed to Padmé. Kneeling in front of Sidious, Anakin proclaims, "I will do whatever you ask," and the Sith Lord, reverberating with ecstatic anticipation, exclaims, "The Force is strong with you!" (123)

This temptation is similar to that of the One Ring in many respects. However, the pattern is more exclusively human and male than in Tolkien's work and more exclusively White than resistance to more overtly romantic or sexual desires.

In the original *Star Wars* trilogy, the temptations are exclusively male, focused on Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader. At least one female character has access to the force (Leia), but she neither uses that power in more than an occasional, indirect way nor is she tempted in any way by the dark side. The dark side of the force associates with some passionate emotions (fear, anger, and hatred), but not with passionate emotion in general and certainly not with lust or sexuality. Regardless, the prequel trilogy shifts the pattern further toward that of hegemonic Whiteness: the dark side of the force remains exclusively male in practice and appeal. Female users of the force appear in more active roles, although usually in the background, but the dark side does not tempt them. Furthermore, a wider variety of passionate emotions now associate with the dark side of the force, and specifically, "Sith rely on passion for their strength" (*Revenge* 00:43). Anakin's forbidden relationship with Padmé – their secret marriage and resulting pregnancy – intricately interweaves with his transition to the dark side, emphasizing the potential for this passion to be sexual. Links between "dark" desire, White males, and sexual urges are strong by the end of the prequel trilogy.

The sequel trilogy does, though, remove the gender exclusivity of all these features. It recontextualizes the earlier films, showing a female character tempted. It also places Rey's temptation in a context of erotic longing via interactions with Kylo Ren and Finn. Her mixed relationship with each links to her temptation through the urge to violate her principles to be with them or a fear of losing them (both feelings factored into Anakin's fall). Further, the culmination of the Rey/Kylo romance in the kiss scene near the end of episode IX corresponds to the salvation of both Rey

and Kylo from the power of the dark side, not their succumbing to it. One can read Kylo as channeling his sexual urges responsibly here, directing them toward a White female and thus obtaining salvation. Rey, as a White human female, redeems the troubled White human male through chaste intimacy. Still, such a reading forces us to revisit readings of Anakin's fall. Anakin's sexual drives were toward a chaste (if forbidden) marriage and successful heterosexual reproduction, but his channeling those desires was associated with a turn to the dark side. In such a context, it would not be Anakin's yielding to sexual desire that was the cause of his fall but rather yielding to sexual desire outside of the appropriate, socially sanctioned context in which such feelings were allowed. Nonetheless, Anakin's redemption at the end of the original trilogy is ultimately facilitated, if not by his White female love interest, at least by the child produced by their forbidden union. In that sense, the context of the sequel trilogy aligns Anakin's story more concretely with White masculine ideals.

Struggles with temptations to the dark side are, though, exclusively human throughout the films, though the use of the dark side of the force is not. The only non-human to use the force in the original trilogy, Yoda, shows no signs of being tempted toward the dark side. In the prequel trilogy, one or more non-humans (Darth Maul and possibly General Grievous) have fallen to the dark side, and numerous non-humans or non-White humans appear on the light side of the force. Even then, we have no account of Darth Maul and General Grievous's falls. The only characters we see experiencing temptation are still White men, and the additional non-human and non-White force users who appear do not show signs of being tempted. Despite breaking gender tradition in being tempted toward the dark side as a woman in the sequel trilogy, Rey is still a White human, so her experiences do not break with the racial tradition.

Comparing them, we see that, like *The Lord of the Rings*, *Star Wars* represents White masculinity through romantic/sexual attraction and the lure of the dark side of the force. Unlike *The Lord of the Rings*, White and BIPOC men participate in this form of representation, while non-humans and women do not, at least before the sequel trilogy. Most of those not participating in these modes of resisting "dark" desire do so simply by not having such desires. However, resistance to the force's dark side is exclusively White. However, some non-humans show both sexual desire and a lack of ability or interest in resisting it, much as Dyer identified typifying representations of non-Whites. While the borders shift, fuller participation by females in these heroic, White-encoded positions only appears during *Harry Potter*.

In *Harry Potter*, temptations or struggles against inner darkness take multiple forms. Romance or sexual yearning is present, while the temptation from “dark” powers comes through exposure to Voldemort’s horcruxes, especially from the diary and the locket. Another similar effect comes from Voldemort’s influence on Harry’s mind. The text later reveals this to be related since Harry is, unbeknownst to them both, one of Voldemort’s horcruxes. Harry experiences passionate emotions (generally anger) that come from Voldemort, which he must master and overcome, as well as the more direct threat of possession. These struggles with temptation, and the resisting or channeling of dark power that occurs in the process, secure heroic positions for various characters, including Ron, Harry, and Hermione, enhancing their places in the hierarchy through Whiteness as they prove their heroism through their superior willpower and ability to endure.

Clear romantic attraction is experienced by a wide variety of humans in *Harry Potter* as the students of Hogwarts and various adults go about their somewhat tangled love lives. The most obvious and explicit cases of forgoing romantic pursuits in the name of other causes or principles are all performed by White men, save one. Harry, for example, initially resists pursuing Ginny Weasley because he believes doing so would damage his friendship with her brother, Ron. After they get together with Ron’s consent, Harry cuts off the relationship to protect Ginny from becoming a target for Lord Voldemort. Remus Lupin, similarly, resists the romantic advances of Nymphadora Tonks on various grounds, most notably due to believing himself unsuitable for her because he is a werewolf. Ultimately, Lupin yields and consents to court, marry, and bear a child with her, which yielding (at least to consenting to court her) happens in response to carefully reasoned discussion, not erotic or emotional enticement. In each case, the White human male feels romantic or sexual attraction but resists it in the name of other principles. The text explores the animalism and irrationality of Harry’s feelings toward Ginny through the theme of the “creature in Harry’s chest” (*Half-Blood* 499), a recurring metaphor for his attraction to her before their relationship becomes openly romantic. The “creature,” which may be characterized by the narration as a “monster” (*Half-Blood* 268, 269, 270), a “creature” (*Half-Blood* 396, 499), or “something large and scaly” (*Half-Blood* 268), is never directly described as “dark.” Thus it avoids directly referencing the racial connotations of “dark” sexual attraction, but it bears some indirect resonance. Being a “creature” and a “monster” with bestial traits (the text refers to scales, large size, claws, and roaring), it emphasizes the ties to the physical and biological, which are already implicit in its representation of sexual attraction, as well as associating it with violence. These

descriptions co-occur with violent, aggressive, or sexual fantasies. These traits may resonate with descriptions of characterizations of non-Whites, especially BIPOC males, discussed above, especially in the links to physicality and animal-like features. Nevertheless, such features are not exclusive to non-Whites. In the case of this more direct sexual yearning, Harry is very much redeemed by the love of a White female romantic interest, as the beast becomes tame and vanishes from the text after his relationship with Ginny solidifies.

The lone exception to this all-male pattern occurs with Hermione Granger, a White woman.<sup>131</sup> During the hunt for the horcruxes, Ron becomes frustrated with the group's lack of progress and finally leaves them. As he goes, he asks Hermione if she will come with him, which she declines. He treats this as forcing her to choose between himself and Harry, and he interprets her reply accordingly, saying, "I get it. You choose him" (*Deathly* 310). Nonetheless, Hermione refuses not in the name of being with Harry but in the name of their common cause, saying, "Ron, we said we'd go with Harry, we said we'd help—" (309). She proves her claim by not pursuing Harry romantically after Ron's departure but continuing to focus on the mission, however heartbroken she may be, and by getting together with, and eventually marrying and having children with, Ron after they are reconciled later in the story. In placing the success of her mission over her romantic feelings, Hermione also enacts this trait. She shows the feature capable of extending to White females within the *Harry Potter* series's world architecture.

Lupin, as a werewolf, might be read as a non-human enacting this feature, which would set *Harry Potter* apart for extending this pattern to non-humans. Otherwise, non-humans remain mostly aloof from romantic matters, with no courtship or romantic drama seen. Despite this, several sources have read and debated the centaur abduction of Umbridge as an implied rape scene (Harmon 36), establishing resonances with rape and uncontrolled sexuality among the non-human centaurs. Meanwhile, Aragog's massive brood resonates with fears about non-Whites out-reproducing and overwhelming Whites, as well as showing a more direct parallel to Shelob, both of which might suggest cases of uncontrolled sex drives. Goblins and house-elves have ancestors and lines of descent, but we see no hints about courtship or reproduction among them otherwise. Others, such as giants and veela, have patterns of reproduction that are unremarkable in speed or number and do not

---

<sup>131</sup>Again, see chapter three for discussion about why Hermione is read as White for purposes of this research.



openly involve sexual assault (distancing them from non-White on White rape motifs) but can potentially include humans. Overall, the non-human coping with sexual temptation in *Harry Potter* is a mixture of those of *Star Wars* and *The Lord of the Rings*, except implications of sexual assault are milder in *Harry Potter* than in *Star Wars*, and Aragog was male, not female. The general trends still align *Harry Potter*'s non-humans more strongly with racist portrayals of non-Whites than Whites.

Blending sexual temptation with other allures of “darkness,” Ginny’s experience with Tom Riddle’s diary offers an early example of seduction by “dark” powers. When Ginny first receives the diary and discovers it can communicate with her, she shares her deepest thoughts and desires with it, one of the major themes of which is her attraction to Harry Potter. Because she opens herself up emotionally to the diary, the diary can take control of her, compelling her to follow the will of the dark wizard that created it. She attempts to dispose of the diary once she suspects this, only for Harry to find it before Ginny steals it back. Ultimately, Harry must rescue Ginny and destroy the diary, freeing her from its clutches. In other words, because Ginny channels her sexual yearnings in an inappropriate direction,<sup>132</sup> she opens herself to darkness. She is only redeemed from that by the intervention of a White romantic interest. The parallel is interesting, but so is that the gender roles are partially reversed, with the White female seduced by darkness and the White male acting to redeem her. Unlike in male-dominated versions of the story, Ginny does not risk becoming evil, per se, and being overwhelmed by the darkness in that sense. Instead, she is threatened with destruction by an external evil force, effectively switching her from the role of a fallen hero to a damsel in distress at the last moment, forestalling a complete gender reversal. Because of that reversal, the text denies Ginny access to the heroic status usually granted to characters who grapple with and overcome temptations of these kinds. She does not sacrifice or resist temptation and so does not prove herself worthy and capable of exercising power. This distinction prevents Ginny from experiencing the implicit benefits within the hierarchy that usually stem from this feature.

Harry’s temptations due to his connection to Voldemort’s mind and Ron’s temptations via Slytherin’s locket follow a more traditional pattern. Each gains access to traditional heroic status through their struggle. More like the temptation of Luke Skywalker and less like that of his father, Anakin, the White male hero in each case

---

<sup>132</sup> I.e., using the diary as an outlet for her feelings (a magical artifact of a type her parents had forbidden her from interacting with) rather than directly toward a potential White male spouse.

ultimately overcomes the darkness on their own, rather than falling and needing outside intervention to help redeem them. Harry, though, experiences only heightened anger and aggression and is fed misinformation, much as the diary fed him misleading information. Ron's experience with Slytherin's locket is even more similar to Frodo's torment by the One Ring. Ron wears the locket – technically an external force – on a chain next to his heart, as Frodo did with the ring, symbolically internalizing the darkness it represents. Ron experiences a heightening of his negative thoughts and emotions, encouraging him to do evil. Despite hints at the possibility, with talk of Voldemort possessing him, Harry is revealed never to be in danger of becoming evil. On the contrary, Ron ultimately succumbs to temptation and abandons his friends. Furthermore, Ron's temptation links to feelings of romantic longing, as the locket feeds on his jealousy and belief that Hermione would rather be with Harry than himself. Harry successfully masters his connection to Voldemort, channeling it rather than resisting it through the power of non-sexual love he feels for his friends, parents, and various parental figures he meets and loses along his journey. For Ron, the dark power is overcome and destroyed, rather than channeled, which he does through “valor” (*Deathly* 689) rather than love. Ron redeems himself, atoning for his actions and weakness to the locket's influence. He rescues Harry upon their reunion and resists an even more forceful manipulation by the locket when he attempts to destroy it.

Moreover, both Ron and Harry suffer torment due to their inner darkness. For Harry, this is literal torment, as he experiences pain during Voldemort's attempts to possess him (before his love drives Voldemort out). Ron undergoes the scorching of the locket before its destruction. The text describes this as “torturing” (*Deathly* 378) him. Thus, Ron and Harry endure anguish and torment to overcome and master or dispel their inner darkness. Both achieve heroic status and accent their own – and, by extension, that of other members of their group – capacity for heroic leadership within the hierarchy of the stories.

## 4.5 White Women: Angelic, Ethereal, Pure

If the contrast between light and darkness establishes conflict and the grounds for heroic action, then the exclusive association between White women and light does the opposite. By associating White women with light and only light, fictional works distance them from conflict and thus the need for action, securing their roles as

passive objects rather than heroes. The same effect extends through associating them solely with spirituality instead of physicality and keeping them free of sexual longing. They lack both action and the underlying desires which motivate them toward action, overdetermining their passivity.

Nevertheless, as noted earlier, artists have long contested presentations of idealized, angelic White females to some degree, and the image has gradually lost currency over time. Even so, contestations of this image have always existed in *reference to* it, and they continue to do so. Tolkien's works diverge from this pattern the least, and they show most clearly the ways this pattern of representation has limited the power and agency of female characters, casting them as objects of masculine desire rather than subjects in their own right. At the same time, Tolkien offers an exception to this pattern that allows idealizations of White femininity to coexist with agency and individual strength. This example sets the precedence for many later presentations. In effect, White femininity *can* act in ways that do not undermine the individual's subjectivity by maintaining the associations with light but avoiding the total separation from desire. At the same time, feminine Whiteness helps establish and enforce standards of female beauty, which may exclude (or not as prototypically include) individuals whose natural pigmentation does not match the White norm. This section will examine the interplay between feminine Whiteness and agency and probe the borders of that representation, exploring who can or cannot be "beautiful."

Speculative fiction has a long history of challenging White female idealizations, even as it internalizes them at its core. For example, in the first book of *The Enchanted Forest Chronicles* by Patricia C. Wrede, the protagonist, Princess Cimorene, is introduced relative to her sisters:

Cimorene was the youngest daughter of the King of Linderwall, and her parents found her rather trying. Their first six daughters were perfectly normal princesses, with long, golden hair and sweet dispositions, each more beautiful than the last. Cimorene was lovely enough, but her hair was jet black, and she wore it in braids instead of curled and pinned like her sisters. (1)

Cimorene turns out to be a far more strong-minded, independent, and active character than her sisters. She exhibits desire, takes initiative, and achieves heroic status, while her sisters are never heard of again. She frequently gets dirty and occasionally gets injured, and she ties together descriptions of dark and light in ways beyond her light skin and dark hair. She shows enterprise and surpasses the limits of

her social station. Nonetheless, as the quote above reveals, she is beautiful *despite* and not *because of* her black hair, and her blonde, beautiful sisters get the appellation of “normal” princesses. Black hair is an acceptable aberration, which *can* be beautiful, but blond hair is normal and *is* beautiful. The character of Cimorene challenges the patterns of White femininity, even as it normalizes and establishes them.<sup>133</sup>

Idealized White women are White *and* white in *The Lord of the Rings*. Originating before racist notions were significantly taboo, Tolkien’s work, particularly *The Lord of the Rings*, has no qualms about describing characters as “white,” even when directly referring to skin tone. These descriptions do not contrast them to non-White characters and White characters rarely encounter non-Whites. Indeed, the lemma *white* appears only once to distinguish one character’s skin from another’s, drawing a contrast between the “white” skin of Frodo and the “brown” skin of Samwise (699). Otherwise, the text describes characters’ skin as “white” for other descriptive or rhetorical purposes. These purposes vary yet follow a distinct gender divide. For example, descriptions of temporarily white skin (such as from fear, surprise, or so forth) appear five times (all in *The Lord of the Rings*) and exclusively with male characters. The lemma *white* with *fair*, when applied to skin,<sup>134</sup> or *white* applied to an individual with any association with plants or growing, are exclusively female and occur seven times (all, again, in *The Lord of the Rings*). The use of *white* with hair or beards is exclusively male, appearing three times in *The Hobbit* and nine times in *The Lord of the Rings*. *White* only describes women’s arms (three tokens, all in *The Lord of the Rings*), although either gender may have white hands (three tokens, all in *The Lord of the Rings*). Thematically, the use of *white* to emphasize purity or power may be either male or female, but its use to highlight age is exclusively male, and its use to emphasize attractiveness is exclusively female.

How *The Lord of the Rings* makes use of this gender divide in Whiteness is evidenced particularly strongly by the song Legolas sings about Nimrodel, which begins:

*An Elven-maid there was of old,*

---

<sup>133</sup> In complete fairness to *The Enchanted Forest Chronicles*, the narrative voice which reifies feminine Whiteness is probably intended to be unreliable, echoing the biases of traditional fairy tales to highlight how the plot works to undermine them. Nonetheless, within the world architecture, princesses like Cimorene’s sisters *do* turn out to be the norm, although Cimorene is not the only exception.

<sup>134</sup> There is a single male co-occurrence of *white* and *fair*, but it is a “fair morning” on which the “White Rider” (Gandalf) sets out with Theoden, and Gandalf himself is not described as “fair,” nor is that use of *white* referring to his skin tone (530).

*A shining star by day;  
Her mantle white was hemmed with gold,  
Her shoes of silver gray.*

*A star was bound upon her brows,  
A light was on her hair  
As sun upon the golden boughs  
In Lórien the fair.*

*Her hair was long, her limbs were white,  
And fair she was and free;  
And in the wind she went as light  
As leaf of linden-tree.*

*Beside the falls of Nimrodel,  
By water clear and cool,  
Her voice as falling silver fell  
Into the shining pool. (330)*

This single excerpt ties together white clothes (“mantle white” and “shoes of silver gray”), the whiteness of the skin (“limbs were white”), and light falling on her hair (literally, “a light was on her hair”) with other traditional aspects of female beauty (slenderness, long hair, singing voice). The remainder of the tale extends this pattern as Nimrodel is lost, sought, and awaited by a lover, emphasizing her sexual desirability. The verse also describes her lover, Amroth, but none of these traits appear. Instead, it describes him as “strong and fair” with “wind in his hair” instead of light and gives attention to his status as a great king, not his attractiveness. His Whiteness involves light skin (being “fair”) associated with strength (“strong”) and movement (“wind” instead of “light”). He seeks Nimrodel, but she does not seek him in turn.

By calling upon the imagery of feminine Whiteness, the poem relegates Nimrodel to a traditional role as object, specifically as the object of masculine desire. The poem emphasizes Amroth's agency and power and his desire for Nimrodel, but not hers for him, reinforcing the dynamic of a passive, "enlightened and enlightening" (Dyer 126) female who is (darkly) desired by the more active male. His desire augments his agency, motivating him to action. By separating Nimrodel from romantic desires, the text compounds her inaction with a lack of motivation, further cementing her static nature.

Nevertheless, not all women act in a wholly passive role. Most oft-discussed among these is Éowyn, whose readings Roberts summarizes as being in the mode of "the sort of woman who is, as it were, almost as good as a man: brave, battle-skilled, strong" ("Women" 474). Éowyn breaks from her traditionally female role as an object and embraces, at least for a time, a masculine role, impersonating a male soldier, going to war, and accomplishing great deeds. However, there is no separation between her heroic battlefield deeds and the idealized femininity of her descriptions. The text punctuates her struggle with the Witch-king with references to her fairness, including two explicit descriptions of light shining on her hair, intermingling idealized feminine descriptions with more overtly martial language:

But the helm of her secrecy had fallen from her, and *her bright hair, released from its bonds, gleamed with pale gold upon her shoulders*. Her eyes grey as the sea were hard and fell, and yet tears were on her cheek. A sword was in her hand, and she raised her shield against the horror of her enemy's eyes.

Éowyn it was, and Dernhelm also. For into Merry's mind flashed the memory of the face that he saw at the riding from Dunharrow: the face of one that goes seeking death, having no hope. Pity filled his heart and great wonder, and suddenly the slow-kindled courage of his race awoke. He clenched his hand. She should not die, *so fair*, so desperate. At least she should not die alone, unaided.

. . . Suddenly the great beast beat its hideous wings, and the wind of them was foul. Again it leaped into the air, and then swiftly fell down upon Éowyn, shrieking, striking with beak and claw.

Still she did not blench: maiden of the Rohirrim, child of kings, slender but as a steel-blade, *fair* but terrible. A swift stroke she dealt, skilled and deadly. The outstretched neck she clove asunder, and the hewn head fell like a stone. Backward she sprang as the huge shape crashed to ruin, vast wings outspread, crumpled on the earth; and with its fall the shadow passed away. *A light fell about her, and her hair shone in the sunrise.* (Lord 823–24, emphasis added)

Despite Merry's perception that "Éowyn it was, and Dernhelm also" (823), Éowyn resumes a wholly feminine *and* martial persona. Her description mingles, without contradiction, the language of idealized White femininity with martial heroism, with light falling on her hair twice and being fair, even while doing great deeds. The name "Dernhelm" is also notable in this context. Meaning "dark helm," it separates Éowyn symbolically from depictions of light on hair, substituting them with darkness on her head and aligning her to male depictions of being less lit with shadowy contrasts. It also has ties to "darkness" in the sense of secrecy, literally the "helm of her secrecy," described falling from her (823), and fittingly, her greatest triumphs begin with losing that titular helm. Éowyn's femininity, like her hair, is "released from its bonds" (823). The use of the initial light-on-hair image accents the femininity of the transformation. The second highlights the pinnacle of her martial glory with the slaying of the Witch-king's mount (her killing of the Witch-king himself results in her loss of consciousness and succumbing to a curse, a tragic rather than glorious position).

Nevertheless, even before she dons armor, Éowyn's portrayal already subverted the passive feminine position. Just as the description of battle mingled feminine Whiteness with action, all her descriptions in Rohan mingled feminine Whiteness with desire, allowing Éowyn motivations (romantic, patriotic, and self-aggrandizing) to augment her agent role. Looks of longing or discontent merge seamlessly with descriptions of fair hair and white clothes. The text plants the seeds of her agency in motivation and desire, which women such as Nimrodel appear to lack. She retains desire, darkness (the dark helm), and physicality (including multiple comparisons of her body to steel and a broken arm soon after the above scene), precisely those aspects of male Whiteness that allow them to obtain heroic status. She even abandons her romantic desires for Aragorn, although this is more due to Faramir's help talking her through her feelings, not in pursuing some higher ideal.

Éowyn is exaggeratedly white in her presentation (blond hair, grey eyes, light skin, and frequently white clothing), and she enacts the White trait of surpassing limits by transcending her gendered position to excel on the otherwise all-male battlefield. After doing so, she renounces her militant ways, resigns her shield, and embraces the roles of spouse and mother, which she had initially rebelled against. How this relates to Whiteness pivots on the role of Grima Wormtongue (a White man) in her adventure. According to Gandalf, Grima's influence initially fuels Éowyn's desires (*Lord* 849). Renouncing her warrior status and returning to the

domestic sphere is part of her being “healed” from that influence (943–44). If Éowyn surpasses her limits of her own accord, then surpassing limits is potentially an aspect of White femininity. If she does it because of Grima, it remains an exclusive trait of White men, which she experiences merely by proxy. Indeed, describing Grima’s influence as “poison” (849) and her return to domesticity as being “healed” (943) marks violating her gender role as inherently negative and harmful to her. Her deeds aided the heroes, but under the latter reading, this is an act of providence, turning evil designs for the greater good. Much as Gollum’s removal of Frodo’s finger destroyed the ring, so Grima’s “poison” (849) to Éowyn resulted in the Witch-king’s destruction. Nevertheless, a close examination of the text seems to support Éowyn’s agency at the root of her deeds. Gandalf is clear that Éowyn’s spirit and courage were not of Grima’s making (849), while Aragorn suggests that the healing she needs is not from her desire for renown but “despair” (849). Grima’s “poison” leads Éowyn to desire death in battle, not to desire battle at all. Éowyn’s empowerment ultimately survives, and the text allows a White woman to do what is elsewhere the domain of White men.

This reading meshes well with one by Adam Roberts. Roberts points out that Éowyn’s act of renunciation of her own will, surrendering her will so that she can find it again, is an act of “passion” (in the archaic sense of the term, sharing its root with “passive”). It represents a supreme moment of Christian agency (imitating the passion, “passivity,” of Christ), one likewise experienced by several male characters (“Women” 479–84). Following such a reading, her surrender would represent an even greater act of agency within the book’s moral framework, solidifying rather than undermining her role as agent. Éowyn lays down her broken shield in the end because it is no longer needed, although notably, most men do not lay down their arms as she does. Nonetheless, numerous examples in *The Lord of the Rings* suggest that Éowyn’s path of renouncing violence and pursuing healing represents a higher ideal than that of the warrior. She matches several male characters in this respect, even if not most. Éowyn thus meshes idealized White femininity with a role as a powerful agent, and she does so without irony, suggesting that the positions are not incompatible. If this is allowed, the Whiteness of White women does not *necessarily* compromise their power so long as it does not separate itself from darkness and physicality. Even so, feminine Whiteness/whiteness remains a strong theme throughout *The Lord of the Rings*, usually associated with objectification and passivity. Éowyn’s example shows the ability of the White spirit, even the female White spirit, to surpass limits and transcend the rules, but in doing so, it leaves the



boundaries intact. By reaffirming and transcending those rules, her example offers empowerment to other White women, who might also transcend their gendered positions while securing the subordination of those women (non-Whites) who implicitly cannot.

Considering other features of White femininity helps to determine its boundaries. As portions of Éowyn's and Nimrodel's depictions indicate, idealized White women in *The Lord of the Rings* often wear white clothing. Characters dressed all in white include Galadriel, Éowyn, and eventually, Gandalf (the only<sup>135</sup> male character to wear white). Galadriel appears only ever in white and is frequently associated with other white things, from jewelry and flowers to horses. Gandalf wears gray from the story's beginning until his return as Gandalf the White, and he wears white thereafter, although he occasionally hides his white clothes beneath other garments. Éowyn wears white frequently, especially when the text wishes to display her beauty, although Faramir once covers it with "a great blue mantle of the colour of deep summer-night, and set with silver stars about hem and throat," which he thinks is "fitting for the beauty and sadness of Éowyn" (*Lord* 940). Additionally, Gandalf is known as "Gandalf the White" or the "White Rider," while Éowyn is four times identified as the "White Lady." Aragorn also refers to "Elwing the White," who wedded Eärendil, and Elbereth is called "Snow-white" by the high elves who sing of her near the beginning of Frodo's journey (78). Goldberry is also portrayed in similar idealizations and has blonde hair, and while she does not wear pure white, one of her outfits is "all in silver with a white girdle" (129), which is a close approximation. *The Lord of the Rings* stays very close to traditional patterns of White female representation in this respect, save for whiteness and light also describing Gandalf (although his whiteness has different associations, as noted earlier).

Most notably, this use of grey eyes, white skin, and white clothes extends to Arwen, who has dark hair. Despite being only one character, Arwen's presence is notable because it offers an alternative form of female beauty that emphasizes lightness of skin but not hair. Near the end of *The Lord of the Rings*, Gimli and Éomer discuss the matter and conclude that both Arwen and Galadriel are acceptable candidates for the fairest woman, comparing their differences to the difference in beauty between evening and morning (953). This discussion marks Arwen's form of dark-haired beauty as *equally* desirable, not beautiful *despite* its darkness, as Cimorene's

---

<sup>135</sup> As discussed below, Saruman wears a robe of many colors, although he presumably wore white at some point before his first appearance in the story.

may have implied. Arwen's example is only a minimal divergence. However, it does mean that women without blond hair can participate in the narrative positions of White femininity, even while blond hair and blue eyes are still the standards for beauty.

Of further note, while most idealized female figures stay far from dangerous situations and thus remain presumably unmarred and pristine, Éowyn goes into battle and is seriously injured in the process, experiencing the Nazgûl's curse and having her arm broken. Her descriptions stop short of describing blood, dirt, or sweat, which her long time in the battle would have covered her with in abundance. This same omission occurs with the male characters, but Frodo and Samwise's tattered clothes are made a point of honor for them after their return from Modor (931). Nothing similar happens for any female character. Éowyn does, though, attract the gaze and admiration of her future husband while her arm is still mending. This last detail suggests a further negotiation of the theme, as it provides a standard of beauty that allows for serious physical injury, avoiding the implicit separation of ethereal womanhood from the physicality of her embodied form. *The Lord of the Rings* thus challenges some assumptions of the White female representation, at least for one character and in small ways for others. It sets a standard that later works will build upon in negotiating empowerment and feminine idealization.

Compared to the later works, *The Lord of the Rings* deals with idealized femininity in more absolute terms. Specific descriptions are always associated with males, others with females. Further, no idealized feminine figure in the works has skin that is not identified as distinctly white,<sup>136</sup> strongly suggesting that whiteness (and Whiteness) is a core aspect of female beauty. Idealized White femininity includes associations with blond hair, blue or gray eyes, white clothing, and illumination. It also restricts itself to upper-class women, human or very human-like. The work challenges these only as far as allowing them to be applied to a single dark-haired woman, allowing one idealized female to become seriously injured, and extending the patterns to a single non-human group (elves). Even with these challenges, the presentations of White femininity in Tolkien's works act as a baseline for understanding the later works, illustrating more than negotiating traditional discourses of feminine Whiteness. However, they also establish an important

---

<sup>136</sup> No non-white women appear in Tolkien's works, but it is noteworthy that among the idealized female figures, the whiteness of their skin is always *mentioned*.

precedent with Éowyn, showing the potential to divorce feminine Whiteness from feminine disempowerment by forgoing estrangement of physicality or desire.

*Star Wars* offers more negotiation of and resistance to feminine Whiteness than Tolkien's works, but these negotiations and resistances are not immediately evident in the early films. The main female characters and primary love interests of the original trilogy and the prequel trilogy, Leia and Padmé, are both lit in traditional ways, and both wear white on at least some occasions, Leia more frequently than Padmé. Although Leia's hair and makeup remain pristine throughout her stay as a prisoner aboard the Death Star (and hers must be a time-consuming hairstyle to maintain), her white dress is allowed to get several dark smudges (although it is never damaged). These do not appear to be from any particular form of dirtying, just a series of cosmetically applied black blotches, while most of the garment remains bright white. By contrast, Padmé wears a pure white outfit throughout a prolonged sequence at the end of Episode II. During that sequence, the outfit takes some damage yet remains spotlessly clean, despite Padmé tumbling across heavy machinery, dust, and sand, through smoke, sparks, and soot, passing through several battles, and falling from a factory walkway and a moving vehicle. Even her receiving a bleeding wound through the cloth somehow leaves the fabric torn, exposing more bare flesh but without getting blood on her attire. Likewise, neither Padmé nor Leia ever shows visible sweat. Neither shines.

Leia and Padmé are not alone in wearing white clothes, but the white clothes of others differ in cleanliness. Luke wears white at his first introduction and throughout most of the first film, for example. Even so, his clothes are dusty and dirty from the start, realistically taking on the effects of the sandy environment. Likewise, as Nama notes concerning the color-coding of the films, the stormtroopers also wear white (28), albeit with black accents (coding whiteness at least partially with evil in contrast to Tolkien's works). Like Luke's, their uniforms become dirty or damaged when circumstances logically dictate they should. Luke similarly becomes sweaty at points, unlike the female characters.

Thus, Leia and Padme are tied to patterns of feminine Whiteness, as seen in *The Lord of the Rings*. Each resists those patterns similarly to Éowyn, showing desires (romantic and political, but not for personal glory as with Éowyn) and physicality (dirt and injuries). These displays of physicality and desire are muted compared to those of the male characters. Accordingly, both characters are empowered, yet each

is less active than their male counterparts by the end of their trilogy. Just as their links to physicality and darkness are qualified, so is their agency.

The works abandon this pattern with Rey in the sequel trilogy, matching that trilogy's other progressive trends. Rey does eventually wear white, although she spends her first two films in outfits of different colors. This white outfit, however, does not remain unnaturally clean. Rey is seen sweaty, dirty, wounded, and soaked through at various points in the trilogy, and in contrast to her female forebears, her hair is not always immaculate. In fact, by the end of the final film, her white outfit is so dirty it has become a mottled grey-brown, bearing numerous stains, including blood, her skin is similarly marred, and her hair has become a mat of tangles. Just as Rey struggles with the dark side of the force, she also retains links to physicality matching or surpassing the males. By merging portrayals of light and dark, ethereal and physical, she can stand on the side of light and struggle against darkness, internal and external, securing the agency and heroism typical of the male characters. In contrast to the earlier films, the positioning of the sequel trilogy against traditional female representation patterns seems self-conscious and oppositional. It grants Rey numerous conflicting desires, links her strongly to physicality and darkness, and forecloses those aspects of feminine Whiteness that prevent White female heroism.

In other notable ways, these presentations differ from those in *The Lord of the Rings*. For example, there are no blondes in *Star Wars*, at least among the women, but neither is feminine Whiteness extended to non-humans. The only non-humans whose females even come close to resembling human females in the original trilogy are the twi'lek, represented by the dancer whom Jabba feeds to the rancor before the arrival of Leia and Chewbacca. This twi'lek dancer is not white but green (and is played by Nigerian-born British actress Femi Taylor), and she has no hair, just a pair of long, tentacle-like protrusions in its place. Most other non-human females are distinct enough from humans that one can only loosely infer their presence. Even when more recognizably feminine non-humans appear in later films, the films do not characterize them in idealized White terms. Finally, rather than being a notable exception, roles that are *at least initially* strong and active are the norm for female characters in *Star Wars*: Leia and Padmé act as significant drivers of plot action in the films where they first appear. Rey remains so across all films. While not wholly consenting to the patterns of female representation Tolkien more closely paralleled, *Star Wars* negotiates these patterns differently than the other works, challenging blondness and cleanliness, even while allowing white clothes and skin to remain

defining features of idealized women. More extensive negotiations with the boundaries and aspects of female representation are found in *Harry Potter*, although while *Harry Potter* extends the borders of feminine Whiteness, the center remains unchanged.

*Harry Potter's* use of idealizations of White females is, as with other aspects of the series, less overt than what appears in the earlier franchises. For example, women in the *Harry Potter* series do not, as a rule, wear white except when getting married. The most idealized of them, Fleur Delacour, if not allowed to get dirty, *per se*, is at least allowed to have “many cuts on her face and arms, and her robes . . . torn” (*Goblet* 439).<sup>137</sup> Nonetheless, the same features of light and Whiteness are associated with many descriptions of female beauty throughout the series while being negotiated in different ways and extended to women who, if not among those described as “black,” are at least implicitly not White.

On a subtler level, this association appears in the gendered use of language. *The Lord of the Rings's* language was mostly entirely raced and gendered (with words like “white” for hair for men and arms for women) or unpatterned (as with “glow” or “shine”). *Harry Potter's* language contains strong trends with infrequent exceptions, using language patterns we can discern through statistical trends.

The *Harry Potter* series extensively uses gendered language with its characters. For example, the lemma *yell* occurs 381 times, of which almost all have male agents, and only 21 have identifiable female agents.<sup>138</sup> Female characters are proportionally more likely to use the lemma *scream* or *cry* than *yell*, even when performing the same speech act, such as casting a spell. Even though 80% of third-person singular personal pronouns are masculine in *Harry Potter* (suggesting that males are referred to four times as often as females), these words still point to an overwhelming gender division. This gendered language pattern includes many descriptions relevant to understanding the place of Whiteness within the works.

---

<sup>137</sup> Fleur also has her clothing damaged during the first task (*Goblet* 314). Other than a tear on Harry's shoulder from the Horntail, the male contenders all pass through the tasks with their clothing undamaged. This might suggest that the damage to Fleur's clothing represents a pattern of sexualization, but there are too few points of reference to be sure. If Fleur's clothing is damaged in the third task, we are not informed, but as she is magically incapacitated off-scene almost immediately, it seems unlikely.

<sup>138</sup> Note that there is some overlap. Several of these 21 are a female and male yelling together, making them still cases of men yelling, just accompanied by a woman. Instances have been excluded from the latter count where the agent's gender is unidentified or is a large mixed group.

For example, the lemma *glow* appears sixteen times, referring to a person or part of a person. Of these, one is a mixed group (*Order* 184), three refer to males, and twelve to females, making the verb predominantly feminine by association, overwhelmingly so given the lower rate of female appearances. Female references are always to the face (*Chamber* 37, *Goblet* 170, 367, 439, *Order* 691, *Half-Blood* 41) or generalized to the whole person (*Prisoner* 50, 101, 236, *Order* 636, *Half-Blood* 90, *Deathly* 144). Of the male references, only one is generalized (*Deathly* 3), and two are to ears (*Order* 197, 355). Just as Dyer described visual depictions of idealized White women as likely to “glow” rather than “shine” (78), so also does *Harry Potter* use the word “glow” more often with women than with men.

Likewise, the lemma *shine* also follows the patterns suggested by Dyer’s analysis, but which gender dominates depends on the feature described. In its eight uses for hair, references with men outnumber those for women only slightly, far less than the gender ratio would suggest. There are four instances for men, three from Dumbledore (*Philosopher* 91, *Chamber* 61, *Goblet* 155), and one from Gilderoy Lockhart (*Chamber* 70), the prior perhaps owing to the frequent associations of Dumbledore’s descriptions with light. The text uses *shine* for women’s hair three times, once for Madame Maxime (*Goblet* 214) and twice for Bellatrix Lestrange (*Goblet* 516, *Order* 480). The remaining instance of “shining” hair is a mixed group (*Order* 564). Concerning other uses of *shine* relating to characters, parts of characters, or their clothing, males outnumber females three to one, with 33 instances for males and only 11 for females. However, this is less than the 4:1 gender pronoun ratio would imply, making the use proportionately feminine. Of these, uses of *shine* concerning blood (*Goblet* 102, 559, *Order* 240, *Half-Blood* 489), sweat (*Prisoner* 270, *Order* 168, 535, 688), or scars (*Order* 342, *Half-Blood* 325) are the *exclusive* domain of males.<sup>139</sup> *Shine* still indicates light and thus is predominantly feminine, but when injuries or bodily fluids come into play, women vanish from the figures entirely.

Closely related to *shine* is the lemma *shiny*. All of *Harry Potter*’s uses of *shiny*, when applied to human beings or parts of human beings, can be neatly grouped under two headings. The first is for sweat, baldness, or burn injuries – usually applied to male characters (*Philosopher* 213, *Prisoner* 146, *Goblet* 50, *Half-Blood* 65, 136, 345, *Deathly* 458, *Half-Blood* 458) with one exception, referring to Hermione being shiny

---

<sup>139</sup> Note that the pattern is of men having visible, shining injuries, thus linking them via light with physicality, not men causing injuries, thus being especially violent. Women and men both receive and inflict injury in *Harry Potter*, but only injuries received by men shine.

from sweat (*Chamber* 161). With eight instances for men and only one for women, this exceeds the 4:1 gender pronoun ratio, making the trend predominantly male. The second group refers to hair and is usually reserved for females (*Goblet* 360, *Order* 170, 494, 603, *Half-Blood* 368, *Deathly* 142) with only two exceptions, both describing the younger Horace Slughorn (*Half-Blood* 345, 462), a pattern of female dominance even more striking when compared to the gender ratio.

I can summarize these trends in terms of three rules:

1. Generalized glow and facial glow are female. All other glowing is male.
2. Shining is female except for blood, sweat, scars, and burn injuries.
3. Shiny hair is female. All other shininess is male.

While not universal, these patterns are statistically significant. Comparing the distribution of these tokens to a null hypothesis in which distribution follows the 4:1 gender ratio of the pronouns, the p-value is less than 0.001. There can be no doubt that the use of light in the descriptions of *Harry Potter* reinforces the visual depictions Dyer identified in visual culture. Women nonetheless find links to darkness and physicality on multiple occasions, and there are strong female characters in *Harry Potter*. Despite this, women are statistically less active and significant to the plot, and there is a corresponding statistical trend toward the sort of feminine Whiteness found in Tolkien's works. Even when not apparent at first glance, these representations work systematically to disempower female characters. Associating them exclusively with light and separating them from physicality denies them access to the internal conflict and desires which motivate the male characters to action.

That this tendency is associated with *idealized* females is further emphasized by how glowing or having lit hair is frequently tied to notions of beauty, which helps to set boundaries about who can and cannot be beautiful. Such descriptions co-occur at times when the text emphasizes an individual's attractiveness, such as with Hermione's hair being "sleek and shiny" at the Yule Ball (*Goblet* 360) or again, with identical wording, at Bill and Fleur's wedding (*Deathly* 142). Fleur Delacour's attempts to flirt with Cedric Diggory in *Goblet of Fire* also emphasize this, with her repeatedly "throwing back her head so that her long silvery hair caught the light"

(*Goblet* 265). Beyond this, having lit or shiny hair is sometimes explicitly described as an *aspect* of female beauty, as when Ron involuntarily took a love potion, and he described Romilda Vane as having hair that was “all black and shiny and silky” (*Half-Blood* 368). Likewise, in one description of Bellatrix Lestrange, Harry observes

She had long, dark hair that looked unkempt and straggly in the picture, though he had seen it sleek, thick and shining. She glared up at him through heavily lidded eyes, an arrogant, disdainful smile playing around her thin mouth. Like Sirius, she retained vestiges of great good looks, but something – perhaps Azkaban – had taken most of her beauty. (*Order* 480)

Here, having hair that ceases to be “sleek, thick and shining” is described as equivalent to, or at least as an aspect of, losing “most of her beauty.” This trend continues to tie together beauty with light. Still, it is notable that black or brown hair, not blonde, performs the tying together in many cases. These cases suggest a broader level of inclusion with these features, allowing non-blonde and even BIPOC women to participate in depictions of light and beauty.

Indeed, these gendered patterns in *Harry Potter* are most distinct from those of *Star Wars* or *The Lord of the Rings* because the patterns extend to less prototypically White (though only southern European and Asian) characters. Beyond emphasizing the shininess of Bellatrix’s dark hair, such descriptions also appear with the “olive-skinned” (*Goblet* 214, *Half-Blood* 590)<sup>140</sup> Madame Maxime or the implicitly Asiatic Cho Chang and Padma Patil. Dyer notes that Whiteness is not seen as being altered or effaced by subtle changes from tanning or emotions (such as paleness or blushing) (49–50). Despite that, in both earlier works, idealized White women are unqualified in their whiteness, without a hint of tanning, pointing to an ideal in which White women are also purely white. *Harry Potter* relaxes the boundaries of this ideal, even if it does not, as I discuss below, change its center. At the same time, the text does not include characters described as “black” in these patterns, yet such characters are scarce and are incidental to the plot, so this omission may be a coincidence. Again, being scarce and incidental to the plot tells of the racial politics of the work in another sense. Even so, there is insufficient evidence to suppose that their darker skin would exempt them from the work’s standards for female beauty. *Harry Potter* also includes veela and part-human characters like Madame Maxime and the Delcour

---

<sup>140</sup> Olympe Maxime’s “olive” skin is likely indicative of her southern European origins. The text seems to treat her the same as other White characters for purposes of patterns of descriptions and so forth. While she is thus not “non-White,” per se, it is still noteworthy that her darker complexion is associated with some of the hallmarks of White feminine beauty.



women in these patterns, resembling the elven and part-elven inclusion in *The Lord of the Rings* and distinguishing itself from the all-human array of idealized White women in *Star Wars*.

Despite extending these themes to individuals with darker hair or skin, however, strong associations exist between feminine beauty and light hair, light skin, and blue eyes in *Harry Potter*, suggesting that the ideal for feminine beauty still centers on those features, even while allowing for variations. The veela and Fleur Delacour (part-veela) epitomize this centering. In their first introduction, the text characterizes veela in an exaggerated version of idealized White femininity. “Veela were women ... the most beautiful women Harry had ever seen ... except that they weren’t – they couldn’t be – human. This puzzled Harry for a moment, while he tried to guess what exactly they could be; what could make their skin shine moon-bright like that, or their white-gold hair fan out behind them without wind” (*Goblet* 93). Their beauty is directly tied here to the fact that their skin is extremely white (“moon-bright”) and that their hair is long and extremely light as well (not just blonde but “white-gold”). In addition, the feminine glow described is literal, unlike the glow attributed to other characters, and even produces enough light that some details can be seen thereby (*Goblet* 113). Despite this apparent connection, the veela’s effect is on men (all men and only men, in a strictly heterosexual form of magical appeal), and they turn into monsters when enraged. Coupled with Mr. Weasley’s comment, “And *that*, boys . . . is why you should never go for looks alone!” (*Goblet* 101), this seems to raise the veela to the level of parody if not satire. The veela’s descriptions are not so much employing links between Whiteness and beauty as mocking them.

Nonetheless, this sense of parody quickly vanishes with the introduction of Fleur. From Fleur’s first appearance, the text describes her in equally exaggeratedly White terms. We read that “[a] long sheet of silvery blonde hair fell almost to her waist. She had large, deep blue eyes, and very white, even teeth” (*Goblet* 222). Avoiding labeling her skin as “white” and only referring to variations in the skin tone when they occur (see chapter three), the sense of whiteness is deflected to her “very white, even teeth.” Even then, the text hints at her skin via her “silvery blonde hair” and “large, deep blue eyes.” Like the veela she descends from, Fleur commands the attention of the men in her vicinity and frequently glows, perhaps literally (*Half-Blood* 90). Unlike the veela, Fleur becomes a recurring character throughout the remainder of the series. Elements of parody do crop up with her reintroduction at the beginning of *The Half-Blood Prince*, where her description ends with the tongue-in-cheek, “To

complete this vision of perfection, she was carrying a heavily laden breakfast tray” (*Half-Blood* 90). Nevertheless, her appearance and her sex appeal are otherwise played straight.

Further, in a supernatural resolution of the contradictions implicit in virgin/mother discourse, Fleur’s mystical glow undergoes a qualitative change on her wedding day. Before this transformation, Fleur’s appearances had been accompanied by a marked effect on some male characters, leaving them dazed or dazzled, as in the case of Ron at the beginning of *Half-Blood Prince*, who follows Fleur’s sudden arrival looking “slightly punch-drunk” (92). After the wedding, no such effect is remarked upon, although it is also absent from the preceding chapters of wedding preparation. However, the text indicates the change at a specific point during the wedding. As she walks down the aisle, it says that

Fleur was wearing a very simple white dress and seemed to be emitting a strong, silvery glow. While her radiance usually dimmed everyone else by comparison, today it beautified everybody it fell upon. Ginny and Gabrielle, both wearing golden dresses, looked even prettier than usual, and once Fleur had reached him, Bill did not look as though he had ever met Fenrir Greyback. (*Deathly* 144)

Fleur is no longer the pure virgin whose Whiteness is a lure for the dark sexual desires of surrounding men. Instead, Fleur’s wedding transforms her unironically into a source of nurturing and uplifting power, transferring its appeal to the still unattached women in her presence and redeeming her husband, by her mere presence, from the marks of the dark powers that had afflicted him. The scene enacts heteronormative White masculinity by showing the redemption of the White man through the power of the White woman. It also partially resolves the virgin/mother contradictions by mystically transforming Fleur from a desirable virgin into a nurturing wife/future mother. It supernaturally emphasizes this through the changes in the effect of her glow. Thus, Fleur can transition from the virgin embodiment of the White ideal into the “pure vessel for reproduction” (Dyer 29) required to reproduce the White race.

In a work so concerned with racism and racial superiority, though,<sup>141</sup> blonde hair and blue eyes have other connotations. In this case, they are embodied by the Malfoy family. Each has blonde hair and blue eyes, strengthening the Aryanist<sup>142</sup> resonances in their pure-blood ideologies. The negative connotations associated with

---

<sup>141</sup> For a fuller discussion of anti-racism in *Harry Potter* and the other works discussed here, see chapter five.

<sup>142</sup> For discussion of Death Eaters and Nazism, see chapter five.

this depiction influence some of the descriptions of Narcissa Malfoy, whose feminine, blond-haired appearance cannot be presented with wholly positive connotations lest the text, by extension, praise her racial purity. Accordingly, Narcissa's first description refers to her as being "blonde, too; tall and slim, she would have been nice looking if she hadn't been wearing a look that suggested there was a nasty smell under her nose" (*Goblet* 91–92). By saying she "would have been nice looking," the text preserves connections between blond hair and feminine beauty standards. It also qualifies the description, indicating that, despite those features, she was *not* nice looking.

A later description of her takes an even more extreme stance. Near the beginning of *The Half-Blood Prince*, we read, "She was so pale that she seemed to shine in the darkness; the long blonde hair streaming down her back gave her the look of a drowned person" (*Half-Blood* 27–28). Here, Narcissa is associated first with the unladylike "shine" (as opposed to "glow") but then further has her pale skin and fair hair specifically invoked in negative ways, giving "her the look of a drowned person" (28). This description calls upon a different aspect of White representation, associating her appearance with the look of a corpse.<sup>143</sup> Indeed, the fact the use of "so pale that. . ." suggests hers is an extreme case. Through intense racial purity, she is *too* light-skinned, *too* blonde, and thus her blondness ceases to be a positive trait. I must note that this is an outright contradiction with the description of the veela as superhumanly attractive, with skin that was "moon-bright" and hair that was "white-gold" (*Goblet* 93), finding *attractiveness* in extreme whiteness, rather than dismissing it as too extreme. I read Narcissa's negative description here as one of momentary ideological necessity, not as a consistent feature of the world architecture. Her earlier description reinforces the trend of associating light hair with feminine beauty, even as it excludes Narcissa for other reasons. In contrast, the latter description turns her hair and skin into unattractive features, calling upon other aspects of Whiteness to avoid placing positive emphasis on features that, for Narcissa, are associated with a form of racism the books seek to reject.

Where *Harry Potter* stands out from the other works, however, is not in its idealized women but in its women who are not idealized. In *The Lord of the Rings*, a few minor, fairly foolish female characters avoid the language of idealized White femininity while having enough (petty) desires to be worth mentioning in the plot.

---

<sup>143</sup> This aspect of White representation is not discussed here. For a discussion of the links between Whiteness and coldness and death, see Dyer 206–23.

The most notable examples are Lobelia Sackville-Baggins and Ioreth. In *Star Wars*, characters who lack idealized White feminine presentations also lack personal ambitions and are even more marginal. *Harry Potter*, however, divorces idealized White feminine presentations from agency almost entirely. The most idealized White female, Fleur, is a minor character but still finds some opportunities to exercise power and agency. The most active female character, Hermione, only occasionally receives such descriptions. Between them, many powerful characters reside with no links to blondness, shining hair, or White clothing, including Minerva McGonagall and Dolores Umbridge. No precedent for this exists in either of the other two works. *Harry Potter* does employ traditional representations of idealized White femininity, and its female characters are correspondingly weaker than the males. It also leverages those representations in a way that centers beauty standards on features unobtainable by many women (if not restricting it to those features). Still, where others granted agency to idealized White females, *Harry Potter* breaks the pattern whereby idealized White femininity and beauty are necessary for female power and relevance.

Placing these works side by side helps draw out the larger picture of White femininity in these works. All employ the tropes of White femininity to differing degrees, coding Whiteness in sometimes less-than-obvious ways through their world architecture. Still, they negotiate those patterns of Whiteness differently, with different implications. *The Lord of the Rings* shows how White femininity can divest idealized White Women of motivations and agency, for example. Simultaneously, it violates certain features of White femininity to position Éowyn in an active role without sacrificing that femininity. Éowyn's performance of martial prowess goes hand-in-hand with descriptions of traditional tropes of White female beauty. She sets a standard merging female beauty and agency that the other works carry on, even if female agency is typically qualified compared to men.

Still, *Star Wars* and *The Lord of the Rings* implicitly make beauty a prerequisite for power and relevance. A woman must be beautiful to save the day, slay the Witch King, or fight the Empire. In *Harry Potter*, that correlation fails. A woman may be beautiful and powerful, such as Bellatrix Lestrange, or beautiful and marginal, such as Cho Chang. Nevertheless, strong, plot-central female characters like Minerva McGonagall or Dolores Umbridge also appear without blond or shiny hair, blue eyes, or white clothing. Tolkien's work establishes a message that beauty need not be incompatible with female power and agency: A woman can be beautiful *and*

strong. *Star Wars* strengthens the message. *Harry Potter* inverts it: A woman can be strong without being beautiful.

Along with this, *Star Wars* and *The Lord of the Rings* associate idealized White femininity exclusively with white or light-colored skin. *The Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter* associate feminine beauty prototypically with blond hair, even while allowing beauty to exist elsewhere. Collectively, these works establish a standard for feminine beauty that excludes or is less inclusive of women whose natural pigmentation does not fit them into a White ideal. Other women may still be beautiful, perhaps even equally beautiful, but theirs will be a less normative, less prototypical beauty. However, which pigmentations associate with beauty is of lesser concern than which associate with morality. The following section addresses how light and dark physical pigmentation can be a barometer of moral standing among humans and orcs in Tolkien's works and the centaurs in *Harry Potter*.

## 4.6 Color-coding: When Light Makes Right

*The Lord of the Rings*, *Star Wars*, and *Harry Potter* tell stories of struggle between “light” and “darkness,” representing good and evil. It would, I believe, be essentializing to mark these divisions of “light” and “dark” as inherently racial. This is especially true in *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter*, where non-White individuals appear exclusively (or almost exclusively, depending on how one interprets the allegiance of certain characters, such as Blaise Zabini) on the side of the “light” and not with the “dark.” Nonetheless, slippage between moral and racial light and dark can occur. When it does, it makes it especially easy for readers to draw connections between the natural hierarchies discussed above and in chapter three and those in the real world. Further, it risks racializing the entire narrative, allowing easy links between moral and racial “light” and “dark.” To show how this slippage happens, I turn here to how physical pigmentation can reflect moral alignment within specific groups in *Harry Potter* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Darker characters in White visual culture tend to be more “wicked and/or sensual” (Dyer 60). No examples appear here of sensual characters being darker in complexion. However, *Harry Potter* and *The Lord of the Rings* show examples of groups whose darker-pigmented characters are reliably more wicked than the lighter ones. Still, differences in pigmentation *between* groups (rather than within) never correlate to morality across these works.

Particularly after the publication of *The Lord of the Rings*, the use of “darkness” to characterize villainous forces has become commonplace in speculative fiction. Examples range from the highly Tolkien-like *Shannara* novels to modern video game franchises like *The Legend of Zelda*. Many such works try to distinguish between racial and moral darkness, but slippages continue. One of the best-known is the case of “drow.” *Dungeons & Dragons*-inspired<sup>144</sup> drow focus on evil-natured elves with dark or literally-black skin who dwell underground. Drow or drow-like elves appear in diverse works of high fantasy. Often called “dark elves,” borrowing the term from Tolkien’s *Silmarillion*, the combination of evil natures and dark skin to distinguish them from “normal” elves allows a direct overlap between racial and moral “darkness.” In works chiefly concerned with a conflict between “light” and “dark” moral forces, this overlap allows racial themes to implicate the entire narrative.

Tolkien’s works might seem to present an exception to the contrast between dark and light power and the connection to light and dark colors through the example of Saruman. Saruman the White was initially portrayed as the head of his order (the “White Council”) and a staunch opponent of the “dark” powers of Mordor. Nevertheless, Saruman eventually revealed himself as a traitor, secretly in alliance with Mordor. His treason would have aligned the “white” wizard with “evil,” while “gray” and “brown” and unnamed others remained with the forces of good, creating a correspondence of shades that does not match the light/dark and good/evil pattern. However, when Saruman first reveals his treachery, he also reveals that he has “broken” his color and forsaken his title. As Gandalf relates the scene:<sup>145</sup>

“ . . . For I am Saruman the Wise, Saruman Ring-maker, Saruman of Many Colours!”

“I looked then and saw that his robes, which had seemed white, were not so, but were woven of all colours, and if he moved they shimmered and changed hue so that the eye was bewildered.

“I liked white better,” I said.

“White!” he sneered. ‘It serves as a beginning. White cloth may be dyed. The white page can be overwritten; and the white light can be broken.’

---

<sup>144</sup> *Dungeons & Dragons* popularized drow, although they do not hold copyright over the concept (the concept dates to Norse mythology, the term to Scots). Even so, they have exclusive rights to some drow-related concepts of their own, including “driders” and “Loth,” and most drow in modern fiction are influenced by the *Dungeons & Dragons* version.

<sup>145</sup> Those puzzled by the punctuation should note that there are three levels of nested quotation here. I quote directly from *The Lord of the Rings*, which contains direct speech from Gandalf which itself contains direct quotations of previous dialog between Gandalf and Saruman. Double quotes indicate Gandalf’s recounting of the story and single quotes indicate dialog within his narrative.

“‘In which case it is no longer white,’ said I. ‘And he that breaks a thing to find out what it is has left the path of wisdom.’” (*Lord* 252)

Thus, although Saruman was initially “white,” he abandons his whiteness in his fall from grace. Indeed, Saruman’s whiteness is literally broken, split into its component colors. This shift in colors for Saruman as he changes allegiance reinforces the light/dark binary of the stories. Saruman cannot be both “the White” and on the side of evil. Instead, Gandalf takes up the title, standing firmly on the side of good.

In Tolkien’s works, orcs carry this pattern over into the realm of physical pigmentation. They stand as the generic and disposable representatives of evil in the works, yet they are not generally dark-skinned, despite some claims to the contrary.<sup>146</sup> Orcs are generally both evil and pale-skinned. True, this is “sallow” skin, which ties them to portrayals of East Asians and their diaspora and thus represents a tie between non-White skin and evil, but it is a form of non-Whiteness characterized by light pigmentation.<sup>147</sup> Compare the “brown” skinned (but presumably still White, just tanned or of a slightly darker variety of hobbit) Samwise, who may be darker than the “sallow” orcs but is of higher moral standing. Likewise, the heroes’ treatment of the distinctly darker Haradrim suggests that they are, at least, better than orcs. Again, this shows pigmentation not indicating relative morality *between* groups but only within them. Orcs exist in a variety of skin tones, from the more common “sallow” orcs to the “black” orcs of different varieties or the “swarthy” uruk-hai. Among these, the darker-colored orcs are always particularly vicious or dangerous. The text usually marks these exceptional types of orcs for viciousness or having special skills. Some are the “large and evil: black Uruks of Mordor” (*Lord* 316). The orc chieftain is “huge” and “swart” (317) and gets a whole paragraph devoted to his assault against the heroes (a great deal of time and attention for a single orc). The cruelty and advantages of the uruk-hai over regular orcs are a matter of frequent discussion throughout the relevant sections of the book. *Among* “orcs,” morality *is* externally marked by skin tone. Pale orcs are evil, but dark orcs are worse.

---

<sup>146</sup> An example of the latter can be found with Mika Loponen, as discussed in chapter one.

<sup>147</sup> This is suggested by a letter of Tolkien’s which Loponen quotes from (67), in which Tolkien refers to them as “sallow” and identifies it as a “Mongol-like” feature. This choice of terms was one of many strategies used by European ideologues for coping with the fact that some northeast Asians had lighter skin than some Europeans without including them under the heading of “White.” For a broader discussion of that ideological unrest and the evolution of terminology used to assuage it, see Michal Keevak’s *Becoming Yellow*.

This same pattern holds up among humans in Tolkien's works. Although not all light-skinned humans are good, the only light-skinned, pure-blooded human who works on the side of Mordor or Saruman is Grima Wormtongue, and those who oppose Sauron and Saruman are always light-skinned. Relatively darker antagonists include the Dulendings (darker of hair than the Rohirrim they oppose), the Easterlings, the Haradrim, and Bill Ferny. Other humans who serve Mordor, and especially those who serve Saruman, are described as looking orc-like and having sallow skin and are presumably part orcs, while the light-skinned Dúnedain (part-elves) work against Saruman and Mordor.

The only arguable exception to this coding is among hobbits. The three varieties of hobbits are marked, among other ways, by their skin tone and hair color, with the lowest being the darkest and the highest being the lightest. Despite this correspondence to a general hierarchy, there is no indication of differences in moral standing among the different hobbit sub-races. Samwise Gamgee, in particular, brown-skinned and presumably belonging to the lowest hierarchical group, shows an unimpeachable moral disposition (his worst sin is eavesdropping), while the corrupt Smeagól is of the same group. Other hobbits experience moral failures, including the gossiping hobbits of Hobbiton, the petty thefts by Lobelia Sackville-Baggins, and those hobbits who side with "Sharky" during Saruman's takeover of the Shire. That Samwise can be at the bottom of the color hierarchy but not at the bottom of the moral hierarchy represents a break from the patterns of color-coding morality via complexion. That Smeagól can be of the same group further resists putting a racial status on his moral disposition. Sam's exceptional moral standing *may* be "going against type" and exhibiting that trait of Whiteness, yet this would be remarkable given how inescapably restrictive Tolkien's characterization of hobbits is otherwise (for discussion of this point, see the discussion of determinism in chapter three). It seems most likely that while pigmentation marks morality among humans and orcs, the coloration of hobbits does not carry any particular moral weight, merely a hierarchical one. Color-coding of moral standing by physical pigmentation is robust in the two works by Tolkien, at least among humans and orcs, lending racial resonance to the larger narrative. However, hobbits may not follow the rules, and no other groups show noticeable signs of internal color variation except ents, whose coloring may be motivated by other factors, such as symbolism associated with different species of trees.



If Tolkien offers hobbits as an exception, *Harry Potter* treats those exceptions as the default. Humans in the *Harry Potter* series show no correlation between their coloration and their moral standing, and White characters appear represented on both sides of the central conflict. Voldemort, after his fall, is pure white and hairless. Dumbledore is light-skinned but also with white hair and a white beard. Kingsley Shacklebolt, Lee Jordan, and Angelina Johnson are dark-skinned and aligned with the protagonists. At the same time, Blaise Zabini is dark-skinned and at least somewhat ideologically aligned with the villains, even though he never fights on their side. Dark hair is commonplace among both groups. The Death Eaters wear black robes, but this is a fashion choice, not a natural pigmentation.

The same is true of most non-human groups. Many creatures do not even have a clearly defined skin tone. For example, *Harry Potter* characterizes goblins as vicious, selfish, and cruel, but their skin tone is strangely ambiguous. Three references appear to their skin tone, spread across two individuals. Two of these refer to them as “swarthy” (*Philosopher* 56, *Deathly* 466) and one as “sallow” (*Deathly* 485). These words indicate a very dark or pale complexion, respectively, yet one of the “swarthy” references also refers to the same goblin who is elsewhere “sallow.” The origin of this contradiction is unclear. Most likely, it is due to an error, but the variety of possibilities for the contradiction do not lend themselves to any particular interpretation.<sup>148</sup> This contradiction distances the general narrative further from racial implications, with one of the most morally aligned groups having an unclear skin tone. Many other creatures, such as giants, are even harder to define, not having their skin tone referred to at all.

Those creatures whose skin the text describes run widely across the scale. Grey skin, for example, is attributed to trolls, merpeople, and dementors alike, and there seems to be at least a similarity of shade, if not of descriptive tone, between the “waxy white skin” of vampires (*Prisoner* 34) and the “moon-bright” skin of veela (*Goblet* 93). Neither set of colors appears to denote a shared moral alignment. Two

---

<sup>148</sup> It is possible that the author simply copied the use of “swarthy” and “sallow” for goblins from earlier sources without understanding what “swarthy” meant, since it is only used in *Harry Potter* with respect to goblins. “Sallow” is used frequently to describe characters like Severus Snape or Victor Krum, whose other descriptions include references to paleness, so it is possible that Rowling thought it was a synonym. Alternatively, it may represent a mistake in the one use of “sallow” or the author changing their mind mid-text and not updating for consistency. It could also be an act of deliberate ambiguity, but this seems unlikely, as the contradiction is not marked, and the skin tone could as easily have been left undescribed, as with the giants, rather than striving for ambiguity by using contradictory terms.

house-elves have their skin color referred to, which colors do not necessarily match, yet this does not seem to indicate an ethical hierarchy between them. Dobby has an “ugly brown face” (*Chamber* 249),<sup>149</sup> while Kreacher has “pale skin hanging off him in folds” (*Deathly* 190). Both house-elves are initially minor antagonists who eventually become loyal followers, even though Kreacher’s transition takes much longer than Dobby’s, and his wrongs against Harry are greater. Nonetheless, as with Tolkien’s work, pigmentation does seem to, at least in the case of centaurs, follow hierarchies of moral alignment *within* the group (though not indicating morally distinct sub-groupings as in Tolkien’s works).

The coloring of different centaurs shows some resonance with the pattern of color-coding individuals based on their moral standing. The most sympathetic centaur character, Firenze, is exaggeratedly white, both in the hair on his human portions and on his equine lower regions, with “white-blond hair and a palomino body” (*Philosopher* 187) and “astonishingly blue eyes, like pale sapphires” (187). Firenze is more friendly to humans than the other centaurs, saves Harry’s life in the first book, and is on good terms with Dumbledore, whom he agrees to work for beginning from book five. The least sympathetic centaur, Bane, is “black-haired and -bodied” (185). Bane opposes Firenze’s rescue of Harry and leads the other centaurs in hostility toward humans and in their attempt to kill Firenze for agreeing to work for Dumbledore (it is Bane’s hoof mark that appears on Firenze’s chest afterward). The other centaurs fall into a spectrum between, including the “chestnut” Ronan “with red hair and beard” (184), the “chestnut” Magorian “with long black hair” (*Order* 615), or the unnamed “grey centaur” (615). They tend to side with Bane more than with Firenze. They are less outspoken in their hostility than Bane, although the black-haired Magorian takes a close second position. Centaur coloration follows this color-coding pattern closely, and the text refers to their coloring much more often than that of other groups (compare house-elf coloration, which describes only two characters once each or the three total, if contradictory, references for goblins). While *Harry Potter* does not use pigmentation extensively to signal moral alignment, its apparent use with centaurs is quite direct: a good centaur is a white centaur, and a bad centaur is a black one. Broader trends distance the good-versus-evil narrative from racial implications, but the resonances are strong with centaurs.

---

<sup>149</sup> The “ugliness” of Dobby’s face appears to be based on its proportions, with large ears and eyes, not its brownness.

Those few other groups with any sign of group-internal color variation are ambiguous at best. Owls show color variation, but it is unclear whether Hedwig, the only white owl, is better than the brown or grey owls seen throughout the rest of the series. Her position as the protagonist's pet lends some credence to her standing, and she shows affection and loyalty to Harry. Still, we do not see enough of other owls, even Pigwidgeon, to make a good comparison. Hedwig shows a strong streak of pride, but so does Firenze. It is more likely that color-coding was secondary to other priorities with owls and house-elves. Kreacher is pale to fit in with the atmosphere of the Black family home. Hedwig is white as a reflection of her owner's inherent goodness (much as with the white horses that various characters in *The Lord of the Rings* ride versus the Nine Riders' black horses).

Overall, the vast majority of creatures, human and otherwise, across the three works do *not* signal their moral alignment with pigmentation. However, at least humans and orcs in Tolkien's works and centaurs in *Harry Potter* do. This coding might seem a coincidence, but the converse, having a spectrum of coloration in which light skin corresponds to wickedness and dark skin to goodness, never occurs. This coding shows further how Whiteness operates at an unseen level in the various works and provides a clear case of slippage between racial and moral light and dark. This slippage is particularly relevant given the significance of moral light and dark symbolism in each work's central narrative. Equivalence between moral and racial darkness would transform the tales into symbolic racial conflicts. It is further significant because even when only affecting a small number of creatures, such parallels create subtle links between light skin and goodness and dark skin and evil, reinforcing aspects of the larger racial hierarchies within the works. Direct associations between traits and pigmentation require the least effort for readers to translate into real-world prejudice.

## 4.7 Whiteness and the (Re)Production of Droids

As the example of orcish enterprise demonstrates, peripheral Whiteness may be a curse if the non-White group appears as a threat. Their traits may motivate violence rather than rationalize a better place in the hierarchy. Whites may often couch their anxieties over the perceived threat of non-Whites in reproductive terms (Dyer 63). They attribute larger family sizes and greater fertility to non-Whites (64). They may see non-Whites as numerous, emigrating or reproducing en masse, and fear that

other races will swamp or overwhelm them by sheer numbers (Martin and Fozdar 56). Despite the focus on non-Whites, this anxiety stems just as much from how Whites perceive themselves. The supposed traits of Whiteness, especially the separation of spirit and body, are thought to lend themselves to sexual inhibition and slower reproduction, leaving Whites disadvantaged (Dyer 64–5). This belief in reproductive imbalance is crucial, for it allows the “more specific,” “less enterprising,” and “less heroic” peoples to transition from inferior to threatening, from labor to exploit to enemies to exterminate.

Speculative fiction frequently marks this divide. While non-human sidekicks and magical helpers abound, so do hordes of individually weak but collectively strong enemies (and they are always enemies). Heroes (typically White, human, and male) prove their mettle through the mass slaughter of these disposable foes. Zombie fiction provides a rich set of examples. The 1968 American horror film, *The Night of the Living Dead* established zombies in the popular imagination. In it, zombies are numerous, deadly, and reproduce through eroticized violence (biting). The film set the standard for zombies defined by their physicality (hunger, violence, and mindless bodies) and associated with darkness (night). Mass production linked with darkness and unbridled eroticism has been a common trait of enemy hordes across speculative fiction. However, these traits often manifest in more coded forms than with zombies.

This section will use droids in the original and prequel *Star Wars* trilogies to illustrate the links between the features of hegemonic Whiteness and this presentation of non-White enemies. Here, I will examine the presentation of the two main droids (C-3PO and R2-D2) in *A New Hope* through that lens. I will argue that the droids express a great deal of Whiteness through coloration, stiffness of joints, spirit-body interaction, and related themes to a more extreme degree than White human characters. This Whiteness does not reflect their social position or treatment by other characters, including sympathetic protagonists (discussed in chapter three). The discussion will then proceed to the prequel trilogy, giving special attention to three key segments: the first introduction of C-3PO, the first introduction of R2-D2, and the droid factory sequence (with the subsequent battle scene). I will argue that certain superlatively White traits of the main droids extend beyond human possibility. The prequel movies exaggerate these further by linking them to their mode of production. Furthermore, the battle droids appear as distinctly non-White, and their mode of production reflects this. This correlation between the presence of

or opposition to White traits with specific modes of production strongly resonates with the White sexual and reproductive anxieties identified as an aspect of hegemonic Whiteness. Through it, White audiences can indulge in fantasies of being overwhelmed by more numerous and faster-reproducing inferiors. They can draw pleasure from watching White heroes prove their superiority through the mass destruction of disposable Others.

Dyer's study of Whiteness was not blind to the role of androids. In analyzing the perceived symbolic connection between (racialized human) Whiteness and death, Dyer comments that the android is the "definition of whiteness, the highest point of human aspiration," one which ultimately reveals "that to be white is to be nothing" (278). While Dyer's ultimate goal is to show the android as symbolic of the emptiness and lifelessness in popularly (i.e., by Whites) conceptualized Whiteness, his words point to how droids can potentially embody a White ideal, exaggerating the traits of Whiteness beyond the capabilities of organic life. However, although Dyer finds these traits of Whiteness in several examples (the android, Ash, from the *Alien* films and the replicants of *Blade Runner*), not all fictional androids are similarly White. Moreover, their (sometimes oppositional) relationship to Whiteness is far deeper and more complex than Dyer acknowledges. That relationship intricately links with the same themes of sexuality and reproduction that Dyer sees in analyzing Whiteness in Western visual culture. Dyer treats reproduction as irrelevant to androids, as they "cannot reproduce themselves . . . at any rate sexually as opposed to technologically" (281). I will argue that reproduction can be central to their Whiteness.

Two droids, far above the others, get our attention during *A New Hope*, namely R2-D2 and C-3PO. One might describe the latter as a gold-plated humanoid, the prior as a garbage bin with wheels. On the surface, they are far from being White humans. Indeed, they are not even biological. Upon closer scrutiny, however, many of their features resonate strongly with models of hegemonic Whiteness. Building on the rest of this chapter, I will first argue from within that model to show that the droids have several traits usually used to rationalize the superior position of Whites on the social hierarchy, some of which they have to an extreme compared to the actual Whites. These traits stand in contrast to their superlatively low social position discussed in the previous chapter. I hypothesize that the contradictions inherent in this portrayal likely stem from an unreflective attempt to reconcile the heroic (traditionally White coded) and subordinate (traditionally non-White coded) positions of the droids.

The most obvious of the droids' White-coded traits is their color. While grey, brown, black, and red-and-white droids appear in the films, R2-D2 is white with blue highlights, and C-3PO is, as has been said, golden. R2-D2's coloring could be said to be a mechanical analog to white skin and blue eyes and C-3PO to blond hair, but outward coloring is comparatively superficial. Even in the case of humans, Dyer notes "that skin colour is not really just a matter of the colour of skin" (87), as demonstrated by everything from the non-effect of tanning on one's racial classification (86–87) to the construction of light-skinned groups as non-White (79). Even so, while R2-D2 and C-3PO are light-colored and benevolent, and many villainous droids are dark, droid coloration does not perform a consistent color-coding of moral standing. There is, for example, a silver protocol droid seen in *The Empire Strikes Back*, which appears to be working with the Empire, despite its lighter color than C-3PO.

The Whiteness of the main droids is signaled much more strongly by their having the invisible traits of Whiteness. The most superficial of these appears in the "tautness" and "uprightness" of the droids' bodies. Far exceeding the tautness of the human characters, C-3PO's joints can barely bend, while R2-D2 has few joints at all. No exceptional looseness or athletic prowess occurs with them, which might otherwise mark them as non-White. Likewise, their dancing ability proves nonexistent, as demonstrated at the end of *The Return of the Jedi*.

Whiteness exploits this supposed tautness to claim greater separation between the White spirit and body. In R2-D2 and C-3PO's situation, this is actually the case. C-3PO makes the separation explicit when he refers to his body as something external to himself in one scene, crying "curse my metal body," when he does not feel he has responded to a situation fast enough (*New Hope* 01:21). Both droids have skill sets focusing on the intellectual realm, from knowledge of languages or mechanics to the ability to hack computer systems. In terms of being representative of civilization and civilized practices, it is difficult to surpass C-3PO, "designed for etiquette and protocol" (*New Hope* 00:17). This point, combined with his general attitude and mode of speech (including his accent, which bears certain stereotypes in American cinema), makes him an outright caricature of civility. On the other hand, R2-D2 expresses a great deal of "spirit" and a "get-up-and-go" attitude in pursuing his mission, far surpassing the reluctant C-3PO.

The droids do not, nevertheless, reenact the tropes of masculine Whiteness. Neither struggles against “dark desires,” be they sexual, metaphysical, or otherwise. Indeed, C-3PO and R2-D2 epitomize the mind-spirit separation by having no biological urges, a complete break from bodily desire more akin to feminine Whiteness. Although C-3PO expresses an expectation of pleasure over a coming autobath, he shows no sign of longing for it otherwise, and the desire for a bath never influences his actions. He shuts himself down at Obi-wan’s residence in a conscious decision to save power, taken after consulting his owner and assessing its possible effects (by ensuring Luke will not need him in the short term), without any expression of an equivalent to fatigue or hunger. Unlike idealized White females, the droids hold this status of freedom from biological urges without significant contradiction. After all, they have no sexual desires, but neither are they expected to bear children.

If they are in many respects constructed as White, however, the social position of the droids does not reflect this. As explained in chapter three, droids occupy the lowest rung of the social hierarchy for their world, existing in a liminal position between enslaved people and non-living tools. While there are many possible explanations for this, I would suggest that the apparent contradiction stems from assumptions the creators have not wholly examined. Among these is the assumption that, as machines, the droids are fundamentally tools and thus subservient to (biological) living beings, especially (White) humans. At the same time, because the droids represent fantastic – even heroic – elements, they are imbued with admirable qualities taken for granted in (White) heroes. The contradiction occurs when these admirable qualities invalidate the traits used to rationalize machine subordination (lack of free will and self-awareness) and those used to rationalize non-White and White female subordination (lack of the traits of male Whiteness). Thus the portrayal of the droid subordination is left unsupported by traditional rationales. The droids act as the servants of human beings simply because that is what they do, which their human masters and the droids themselves equally take for granted. As with many racist positions, their subordination is a foregone conclusion, its justification merely an afterthought.

In that light, there is little new in the prequel films to observe in the droids’ hierarchical position, save that there is more acknowledgment of their agency. Anakin emerges as a character who, even up to his last interaction with the main droids in *Revenge of the Sith*, treats them respectfully and protects them from

discrimination (including Obi-wan's "loose wire jokes" and defending R2-D2 from his criticism). Otherwise, the droids encounter many of the same forms of oppression. They are still subservient, a freighter employee refuses R2-D2 service because he is a droid, and Bail Organa has C-3PO's mind wiped at the trilogy's end.

Much more information, however, appears in the three aforementioned scenes relating to their Whiteness and the relative non-Whiteness of their counterparts, the battle droids. The first strengthens the reading of C-3PO as a White-constructed but hierarchically subordinated being. His creation falls even more in line with descriptions of hegemonic Whiteness than his general portrayal during the first film. His creator builds C-3PO based exclusively on a rational decision ("forward planning") and through the highly intellectually-focused activity of assembling advanced technology rather than sexual intercourse. Further, the environment is clean and physically light. Unlike the not "pure white" means (sex) of producing Whiteness (Dyer 63), C-3PO's production is exceptionally White within the same framework. To emphasize its asexuality, not only is C-3PO produced deliberately and asexually by a single virgin parent, but that parent is himself the product of a virgin birth. Truly a White ideal in its separation from non-White sexuality, it further aligns C-3PO to feminine Whiteness by distancing him from "dark" (sexual) desire and simultaneously sidesteps the problem of female sexuality by providing (re)production devoid of female involvement.

This pattern is imperfect, however. For one thing, when we first see C-3PO activated, and his final eye is attached, his creator is trying to impress a girl, offering a highly muted sexual dimension to the process. Furthermore, Sith power may have triggered Anakin's conception, as suggested by the third film. In that case, he may be a product of passion (a literal "dark desire" in the form of the dark side of the force), if not sexuality per se, qualifying his "virgin" birth. Even with the qualifications to Anakin's "virgin birth," his birth still does not avoid the matter of female childbirth, only female sexual relations, as his single parent is a mother, not a father.

Nonetheless, Padmé does not directly involve herself in C-3PO's construction. Even having only one male parent and no female, regardless of how "virgin" that parent's birth was, C-3PO remains far more "White" in his means of production (separated from "dark" sexuality or bodily urges) than any biological hero introduced in the films. Sexual connotations to the scene are thus liminal at best. In



this sense, C-3PO's alignment to female Whiteness, rather than male Whiteness, also remains imperfect, as evidenced by his darker appearance. Being without coverings ("naked" to use the word C-3PO interprets from R2-D2), he is colored darkly, shows sharp shadows and contrasts, and does not glow. This glimpse into the literal inside of C-3PO is the closest the series comes to exposing him as having the internal "darkness" associated with White men. This portrayal further emphasizes the trends in his relative Whiteness that I noted relative to the earlier film.

Unlike C-3PO's, R2-D2's creation does not appear, but in the scene that introduces him, we have some clues about its nature. For one thing, Captain Panaka describes him as "an extremely well put together little droid" (*Phantom* 00:27). The choice of referring to R2-D2 as being "well put together" rather than, for example, a "quality model" hints at individual craftsmanship. For another, we see him first with a collection of other astromechs, no two of which are identical (the droid next to R2-D2 is very similar to him, but its legs are different). This variety again suggests individual craftsmanship rather than mass production. While we do not learn in the films when, where, or who created R2-D2, we at least get some suggestion that his production was similar to C-3PO's, involving hand-craftsmanship and some individual attention to detail. Individual craftsmanship suggests planning and control over numbers produced, which a scenario involving mass production would not. This "forward planning" matches Whiteness's means of reproduction (via White children) in hegemonic depictions of Whiteness. Given his non-biological nature, we can assume that R2-D2's creation was not sexual. Despite this, the presence (or absence) of symbolic sexuality is essential, especially when one draws comparisons to the readings of battle droid production detailed hereafter. Insofar as sexuality is not "pure white" (Dyer 63), R2-D2's production being thus devoid of symbolic sexuality indicates Whiteness on his part.

Unlike R2-D2 and C-3PO, the battle droids *are* mass-produced. A giant plant akin to a vast, mechanical womb produces the droids amidst rampant sexual imagery. The latter ranges from protruding, phallic mechanical arms to the rhythmic pounding of machinery to sudden cutaways to telescoping pipes, which grow in length before spewing hot molten metal into waiting receptacles and then shrink back to their original size.<sup>150</sup> The dark and dirty environment contrasts with the clean, well-lit

---

<sup>150</sup> Many of these devices do not seem to serve a diegetic purpose. Many of the chopping, pounding blades do not actually cut anything, and it is hard to imagine why the molten metal, already carried thus far by pipe, cannot be carried the rest of the way by the same method, rather than be shuttled

room of C-3PO's creation (being visually black rather than white). If the environment's sinister sexual implications are not immediately apparent to the viewer, C-3PO soon arrives to clarify, describing what he sees as "perverse." Even without the sexual imagery, if droid natures incorporate *female* Whiteness, C-3PO's comment of "machines making machines" being perverse might already be justifiable by the contradictions of female sexuality identified by Frye. The (female) machines reproducing at all can already be understood as a sort of perversion.

In keeping with portrayals of interracial sexuality as "rape," White (or functionally White) characters who trespass in this womb face symbolic sexual violation. For the males, this means symbolic castration. C-3PO experiences this as a non-lethal decapitation (and subsequent transplanting onto a new body), while Anakin experiences this through severing his lightsaber, the classic Jedi phallic symbol.<sup>151</sup> Padmé's fate is arguably bleaker. Made into an iconic White female, her Whiteness is emphasized by an ensemble of all-white clothing (which somehow remains spotlessly clean throughout) and accented by her frequently moving in and out of bright, direct lighting, making her glow with whiteness and purity. As is typical for White females, her role is to be threatened with rape by a non-White aggressor, then rescued by a White male. In this case, a grappling match first enacts the symbolic rape, where a dark-bodied alien overpowers her, then flings her into one of the passing buckets. The rape symbolism continues as one of the aforementioned telescoping, liquid-spewing tubes threatens her with literal and symbolic destruction. The timely arrival of R2-D2, now filling the role of the White male and thereby further emphasizing his Whiteness, rescues her from this climactic (pun intended) death.

The battle droids, produced through this "perverse," sexualized process, explicitly reenact White anxieties. The title scroll and Count Dooku describe them as outnumbering and "overwhelming" the less numerous Jedi. The ensuing battle brings these fears to a realization, as the Jedi are threatened with destruction by the more populous and faster-produced droids, and they are saved only by the timely arrival of mass-produced fighters of their own. The swamping and overwhelming of

---

around in large buckets. The sexual imagery may be the only reason for the inclusion of some elements, while others serve the dual purpose of providing obstacles to be overcome by the heroes.

<sup>151</sup> If the Freudian implications of this castration were not strong enough, Anakin responds to the loss of his lightsaber by referring to the individual he has twice in the movie thus far described as approximating his father, saying, "Obi-wan is gonna' kill me!" (*Attack* 01:38) This association makes arguably more explicit the reading of the act as a form of sexual violence.

the Jedi is emphasized by several high-angle shots, depicting the emergence of the battle droids like a flood, washing over the arena and forcing the Jedi into a smaller and smaller space as they press in on all sides. Shortly before the battle halts, several shots show Jedi killed. When Dooku calls for the combat to cease and asks for their surrender, a crane shot emphasizes the diminished number of the remaining Jedi. A close-up shows Obi-wan kneeling next to a young-looking fallen Jedi, checking his vitals before rising with the implication that he found none.

The arena battle further emphasizes the battle droids' non-Whiteness. The switching of heads between C-3PO and one of the battle droids is of particular note. Their reactions suggest a different type of mind-body distinction at work with each droid. C-3PO's body is passive, only interfering in the battle droid head's actions via the stiffness of its joints (re-invoking the White stereotype), which the droid comments on. The battle droid's body, on the contrary, dominates C-3PO's actions, compelling him not only to fight against the Jedi but making him shout lines like "Die, Jedi dogs!"<sup>152</sup> entirely against his will. The battle droid's body, as is presumed of the bodies of non-White characters, enslaves the spirit that inhabits it.<sup>153</sup>

The battle droids are thus clearly marked as non-White according to the frameworks described above. Their mass production suggests a lack of careful planning in their creation, emphasizing their ability to reproduce quickly and thus swamp or "overwhelm" their less numerous opponents. Further, in contrast to the light, sterile, virgin nature of C-3PO's creation, the battle droids' creation is marked by darkness, dinginess, and rampant sexual imagery. Collectively, once created, they reenact traditional swamping and overcrowding fears as they outnumber and threaten to destroy the Jedi. Individually, they prove to have minds that are closely tied to or even enslaved by their bodies. The exchange of heads between C-3PO and the battle droid during the arena scene shows this particularly clearly. The heroes shutting down the droids on Naboo by destroying the "droid control ship" also reveals this trend. The droids lack the heroic main droids' intelligence, ingenuity, or

---

<sup>152</sup> It is worth noting that no other battle droids yell taunts of this nature. The statement seems to only exist to emphasize C-3PO's loss of control.

<sup>153</sup> One might attempt to interpret this scene as indicating that C-3PO's mind or spirit is "weak" and thus unable to control the battle droid's body, while the battle droid's own spirit is "strong" and thus controls C-3PO's body more easily, entirely opposite of the reading above. Given the lack of internal conflict portrayed with the battle droid, however, this reading seems unlikely. C-3PO's body is not shown being overcome by the battle droid. Rather, it has no influence on the battle droid at all, while C-3PO struggles with and fails to master the non-White body he has been attached to.

get-up-and-go attitudes. Their lack of enterprise is so significant that without their leadership (the “droid control ship”), they cease to act.

The battle droids are not the only mass-produced creatures displayed. Clone troopers experience similar modes of production, being mass-produced (Lama Su initially tells Obi-wan that “Two hundred thousand units are ready, with a million more well on their way”) for a similar purpose. Their origins are clean and better lit, though whether those origins are less “perverse” is not apparent. Reproductive imagery replaces sexual imagery, with towers of glass vats containing human embryos as a backdrop for some of Obi-wan’s conversations with Lama Su. Their origin environment is visually white rather than black. The clone troopers are, however, explicitly defined by their bodies over their spirits. It is through “tampering with the structures” of their DNA, after all, that the cloners make them “more docile” and “less independent.” Thus their masters control them more easily due to their bodily natures, which might appear as a step up within a White racist framework (in terms of desirability to those atop the hierarchy, not as a step up within the hierarchy itself). They are Whiter than the battle droids but still fundamentally non-White, and they displace the battle droids as the main reenactors of swamping fears in episodes three through six. They first overwhelm (more successfully than the battle droids) and nearly exterminate the Jedi, and they later threaten the same against the rebel alliance. Their whitening is primarily symbolic, casting their dark bodies in white uniforms. Even then, an inner blackness can be seen around the seams of their attire, further emphasizing this theme.

In a 2007 article in *The Journal of Social, Political, and Economic Studies*, Dwight D. Murphey writes

Moreover, the immigration[sic], amounting to a flood, poses a virtual certainty of demographic swamping that over time will transform the societies of the West (which are the ones that permit and often invite the influx) beyond recognition. This amounts to an existential crisis for the West, which will within a historically short time cease to exist as such. (398)

It is not hard to tease out Murphey’s meanings in this supposed Western “existential crisis.” The “transformation” feared is racial and only political or cultural insofar as one interprets those as essentialist racial traits. Western countries existing “as such” means countries existing “as White.” I will leave challenging the details of these predictions to other scholars, such as Andrew J. Pierce, in the article “The Myth of the White Minority.” For my purposes, let it suffice that Murphey clearly illustrates

the anxieties at work in the battle droids and their successors. Whiteness unconsciously informs the portrayal of droid characters, whether by inclusion in or exclusion from its positions. The distinction between White and non-White droids pivots around mind-body relations and sexual/reproductive anxieties. Reproductive anxieties, in particular, separate Whites from subordinate non-Whites and both from dangerous or threatening non-Whites. Battle droids are weak, unimaginative, and all-around inferior to White humans, but their fast production speed links to sexual perversion and makes them a threat to the heroes. Ironically, Murphey's proposed solution is closed borders and more robots.<sup>154</sup>

Treating the battle droids in this way implicates the entire narrative in discourses of racial swamping. The failure of democracy, the collapse of the traditional religious order, and the rise of "dark" powers across the galaxy all trace to the inability to control or counter these mass-produced hordes of non-Whites. Attempts to counter the external non-White threat (battle droids) by turning to an internal non-White presence (clone troopers) ultimately backfire. As in swamping discourses, the very traits that mark their Whiteness and superiority ultimately doom the White characters, as they cannot maintain the numbers needed to counter the tide of enemies.

These works resist Whiteness by including BIPOC characters, extending beauty standards to dark hair, and using non-human perspectives for descriptions, set design, and camera angles. Nonetheless, these attempts to resist Whiteness only serve to conceal it, mute certain aspects, and grade its borders but not remove it entirely. This resistance allows partial participation in the traits and positions of Whiteness to many non-White and non-human groups. This partial participation allows for the creation of graded hierarchies, in which one group, maia or White human males, reigns supreme. Others participate in the hierarchy to degrees corresponding to their respective Whiteness. Resisting Whiteness in these ways allows this graded participation in positions of power and participation in beauty standards by some groups who might otherwise be unable, even while continuing to center around a White prototype. The tendency toward Whiteness, then, is so strong

---

<sup>154</sup> Note that Murphey was a retired professor, writing after the release of the prequel movies but still in 2007, over a decade and a half before this dissertation. While it did clear peer review, the article is employed here as an example of contemporary discourse, not a claim to academic consensus, even from that period.

that it even predominates in works specifically trying to evade or resist it. Resisted Whiteness further reinforces, or in some cases, elaborates or even establishes, the hierarchies of each world, with one exception.

The hierarchy underpinned by Whiteness is especially notable in Tolkien's works for how it conflicts with the more deliberate hierarchies by favoring White humans over elves. White humans appear more universal, generic, and enterprising than elves. This undoubtedly speaks to humans' ascension at the end of *The Lord of the Rings*, as the higher races (elves and maiar) depart Middle Earth. The elves' departure could be a means of negotiating the conflicting hierarchies. As Tolkien depicts them, elves cannot be the superiors of humans because they lack the same qualities of Whiteness, which are inseparable from the social mechanics of racial superiority. White human ascension becomes a natural product of their Whiteness. The hierarchy of Arda (Tolkien's world) can only be preserved by having the higher races withdraw to a land where the humans are not permitted to go. Only via their separation can the text maintain an illusion of their superiority. Other works, having less deliberate racial hierarchies, avoid this contradiction by employing only those hierarchies that derive naturally from Whiteness's graded elements. The preeminence of humans in those works is a natural outgrowth of the motifs and subject positions granted to them within the world architecture.

By reinforcing the traits of White human males in fiction, the works add credibility to the corresponding real-world stereotypes. Those traits necessarily distinguish White human men from Others, including those who are BIPOC, women, or both, who implicitly lack the same characteristics. Even when the borders of Whiteness vary in these works, they never grant full inclusion to all of humanity. No BIPOC female characters appear in heroic roles in *Harry Potter*, for example, or appear at all in Tolkien's works or *Star Wars* films before the sequel trilogy. These implicit hierarchies reinforce real-world social inequalities more directly than the hierarchies among non-humans.

Nevertheless, resistance to racism in these works goes beyond weakening or diluting stances. Each also engages with and negotiates numerous anti-racist approaches. These highlight the producerly functions of each text, as they interweave sometimes-contradictory meanings and open themselves up for guerilla readings and alternative interpretations. The next chapter will build on this analysis further,

showing how anti-racism in each work helps establish a richer ideological engagement than what analysis of racism and Whiteness alone reveals.

## 5 THE RHETORICAL STRATEGIES OF ANTI-RACISM

### 5.1 Anti-Racism in Popular Speculative Fiction: Equal When We're Not All the Same

On April 10, 2020, Dreamworks Animation released a computer-animated musical film titled, *Trolls: World Tour*. The film tells the story of magical creatures, “trolls,” who live throughout their world in various tribes. Each has an affinity for a different musical genre, including rock trolls, techno trolls, hip hop trolls, pop trolls, classical music trolls, country music trolls, and many smaller groups. Each tribe is physically distinct, with different shapes, colors, and bodily configurations. Throughout the film, various conflicting efforts appear to unite the disparate groups of trolls. These range from those of the rock trolls, who attempt to create unity by enforcing a single genre of music over all groups, to those of Queen Poppy of the “pop” trolls, who tries to unite them through peaceful communication and understanding. However, Poppy’s attempts to show the various groups of trolls that they are all the same go awry when she discovers they are not the same. Indeed, essentialism runs strong among the trolls, some of whom can learn to appreciate other types of music than their own, but all of whom have a natural predisposition toward their own genre. Even Cooper, a hip-hop troll raised among pop trolls, has a natural affinity for hip-hop, despite not being brought up in that culture. Ultimately, Poppy must learn to listen to other trolls and accept their differences. In contrast, Queen Barb, the leader of the rock trolls, must realize that those differences are not necessarily bad.

The ideological positioning of *Trolls: World Tour*, via its non-human characters, is straightforward and heavy-handed. It preaches a belief in, rather than a denial of, innate biological difference. In relativist anti-racist terms, it argues that difference need not and should not be grounds for conflict. Approaching the film from a racist ideological standpoint, we reach a similarly straightforward message. We, like the trolls, can still live in “harmony” (something more literal in the case of the musical trolls), even though we are born with immutable hereditary differences. Such a position in anti-racist discourse has been controversial, but in the short,



simplistic view of the troll world, these criticisms do not appear. The film presents its solution to racism as straightforward and unproblematic, with everyone learning quaint lessons about acceptance of inborn differences and thereby resolving all conflicts.

Speculative fiction need not engage with anti-racism with any degree of complexity, as the example of *Trolls: World Tour* demonstrates. Nevertheless, as André Carrington points out, “the range of meanings Blackness [and here we might substitute numerous cultural constructs] attains in culture does not consist of just two positions: capitulation or resistance,” a point that “is especially true for works of genre fiction” (14). Indeed, Stuart Hall suggests that “total victory or total incorporation” over or into dominant discourse “almost never happens in cultural politics” (471). Even *Trolls: World Tour* fails to endorse or reject racism altogether, accepting essentialism coupled with relativism. Nonetheless, popular works are more often “shot through with contradictions” (Fiske, *Understanding* 84). Works like those I study here, namely *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *Star Wars*, and *Harry Potter*, engage with race and anti-racism in ways that expose the limits and contradictions inherent in their preferred meanings. I contend that they constitute what John Fiske refers to as “producerly texts” (*Understanding* 83).

Building on Roland Barthes’s notion of readerly (simple and accessible) and writerly (complex and artistic) texts, Fiske employs the term “producerly. . . to describe the popular writerly text” (*Understanding* 83). According to Fiske, an authentic producerly text has the accessibility of a readerly text but “the openness of the writerly” (*Understanding* 84). A producerly text “exposes, however reluctantly, the vulnerabilities, limitations, and weaknesses of its preferred meanings; it contains, while attempting to repress them, voices that contradict the ones it prefers” (84). While even texts like *Trolls: World Tour* contain some opposing voices, the works I study here expose and engage with their limitations on multiple levels, opening up additional readings. Those who indulge in “guerrilla readings,” to borrow the term from Fiske (84), picking and choosing which signs and symbols to incorporate into their understanding of the world, will find rich resources for justifying their preferred message.<sup>155</sup>

---

<sup>155</sup> Many scholars have used similar concepts, such as “reading against the grain,” “resistant reading” and so forth. I use Fiske’s “guerilla reading” here because it best captures the methods for creating alternative meanings I focus on in this dissertation: engaging selectively with texts, employing “hit-and-run” tactics and taking only those elements which support the desired meaning.

Christina Flotmann argues for a form of this producerliness in *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter*, claiming that mythical structures, such as “the fight between good and evil, hero and villain, divert the attention from discourses of gender and ethnicity, topics that raise concerns in contemporary Western societies” and that “ambiguously, these ‘real’ issues are present . . . but any ‘true’ discussion of them is avoided at the same time” (10–11). According to Flotmann, “contemporary discourses such as the ones mentioned are veiled by mythical structures” (16). This veiling shows but one of the levels of producerliness at work with racism and anti-racism in these texts, in which readers can focus on other areas, such as the mythical structures, and produce readings that do not include race. I will argue here that the openness goes far deeper, involving readings of racism and anti-racism that can produce opposing valuations of the same.

This openness to interpretation is why, as discussed in chapter one, scholars have been able to read Hermione’s activism from such a wide variety of angles. While my reading supports Hermione’s activism as a point of ridicule, there can be no doubt that some of the examples from the *Harry Potter* series have inspired fans to become involved in real-world activism (Jenkins). Indeed, these works all engage many forms of anti-racism. These include relativist forms, which reject racial differences as grounds for discrimination; universalist forms, which deny essentialism; and practice-oriented forms of anti-racism, which focus on anti-racist strategies. At the risk of appearing repetitive, I will discuss each form in separate sections hereafter, hoping to show the breadth and complexity of these producerly anti-racist engagements and the variations across and between the works. Each approach offers different ways this producerliness can operate, from embracing and outright rejecting specific anti-racist messages to encoding opposing positions in parallel or displaying, negotiating, and critiquing different strategies.

This producerly interaction comes despite many claims about the *non*-engagement of these works with challenges to popular discourse. Speaking of *Star Wars* alone, examples range from Peter Lev’s assertion that “that *Star Wars*’ rebellion in no way challenges gender, race, or class relations” or Robert G. Pielke’s that “*Star Wars* . . . is intended by Lucas to be no more than a fun-filled adventure” (145). Despite this, *Star Wars*, along with the other works examined here, engages with anti-racism, reflecting some of the approaches to and criticisms of different forms of anti-racist work. Even while not wholly extricating themselves from these larger

discourses, works of fantasy have long shown the ability to question certain aspects of them.

As with resistance or capitulation to the dominant culture, as discussed above, simultaneous engagements with racism and anti-racism may be more the rule than the exception. Solomos and Back have insisted that, beyond identifying connections between racism and popular culture, researchers must also “be sensitive to the potential that popular culture has for conveying critical discourses that unsettle and undermine racist regimes of representation” (200). I would contest that the works I study in this dissertation go beyond having potential, and each actively performs anti-racist work, even while simultaneously engaging with racist discourses. As Robert J. Helfenbein argues, “while dominant ideologies may be at work [in popular culture texts], their dominance is in no way guaranteed” (502). Nevertheless, even when popular culture engages in anti-racism, “this is not necessarily the cause or horizon of its creativity and meaning” (Bonnett 91). Interactions between popular culture and popular ideologies are rarely one-sided, with racism and anti-racism often appearing hand in hand.

This co-occurrence of racism and anti-racism is not itself a contradiction. Bonnett notes that the term “anti-racism” did not appear until the mid-twentieth century. Despite this, others have pointed out that resistance to racism has existed almost as long as racism itself and that such efforts have similarly changed and adapted, existing in diverse forms (Aptheker, C. Lloyd, cited in Paradies “Whither” 1), perhaps almost as diverse as racism. These forms include resistance to racist beliefs, practices, and groups, practices justified by racism, and the social and structural inequalities seen as the legacy of “past” racist practices. Many forms of anti-racism have opposed only one form of racism, a particular racist practice, or objected to racist discrimination against a specific group without objecting to other aspects of racism. It was not unusual, for example, for abolitionists in the early nineteenth-century U.S. to hold beliefs about the congenital inferiority of blacks, even while arguing that this inferiority did not justify their enslavement. It should be no surprise that, as Guillermo Rebollo-Gil and Amanda Moras note (citing Feagin et al.), “racism can be the key ingredient informing governmental policy . . . and then show up on the President’s agenda as a social evil or malady to be dealt with and terminated” (381–82). Racism and anti-racism have been longtime, sometimes even very comfortable, bedfellows.

Different forms of anti-racism have been subject to critiques and resistance from both racists and anti-racists. These criticisms will be discussed more fully hereafter, alongside their respective forms of anti-racism. Notably, critiques come from different perspectives. Some critique anti-racism with the intent of abolishing it, while others do so to change or reform existing practices (Bonnett 163). Some of these latter criticisms come because of genuine shortcomings in the approach, and others because the criticizing anti-racists share the same basic assumptions about race and racial differences as the racists. The latter include the criticisms that resulted in revising the first UNESCO Statement on Race (Brattain 1390) or concerns that universalist anti-racists deny and fail to respect genuine racial differences (Bonnett 138). This dissertation will focus on non-essentialist critiques in keeping with its anti-essentialist perspective.

Some criticisms of anti-racism are more generalized and come from certain assumptions about what “anti-racism” is. As noted above, the term “anti-racism” did not enter circulation until *after The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* were published, and their not referring to it by name is due partly to the term not existing. However, neither do Tolkien’s works refer to “bigotry” or “prejudice,” preferring the less racially marked “hatred.” Likewise, neither *Star Wars* nor *Harry Potter* mentions “anti-racism” or “racism” by name. Of all the works, only *Harry Potter* employs the term “bigotry,” and then only once, through the voice of Hermione Granger, with other characters preferring to use “prejudice” (only five instances of which might refer to racism) or “belief” (only one relevant use). Rather than describing them, the texts *show* racist attitudes or encode them in their world architecture (see chapters three and four). Likewise, anti-racism manifests in characters’ actions and reactions, narrative structures, and how the world architecture demonstrates or refutes certain beliefs and claims.

This failure to refer to anti-racism or racism by name, even while engaging so thoroughly with both, may reflect broader unease with the idea of anti-racism, particularly in the post-civil rights era. As Bonnett has observed, many conservative critics have objected to “anti-racism,” usually while claiming to oppose racism. Such critics see anti-racism as “extreme.” They focus on “‘extreme cases’ as if they were representative of all anti-racist work” (Bonnett 156–57). Often, this comes with the assumption that Western society is already free from racism, while anti-racists attack people and traditions which are innocent and innocuous; this posits “anti-racism as a distinct, authoritarian and intolerant tradition” (Bonnett 161). Anti-racism may

appear to be “a threat to traditional social and political values” (Solomos and Back 114). Such critiques assume “that talking about racial inequality creates racial tension, and that racism and racial difference would not be so important, or indeed exist, if the anti-racist lobby were not there to ‘stir things up’” (Bonnett 164).

Hermione’s approach to house-elf liberation has much in common with portrayals of “extreme” anti-racism and points to similar anxieties. Her use of leaflet campaigns, fundraising, awareness-building projects, and similar tactics is strongly reminiscent of tactics used by anti-racist groups in the real world. Even so, discontent with the prevailing racial order is located entirely with Hermione, at least regarding house-elf enslavement. Others may sympathize with other injustices she identifies, such as the mistreatment of house-elves (although the house-elves themselves never complain, aside from Dobby, and then only about his own treatment). Even then, only Hermione seems to think house-elves require freedom. Even the house-elves disagree with her. When she inquires about the location of the Hogwarts kitchens, where the house-elves work, Fred and George warn her that any efforts to tell the house-elves “they’ve got to take clothes and salaries” would be “upsetting them” (*Goblet* 320). They seem correct, even if Fred and George’s prediction about putting the elves off their cooking goes unfulfilled. Reproducing such depictions of anti-racism, Hermione very much approaches a stable, peaceful social order, which all sides seem content with, and tries to “stir things up.”

However, other characters engage in other forms of anti-racism in the text. While Hermione’s example may be “extreme,” it is not made representative of all anti-racist work. Furthermore, Bonnett stresses that not all objections to anti-racism stem from a desire to be rid of anti-racism or to engage in racist practice freely (157). Others seek to reform or refine anti-racist practices. One should not assume that this portrayal of and objection to anti-racism necessarily indicates racism. *Harry Potter* does engage with other forms of anti-racism, including a broad mixture of relativist, universalist, and practice-oriented forms, not always by way of criticism. Nonetheless, the failure to identify the anti-racist efforts as such may stem from this same contemporary suspicion of anti-racist activism, which complicates readings of anti-racism.

To better explore the status of these works as producerly texts, this chapter will focus on how anti-racism, even unnamed, plays a hand in their world architecture. Even when predating their broader deployment (especially in the case

of Tolkien's works), these works imitate the rhetorical strategies and positions of various forms of anti-racism. Unlike in *Trolls: World Tour*, discussed at the beginning of this chapter, these engagements show a critical awareness of the shortcomings and implications of different anti-racist strategies, as each form is employed, critiqued, and renegotiated throughout the work, often reflecting on broader critiques of those same anti-racist forms. Showing these works' engagements with anti-racism adds nuance to the prior readings of racism, helping to establish a more refined picture of the ideological frameworks underpinning each work's world architecture.

I will begin the chapter's analysis by dividing a variety of approaches under the general headings of relativist and universalist anti-racism. The prior approaches include racial tolerance, respect for difference, multiculturalist anti-racism, positive racial images, and strategic essentialism. The latter include anti-essentialism, racial indifference, and color blindness. I will first discuss the relativist approaches, which dominate the presentations of anti-racism regarding non-humans in these works, including many relevant nuances, variations, and pitfalls. I will then contrast that analysis with universalist anti-racist approaches, which dominate the anti-racist perspectives regarding human beings. The second section will discuss practice-oriented approaches to anti-racism, whose anti-racist strategies do not necessarily commit themselves to relativist or universalist ideas. These include diversity management, anti-Nazi anti-racism, opposition to slavery, and particularist anti-racism. Through this discussion, I build off the analysis of the preceding chapters to show how various forms of anti-racism, particularly relativist and practice-oriented approaches, can co-exist comfortably with the ideological positions they ostensibly seek to oppose. Anti-racist efforts that avoid challenging racial essentialism can never hope to completely overturn the hierarchies and injustices that racism brings about.

I am not the first to address how anti-racism and racism relate in *Harry Potter*. Jackie Horne, for example, has considered the representations in *Harry Potter* in terms of their relationship to multiculturalist versus social justice anti-racist work, which Horne defines based on a distinction between using interpersonal interaction or policy change as a tool for anti-racist ends. Horne's conclusion that the *Harry Potter* series supports individual, interpersonal anti-racist work, promoting individual relationships rather than changes to social policy, is insightful regarding the lessons learned by the protagonists in their interactions with non-humans. However, very real fluctuations of social policy occur, both during the unstable career of Dolores

Umbridge and the rise and fall of Voldemort's regime, which are relevant to the work's anti-racism. Similarly, Luisa Grijalva Maza argues that the *Harry Potter* series represents "the grand narrative or grand récit of liberal values and multiculturalism" (426) and that the series demonstrates how "colonial discourse hidden in the liberal grand narrative generates policies that are profoundly discriminatory" (426). This somewhat parallels Farah Mendlesohn's analysis, which contends that "Rowling's *Harry Potter* books are rooted in a distinctively English liberal-ism that is marked as much by its inconsistencies and contradictions as by its insistence that it is not ideological but only 'fair'" (159). This chapter will extend from such analyses, broadening them beyond *Harry Potter* and to a wider variety of anti-racist strategies. *Harry Potter* engages with anti-racism on more levels than developing individual tolerance and social policy. Situating it in the context of other works of speculative fiction will help highlight many of the nuances and complexities of its engagements. Although I cannot address all forms and approaches related to anti-racism here, this broader sampling should help illustrate the degree and complexity of these engagements. It demonstrates how anti-racist engagements can co-exist comfortably with Whiteness and elements of contemporary racisms more generally.

One should not misread the taxonomy of anti-racist approaches used in this chapter as indicating distinct, wholly independent traditions. Anti-racist efforts typically combine multiple approaches. One might generalize a claim by Bonnett to say that "[a]ll . . . kinds of anti-racist practice intersect and overlap. Moreover, they are often applied simultaneously" (88). The works here are no exception. Rather than employing a single method for combating racism, they engage simultaneously with numerous approaches. They do so dynamically, adopting, modifying, and critiquing as the situation demands. Tolkien's works often engage with a proto-anti-racism, and *Harry Potter* with suspicion of anti-racism as an activist practice. Furthermore, *Harry Potter* derives from the post-Cold War era, a period Rudolfo Torres and Christopher Kyriakides see as marked by "paradigms of pessimism," "a consensus of thought. . . underpinned by the contemporary acceptance of the impossibility of human emancipation" (VIII). Tolkien's works are correspondingly less systematic in their anti-racism. *Harry Potter* tends to be the most cynical, emphasizing "bad" anti-racist practices and fewer positive results. Nonetheless, their periods of origin do not wholly define the works. Some divergences from contemporary discourse will be noted, particularly around issues of slavery. By showing these various approaches side-by-side, I hope to draw a clearer picture of the intricacy and complexity of these

works' engagements with anti-racist projects, even while they engage simultaneously with contemporary racisms.

## 5.2 Relativism vs Universalism

A prevalent way of categorizing approaches to anti-racism is by their focus on relativism versus universalism (Bonnett 12). Relativist approaches promote accepting and recognizing differences between groups, that “different does not mean unequal” (Bonnett 13). In contrast, universalist approaches deny differences or focus on commonalities between groups and shared universal human values. To begin with, I will survey several common approaches to relativist anti-racism in turn, discussing their strengths and weaknesses. I will then analyze the multilayered engagement with these same strategies in the fictional works to highlight their producerly dimensions. I will then do the same (albeit in much briefer terms, for the latter appears less in these works) with universalism. In doing so, I will show that relativist approaches are more associated with intelligent non-humans. In contrast, universalist approaches have been most strongly associated with human beings. Using relativist approaches with non-humans encourages the non-humans' better treatment while still allowing equality to be denied and cementing the hierarchies described in previous chapters. However, the use of universalist approaches with human beings allows for, or at least points toward the possibility of, the abolition of inequality and for all human groups to become equal members of society. This allowance emphasizes the critical importance of anti-essentialism for anti-racism.

### 5.2.1 Relativism: “We’re talking about a different breed of being.”

Of the approaches to relativist anti-racism, one of the most straightforward and minimal forms is racial tolerance. Neither countering racial beliefs nor ill will, racial tolerance prevents views and negative opinions from affecting behavior. Peter Balint defines an act of tolerance as having “three conditions: (i) objecting to something (ii) the power (including both opportunity and willingness) to negatively interfere with the thing or its holder and (iii) intentionally not negatively interfering with this thing or its holder” (16). Stopping short of cooperation or kindness, racial tolerance calls for members of different racialized groups to not interfere negatively with one another. Although considering tolerance to be “an important minimum” (17), Balint



nonetheless identifies several problems with it, including its inability to prevent less direct forms of discrimination and that it “seems normatively problematic that people have racist beliefs and attitudes” (17). In other words, although racial tolerance can lessen the *impact* of racism, it does little to reduce the amount of or remove racism from society. Approaches including an ideal of racial tolerance may include “separate but equal” policies or form the starting point for anti-discrimination legislation forbidding negative behavior without requiring positive interaction. Racial tolerance stays clear of community building or efforts to develop understanding. It “leaves the objection intact but prescribes non-hindering behaviour towards those whose racial characteristics are objected to” (Balint 20). Racial tolerance approaches often manifest strongly within “racism awareness training” (Bonnett 100), programs businesses and other organizations use to respond to perceived internal acts of racial intolerance. Such training sessions may avoid future incidents by encouraging outwardly tolerant behavior rather than attacking the underlying beliefs or attitudes.

Discouraging intolerance can appear as an initial step toward peaceful coexistence. From that perspective, the next logical move would be to focus on peaceful coexistence itself. Those who do so employ what might be termed “multiculturalist anti-racism,” an approach to seeking social harmony related to, but crucially distinct from, multiculturalism. When properly employed, multiculturalism is about culture, not race, as its name implies. Richard T. Ford notes that many multiculturalists restrict themselves to analyzing situations where the differences between groups are distinctly cultural, such as in interactions between the Quebecois and Anglophone Canadians (8).<sup>156</sup> When multiculturalism addresses racial conflict, it becomes multiculturalist anti-racism, a form of anti-racism that runs a spectrum from conflating race and culture to seeing racial identities as inherently valuable and their diversity worth pursuing. However, in either form, it risks the same essentializing tendencies as other forms of relativist anti-racism (discussed hereafter). As Bonnett describes, “multiculturalism affirms difference, but for universalist<sup>157</sup>

---

<sup>156</sup> I would not join Ford in rejecting the multiculturalist perspective in cases where racial differences have been constructed. Nonetheless, I agree that such pursuits must be tempered by an awareness of how cultural difference has appeared as an aspect of racial difference and not contributing to such discourse by identifying cultural affiliations based on perceived racial identities or otherwise dividing cultures along strictly racial lines.

<sup>157</sup> How “universalist” these ends are for multicultural anti-racism is a point worthy of some skepticism. “Diversity” presumes difference, “racial diversity” racial difference. Any multicultural anti-racism that seeks diversity of essentialized racial identities thus necessarily espouses non-universalist beliefs in racial essentialism. Bonnett’s focus is on multiculturalism, not multicultural anti-racism, and

ends. Indeed, the rhetorics of ‘world togetherness’ and ‘one world’ are collided and conflated with those of ‘cultural diversity’ and ‘cultural affirmation’ throughout a great deal of multicultural discourse” (98). In its affirmation of difference, multiculturalist anti-racism encourages interracial harmony but also risks reifying and reinforcing racial categories and ascribed racial traits. It joins with a larger collective of anti-racist discourses, focusing on acknowledging and respecting racial differences rather than denying them.

Richard T. Ford coined the term “difference discourse” to describe a type of “multiculturalism” characterized by “a set of moral arguments that promote,” which Ford calls “rights-to-difference” (14). In such a discourse, Ford identifies a conflation of racial and cultural difference, which results in attempts to defend individuals’ rights to practice various aspects of their own *racially defined* culture. While not all anti-racist approaches centered around respect for difference necessarily conflate the cultural and racial, rights-to-difference anti-racist positions are defined by a shared recognition that there exists some manner of “cultural and/or physical differences between races” and that such differences “should be recognised and respected; that different does not mean unequal” (Bonnett 13). Ford shows the shortcomings of these approaches at great length, but for our purposes, let it suffice to note that these approaches can potentially reduce conflict, at least in the short term. Regardless, they do so at the expense of (much like multiculturalist anti-racism) reifying racial categories, reinforcing stereotypes, obfuscating internal group differences, and encouraging beliefs in distinct, essential traits of racialized groups.

However, some forms of anti-racism go beyond acknowledging and respecting or protecting differences and seek to overturn negative beliefs about members of other races by actively ascribing positive traits to them. Bonnett refers to this as the “positive racial images” tradition (100). Balint describes this strategy as trying to “turn the objection into a much more positive belief or attitude, with the assumption that less hindering behaviour will then follow” (20). Such approaches again range from cultural, such as celebrations of oppressed groups’ culture and achievements (Nelson and Dunn 31), to essentializing, such as claims that Blacks are “endowed with a sense of rhythm” (Memmi 54). These approaches hope to replace traditional negative evaluations and establish a world where all racial identities can be a source of pride and positive value.

---

thus actually seeks universalist ends by encouraging acceptance of non-essential cultural difference as such to aid in recognizing common humanity.

These relativist approaches to anti-racism have several problems. For example, celebrating cultures and achievements can allow organizations to make token efforts toward anti-racism while avoiding more strenuous engagements with racism (Nelson and Dunn 31–32). Racists may also twist positive traits to imply negative traits or the absence of other positive ones (Memmi 54, Cole 2). Even if the ascription of positive racial characteristics (such as strength, intelligence, or athleticism) is sincere, using them is essentializing. Such divisions between positive and negative portrayals may already be too reductive (Nama 4). Balint has pointed out that even positive valuations may “be a step towards a new racial hierarchy” (21). Implying that one group has a positive trait suggests that other groups lack that trait or lack it to the same degree. Further, not all positive traits are equally valued. One group being more intelligent means that others are less (or less reliably so). Compensating for this by labeling the other group as athletic does not indicate equality, as athleticism and intelligence have very different perceived values in modern society.

Respecting group differences can contribute to racialized social hierarchies on its own (Ford 3–4, Bonnett 17). Indeed, for many nineteenth-century racial scientists, respect for difference was a *common principle* that went hand in hand with respect for racial inequality (Bonnett 19). This belief continued through Nazism and Apartheid (18–19). Even if the positive traits were not a source of hierarchy in and of themselves, they would do little to challenge racial hierarchies. Memmi claims that higher groups legitimize hierarchies by supposing their “multiple superiorities” (6) and the lesser groups’ inferiorities. These racial hierarchies persist as preexisting assumptions rather than taking traits as prerequisites. Attributing positive traits to the higher group and negative traits to the lower group occurs only as an afterthought, legitimizing in retrospect. Often, a group assumes racial advantages because of a *presupposed* superiority rather than the other way around, which makes ascribing advantageous traits only incidental to challenging the hierarchy.<sup>158</sup>

Another critique of relativist approaches to anti-racism is that relativism may be “accompanied by the decidedly unrelativist assumption that European values and habits are the yardstick that the world can and must be measured against; that Europe

---

<sup>158</sup> This should not imply that ascribed racial traits should go unchallenged. They should be challenged, but that challenge should derive from the larger argument that essential racial traits do not exist, rather than claiming that all races have good essential traits.

is the fixed norm that defines other cultures as exotic” (Bonnett 18). As Meyda Yeğenoğlu has explains it:

The racism of multiculturalism does not reside in its being against the values of other cultures. Quite the contrary: it respects and tolerates other cultures, but in respecting and tolerating the different, it maintains a distance, which enables it to retain a privileged position of empty universality. It is this emptied universal position that enables one to appreciate (or depreciate) other local cultures. Thus, multiculturalist respect for the particularity of the other is indeed a form of asserting one’s own superiority and sovereignty. (54)

Respecting another group as “different” may imply a norm they differ from, creating an unequal situation where some have differences respected, and others have no differences. Something similar is true of racial tolerance. Tariq Ramadan describes tolerance as “intellectual charity on the part of the powerful” in which “others endure and ‘suffer’ one’s presence,” a condition which is “inadequate for oneself and detrimental to them” (cited in Balint 23). Such tolerance can intertwine with notions of hospitality so that the social hierarchy is reinforced, rather than undermined, by the tolerant act. As Yeğenoğlu explains:

Far from laying the grounds for an interruption of sovereign identity of the self, multiculturalist respect and tolerance implies the conditional welcoming of the guest within the prescribed limits of the law and hence implies a reassertion of mastery over the national space as it enables the subject to appropriate a place for itself—an empty and universal and therefore sovereign place—from which the other is welcomed. Thus, the place from which multiculturalist tolerance welcomes the particularity of the other, fortified by codifications such as affirmative action and other legal measures, is what precisely enables the disavowed and inverted self-referentiality of racist hospitality, which by emptying the host’s position from any positive content asserts its superiority and sovereignty. (57)

As one group is permitted to act as “host,” tolerating and respecting those they extend conditional hospitality to, that group also reasserts its superiority and lack of particularity. The Other is permitted to remain solely at the hosts’ discretion, in whose hands remains the unmarked status of “normal” residents and thus the power over the extension of hospitality. Racial tolerance and respect for difference can thus help preserve the very relationships of power they hope to diminish.

Still, the tendency towards essentialism may be one of the most fundamental flaws in many relativist approaches to anti-racism. As Ford has forcefully put it, “[t]he attempt to run from compulsory assimilation toward recognition of difference delivers us all the more firmly into the grasp of a racism that always includes both”

(42). Appeals to respecting group differences reinforce the impression that racialized group distinctions represent underlying biological realities or that cultures and other traits can be discerned by appealing to physical features. These sorts of implications appear in many anti-racist messages, an example of which arises in Solomos and Back's analysis of the United Colors of Benetton anti-racist advertising campaign (186–90). While respect for differing cultures is vital, “there is no more reason to respect the lie that such groups are natural formations with immutable attributes and clear boundaries, than there is to respect the fantasy of race” (Bonnett 179).

Nevertheless, not all anti-racist strategies treat essentialism as a necessarily negative phenomenon. So-called “strategic essentialism” leverages essentialist discourses to unite larger bodies of individuals for political action. Bonnet openly questions whether one should or could, “for political reasons, pretend that race is, in fact, a fixed essence, while knowing full well that it is not” (141). Those who support such approaches often do so with caution. Omi and Winant warn that this approach “should not, however, be simply equated with the essentialism practiced by dominant groups, nor should it prevent the interrogation of internal group differences” (72). These approaches represent a powerful political position, given their ability to mobilize oppressed people to seek redress and correct injustices. Even so, their embrace of essential racial categories makes those categories challenging to deconstruct or question. Further, while the potential of these approaches for political mobilization is considerable, it is fundamentally limited. For example, “Black Power” has proven a powerful tool for uniting and mobilizing those with identities constructed as “Black.” However, by its self-definition, it can only garner the sympathies and not the active participation of those whose identities are differently constructed. These approaches thus provide powerful tools for making certain kinds of social progress, but their final scope is crucially limited.

Relativist anti-racism is a common thread in speculative fiction. It is so much so that in Adam Roberts's book, *Science Fiction*, the chapter on racism focuses almost exclusively on the idea of “encountering difference.” Roberts sees these encounters as potentially “crude or bigoted” (20) or having complexity beyond “straightforward demonisation” (95). Speculative fiction lends itself quite easily to relativism, owing to its ability to speculate about new forms of difference. The works studied here are no exception. As chapter three establishes, they reify essential differences between non-human groups within their world architecture. They allow those differences to be reacted to and negotiated in various ways by the different agents within the world.

In a productive (producerly) confluence of meanings, the works champion friendliness and cooperation between disparate groups while condemning hate and division,<sup>159</sup> even as their innate differences support the hierarchies that back intergroup oppression.

A set of nearly identical sentiments shows the call for unity most clearly. Spread across all three sets of works, these sentiments place the blame for division and disunity squarely on the shoulders of the villains, calling the heroes to unite and cooperate:

“Indeed in nothing is the power of the Dark Lord more clearly shown than in the estrangement that divides all those who still oppose him.”

-Haldir, *The Lord of the Rings*

“Lord Voldemort’s gift for spreading discord and enmity is very great. We can fight it only by showing an equally strong bond of friendship and trust. Differences of habit and language are nothing at all if our aims are identical and our hearts are open.”

-Albus Dumbledore, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*

“The First Order wins by making us think we’re alone. We’re not alone.”

-Poe Dameron, *Star Wars, Episode IX: The Rise of Skywalker*

As established in chapter four, however, these and other relativist sentiments are often constructed in ways normative to specific groups. There is a need for disparate groups to band together, even with the oft-unstated understanding that those groups are “different.” That difference is not so much “different from each other,” as it is “different from ‘us,’” where “us” refers mainly to human beings, typically White ones. Still, this less-than-relativist assumption is common to relativist approaches. The works valorize reacting positively to interracial differences, a strong relativist stance. I will focus here on how relativist anti-racism builds on the foundations of racial hierarchy and difference established in previous chapters, creating meaning-productive synergies and contradictions in its appeal to racial harmony.

---

<sup>159</sup> With certain exceptions discussed hereafter.

The most straightforward way to react positively to racial differences is through forging positive relationships across racial lines. Enemies in speculative fiction are not infrequently racially distinct from the heroes, with examples ranging from the “savage races” of *Dungeons & Dragons* to countless alien invasion stories from *The War of the Worlds* and beyond. At least Tolkien’s works are no exception here, but powerful friendships across racial lines also appear. The most consistent in these works is the friendship between Han Solo and Chewbacca, whose bond is already established at the beginning of the original *Star Wars* trilogy and remains constant throughout. The least consistent of these are in the *Harry Potter* series, where interracial social relations are always secondary to same-race ones. Perhaps most notable is Gimli and Legolas’s friendship, which scholars such as Lynette Porter describe as showing “to the rest of Middle-earth the ability of different races to appreciate and understand each other” (147). Gimli and Legolas’s relationship is especially notable regarding racial tolerance; their relationship is initially tinged with animosity, explicitly deriving from their racial backgrounds. This mistrust stands out throughout the early parts of their journey, with various remarks between the characters, such as the following dialog that takes place outside the gates of Moria, beginning with Gandalf:

“Those were happier days, when there was still close friendship at times between folk of different race, even between Dwarves and Elves.”

“It was not the fault of the Dwarves that the friendship waned,” said Gimli.

“I have not heard that it was the fault of the Elves,” said Legolas.

“I have heard both,” said Gandalf; “and I will not give judgement now.” (295)

That it is Gandalf whose place it is to “give judgement” again tells of the unrelativist assumptions underpinning this perspective. Unlike the elf and dwarf, Gandalf (an elderly, light-skinned, male member of a hierarchically superior race) is not “different” and can thus presume to be impartial. He shows his hierarchical superiority by mediating the conflict, and the others reinforce it by accepting his authority. Bickering like this highlights the racialized nature of the disagreement (literally “between folk of different race”), mainly through the use of the phrase “even between Dwarves and Elves,” marking elf/dwarf relations as especially notable for their present lack of “friendship.” At the same time, Gandalf calling those days of friendship “happier days” emphasizes interracial friendship as an ideal worth seeking after. Notably, this sets Tolkien’s work apart from his own time, as racial tolerance did not enter the mainstream until at least a decade after *The Lord of the*

*Rings* was published. Indeed, it may be no coincidence that *The Lord of the Rings* experienced a surge of popularity around the same time racial tolerance was ascending.

This animosity is not limited to Legolas and Gimli. When the fellowship arrives in Lothlorien, for example, the elves of Lothlorien insist on blindfolding Gimli and Gimli alone before leading him to their city precisely because he is a dwarf. Aragorn overcomes Gimli's objections by demanding that the group be equally blindfolded, which Legolas agrees to only with great reluctance and after protest, emphasizing the sacrifice it represents for him. Shortly after this point, their friendship blooms, much to the wonder of their companions. Their developing friendship shows racial tolerance positively: the characters' initial tolerance for one another and willingness to travel together despite their animosity yield a lasting friendship. They also help overcome some of the animosity between their respective groups. Their tolerance alone did not accomplish this, but it provided the first step, promoting racial tolerance as a potential pathway to resolving racial conflict.

The larger picture of dwarf/elf relations further highlights racial tolerance as an ideal first step in anti-racist practice. *The Hobbit* highlights antipathy between elves and dwarves early on, as Bilbo and the dwarves first arrive in the valley of Rivendell. Characterizing the conflict in more juvenile terms, per the younger target audience of *The Hobbit*, the narrator explains that "Dwarves don't get on well with them. Even decent enough dwarves like Thorin and his friends think them foolish (which is a very foolish thing to think), or get annoyed with them. For some elves tease and laugh at them, and most of all at their beards" (68). Examples of dwarves dismissing elven foolishness and elves mocking dwarven beards follow. The latter is especially notable as beards are a racial trait<sup>160</sup> distinguishing dwarves and elves, marking a racial rather than cultural intolerance. Graver causes for animosity appear later in interactions between the dwarves and wood elves. These include a payment dispute and accusations of thievery, followed by further strife over the dragon's treasure, culminating in armed conflict. *The Lord of the Rings* implies more deep-seated and general causes for dislike between the two peoples, even if it does not elaborate fully. Still, both the conclusion of *The Hobbit* and the narrative of *The Lord of the Rings* make it clear that this rift between the two races is tragic and not an inevitability. *The Hobbit*

---

<sup>160</sup> All dwarves have beards, even the women, while elves of any gender do not.



celebrates a partial reconciliation between one group of elves and dwarves.<sup>161</sup> Meanwhile, in *The Lord of the Rings*, Gandalf refers to times of friendship between elves and dwarves as “happier times” (295, 300). Celeborn hopes “that friendship shall be renewed between our peoples [elves and dwarves],” which would be a mark of “better days” (346). Accordingly, the decision of the elves of Lothlorien to break their “long law” (346) in allowing Gimli to enter their land proves to be the first step to a (never realized) more general reconciliation.

Abigail Ruane and Patrick James see the example of Gimli and Legolas’s friendship “serving as an exemplar for cooperation between their races” (165). This link is possibly enacted even more keenly in interactions between Gimli and Galadriel. After Galadriel empathizes with Gimli’s desire to see his ancestral home, even calling the places by their Dwarven names, Gimli

hearing the names given in his own ancient tongue, looked up and met her eyes; and it seemed to him that he looked suddenly into the heart of an enemy and saw there love and understanding. Wonder came into his face, and then he smiled in answer.

He rose clumsily and bowed in dwarf-fashion, saying: “Yet more fair is the living land of Lorien, and the Lady Galadriel is above all the jewels that lie beneath the earth!” (347)

Although Gimli’s perspective describes Galadriel as “an enemy,” she does not participate in the elvish rejection of dwarves before this scene, nor has any attitude change thereafter. Neither her position nor history ties her to any direct conflict with the dwarves. Instead, she is “an enemy” exclusively based on her racial classification, showing essentialism through shared blame over the actions of other group members. Nonetheless, Galadriel’s decision to use the dwarves’ “ancient tongue” here to name the various locations rather than their names in her tongue is an act of humility and empathy. She acknowledges the value of the dwarven attachment to those lands and from a dwarven (linguistic) perspective. Gimli’s reply performs a similar act, placing what Galadriel prizes above what he prizes. He calls her land “more fair” than his people’s ancestral homes and praises Galadriel herself above beautiful gems. His reference to the “living land” of Lorien and to “jewels that lie beneath the earth” further reinforces the essential differences between dwarves and elves, highlighted later in his interactions with Legolas. It emphasizes that appreciation for “living” things is an elvish trait and an appreciation for “jewels” is

---

<sup>161</sup> Specifically, the groups from which Legolas and Gimli derive, whose later contention highlights the limited nature of this reconciliation.

a dwarven one. His hesitance to visit Fangorn Forest with Legolas later highlights that Gimli is only showing humility and has not changed his opinion. Gimli ultimately makes the visit as part of a bargain with Legolas, where he also tries to show Legolas the value of things dwarves prize in the caves below Helm's Deep. However, the reader never sees Gimli's response to traveling through Fangorn Forest, and Legolas's reaction to the caves is one of thoughtful, ambiguous silence. It is thus difficult to read any change of opinions as having occurred. Such a change might have challenged essentialism, but Gimli's hesitation emphasizes that he did not yet value "living" things over "jewels" during his interaction with Galadriel. The exchange remains firmly relativist, with Galadriel and Gimli finding respect for one another despite their differences rather than discovering that the differences did not exist. It encourages harmony and cooperation, but keeping with the mainstream acceptance of racial essentialism before and shortly after the Second World War, those acts of goodwill tie closely to essentialist racial notions.

This exchange is the first of several that highlight and valorize the possibility of a renewed friendship between elves and dwarves. Afterward, Gimli praises Galadriel with fair words that impress the elves, and he is given a lock of her hair as a token, which he keeps as a treasure. He then defends her reputation to Éomer, and he is ultimately (possibly) allowed to travel to the Western lands with the elves. The latter is likely thanks to the intervention of Galadriel and Legolas on his behalf. The appendix indicates that his emigration is a rumor, which "would be strange indeed" if true, emphasizing racial essentialism by an exception that proves the rule, even when the narrative focuses on racial harmony. The text shows the blossoming of an interracial friendship, whose seeds were planted through gestures of humility and tolerance, yet exposing the limits of that strategy at every step. The elves' departure from Middle Earth mostly preempts any broader or longer-term reconciliation between elves and dwarves. Still, the example of Gimli, Legolas, and Galadriel marks such a reconciliation as possible and desirable, sending a strong message about the value of racial tolerance and cooperation.

Tolkien's portrayal of tolerance leading to positive relations is succinctly mirrored, if not in the original trilogy, at least in the *Star Wars* prequels, through the mended relationship between the Gungans and the Naboo. The two groups initially despised and mistrusted one another, but they eventually achieve peaceful reconciliation, perhaps even some measure of integration (as hinted by scenes later in the prequel trilogy). *Star Wars* and Tolkien's works show racial tolerance leading

to anti-racist ends, but in keeping with contemporary paradigms of pessimism, *Harry Potter* sends a less optimistic message. In the few cases where members of antagonistic groups work together, rather than simply keeping their distance, their efforts only increase antagonisms. This pattern parallels Ruth Frankenberg's observation from 1993 that

[t]oo often, I witnessed situations in which, as predominantly white feminist workplaces, classrooms, or organizations tried to move to more multiracial formats or agendas, the desire to work together rapidly deteriorated into painful, ugly processes in which racial tension and conflict actually seemed to get worse rather than better as the months went by. (3)

One can see resonances of this same sense of liberal despair as the centaur herd is estranged from their wizarding neighbors after Firenze joins the Hogwarts teaching staff, and Harry's alliance with the goblin Griphook ends in disaster. Mirroring the sentiment about tolerance being "intellectual charity," centaurs and goblins in *Harry Potter* openly seem to resent wizarding tolerance. They show a keen awareness and rejection of their groups' hierarchical positions compared to humans and hypersensitivity to any hints of humans asserting or exploiting their dominant position. As Firenze puts it, "Centaur are not the servants or playthings of humans" (*Order* 530), and they make sure humans know it.

Meanwhile, Dolores Umbridge most openly expresses the condescending tolerance of centaurs by humans, explicitly representing the Ministry of Magic<sup>162</sup> in her encounter with the centaur herd. After identifying them as "half-breeds" and referring to them as having "near-human intelligence,"<sup>163</sup> Umbridge denies the centaurs' claim to ownership of the forest. She insists that "you live here only because the Ministry of Magic *permits* you certain areas of land" (*Order* 665, emphasis added). From Umbridge's perspective, the centaurs have their homes only because the ministry *permits* them to (tolerates them there and chooses not to negatively interfere with their ability to remain). She enacts the positioning of unmarked host and conditional guest and highlights the vast power gap resulting from that arrangement. According to Umbridge and the other officials she represents, the centaurs possess their home, level of intelligence, and status in the hierarchy only by humankind's permission (tolerance). As might be expected, the centaurs do not react

---

<sup>162</sup> She identifies herself by her position as a ministry employee, and most of her dialog involves citing ministry policies, sometimes verbatim. She thus speaks for the Ministry of Magic in this scene, often in their own words.

<sup>163</sup> These terms are implied to be legal distinctions, further marking them as official ministry positions.

with gratitude for this racial tolerance. They shout, lash out, fire arrows at, disarm, and ultimately abduct Dolores Umbridge, dragging her away screaming into the forest.

Nonetheless, racial tolerance is somewhat effective at avoiding or minimizing conflict in *Harry Potter*, but it backfires when used as a pathway to more meaningful cooperation.<sup>164</sup> This pattern manifests in the status quo relationships between wizards and goblins or centaurs, which are fraught but usually<sup>165</sup> non-violent. Moving beyond tolerance seems more likely to end with burning bridges than mending them, perhaps because of the resentment created by using tolerance as a strategy in the first place. *Harry Potter* draws on contemporary racial inequalities in, for example, the centaur land allotment and its resonances with the reservation systems in the United States and Canada or the bantustans of Apartheid South Africa. It leverages these similarities to engage with contemporary paradigms of pessimism, showing a reluctance to acknowledge racial harmony as attainable. In a sense, all of the works establish racial tolerance as an effective tool for reducing interracial conflict, but the longer-term effects of tolerance vary significantly. Tolkien's works and *Star Wars* show tolerance as the first step toward something better. At the same time, *Harry Potter* suggests that tolerance is suitable only for preventing conflict. Fueled by arrogance and hierarchical assumptions, it may even serve to poison the wells of future cooperation.

However, a combined reading of the three sets of works might suggest that the different portrayals do not necessarily represent differences in perspective on tolerance in general. In Tolkien's works and *Star Wars*, acts of humility and abandonment of hierarchical assumptions by the dominant group always preface successful moves beyond mere tolerance. This prefacing is most explicit in *The Phantom Menace*. Attempts to ally with the Gungans fail until Queen Amidala ceases using her decoy bodyguard, drops to her knees, and declares, "I ask you to help us.

---

<sup>164</sup> Crossing the stable boundaries instigates all conflicts with centaurs or goblins during the stories, as wizards interfere at or steal from Gringotts or trespass into the Forbidden Forest. Even attempts at further peaceful cooperation, such as the hiring of Firenze, Harry's bargain with Griphook, or Bagman's friendly wagers with the goblins, seem only to exacerbate conflict.

<sup>165</sup> Numerous references to historic goblin rebellions may undermine this reading, but it is not clear whether those rebellions were responses to the status quo or past violations of it. References by Bill Weasley and Hermione to the lack of blamelessness of wizards might suggest the latter. At the same time, wizards refer to these conflicts as "goblin rebellions" not "wars with the goblins." This wording further emphasizes that wizarding tolerance of goblins goes hand-in-hand with assumptions of their own superiority.

No, I beg you to help us. We are your humble servants. Our fate is in your hands.” The Gungan leader laughs and replies, “Yousa no tinken yousa greater den da Gungans?” (*Phantom* 01:37), immediately accepting their offer of alliance. In *The Lord of the Rings*, gestures of humility on each side (such as Legolas consenting to wear a blindfold), coupled with mutual praise and acknowledgment, help overcome mistrust between dwarves and elves. Opposing groups do not overcome such mistrust in *Harry Potter*, perhaps because no such act of humility appears.<sup>166</sup> Tolerance that clings to assumptions of superiority, the combined diegetic logics indicate, is never a path to reconciliation. In contrast, tolerance and humility might be the start of a successful anti-racism.

Each set of works also allows degrees of multicultural anti-racism, although their approaches and the degree of multi-racial integration vary. *Harry Potter* represents the least-integrated society, where all non-human groups fundamentally exist within separate social spaces. U.K. discourse on multi-racial integration, especially from the 1990s onward, has been marked by the notion of “self-segregation,” a notion by which integration does not occur because members of minority groups “don’t mix” (Crozier and Davies 289) with others outside their group. Multiple scholars have refuted these claims, but the discourse remains influential (Crozier and Davies, Kalra and Kapoor, Powell, Peucker and Ceylan). Correspondingly, no legal restrictions appear in *Harry Potter* to enforce its segregating trends. Instead, individuals are generally uninterested in integration. As one unnamed centaur describes their separation, “we are a race apart and proud to be so!” (*Order* 667), marking their exclusion as being by the centaurs’ own will. *Harry Potter* thus reinforces its racial pessimism by calling upon contemporary discourses of self-segregation, marking integration as impossible.

Nevertheless, while societies do not integrate further, individuals often cross between spaces. For example, Hogwarts is run and inhabited mainly by wizards. It is also home to the largest number of house-elves of any dwelling in Britain. However, these remain in their designated spaces, hiding in the kitchens and

---

<sup>166</sup> This may be the key to Dumbledore’s (and his alone) reliably good relationship with the centaurs. Thereby he can recover Umbridge from centaur custody and receives a sign of respect from them at his funeral. His interactions with the centaurs do not appear, but those whose interactions with centaurs and goblins do appear never attempt to show humility. Dumbledore’s good relations with the centaurs sends a more optimistic message, hinting that positive racial relations are at least possible. At the same time, it is only the highly exceptional Dumbledore who has positive relations with the centaurs. The text may hint that positive relations are so difficult that only someone like Dumbledore can manage.

emerging unseen to tidy up parts of the castle<sup>167</sup> after nightfall. Staff members may summon house-elves to perform specific tasks, and out-of-bounds students may visit the kitchens, but no routine interactions between the house-elves and the wizards seem to occur. Indeed, non-interaction is ideal. As Sir Nicholas puts it (while also dehumanizing the house-elves via his pronoun selection), “the mark of a good house-elf [is] that you don’t know it’s there” (*Goblet* 161).

This relationship is true of all racialized non-human groups and social spaces. Centaurs live in the Forbidden Forest, where they may be visited, but one centaur eventually comes to live in the castle. He stays apart from other staff on most occasions. He mostly remains in a room that Dumbledore enchanted “in imitation of [his] natural habitat” (thus keeping the division of spaces intact). Students may enter the lake to see the merpeople (at least during one Triwizard task), but they do not do so normally. Goblins run Gringotts and stay out of wizarding areas, save for occasional visits. Gringotts is left alone, save for customers and the occasional wizard employee curse breaker. There again, the spaces remain bounded, as curse breakers seem to be exclusively wizards,<sup>168</sup> while other roles are held solely by goblins. The pubs in Hogsmeade occasionally play host to non-human customers, such as hags, yet these creatures do not live in the village. Even Hagrid, holding a liminal identity as a half-wizard/half-giant, lives literally on the border between spaces in a hut at the edge of the Forbidden Forest.<sup>169</sup> As mentioned in chapter two, Hagrid’s accent may indicate that Hagrid’s interaction with the rest of the Hogwarts staff is minimal (and not strictly based on social class, as even Filch does not have an accent transcribed into his dialog). Thus the spaces are further racially bounded. The list goes on. Again, *Harry Potter* is limited in the results of its anti-racism. Multicultural anti-racism in *Harry Potter* relies on heavily racialized social spaces and stops short of full integration. It merely permits outsiders’ occasional, usually temporary, transgression of spaces.

---

<sup>167</sup> It is unclear how the caretaker, Argus Filch, and the house-elves divide cleaning responsibilities, but common rooms seem to be cleaned exclusively by elves, and messes made by students in the halls appear to be the sole responsibility of the caretaker. This may indicate further bounded spaces.

<sup>168</sup> Again, this analysis is limited to the world architecture of the seven-book series. Thus, it incorporates all details which can be discerned by an appeal to those texts. Other franchise works indicate the existence of non-wizard curse breakers, but the seven *Harry Potter* novels do not.

<sup>169</sup> We do not know precisely where Madame Maxime lives. However, given her status as Headmistress of her school, it seems plausible that it is not so marginal of a dwelling, despite her half-human/half-giant status.

Further, it reinforces the hierarchical arrangements by allowing only *particularized* spaces for non-humans. Human spaces include numerous types of work spaces, dwelling spaces, and recreational spaces, while, as discussed in chapter three, non-humans are associated with specific environments. Their spaces are always narrow in scope. Goblin spaces, for example, are limited not merely to one particular industry but to a single business. There is no indication of where they live or sleep, only where they work. Something similar might be said about the house-elves at Hogwarts, as both groups seem to exist primarily through their labor interactions with wizarding society. Centaur and giant spaces offer no hints of being either labor *or* residential spaces, merely wilderness areas where they appear. The multiculturalist structuring of the *Harry Potter* world thus reinforces, not undermines, the hierarchy.

1990s-to-contemporary U.K. discourse frequently associates the supposed self-segregation of minority groups, predominantly South Asians and Muslims, with terrorism (especially after 2001), racial violence, and unrest. There can be no doubt that self-segregating groups like goblins and centaurs enact similar patterns of open hostility and occasional violence. In that sense, *Harry Potter* adopts the self-segregation rhetoric, which blames racial discord on minority groups' willful failure to integrate. In keeping with the liberal pessimism of the time, non-human integration in *Harry Potter* seems impossible, both from the ineffectiveness of majority anti-racist tactics and the unwillingness of minority groups to integrate.

By contrast, *Harry Potter* is arguably the most integrated society for human beings, with humans of all racial identities interacting and intermingling at every level of society without broader narrative comment. Such integration appears in the Ministry of Magic staff, the Hogwarts student body, Dumbledore's Army, and the Order of the Phoenix, among other places. This arrangement sends much the opposite message. *Harry Potter* tends toward relativism and essentialism with non-humans and universalism and anti-essentialism with humans. The arrangement indicates a diegetic logic in which genuinely different groups do not naturally intermingle. At the same time, those who are essentially the same will naturally live side-by-side. Whether this diegetic logic supports multiculturalist anti-racism depends on whether it pairs with essentialist or anti-essentialist assumptions regarding race groups in the real world. My views and scientific consensus both support the idea of races as non-essentialist social constructs. *Harry Potter* does not contradict this concerning human races, yet I must concede that not all readers can be assumed to share this view. The anti-essentialist portrayal of racialized human

groups goes unmarked in *Harry Potter* (not to be confused with the anti-essentialism regarding wizards of differing magical and non-magical parentage), so the views of readers who believe in essential human races go unchallenged. Such readers are free to extend the normativity of segregation among non-humans. This openness to alternative meanings shows another example of *Harry Potter* operating as a producerly text.

*Star Wars* and Tolkien's books have the same sort of crossing between human/non-human racialized spaces found in *Harry Potter*. Nonetheless, each goes further, displaying mixed-racial societies with human and non-human long-term residents. As discussed in chapter three, the original *Star Wars* trilogy's multi-ethnic spaces contain various non-humans and humans of different ethnicities. They link mixed racial societies with capitalism in a way that reflects positively on both, especially in Bespin. In Bespin, various ethnicities of humans mingle with non-humans, working side-by-side and socializing in their off-hours. Numerous such characters appear in the backgrounds of different scenes, busily engaged in joint activities. Similar arrangements occur in Mos Eisley and Jabba's Palace. Such areas may be exceptions in the original trilogy, but they all have the common element of being associated with the performance of illegal activities. In other words, they are areas outside of the legal influence of the Empire. This connection might suggest an association between multiculturalism and criminality, but Bespin's criminal nature amounts to peaceful, prosperous non-conformance to the Empire's socialist demands. In this context, the diegetic logic seems to be not that multiracial societies are prone to crime but that multiracial societies are naturally associated with freedom from oppression, although both readings are productively available. This latter connection follows through links between liberty and democratic capitalism discussed in chapter three. The pattern carries through the prequel trilogies to a large extent, but not in the later films, which treat multi-racial societies as the norm, regardless of political affiliation. Here again, *Star Wars* remains more optimistic than *Harry Potter* while opening diverse readings of its own.

Notably, the term "multiculturalism," like "anti-racism," did not appear until years after *The Lord of the Rings*, but the rhetorical strategies of multicultural anti-racism predate the term. Many of those are found in Tolkien's works, if in less-developed form. Only one example of a mixed racial society exists in Tolkien's



works, namely in Bree. While these works only<sup>170</sup> have one such society and keep this integration partial and highly qualified, the narrator also praises it:

There were also many families of hobbits in Bree-land and they claimed to be the oldest settlement of Hobbits in the world, one that was founded long before even the Brandywine was crossed and the Shire colonized. They lived mostly in Staddle though there were some in Bree itself, especially on the higher slopes of the hill, above the houses of the Men. The Big Folk and the Little Folk (as they called one another) were on friendly terms, minding their own affairs in their own ways, but both rightly regarding themselves as necessary parts of the Bree-folk. Nowhere else in the world was this peculiar (but excellent) arrangement to be found. (146)

This description shows that the hobbits and humans of Bree live among each other but only to a qualified degree, and their interactions are expressly limited. After all, the Bree hobbits “lived mostly in Staddle” and when in Bree, “especially on the higher slopes of the hill, above the houses of the Men.” This description indicates a division between hobbit and human living spaces by city and neighborhood, even when dwelling in the same region and further “minding their own affairs in their own ways” rather than pursuing more involved forms of interracial cooperation. Still, they have “friendly” interactions and likely very regular ones, including mercantile and social interactions, if the events in the Prancing Pony are any indication. There, hobbits and humans seem somewhat more interested in their own kinds but swap stories and do business, and the establishment’s staff is mixed (a human man with two hobbit employees). This mixing is further distinct from the spatial divisions of *Harry Potter* in that neither space is visibly more particular. Each contains a wide range of living and mercantile arrangements in equal measures (although this is not true of all non-humans, as discussed in chapter four).

That this arrangement was “excellent” likely refers to both the integration and its limitations. However, it shows that the texts’ divided social spaces are not ideal, much like the original *Star Wars* trilogy’s divided (generally Imperial) spaces. At the same time, there is only one such location, even among the “free peoples of Middle Earth.” This scarcity suggests a diegetic logic in which this arrangement is not a natural outcropping of freedom or a default ordering of society but a rare, limited, if “excellent,” occurrence. Those who desire such an ideal will likely have to

---

<sup>170</sup> Both Sauron and Saruman’s forces contain soldiers of various human and non-human races. However, they only seem to fight together, not live together, so I exclude them from this heading, just like the mixed memberships of the fellowship of the ring and Thorin’s party. The text similarly treats this as distinct, as it does not qualify the claim that the Bree arrangement occurred “[n]owhere else in the world” (*Lord* 146).

work to achieve it. In a sense, Tolkien's works treat segregation as natural as *Harry Potter* does, rather than as something unjustly inflicted, as in *Star Wars*. Nonetheless, Tolkien's works remain much more optimistic than *Harry Potter*, framing the overcoming of segregation, at least to a degree, as possible and desirable.

This use of multiculturalist anti-racism reinforces the racial essentialism discussed in chapter three. All benefits from multiculturalist integration tie to essentialist traits, such as wizards benefiting from house-elf or goblin abilities. Limitations to integration also derive from essential traits. Hobbit and human temperaments and desires prevent them from integrating more fully in Bree. Centaur and goblin desires for independence and autonomy and house-elf desires for subservience prevent them from seeking more integrated roles in wizarding society. Multiculturalist anti-racism here not only fails to challenge but actively reinforces essentialist beliefs, exposing the limits of the approach, even where championing it.

Even more so than multiculturalist anti-racism, positive racial images explicitly uses racial determinism in its approach to relativist anti-racism. The use of positive racial images can take several forms for intelligent non-humans. For example, *The Lord of the Rings* highlights the advantages and unique abilities of different races more often than their vulnerabilities or weaknesses, at least when compared to *The Hobbit*. Rebecca Brackmann notes this about dwarves, comparing their portrayal in *The Hobbit* to *The Lord of the Rings*: "Particularly in Gimli's character, Tolkien's Dwarves in *The Lord of the Rings* radically alter the Dwarves in *The Hobbit*. He sets out to undo the negative qualities ascribed to the Dwarves in the earlier book, and shows them as no longer marginal to the heroic culture of the other characters" (95). Brackmann's observation could stretch to other groups, including elves and hobbits. *The Lord of the Rings* spends much more time promoting the positive aspects of sympathetic non-human races and recontextualizing or deemphasizing their unflattering traits from *The Hobbit*. Brackmann notes that the dwarven love of gold becomes less about avarice and more about an appreciation for beautiful things. The earlier statement that "dwarves are not heroes" is soundly rejected. I would add that the playful, singsong nature of elves, dancing and teasing, is set aside. More aristocratic parties are substituted, filled with epic ballads and fine poetry. The change adds politeness (no longer teasing dwarves), as well as seriousness and social class. As chapter three notes, the troublesome hobbit traits

associated with Bilbo's mixed parentage vanish entirely.<sup>171</sup> As in criticisms of positive racial images, however, Tolkien's works' focus on positive images remains compatible with their racial hierarchies (see chapters three and four). Ascribing positive traits to subordinate groups does not lead to equality.

*Harry Potter* employs a different approach to positive racial images. Rather than showing a conscious revision of its presentations, it contrasts assessments of race groups by sympathetic and unsympathetic characters. This contrast manifests to some degree in Dolores Umbridge's assessment of centaurs or Cornelius Fudge's beliefs about half-giants. Even so, it is probably most clearly pronounced in Voldemort's perception of house-elves compared to the protagonists'. His failure to recognize the positive traits of house-elves links directly to his downfall. He abandons the house-elf Kreacher to his death, not realizing that the spells in place to prevent wizards from escaping would not hinder a house-elf. After escaping, Kreacher returns to his master, Regulus Black, bringing him vital information and letting Regulus steal Voldemort's horcrux. Ronald Weasley later destroys the horcrux, helping bring about Voldemort's demise.<sup>172</sup> This same lack of consideration for house-elf abilities leads to oversights, allowing Harry, Ron, Hermione, Luna, Griphook, and Olivander to escape from Voldemort at Malfoy Manor.

As Hermione puts it, "Voldemort would have considered the ways of house-elves far beneath his notice, just like all purebloods who treat them like animals. . . . It would never have occurred to him that they might have magic that he didn't" (*Deathly* 95). The memory of Albus Dumbledore later echoes the sentiment, declaring, "That which Voldemort does not value, he takes no trouble to comprehend. Of house-elves and children's tales, of love, loyalty, and innocence, Voldemort knows and understands nothing. *Nothing*. That they have a power beyond his own, a power beyond the reach of any magic, is a truth he has never grasped" (*Deathly* 709–10). House-elves have value and unique abilities and talents that wizards lack, and Voldemort's inability to recognize this links to his failure to acknowledge or appreciate "love, loyalty, and innocence." Further, it compares their value to that

---

<sup>171</sup> Or they do not appear on Frodo, at any rate. Bilbo's personality remains, but as Frodo's ancestry is functionally identical, his lack of such traits marks them as specific to Bilbo, rather than racial.

<sup>172</sup> In fairness, had he not underestimated house-elves, Voldemort's horcrux might have been destroyed even earlier. Instead, its theft by Regulus complicated the heroes' efforts considerably. Still, by his ignorance, Voldemort created an opening for the horcrux's much earlier destruction, even if that possibility was never realized. The narrative explicitly highlights that possibility and its link to Voldemort's ignorance of house-elves.

of “children’s tales,” a dual reference both to the diegetic *The Tales of Beetle the Bard* and to the *Harry Potter* series itself, also a set of children’s tales, tying in the value of house-elves to the value of the series as a whole. The narrative seeks to counter the racism of Voldemort to some extent, therefore, by appealing to positive images of those he does not view positively. At the same time, these endorsements of positive house-elf images and positive images of half-giants, centaurs, and werewolves emphasize their essentialized racial specificity. They reinforce their status as subordinate to the less racially-specified humans.

Similarly to *Harry Potter* promoting positive images of house-elves by having villains overlook their abilities, *Star Wars* has characters who underestimate droids. Although the heroes are saved on numerous occasions by the intervention of droids, especially R2-D2, they and the villains repeatedly underestimate their contributions throughout the saga. In *A New Hope*, the droids wander free on the Death Star without challenge because the Imperials seem blind to the possibility of droids being enemy agents. In *Attack of the Clones*, Obi-wan and his friend Dex dismiss droid intelligence, including Obi-wan’s “if droids could think, there’d be none of us here, would there?” (*Attack* 00:31). In *The Force Awakens*, Kylo Ren disbelievingly comments, “The droid stole a freighter?” (*Force* 00:35). These opinions stand in contrast to the portrayed narrative. R2-D2 and C-3PO *do* successfully aid the human heroes aboard the Death Star, despite being overlooked by the Imperials (and R2-D2 is still carrying the Death Star plans throughout the whole escapade). R2-D2 also shows extreme creativity in solving problems (usually when out of sight of Obi-wan). Droids fly ships on several occasions, and the droid Kylo Ren refers to, BB-8, steals<sup>173</sup> another starship one film later, as well as a First Order walker. By contrast, characters such as Anakin Skywalker, Leia Organa, Rey, and the unnamed thief and codebreaker from *The Last Jedi* acknowledge droid capabilities and correct others’ assumptions about them.

Nevertheless, *Star Wars*’s use of positive racial images is crucially different from *Harry Potter*’s. Voldemort suffers for failing to recognize that house-elves can do things that wizards cannot. Those who underestimate droids miss that droids can do things that humans *can*. Those who correct others’ assumptions warn against underestimating droids or thinking they are inferior but do not ascribe advantages

---

<sup>173</sup> BB-8’s exact contribution to stealing the ship is unclear, but the unnamed thief and codebreaker who assists him (referred to as “DJ” in the credits) acknowledges him as an equal in the enterprise: “He says I stole it. . . We stole it” (*Last* 01:22).

to them. In that sense, *Star Wars* does not fit neatly into the positive racial images tradition because it denies negative images without promoting positive ones. Instead, it angles toward anti-essentialism, discussed hereafter. Nonetheless, *Star Wars* only challenges some essentializing beliefs about droids, but not all. Meanwhile, even *Harry Potter*'s positive ascriptions do not undermine the existing racial hierarchy any more than those in Tolkien's works. Thus, both droids and house-elves remain comfortably in their enslaved positions. Indeed, *Harry Potter*'s positive racial images of house-elves engage with racial essentialism to support the hierarchy. *Star Wars*'s droid descriptions fail to oppose it. Each behaves in a producerly fashion, however, displaying the tactic while revealing, reluctantly or not, its weaknesses and limitations.

With strategic essentialism, the works pivot to an extreme. Rather than employing the strategy while showing its limitations, they reject it, situating it only with the villains when it appears. The clearest example of strategic essentialism in any of the works comes from *The Lord of the Rings*. During his efforts to overthrow Rohan, Saruman enlists the aid of the Dunlanders, reminding them of the wrongs their ancestors suffered at the hands of the Rohirrim. Like the Palestinian account of Israel's founding (which founding this text predates), Rohan's land was originally gifted to them by Gondor, even though the Dunlanders already claimed it and many dwelt there. A "half a thousand years" (*Lord* 524) later, the Dunlanders still hold a grudge over losing their ancestral land, which Saruman inflames to win their support against Rohan. The Dunlanders characterize the Men of Rohan as "robbers of the North" as well as "Forgoil" and "Strawheads" (524). The prior classify the Men of Rohan geographically and the latter two (which may be translations of each other) by physical appearance. Together, they essentially amount to a racial classification. Similarly, as discussed in chapter three, the uruk-hai under Saruman's command also distinguish themselves and their enemies in distinctly racial terms. Both groups employ racial distinctions between themselves and their foes to a high degree, even for Tolkien's works. Saruman thus strategically deploys racial essentialism to rally his followers toward his villainous ends.

For any justice it may have, the text portrays the Dunlanders' cause as a blind racial hatred and a thinly veiled excuse to seize land and power. Their grievances get only a passing mention, and the text repeatedly undermines the justice of their cause. For example, associating their grudge with Saruman's manipulation seems to undermine its validity, suggesting they would not be as upset without his influence. Emphasizing the period since the offense as "half a thousand" focuses on its

proximity to the larger number, a thousand. It belittles their grudge by exaggerating the time since the offense occurred. Furthermore, scenes such as Erkenbrand's debriefing of the Dunlander prisoners suggest that the Men of Rohan are merciful and egalitarian. The Dunlanders, amazed to discover this, have been lied to by Saruman, who "told them that the men of Rohan were cruel and burned their captives alive" (532). Strategic essentialism, in this case, is just a tool for Saruman to, more successfully than Hermione, literally stir up trouble, and Saruman's defeat hails as a triumph of good over evil.

Nevertheless, even in condemning strategic essentialism, Tolkien's works remain productively. They cannot conceal that the Dunlanders have genuine grievances nor that the privileged position of the Rohirrim may not be as innocent as they like to believe. Strategic essentialism proves an effective rallying tool, but just as frequently in the real world, it fails to convert the dominant group, only unifying the subordinate group against them.

Strategic essentialism in *Harry Potter* is similar but less overt and generally enacted by goblins and centaurs. Chapter three explains that *Harry Potter* typically references "race" when discussing racial oppression, usually through those claiming victimhood. These references highlight the racial identities of these groups, often leveraging those identities to seek redress for inequality. This strategic invocation of racial identity echoes the methods of strategic essentialism. As in *The Lord of the Rings*, this tactic causes trouble historically (via numerous goblin rebellions referred to during the History of Magic classes) and presently (when the heroes have difficulties with the centaurs or with Griphook).

Nevertheless, unlike the Men of Rohan, many wizards *are* acknowledged as mistreating or oppressing goblins and centaurs, marking their oppression claims as more valid. However, their discontent is not addressed exclusively to the wizards who oppress them, and both appear somewhat fanatical in their pursuit of racial redress. The centaurs both abduct the openly racist Dolores Umbridge near the end of *The Order of the Phoenix* and attempt the same with Harry and Hermione, using reasoning portrayed as irrational<sup>174</sup> to find them guilty of oppression. Grawp must

---

<sup>174</sup> That their discontent is understandable, as identified in the discussion of racial tolerance, while still including irrational claims, as identified here, should not be read as a contradiction. It neatly demonstrates one reason why simply identifying certain portrayals as positive or negative can at times be too reductionist. Despite being portrayed as irrational, however, their resentment toward Harry and Hermione is not wholly unjustified. Hermione attempts to reenact a common trope in young adult

rescue them before they can continue their mission. Both groups refuse (or refuse until the end in the centaurs' case) to take sides in the war with Voldemort, seeing it as a wizard conflict and blaming all wizards equally for past injustices.

*Harry Potter* shows narratives of justified discontent and real racial oppression alongside portrayals of irrationality among those seeking redress. Critics and proponents of strategic essentialism can find their preferred narrative within the producerly contradictions, either by pointing out the justice of the oppressed's cause or by focusing on details that discredit their efforts. Nonetheless, *Harry Potter* is again more pessimistic than the earlier works. Where seeds of reconciliation appear in Tolkien's works, as the oppressed come to see their oppressors in a new light, *Harry Potter* merely defers conflict. Sources of discontent remain, and violence will likely resume another day.

Just as with celebrations of cultures and achievements, these anti-racist strategies do not alter the degree of racial equality in the fictional worlds. At each story's end, the overriding racial order in the fictional world is mostly unchanged, save for some degree of dwarven/elven reconciliation in Tolkien's stories and a return to the racist status quo in *Harry Potter*. Instead, relativist anti-racist actions by the protagonists are ways of "checking off" anti-racism before moving on with other concerns without making noticeable social progress. Likewise, ascribing positive traits or respecting traits does not contribute to equality but indicates a greater multitude of inequalities. Furthermore, as discussed in chapter four, the world architectural structures are normative to humanity, often White humanity. These relativist positions thus have been "measured against . . . [a] fixed norm that defines other cultures as exotic" (Bonnett 18). As discussed in chapter three, the works contain essentialized depictions of non-humans, with meaningful racial divisions and unique racial traits. Relativist approaches cannot address these underlying problems, whatever other merits they may have. These works show their producerly quality by exposing these weaknesses alongside their anti-racist engagements.

---

fiction in which the youthful protagonists escape a menacing adult by tricking or allowing the adult to fall prey to a hazard which they have previously escaped. Rather than treat the centaurs as equals and asking for help, she treats them as a hazard, which follows certain rules that she has already learned. In so doing, she disregards their agency and disrespects their wishes. She is punished for this hubris as the centaurs reassert that agency and do not act within the rules as she understood them. As they rightfully observe of Harry and Hermione, "They already have the arrogance of their kind!" (*Order* 666).

Most striking, *Harry Potter* and Tolkien's works do not extend this relativism to all groups. Each contains races characterized as "evil" and thus beyond the reach of relativism. Dementors, orcs, and trolls (Tolkien's trolls, not *Harry Potter's*) are irredeemably evil, an already unrelativist ascription, and there appears to be no attempt to tolerate them, respect their differences, or show them in a positive light.<sup>175</sup> At the end of the Battle of Five Armies and the Battle of Helm's Deep, the protagonists exterminate the remaining orcs. The victors always pardon human opponents and offer them a chance to return to peaceful lives. Similarly, while Dumbledore attempts to forge alliances with numerous creatures, including giants and goblins, he finds dementors beyond consideration as allies. Instead, he responds by demanding their immediate removal from Azkaban once Voldemort returns, and he disapproves of their use long before, as seen in the flashback trial scenes during *The Goblet of Fire*. The narrative supports each decision, as orcs appear unredeemable in *The Hobbit* or *The Lord of the Rings*, like the dementors in *Harry Potter*, and the dementors behave as Dumbledore predicts, casting his opinions as keen insight rather than irrational prejudice. Orcs and dementors thus expose yet another producerly limit to the works' relativism, allowing those who focus on them to find the opposite reading.

## 5.2.2 Universalist Anti-Racism: "It's the same all over. . . blood is counting for less everywhere."

The alternative to racial relativism is a perspective known by such varying names as universalism, anti-essentialism, or racial indifference. Prototypically, it seeks to discredit essential racial differences and promotes the idea that "people are all equally part of humanity" (Bonnett 19). It focuses on "the task of overcoming prejudice in order to see and enable the equality, the sameness, of people, rather than on conquering prejudice in the name of difference" (20). Balint sees "racial indifference" as an alternative to racial tolerance. "Indifference" does not necessarily challenge the existence of the racial trait<sup>176</sup> but removes the stigma from it (20). In its purest form, anti-essentialism rejects belief in race as more than a social construct.

---

<sup>175</sup> Robert Tally Jr.'s "Let Us Now Praise Famous Orcs: Simple Humanity in Tolkien's Inhuman Creatures" is worth noting here. Tally's argument that Tolkien humanizes orcs through various means is correct but should not be confused with Tolkien portraying them positively. Orcs display complex desires and emotions, but as Tally notes, they universally channel them to villainous ends.

<sup>176</sup> When read as a form of universalism, the "racial trait" here should be understood as a defining physical trait like skin color.



Such positions have existed as part of anti-racism for as long as racial essentialism has (Bonnett 139). The potential value of anti-essentialism, at least as a final goal for anti-racism, cannot be easily overstated. Indeed, there seems to be a consensus that anti-essentialism represents an ideal for anti-racist practice (Torres and Kyriakides 37, Bonnett 142, Balint 21) and that it may be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve (Bonnett 142, Balint 21). The ideal is such that a world of perfect anti-essentialism and a world free of racism are essentially the same, for without a belief in meaningful racial distinctions, a belief in *racism*, racism has no power.

Early criticisms of anti-essentialism, especially from Tolkien's time, derived from essentialist positions. They rejected working from a belief in the sameness and equality of races, arguing that races were neither the same nor equal, a stance held even by those opposing forms of discrimination (Brattain 1390). As long as scientific racism remained ascendant, critics were keen to note that anti-essentialism flew in the face of scientific consensus. Even working from outside essentialist positions, some criticisms arise. For example, Bonnett warns that universalism can potentially lead to assimilation. Even seeing everyone as the same, one group can hegemonically define what that "sameness" entails, compelling others to participate in that self-conception to gain equality (24). Such criticism seems valid, however, *only* if applying universalism to cultural traits, construing the characteristics of one culture as features of all humanity. To suggest that a universalist position would be a denial or imposition of *racial* traits is to subscribe not to a universalist but an essentialist one. After all, it is only when races *have* essential features and meaning that one can (be forced to) become "like another race."

Another criticism concerns so-called "colorblind" anti-racism. Beyond identifying racism as a social construct, colorblindness insists on not identifying race at all. Colorblindness can appear as a "useful stratagem" for avoiding accusations of racism, especially helpful since, in some cases, noticing race may appear to indicate racism (Norton et al. 949). As Apfelbaum et. al. argue,

The allure of color blindness is that it seems to offer a relatively simple framework for managing issues of race in contemporary society: If people do not notice race, then race will no longer matter. Yet . . . color blindness is far from a panacea, sometimes representing more of an obstacle than an asset to facilitating constructive race relations and equitable race-related policies. (207)

The trouble is that people notice race, even when pretending not to, which affects their judgment (Norton et al. 949). Apfelbaum et al. cite numerous studies which

suggest that exposure to colorblindness arguments can increase racial bias (206) and that colorblindness can heighten racial resentment (206), perpetuate existing inequalities (207), and diminish ability to recognize bias in others (206). Moreover, colorblindness often suggests that racism is past and does not need to be confronted directly (Gilbert-Hickey and Green-Barteet 6). It “involves a selective engagement with difference, rather than no engagement at all” (Frankenberg 143). It “makes it all too easy for white liberals to deny the existence of white power and privilege” and thus “accept the normativity of that humanity as white” (Fiske *Media* 48). Colorblind arguments “have become increasingly geared toward combating race-conscious policies” (Apfelbaum et al. 207). In more recent cases, in other words, insistence that policy be blind to race has resulted in policy blind to racism. Dismantling policies such as affirmative action has been a step back from equality, enabling racist individuals and organizations to continue supporting an unequal status quo.

Speculative fiction, especially science fiction, has frequently posited (future) human societies where human race ceases to be relevant. Usually, this occurs through examples like *Star Trek* or *Horizon: Zero Dawn*, where races are recognizable but no longer constructed as important. Rarely, races become so mixed that racial diversity almost vanishes (as in Piers Anthony’s *Race Against Time*). In many cases, works displace difference onto non-humans or other speculative groups. Even then, Sierra Hale argues that speculative fiction may be particularly prone to color blindness when establishing post-racial societies and displacing difference into other areas. Hale warns that this practice of “[d]isplacing racial tensions into post-racial spaces and figures creates a colorblindness that undercuts the otherwise noble intentions of the texts” (125). By addressing issues of racism via groups and divisions that do not correspond to real-world constructs, especially in otherwise postracial settings, “racial differences” become “differences” (125). Such a text flatters colorblind perspectives. It “confuses and potentially counteracts positive messages about race that SF writers attempt to convey to readers through metaphors of difference” (125).

Anti-essentialism is implicit to varying degrees in the presentation of human beings across most of the works. Even Tolkien, much criticized for his portrayals of BIPOC humans, makes an effort to avoid making claims about inherent traits or moral dispositions of individuals of different skin tones, a progressive move for his time. True, Damrod once describes the Easterling, Southron, and Haradrim soldiers who fight for Sauron as “ever ready to His [Sauron’s] will” (*Lord* 645), suggesting an evil disposition. However, Damrod is a Dúnedain of the South, for whom these

people are enemy combatants. The text undermines Damrod's report only a page later through Samwise Gamgee. Sam questions whether the BIPOC humans were "really evil of heart" or whether they were led away from home by "lies and threats" and "and if [they] would not really rather have stayed there in peace" (*Lord* 646). Sam's perspective is reinforced as many human invaders eventually lay down their arms and either return home or settle in the newly vacated lands Sauron once occupied. Those who continue fighting do so because of a hatred for Gondor rather than evil dispositions. Their hatred is generally only mentioned to distinguish them from the orcs, who also hate Gondor: the orcs flee while the Haradrim and Easterlings bravely remain and fight. As discussed earlier in this chapter, even the Dunlanders fight against the Rohirrim only because Saruman manipulates them. Nonetheless, these portrayals coincide with a tendency to mark comparatively evil characters as comparatively dark (see chapter four) and a lack of non-White characters among the heroes. Such trends may yet imply essentialism. Although anti-essentialist regarding human beings, Tolkien's producerly works thus still allow for essentialist readings of them.

*Harry Potter's* use of universalism regarding wizards of different degrees of magical/non-magical heritage is even more explicit, both in establishing the non-universalist ideologies relating to humans and in their firm denial. The wizarding world at large contains a pervasive belief in a hierarchy of magical ability based on magical lineage. Those of pure wizarding descent are presumed to be the most powerful, followed by those with part-magic ancestry, then those without magical ancestry. Voldemort's supporters are most vocal in preaching these beliefs, yet even Cornelius Fudge, the Minister of Magic for most of the series, puts strong emphasis "on the so-called purity of blood" (*Goblet* 415). Many who claim to be free of prejudice, such as Horace Slughorn, still allow such beliefs to color their judgment.

Nevertheless, the narrative does not support these beliefs. The text undermines it from its historical foundations. The wizard Salazar Slytherin, oft-cited as an early proponent of the ideology, did not believe in different levels of competence between pure-blooded and non-pure-blooded wizards. Having lived in a time when muggles threatened wizards through witch hunts and persecution, Slytherin "disliked taking students of Muggle parentage, *believing them to be untrustworthy*" (*Chamber* 114, emphasis added). His bias thus has an entirely different basis. The text contradicts beliefs in differing levels of competence by various means. Prominent are the examples of powerful muggle-born witches and wizards,

contrasted with pure-blooded witches and wizards who are evil, incompetent, or both. Hermione Granger, the muggle-born witch who is at the top of most subjects at Hogwarts, is a frequent example:

“I mean, the rest of us know it doesn’t make any difference at all. Look at Neville Longbottom – he’s pure-blood and he can hardly stand a cauldron the right way up.”

“An’ they haven’t invented a spell our Hermione can’t do,” said Hagrid proudly. (*Chamber* 89)

Similar claims and refutations appear around part-blooded humans, like Hagrid and Madame Maxime. Cornelius Fudge, for example, accuses Madame Maxime of murder based on her heritage, only to be rebuffed by Dumbledore and Harry, accused of prejudice and ultimately proven incorrect. The irrationality of objections to muggle-born witches and wizards is emphasized further in the final book of the series. There, Voldemort’s new regime persecutes muggle-borns, accusing them *in defiance of all evidence* of stealing wands and magic. As Jennifer Sterling-Folker and Brian Folker argue, “[t]he delineation of collective characteristics among wizards and witches is very much a social fabrication” (122). *Harry Potter* heavily employs universalist anti-racism when addressing supposed differences between pure-blood, half-blood, and muggle-born witches and wizards.

Racial colorblindness is a late-twentieth-century phenomenon. It is little surprise that *Harry Potter* is more susceptible to it than the earlier works. Tolkien’s works do not hesitate to highlight racial distinctions, and *Star Wars* emphasizes human ethnic differences, especially in the Bespin sequence. As discussed in chapter three, however, *Harry Potter* never once refers to the skin color of non-White humans. In this respect, the characters and narrator attempt to be blind to race. Still, as with colorblind anti-racism, race is apparent, even when we pretend it is not. Readers can discern the race of many, albeit not all, characters, following clues such as names and hair color (such as the dark hair and Asian-derived surnames of Cho Chang or Padma Patil). That descriptions of changing skin tones occur only with White characters reveals the same awareness on the implied author’s part. Further, as discussed in chapter four, there are sharp differences in the portrayal of White and non-White characters in numerous respects. The unmarked awareness of race matters. *Harry Potter* thus pretends not to acknowledge racial identities while revealing an awareness of them incidentally and allowing that awareness to influence the narrative.

Nevertheless, there is nuance even here. The text identifies some characters as “black,”<sup>177</sup> marking a limit to the text’s colorblindness. Moreover, it avoids the pitfall Hale warned of because the other forms of difference, both among humans and non-humans and among magical humans, are couched in the language of race and racism. This couching allows readers to draw easy connections between the plights of elves, goblins, and muggle-borns and those of oppressed people in the real world. Racial difference is clearly *racial* and not just “difference.” Nonetheless, differences in magical lineage and human/non-human differences are both racially marked, creating parallel discourses of essentialism and anti-essentialism within the same work, both along speculative group boundaries. *Harry Potter* explicitly uses anti-essentialism but without wholly committing to it.

### 5.3 Practice-Oriented Anti-Racism

Not all forms of anti-racism fit neatly under the headings of relativism and universalism. Many have specific focuses or practices not bound to a conception of race or racism. These forms extend beyond relativist and universalist forms in how they highlight producerly engagements, so I consider some more pertinent examples: diversity management, anti-Nazism, anti-slavery, and particularist anti-racism. Each draws out unique dynamics in the anti-racist engagements. In particular, diversity management reveals producerliness by displaying diversity-oriented strategies estranged from their anti-racist goals. Anti-Nazism shows how hyperfocused anti-racism can mislead efforts and lead to neglect of other problems. Meanwhile, the works’ approaches to anti-slavery show how producerly engagements can form through directly contradictory messages. Lastly, only briefly discussed, particularist anti-racism steps beyond the producerly strategy shown with strategic essentialism, highlighting how the works may articulate some methods yet show them in a wholly unsympathetic light.

#### 5.3.1 Diversity Management: “Peregrin shall go and represent the Shirefolk.”

Closely related to one another are several anti-racist strategies that involve including differing racialized groups in an organization’s membership. Foremost among these

---

<sup>177</sup> “Black” is deployed as a racial identity, not a skin tone. Black skin is still not directly referred to among humans and must be inferred from the identity. See chapter three.

is “diversity management,” a practice developing out of affirmative action compliance programs, especially during the 1980s in the U.S. (Kelly and Dobbin). Many affirmative action programs and what Bonnett calls “the representative organization” (Bonnett 114) are similar. Each focuses on encouraging businesses, committees, and other organizations to become more racially diverse. The goals for this diversification vary. Diversity management draws upon assumptions “that only by drawing on the talents<sup>178</sup> and perspectives of a broad range of the populace, rather than merely middle-class white males, can businesses understand, hope to sell to, and be sustainable within, the entire community” (Bonnett 83). It often hinges on the idea that diverse workforces are more efficient (Kelly and Dobbin 969–70). However, the reasons for that efficiency assumption may be unclear or underpinned by unspoken assumptions that a diverse workforce is less able to take collective action against their employers (Torres and Kyriakides 116–18). Other, more overtly anti-racist approaches employ a “theory of social change” in which the “victims of racism need economic and institutional power in order to lift themselves out of their marginal status” (Bonnett 114–15), in some cases suggesting “that ‘lifting’ a few will encourage the rest” (115). Whether for improving the organization, bettering the disadvantaged, or a mixture of each, these approaches share a common strategy of diversifying membership to reach their goals.

Despite appearing long before these methods’ formal anti-racist connotations, Tolkien’s works set a powerful precedent for groups of mixed human and non-human characters in medieval fantasy. Picked up by *Dungeons & Dragons*, the “adventuring party” has become well established, from sword and sorcery to some space opera. Franchises such as *Star Trek* created alternate diversity standards (ethnic and human/non-human), influencing many other strands of speculative fiction. In this way, the earlier works, namely *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *Star Wars*, make their assumptions clear about the value of mixed-race group membership. These assumptions are commonplace throughout the genre.

The heroes of *The Hobbit* represent an at least somewhat mixed group, with a wizard, a hobbit, and thirteen dwarves. Those of *The Lord of the Rings* are more broadly and explicitly representative. Elrond declares that Gandalf and the hobbits’ companions “shall represent the other Free People of the World: Elves, Dwarves

---

<sup>178</sup> While an appeal to “talents” risks essentialism, most defenses of diversity management practices I encountered while performing this research are concerned with establishing broad recruitment bases, not expecting unique talents from a given racial group.

and Men” (268). The meeting with the Mouth of Sauron is similarly marked: “There was Gandalf as chief herald, and Aragorn with the sons of Elrond, and Éomer of Rohan and Imrahil; and Legolas and Gimli and Peregrin were bidden to go also, so that all the enemies of Mordor should have a witness” (869). Each member group of the “Free People” has its representative. Even so, it is notable that all representatives are light-skinned males. No one attempts to recruit Dunlanders, Easterlings, or Southrons (even when they surrender, although the heroes spare them, unlike orcs and trolls), or women, revealing limits to Tolkien’s works’ inclusiveness. Interracial cooperation is desirable in Tolkien’s works, but only among males from light-skinned races.

Something similar but less overt occurs in *Star Wars*. The band of heroes in the original trilogy contains a broad sampling of races and other identities, including two White male humans, along with a White female human, an alien, and two robots (and later, a Black male human, along with minor allies from a variety of other species). The grouping is less explicitly comprehensive, and many alien races who do not join the main heroes appear in the alliance. Still, it covers a range of “human, alien, and robot.” As in Tolkien’s works, some races exist with no consideration given to recruiting them, such as the non-human inhabitants of Bespin, and others who only appear as enemies, such as many seen in Jabba’s palace, but these distinctions are not explicit. The structural change between the works is mainly one of perspective. Nevertheless, the eventual inclusion of a non-white human character and a female character (whose inclusion does not require subterfuge or overcoming the protests of the men) represents a distinct redrawing of boundaries. The post-civil rights era *Star Wars* shows a corresponding willingness to draw upon broader notions of diversity, even while the ethnic in-group/out-group structures remain the same.

Despite the multiple references to representation in Tolkien’s works, the benefits of diversity shown in Tolkien’s works and *Star Wars* are more akin to those from diversity management (which both works predate) than representative organizations or affirmative action. In each, members of different groups only contribute skills and perspectives to the team. Their membership does not help their respective racial groups, inspiring others or representing their needs. There is no acknowledgment of hobbit needs in *The Hobbit*’s quest, nor any evidence (and evidence to the contrary) of Bilbo’s success inspiring other hobbits to follow his example.

*The Lord of the Rings* shows a few younger hobbits, if still not the majority, inspired by Bilbo's tales of adventure. Nonetheless, the hobbits' actions as part of the mixed-racial fellowship in *The Lord of the Rings* are of little interest to those who remain home. After the adventure, the Shire hobbits exclusively celebrate the heroes' roles in the (hobbit-only) scouring of the Shire. Likewise, the endeavors of the fellowship members after their separation focus on the immediate interests of groups of Men without any acknowledgment of the needs of dwarves, elves, or hobbits.

In each case, though, the minority members' "perspective" *does* seem to contribute to the quest. For example, Bilbo's "hobbit sense" could have simplified diplomatic matters before the Battle of Five Armies, getting Men, elves, and dwarves to cooperate more quickly had Thorin not ignored it. His other hobbit abilities, such as moving silently, also prove helpful against various challenges. Each fellowship member in *The Lord of the Rings* also contributes based on his racial skills and temperament in ways that prove crucial to their success. Likewise, all the heroes in the original *Star Wars* trilogy contribute valuable skills, even if droids and wookiees neither have their interests represented nor serve as an inspiration to other members of their groups.

*Harry Potter* does not employ such an approach. The main heroes – Harry, Ron, and Hermione – are all human and only diverse regarding gender or mixture of muggle and magical blood. Even when this circle widens during *The Order of the Phoenix*, it adds only characters like Neville, Ginny, and Luna, all (White) humans and pure-blooded wizards to boot. Some token acknowledgment of diversity occurs via the membership of Dumbledore's Army, which incorporates non-White students, and the Order of the Phoenix, which also includes some peripherally human<sup>179</sup> members. Even then, the latter contribute only by representing the team's interests to their respective groups (as Hagrid acts as an emissary to the giants and Lupin to the werewolves) and not by representing those groups' interests to the team. As in *Star Wars* and Tolkien's works, even these examples imitate only the goals of diversity management and not the more socially progressive forms, allowing the Order to "sell to" their communities more effectively but not to represent their communities' needs in policy matters. Interestingly, members of the Order seem

---

<sup>179</sup> As discussed in an earlier footnote in chapter one, in *Harry Potter*, some individuals have their humanity qualified. Labels like "part-human" and "halfbreed" denote some of these types of individuals while including others that are distinctly non-human. The terms are interchangeable, referring equally to mixed-race individuals, such as the half-giants, cursed humans, such as werewolves, or individuals with a few human-looking body parts, such as centaurs.



aware of the policy needs of some non-human groups. For example, when Bill, Lupin, and Mr. Weasley discuss the chances of goblins joining Voldemort, Lupin notes, “If they’re offered [by Voldemort] freedoms we’ve been denying them for centuries they’re going to be tempted” (*Order* 81). However, they never show interest in pursuing those policy objectives. They fear Voldemort might offer others rights but do not work to offer those rights themselves.

The representative group approach is also specifically satirized in *Harry Potter*, where it forms a part of Hermione’s caricatured plans for promoting house-elf rights. In the context of Hermione’s other activist activities, it is hard to take seriously her goal of “trying to get an elf into the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures, because they’re shockingly under-represented” (198). Meanwhile, her hopes that “[t]he other house-elves will see how happy [Dobby] is, being free, and slowly it’ll dawn on them that they want that, too!” (334) mostly backfire. While the contributions of other groups’ members are potentially valuable, they do not have to join the leading trio to contribute, nor does the trio forward their interests. Some members of other groups join the broader cause, particularly at the Battle of Hogwarts, but this is unrelated to the example of group members counted among the heroes.

While the prior works engage more with diversity management than representative organizations, *Harry Potter* rejects both approaches. In *Harry Potter*, membership in the elite group is unnecessary for others to provide their skills and perspectives toward the common goal. Despite extensive talk about rallying allies across racial borders, characters like Dobby and Hagrid can contribute equally well as servants or outside contacts, called upon as needed and otherwise left in the periphery. In fairy tale terms, non-humans in *Harry Potter* act as magical helpers at best, providing aid or boons (when not providing obstacles), a role they admittedly share with some humans. Nevertheless, when seen through a lens of race and racism, this trend shows a striking parallel to Dan Rubey’s reading of *Star Wars*. In it, Rubey describes the fantasy of “non-competitive, non-sexual comrades and friends” who support one’s endeavors without competing for rewards or glory. According to Rubey,

In fantasy, members of lower classes or races can fill that supporting role because they cannot compete with us. In the fantasy at least, they accept their inferior position without question and assume the role of loyal follower and trusted sidekick. U.S. literature is full of Indians and blacks who fill this role (James Fenimore Cooper’s Indians, Huckleberry Finn’s Nigger Jim, and so on). In an adventure fantasy you don’t

want subordinates striking for higher wages while you are being mashed in the garbage crusher, so you make them robots or Wookies who cannot move up in the hierarchy. Wookies and robots are not eligible to court princesses and they do not need money or glory. In the final ceremony only the white male heroes get medals. The Wookie walks down the aisle and then steps aside to join the robots and applaud like everyone else.

This description is even more true of *Harry Potter* than *Star Wars*. In keeping with its segregationist tendencies in social spaces, *Harry Potter* keeps the proverbial spotlight as a human-only zone. Others may visit, but they do not remain. Non-humans may swoop in gallantly to rescue the heroes but may not join their quest. Even when they arrive, the humans handle the main action, such as when Dobby rescues Harry and his friends from Malfoy Manor. Dobby makes the escape possible, but Harry and Ron overpower and disarm Wormtail, duel with and disarm several of the Death Eaters, and take primary responsibility for saving Hermione and Griphook from Bellatrix. Dobby's role is to drop a chandelier, teleport them away, and die nobly in the effort.

These various involvements with diversity management and representative organizations do not map neatly to the works' periods of origin. *Harry Potter* and *The Lord of the Rings* show an awareness of racially representative organizations, despite the temporal divide, and *Star Wars* acknowledges them at least implicitly. Nonetheless, Tolkien's works and *Star Wars* base their representations on a rationale that did not solidify in business management discourse until after the original *Star Wars* trilogy was released. Indeed, the idea that different races could work together to accomplish what one alone could not would have been alien to many in Tolkien's time. *Harry Potter's* rejection of these methods cannot be attributable to the liberal pessimism of the 1990s and beyond. Such pessimism feared that anti-racist projects were doomed to fail, but *Harry Potter* seems indifferent to the project's goals.

Nevertheless, the engagements remain producerly. Foremost among their producerly aspects are the earlier works employing pro-diversity narratives estranged from their anti-racist goals. They suggest that including members of subordinated groups is good without considering how such inclusion benefits those included. Meanwhile, *Harry Potter's* lack of diverse groups contrasts with numerous, mostly-failed attempts at interracial cooperation and alliance. Much fuss appears regarding overtures to giants, werewolves, and goblins. Although none of this diplomacy

results in new allies,<sup>180</sup> it establishes a productive counter-narrative that values such alliances. Likewise, all the works, regardless of stance, reproduce ethnic in-group/out-group notions, with some groups worthy of consideration as allies and others not. This division allows for readings unsympathetic to intragroup diversity, even in *Star Wars* and Tolkien's works. Thus their engagement with this approach exposes multiple, distinct angles for producing alternate meanings, which can either valorize or reject the approach. In the following section, hyperfocalization produces additional angles through the works' engagement with anti-Nazi anti-racism.

### 5.3.2 Anti-Nazism: "All that 'right to rule' rubbish, it's 'Magic is Might' all over again."

Although all forms of anti-racism tend to reject Nazism, some focus specifically on opposing Nazis and other organizations that the practitioners of these forms characterize similarly (Bonnett 111). Racism may sometimes be challenging to discern and isolate (MacMaster 2). Nonetheless, many openly racist groups are easy to identify, which adds appeal to this form of anti-racism for individuals and policymakers. It draws clear lines with easily-identifiable villains and measurable objectives. It is understandable why European Commission initiatives have focused on this form of anti-racism at the expense of issues such as immigration, where consensus is more difficult to obtain (Bonnett 71). Such an approach to anti-racism is not without its dangers. Anti-Nazi anti-racism does not necessarily rely on other forms of anti-racism. It can be – and at times is – performed to the exclusion of alternate approaches. For example, Torres and Kyriakides describe how in the 1970's "[a]ll mainstream British political parties were anti-Nazi," which trend "did not significantly take up the all-party consensus for immigration control that had made racism respectable" (106). As Neil MacMaster warns, "An over-preoccupation with 'Nazi' movements, and a widespread belief that the defeat of such organizations will represent a definitive victory over the forces of darkness, not only lends itself to a misreading of the nature of racism but, more seriously, can drive anti-racist action in the wrong direction" (192). There is thus a double risk of blind spots, both in ignoring other manifestations of racism in society while focusing on Nazi-like organizations, as well as in the temptation to declare the fight over when the

---

<sup>180</sup> The one giant ally obtained by the end of the series does not join due to diplomacy. Hagrid kidnaps him. Groups that do join, namely centaurs and house-elves, are not targets for diplomacy.

opposing group is defeated, leaving the racism that gave birth to that organization unchallenged.

Attempting to project racism onto political enemies falls in a similar vein. The goal of such efforts is often more to use the stigma of racism to condemn political opposition than to denounce racism directly. Howbeit, these political maneuvers reinforce a negative image of racism, and these efforts have significantly contributed to anti-racism. I have already discussed in chapter three the example of various nations (including the United States, Nazi Germany, Imperial Japan, and the Soviet Union) amplifying stories of racism among their enemies. As scholars such as Thomas Borstelmann argue, America's Cold War-era attempt to reframe itself as anti-racist, and its projection of racism onto its enemies, contributed to its "becoming increasingly tolerant of the idea of integration in the process" (31). Nevertheless, the examples of Germany and Japan employing similar rhetorical tactics during World War II (Borstelmann 36) show that anti-racism at home is not a necessary goal or inevitable result of such a maneuver. Denying racism at home may be an excuse *not* to improve local practices, merely to pretend harmful practices do not exist.

*Harry Potter's* engagement with Nazi-style enemies is the most explicit of all the three franchises. Voldemort's followers subscribe to an ideology of blood and breeding that strongly echoes those of White supremacist groups in the real world. Similarly, Voldemort's takeover of wizarding Britain in *The Deathly Hallows* reflects conditions in occupied countries during World War II (Curthoys). As Andrea Mammone notes, some have seen the emergence of neo-fascist groups in western Europe as a novel development. Even then, "extreme-right and proto-fascist sentiments and deeds, chauvinism and racism" (176) have long been common in western Europe, and neo-fascist groups have close ties to earlier fascism (Mammone). Likewise, Voldemort's rise to power is a new and growing threat. However, his ideology hails back to Grindelwald and some aspects of the previous ministry regime. As critics of anti-Nazi anti-racism have feared with such real-world efforts, the defeat of Voldemort substitutes for addressing endemic problems in the wizarding community. Yes, with his defeat, muggle-borns can likely once again participate in society as full-fledged wizards. Regardless, beings like house-elves and centaurs, who cannot now expect better treatment than they received under the pre-Voldemort regime, also celebrate his defeat.

The other works also engage with anti-Nazi anti-racism, although none directly link their villains to Nazis, White supremacy, or even contemporary fascist movements<sup>181</sup> in the same way that *Harry Potter* does. Each, nevertheless, performs a deflection of racism onto political opposition. In *The Hobbit*, for example, racism is situated most clearly with the goblins. Dislike between groups is not unique to the villainous goblins, as groups such as elves and dwarves also do not get along (68). Despite this, goblins hate *everyone*, and only goblins enslave others. Slavery is not necessarily equivalent to racism, but goblins *only* enslave non-goblins. Using race to determine whether an individual qualifies for slavery is racist *by definition*. Goblins are thus more racist than members of sympathetic groups, and this racism is a core aspect of their villainy. Still, general race hate and slavery do not fit them to any contemporary racist group, even though using racism to characterize political enemies, a practice beginning at least as early as WWII, distinctly arises here. Even so, of the various works, *The Hobbit* stands out for not conflating the defeat of the goblins with a resolution of larger injustices. Much good occurs from defeating Smaug and the goblins, but this good is strictly local. Some groups reconcile after the adventure, yet this reconciliation is separate from the defeat of the racist goblins. The group members must work to overcome their prejudices rather than consider racism defeated.

Likewise, *The Lord of the Rings* performs anti-racist work by using racism to characterize some of its villains, but racism is *not* a mark of the *main* villains. Slavery recurs, this time as a defining practice of Sauron. Even then, Sauron's slavery is general rather than racial, with no groups favored or exempt. His evil is a more general evil rather than specifically racist. Racism is more apparent among the uruk-hai and the Dunlanders. The uruk-hai are keen to note their biological advantages on several occasions, yet so are Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli. At the same time, the uruk-hai employ racial epithets for the Rohirrim, calling them "Whiteskins" (439, 441, 442, 444). The Dunlanders refer to them as "Strawheads" (524). Both evoke the imagery of racism, albeit directed now at Whites. The heroes do nothing equivalent (although an anti-orc insult by Treebeard comes close). Racism is thus more associated with Saruman than Sauron, although it may be a convenient way to motivate his servants rather than his personal belief.

---

<sup>181</sup> Peter Firchow's "The Politics of Fantasy: Fascism and *The Hobbit*" reads links between fascism and Bilbo Baggins. Regardless of whether this reading is accepted, the points Firchow describes go unchallenged in the text and thus cannot be a form of *anti-Nazism*. My concern is with the racist elements of Nazism and their use in characterizing the villains. Still, any resonance between fascist notions and the *heroes* further emphasizes these texts' productively aspects.

Nonetheless, Saruman's defeat is treated much like the defeat of Smaug and the goblins in *The Hobbit*. It is a local victory, associated with some reconciliation between peoples but not a substitute therefore. On the other hand, the more general victory over Sauron reinstated an older status quo that was not without shortcomings. The racial hierarchies in Tolkien's works are associated with several other unjust hierarchies, including class and gender (Ruane and James 22–28). The race hierarchy remains unchallenged, and as Ruane and James note, "Sauron's destruction would appear to do little to change the existing class structure of the Shire, or the patriarchal hierarchy within families of Elves or other races" (29). The defeat of Sauron or Saruman may improve many lives, but it does not wholly set the world right.

*Star Wars* does similar work, now tied to Cold War politics. As discussed in chapter three, the Empire of the original *Star Wars* trilogy is racially homogeneous, unlike the multi-species and (eventually) multi-ethnic Rebellion. Casting the Empire as socialist and the Rebellion as democratic and capitalist reaffirms an ideal of anti-racist, capitalist democracy, implicitly branding the communists as racists and the racists as communists. This is a striking inversion of contemporary U.S. discourse, in which those who showed discontent with the prevailing order, including the racial one, were frequently accused of being communists. *Star Wars* reclaims that discourse for anti-racist democratic ends. At the same time, victory over the Empire is treated as a general victory, righting the world's problems, as with Sauron's and Voldemort's defeats. Given the contrast between racially homogenous and heterogenous spaces noted earlier, the defeat of the Empire may result in some improved conditions for many groups. However, discrimination against droids occurs even in multi-ethnic settings like Mos Eisley. There is every reason to assume that, even though droids join in celebrating the Empire's defeat, their circumstances will not notably improve.

Examining their perspective on anti-Nazi anti-racism draws out further producerly aspects of these texts, showing how anti-racism can also undermine itself by limiting its scope. These portrayals do anti-racist work in emphasizing the villainy of racism by associating racism with their villains. At the same time, they show the inadequacy of the approach, as defeating the villains has limited or negligible anti-racist outcomes. At the close of each series, racial hierarchies still organize the "free" peoples of Middle Earth, droids and house-elves alike are still enslaved, and groups such as werewolves, centaurs, and goblins can still not expect equal treatment under the law. Although these works focus on defeating the more overt evil, they cannot

completely close out the alternative narratives that arise. Readers can perceive other injustices that the heroes' victories do not address. As in the real world, anti-Nazi anti-racism calls for challenging those marked as "racists" and lets other anti-racist actions slip by.

### 5.3.3 Anti-Slavery: "That's not on! . . . You're setting them free when they might not want to be free!"

More striking than limiting focus, sometimes the text's producerly aspects can broadcast opposing stances directly. Pro-slavery and anti-slavery messages in these works show this quite clearly. Despite transparent connections between the two, opposition to slavery is not a form of anti-racism per se. Slavery existed in some forms long before the conception of modern racism. It had antecedents in numerous ancient societies, often among peoples who did not see their enslaved people as ethnically or racially distinct from themselves. Likewise, even after the Enlightenment, being for or against slavery did not correspond to a belief in racial equality. Positions on the favorable treatment of Blacks in the antebellum South in the United States, for example, did not necessarily go hand-in-hand with abolitionism, nor did beliefs in racial equality, although certain combinations of positions took a great deal of rationalizing. James Hunt, for example, argued that Blacks wanted enslavement and that abolitionists were not being sensitive to their needs (MacMaster 63–64). Hunt supported the practice of slavery purportedly (if in denial of all evidence) for the well-being of those enslaved. The obverse appears how Abraham Lincoln, at least for most of his career, supported abolitionism *and* the superiority of Whites, publicly defending beliefs in the congenital inferiority of blacks but arguing that this did not justify their enslavement (Fredrickson, *Big Enough*). Modern slavery has gone hand-in-hand with racism almost universally, however, to the point where opposition to the two stances often appears synonymous today. The works analyzed here likewise address slavery and anti-slavery in ways closely linked to racist and anti-racist positions. Anti-slavery, nonetheless, should not be mistaken for anti-racism, and anti-slavery alone is insufficient to ensure the defeat of racism.

Slavery is not uncommon in speculative fiction, nor is it always portrayed as evil, as Istvan Csicsery-Ronay discusses in *The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction* with the archetype Csicsery-Ronay calls "The Willing Slave" (229). Loyal, "slave-like" followers frequently accompany the heroes in speculative fiction. Usually technically a servant (serving of their own will, rather than compelled), such characters fulfill

the role of the “ideal” enslaved person through blind obedience and dogged faithfulness without reward, contract, or financial compensation. Such “willing slaves” are typically racially (human race or alien/fantasy race) distinct, further emphasizing links to modern slavery. The texts distance the heroes from blame for this arrangement by portraying the slave-like character as willing and eager to serve, often against their master’s wishes. The master may discourage the servant or deny the slave/master relationship. Even when not enslaved, such servants enact the fantasy of willing servitude James Hunt envisioned. They build on the appeal of slavery and worldviews used to rationalize it but focus on protecting the masters’ integrity. In doing so, they reinforce other class and race hierarchies within the same text.

This trope appears across all three sets of works to varying degrees. Each instance is further accompanied by other forms of more “real” slavery, creating a dynamic that condemns slavery, yet allows heroes loyal servants who happily act in the slave role while shielding their masters from condemnation for accepting their servitude. These roles always involve a sharp, unilateral power dynamic. The servants are often literally owned and almost always address the superior as “master.” Curiously, taken chronologically, the works discussed here become more accepting of slavery over time rather than less. The older works by Tolkien show actual slavery as an indefensible evil, and *Star Wars* treats slavery as mostly so, except in the case of droids. *Harry Potter* draws lines between acceptable and unacceptable forms of slavery on even more overtly racial lines.

Tolkien’s works position “actual” slavery exclusively with the villains and employ the Willing Slave trope in ways most distinct from actual slavery. Goblins enslave others in *The Hobbit*, as do Sauron and the Haradrim in *The Lord of the Rings*. Furthermore, the heroes liberate many enslaved people by defeating their masters (save for the orcs, whom they exterminate where possible), so the villains practice slavery, and the heroes oppose it. By contrast, Frodo enjoys a nigh-slave-like servitude from Samwise and (for a brief period) Sméagol. Sméagol calls Frodo “master” and follows him with outward obedience. However, his loyalty corrodes under the ring’s influence, a process first triggered by exposure to the cry of a Nazgul, suggesting his unwillingness is evil in origin. Like other Willing Slaves, Sméagol is racially distinct from his master, being a stoor rather than a fallohide. Once “tamed,” no need for force to enforce commands is initially required. Sméagol becomes almost



obscenely subservient, laughing at the slightest joke or even a kind word and crying if rebuked (*Lord* 604).

Nonetheless, even at the beginning, the language of violent discipline remains in his early descriptions, even while Frodo is spared from administering that violence. The text describes Sméagol's happiness as "like a whipped cur whose master has patted it" (604) and how "[h]e would cringe and flinch if they stepped near him or made any sudden movement" (604). Later, Frodo must make threats to ensure Sméagol's obedience and overcome his fear and hesitation. Still, the text characterizes his actions as being for Sméagol's good. Frodo can take the role of benevolent caretaker for Sméagol, pitying and sparing him and concerning himself with Sméagol's recovery from the ring's power. He can do this partly because the text deflects fear and mistrust of Sméagol onto Samwise. Further, Sméagol's untrustworthiness and the necessity of his services as a guide characterize Frodo's enslavement of him as a necessity for Frodo's survival and the success of his mission, mitigating his guilt. Frodo also attempts to free Sméagol upon reaching the borders of Mordor. Sméagol refuses the offer, allowing Frodo to reenact the token reluctance in slave ownership and emphasizing the willingness of his servants.

For most of his tale, Samwise also seems to embody the role of the Willing Slave and the status of only being happy when serving, as imagined by James Hunt, but the narrative takes great care to show that he is not enslaved in practice. As with other Willing Slaves, Samwise is racially distinct from his master (a hierarchically lower hobbit race). Unlike Smeagol, who is offered service as a form of mercy, Frodo never insists on Samwise's service. Samwise extends his service far beyond the requirements of any terms of employment and refers to Frodo, both in dialog and narration focalized through him, as "my master" and occasionally addresses Frodo directly as "master." Others speaking to Samwise (and Faramir speaking to Sméagol) about Frodo may call him "your master." The latter phrase is otherwise only used for Théoden, Denethor, and Sauron, curiously linking Frodo's relationship with his servants with that of powerful monarchs. Frodo, meanwhile, repeatedly tries to stop Samwise from serving, even attempting to leave him behind (and failing) in the Shire, at Rivendell, and at Emuin Muil, where the fellowship dissolves. This example shows a classic case of token refusal of service while keeping Sam's status distinct from an enslaved person's, emphasizing his servitude as being of his own volition. Unlike his treatment of Smeagol, Frodo never motivates Samwise with threats of violence, allowing Sam's obedience to be fueled entirely by his willingness and loyalty.

Even without being formally enslaved, Sam's servitude to Frodo might appear to naturalize class relationships, yet Sam's social class is not permanent. When Frodo finally does leave Samwise behind, as Frodo sails into the West (and to some extent even before he leaves), Samwise rises to a higher social class in the Shire. He becomes Mayor, inherits Frodo's wealth, becomes educated, and establishes himself as the patriarch of his line, with no apparent need to continue as a servant thereafter. Sam's servitude is highlighted as only the result of a particular loyalty, not because service was inherent. It is distinct from the racial predisposition to slavery Hunt described. *The Lord of the Rings* indulges the fantasy of the Willing Slave to a certain extent, but it draws clear boundaries between willing servants and the truly enslaved and strongly condemns the latter. As with anti-Nazi anti-racism's opposition to racist groups, however, this opposition to slavery does nothing to destabilize racial and other social inequalities. The hierarchy remains intact. Indeed, because some slavery occurred in defiance of that hierarchy, such as with White humans enslaved by Sauron, the orcs, or the Haradrim, the freeing of enslaved people may *reassert* the racial order. It supports the more stable inequities by opposing slavery structured contrary to them. Even then, Tolkien's works remain more egalitarian on slavery than those that follow them.

Unlike the purely anti-slavery heroes in Tolkien's works, the heroes keep enslaved droids in *Star Wars*. The droids never directly express a desire for freedom, and no liberated droids appear (outside of a brief slave revolt in *Solo: A Star Wars Story*). Even so, droids are not perfectly willing, happy only when serving. For example, on several occasions, the main droids express displeasure at their current ownership, R2-D2 when sold to Owen Lars and C-3PO when gifted to Jabba the Hutt. Furthermore, "restraining bolts" prevent droids from disobeying or escaping, which, together with Luke's comment that R2-D2 appears "too small to run away on me if I take this off" (*New Hope* 00:21) when removing one, indicates that droids fleeing enslavement is a known phenomenon. In addition, several references to possible (and actual during a scene in Jabba's palace) punishments for misbehaving droids appear throughout the original trilogy. Crimes range from running away or using an escape pod to the vaguely defined offenses of the droids punished by Jabba. These punishments suggest that threats of violence are needed to keep the droids in line. They hint at a history of resistance rather than quiet, willing servitude. This slavery is otherwise naturalized, but these hints point toward a further layer of producerly meaning, exposing the contradictions and pointing to possible alternate narratives.

Still, droids are not the only beings enslaved. Other beings, including protagonists, are enslaved at various points in the series. The earliest published examples of this appear in Jabba's Palace on Tatooine during *The Return of the Jedi*, where several sapient organic beings, including Leia, are enslaved by Jabba the Hutt (in addition to droids). The prequel trilogy shows other slavery with the enslavement of humans on Tatooine, including Anakin Skywalker and his mother, Shmi. Non-droid slavery appears again in *Solo: A Star Wars Story* (through the enslaved wookiees, including Chewbacca and non-wookiee miners) and in *Episode VIII: The Last Jedi*, with enslaved children and possibly fathiers<sup>182</sup> in Canto Bight. In each case, slavery is practiced exclusively by villainous characters or groups. At least with slavery on Tatooine in the prequel trilogy, the text marks its distance from heroic methods, forbidden by "the Republic's anti-slavery laws" (*Phantom* 00:39). In every case, the heroes act to liberate these enslaved organic peoples. The heroes opposing organic slavery while practicing inorganic slavery establishes additional ground for producing alternate readings. It also reinforces the hierarchy of organic over inorganic that runs throughout the series, further subordinating droids below organic life forms.

In some of these latter cases, the slavery is racial, as with the droids. Jabba seems to enslave creatures indiscriminately, but *Solo: A Star Wars Story* indicates that wookiees have all been enslaved (although humans appear as enslaved as well as enslavers). Adilifu Nama has read the slavery on Tatooine in the prequel trilogy as racial, with Anakin filling a role "cloaked in familiar signifiers of black racial identity" (63). Nama sees Watto's line, in which he tells Qui-Gon that Anakin is "a credit to your race," as having a double meaning, referring both to the pod race they are about to enter and to their mutual status as humans, with a phrase "used at various periods in American history" with Black Americans (63). This rhetorical link further emphasizes the racialized nature of this form of slavery.

The Willing Slave trope is also frequent in *Star Wars* and curiously less distanced from actual slavery than in Tolkien's works, despite changes in racial politics. In the original trilogy, Luke Skywalker owns two enslaved droids. He resists the moral implications of this ownership in several ways. Firstly, save for R2-D2's initial attempt to escape, the droids serve him willingly, sparing Luke the necessity of enforcing his control over the droids. Even when R2-D2 flees, C-3PO again spares Luke the disciplinary responsibility, threatening R2-D2 himself and keeping the will to ensure the slave condition firmly in droid hands. Luke can be

---

<sup>182</sup> It is not clear from the film whether the fathiers are sapient.

magnanimous in declining C-3PO's suggested punishments. The text deflects his responsibility for the trip to recover R2-D2 in two ways. First, Luke will be in trouble with his uncle if he fails to recover the droids. Second, R2-D2 flees into personal danger, making Luke's recovery effort as much a rescue mission as recapturing a runaway. On top of this, Luke makes token efforts to deny or diminish the slave/master relationship. The most obvious of these is in his first conversation with C-3PO, in which Luke objects to being called "Sir":

C-3PO: I see, sir.

Luke: You can call me "Luke."

C-3PO: I see, Sir Luke.

Luke: Ha ha, no, just "Luke." (*New Hope* 00:19)

Luke's insistence on first names shows his commitment to equality in his interaction, nominally declining the position of power that C-3PO places upon him by his deference. The use of "Sir Luke" ties Luke to themes of medieval romance and knighthood typical of the trilogy while also acting as a noble title. Luke's rejection of it further strengthens his ties to democratic values. Given Luke's resistance to these titles, it is ironic that C-3PO thereafter refers to Luke as "Master Luke." The latter title is arguably<sup>183</sup> even more deferential than "Sir" (which C-3PO also persists in using). C-3PO's insistence on using deferential titles for Luke, despite Luke's objections, further keeps responsibility for his subservience in droid hands.

Luke's relationship with his droids parallels other Willing Slave relationships throughout the series, such as Jar Jar Binks and Qui-Gon Jinn in the prequel trilogy. Qui-Gon and Jar Jar's relationship is likewise established through the willingness of the ethnically distinct Jar Jar, who insists upon his servitude, saying his gods demand it. Qui-Gon makes a token effort to decline, briefly trying to get rid of Jar Jar before realizing his potential usefulness. Another example appears in the relationship between Poe Dameron and the droid BB-8 in the sequel trilogy. BB-8 willingly serves Poe, who in turn refers to the droid as "my droid" when speaking to others but uses terms like "Buddy" when speaking to BB-8 directly, using the latter term to deny (even while acknowledging elsewhere) the master/servant nature of the relationship, focusing instead on their friendship.

---

<sup>183</sup> Technically, as a protocol droid, C-3PO uses the correct title for an unmarried man by calling Luke "Master" instead of "Mister." Nonetheless, it is difficult to escape the broader connotations of "master" in a slave relationship.

The producerly aspects of slavery in *Star Wars* operate on numerous levels. The Willing Slave trope emphasizes the droids' willingness to serve, even while comments about punishment, escape, and restraining bolts undercut that supposed willingness. Multiple liberation stories forward anti-slavery narratives, while naturalized relations between droids and their masters forward the opposite. Different rules for organic and inorganic slavery reinforce existing hierarchies, yet even the naturalized droid slavery contains hints of resistance. Droids show an outward willingness but may sometimes be unhappy with specific arrangements and do not need enslavement to be happy. The latter is more than can be said of the house-elves of *Harry Potter*.

In *Harry Potter*, slavery takes many forms, including both forms endorsed by the narrative and forms wholly condemned. However, *Harry Potter*'s endorsed form of slavery is not distinguished from actual slavery, as Samwise's service is. As with droid slavery in *Star Wars*, *Harry Potter* establishes an ethics of slavery which draws clear racial lines. *Harry Potter* goes beyond *Star Wars* by treating that service as based on an innate desire to serve, yet even that desire is marked by certain contradictions, at least among the house-elves. These numerous forms of slavery in *Harry Potter* paint a complex picture of slave ethics, which bears considerable nuance but is ultimately troubling in its implications.

*Harry Potter* has many kinds of slavery, but they are not always easily recognizable. Only house-elf servitude in *Harry Potter* is referred to as slavery and rarely, with only six tokens of the lemma *slave*, one of *slavery*, and eight combined of *enslave* and *enslavement*.<sup>184</sup> All tokens but one of *slave* and *slavery* are from *Goblet of Fire* (three of them from one chapter as part of the phrase "slave labor") and all by Hermione Granger.<sup>185</sup> Despite this limited range of references, forced servitude takes several forms in the books. These can divide prototypically into work based on coercion (magical or otherwise) and labor extracted because of the inherent desire of the laborers. There is some slippage between the categories, but the enslaved individual's race always determines the moral weight of the enslavement. Coerced

---

<sup>184</sup> One further token exists, where Barty Crouch Jr. uses it to describe his imprisonment in Azkaban. Since Azkaban prisoners do not experience forced labor, their imprisonment is not considered here under the heading of slavery.

<sup>185</sup> Other characters use *enslave* or *enslavement*, but only Hermione uses *slave* or *slavery*. The relative hesitation of other characters to use the latter seems to reflect a similar hesitation about engaging with house-elf enslavement as a possible moral wrong. While the text is not sympathetic to Hermione's activism, there can be no doubt that house-elves are enslaved.

forms of slavery center around those kidnapped and compelled into servitude by Lord Voldemort and those controlled by the imperius curse. Less prototypical forms include the service of the Death Eaters for Voldemort or house-elves. The Death Eaters presumably volunteered for service but now serve with varying mixtures of fear and loyalty and are no longer free to abandon their work. House-elves are magically coerced but also seem genuinely interested in serving. Labor based solely on the inherent desire of the laborers includes creatures such as owls.

The most straightforward form of magical coercion, and one whose use ethics are distinctly racialized, is the imperius curse. The imperius curse is a powerful spell that wizards use to control another living being completely. The spell compels individuals who cannot resist to follow orders given to them by the one who cursed them, including both labor and acts that are self-destructive or contrary to their nature. Some spell uses seem only to last for a matter of minutes. In other cases, wizards use the curse to keep individuals in subjection for years. Voldemort, various Death Eaters, members of the Order of the Phoenix, and even Harry Potter use the spell. Highly legally restricted, as one of the so-called “unforgivable curses,” the use of the curse “on a *fellow human being* is enough to earn a life sentence in Azkaban” (*Goblet* 192, emphasis added). “Human being” points to a distinction between humans and non-humans in using such spells. It is also permitted to use them against those suspected of being dark wizards, thanks to legislation by Barty Crouch (*Goblet* 457). These are important distinctions for understanding the books’ stance toward this form of slavery. Harry Potter uses unforgivable curses against dark wizards and goblins, the prior admissible because of Crouch’s policy and the latter because they are not “human beings.” Uses by other members of the Order of the Phoenix are also against criminals or dark wizards. In particular, McGonagall’s use of the imperius curse to force an already-subdued Death Eater to cooperate with being bound more securely seems somewhat gratuitous. It suggests an off-hand, unproblematic use of the spell, not a compromise of standards made as a last resort. The willingness of heroic characters to work within these exceptions adds moral weight to the distinctions they make. It suggests that the curse is legally *and* morally permissible when the victim is a dark wizard or a non-human. Only unsympathetic characters, including Voldemort and his Death Eaters, use it against innocent humans, adding to the implicit villainy of using the spell in that fashion.

More telling is how heroic characters use the confundus charm against innocent human targets versus the imperius curse for non-humans and non-innocent

humans. The distinction between their use can often be explained only via their ethical implications and not by their utility. The purpose of the confundus charm is to befuddle the victim, making them confused and easy to misdirect, not outright controlling them. For example, the heroes use this spell to avoid detection by human gate guards outside Gringotts. However, to bypass the goblins in the same endeavor and throw an inquisitive Death Eater off their trail, they use the imperius curse, even though the Death Eater needed only to be confused and misdirected, not controlled. Likewise, when Dumbledore orders Snape to gather information from Mundungus Fletcher and instruct him on a new plan to protect Harry, Dumbledore tells Snape to try “Confunding” him (*Deathly* 688). Snape compelling Mundungus to give up and pass on information, behave a certain way, and hide Snape’s involvement makes little sense with confundus charm as previously described. It should only be possible to perform that level of control via the imperius curse. The only logical explanation<sup>186</sup> for referring to the confundus charm rather than the imperius curse is to avoid placing moral condemnation on Snape. Each heroic character uses the confundus charm on innocent humans and the imperius curse on non-humans or non-innocents, *even when the choice of spells is not otherwise logical*. This further hints at an ethical distinction based on the guilt and race of the victim: slavery via the imperius curse is wrong only when the victim is innocent and of a certain race.<sup>187</sup>

---

<sup>186</sup> There are at least four ways to read this, but they all hinge on this exact point. The first option is to assume, as above, that the confundus charm used by Snape, in this case, is functioning differently than usual. It behaves instead as the imperius curse, which helps reveal the ethics of using the imperius curse on different victims, even while assuming some narrative inconsistency. Another possibility is that Snape defied Dumbledore’s orders and used the imperius curse and not the confundus charm (we never see him casting the spell). In that case, Dumbledore’s reluctance to order the imperius curse, despite needing its effects, shows his idealism versus Snape’s willingness to compromise his integrity in the name of a greater good. The third way is to assume that Snape used the confundus charm and is just so good at manipulating people (and Mundungus is so impressionable) that he can get Mundungus to perform as desired long afterward, despite only having confused him for a short period. The latter seems the least likely, considering Snape’s direct orders to Mundungus. The second offers the best compromise of combining likelihood with narrative consistency. However, all three options support Snape using the confundus charm as a less ethically questionable alternative to the imperius curse and thus support the argument above. The imperius curse would have been a more practical choice. Dumbledore decided not to order it. If Snape followed those orders, he either had to go to great pains to do so, or the diegetic logic itself had to be bent to allow him to succeed and keep his hands clean. The only remaining reading would be to assume that the confundus charm could have had that effect all along. This reading makes choices between the two spells somewhat arbitrary. It brings into question all uses of the imperius curse thus far. If the spell selection is functionally meaningless, we must assume no moral impediments whenever heroic characters to use the imperius curse. Otherwise, they would always use the confundus charm.

<sup>187</sup> These are probably not wholly distinct criteria. Goblins appear as selfish and cruel creatures and may not be inherently innocent. At no point does Harry use an unforgivable curse against a house-elf or other more sympathetic non-human. Nonetheless, being qualified for slavery because of guilt and

Service based on the racially-inherent desire of the serving to serve shows racial distinctions in the ethics of slavery from a different perspective. It goes beyond showing slavery as permissible based on specific racial identities to making it an *aspect* of those racial identities. Many intelligent non-humans serve wizards, apparently of their own free will. House-elves are the most obvious because challenges to their subservience draw attention to it. By contrast, owls are intelligent (they can read, count, understand speech, and have a sense of social status) and frequently labor on behalf of wizards. They are owned and not paid. This servitude goes unmarked because neither the owls nor anyone else objects to it. If owls can be set free or must punish themselves for disobedience, the readers cannot tell because freeing them is never considered, and none of them disobey.<sup>188</sup>

House-elves, by contrast, are occasionally reluctant to follow orders. They have a method whereby others can free them, and Hermione Granger's activism highlights their status. Their enslaved status is thus much more apparent than the owls'. This contrast somewhat undermines the rationale for their enslavement, which rationale Farah Mendlesohn rightly notes comes "straight from the American antebellum South" (180), as indicated through the example of James Hunt above. This portrayal is fraught with conflicting meanings. After all, if house-elves desire the exact situation they already find themselves in, their status should appear to the reader no different from owls. It is precisely the discontent of house-elves like Winky, Dobby, and Kreacher that allow the reader to understand the rules that govern their servitude. They frequently desire to disobey and often do, so they must punish themselves in grotesque fashions. Like the droids of *Star Wars*, compulsions (magic instead of restraining bolts) and threats of violence (self-inflicted instead of externally applied) keep the house-elves in line. However, the open discourse of willing slavery makes this smack all the more strongly of contradiction. Just as with the real-life enslaved people James Hunt and his contemporaries spoke of, slavery operates through force and violence, not the natural subservience Hunt imagined. The *Harry Potter* series seems unable to reconcile the inconsistencies that this entails.

Despite this more overt slavery, the trope of the Willing Slave still plays out in *Harry Potter*. It further betrays the contradictions inherent in the text by mitigating

---

guilty because of race is still immensely troubling and no different in practice than being qualified by race alone.

<sup>188</sup> Although Hedwig may sulk and need to be coaxed or manipulated into performing a delivery at times. When she is locked in her cage at the Dursley's insistence, she objects, but her objection is downplayed as boredom from being unable to fly outside.



guilt where no guilt ought to exist. The slavery of owls is sufficiently unmarked to require no further mitigation for owl owners, yet some mitigation still appears. For example, Ron and Harry receive their owls as gifts rather than purchasing them, although neither attempts to refuse the gift or set the owl free. Similarly, when Hedwig must be locked away in a cage for a prolonged period, it is never because of Harry's choice but because the Dursleys compel it.

Nonetheless, Harry owns one house-elf by the end of the series and accepts the assistance of a second, and the usual tactics for mitigating the guilt of the Willing Slave's master appear on Harry's behalf. Dobby, who assists Harry but does not belong to him, is freed from his enslavement to the Malfoys and serves Harry out of a mixture of friendship, gratitude, and hero-worship. He exchanges service to the Malfoys for a situation in which, in his own words, "Dobby is a free house-elf and he can obey anyone he likes and Dobby will do whatever Harry Potter wants him to do!" (*Half-Blood* 394)

Still, Harry's relationship with Dobby is distinct from a master/slave relationship despite Dobby's willingness. Harry resists giving Dobby instructions in most cases and offers presents to show his gratitude when Dobby helps him. His requests for Dobby's lack of service, beginning with asking Dobby never to try to save his life again, are more successful than Frodo's attempts to end Samwise's service.<sup>189</sup> No such distinction appears with Kreacher, whom Harry both owns and commands. Harry evades blame for this ownership by being unable to release Kreacher due to other obligations, initially refusing Kreacher's service and sending him to serve others rather than fulfilling Harry's wishes. Harry eventually accepts Kreacher's servitude. Although Kreacher is likewise initially unwilling, Harry ultimately wins Kreacher's loyalty. He retains his service until the end of the series, referencing it in the last pre-epilogue sentence, after his reasons for being unable to free Kreacher have ceased to be relevant.

The *Harry Potter* series thus shows a variety of anti-slavery *and* pro-slavery narratives. Of these, the latter are dominant and most overtly linked to slavery. Enslavement via the imperius curse or the mode of house-elves is seen as justified or allowable when it occurs along appropriate racial lines. *Harry Potter* also has a main

---

<sup>189</sup> Although in a moment of great irony, Dobby eventually does come to save Harry's life again but at the instruction of Aberforth Dumbledore. Dobby succeeds in rescuing Harry and his companions but receives a mortal wound and dies in the process.

character who has an enslaved elf and several major characters who own owls. The text identifies only the ownership of elves as slavery. The text seeks to rationalize pro-slavery positions, including those of elves, through appeals to Willing Slave tropes and racial predispositions to servitude. It does not justify the forced servitude by Voldemort, yet neither does it acknowledge it as slavery, per se, thus failing to link Voldemort's activities to a condemnation of enslavement. Further producerliness arises as the text undercuts pro-elf-slavery narratives through abuses of house-elves and sympathy for them. Even so, these instances of house-elf abuse never directly contradict the pro-slavery narrative, only suggesting a need for better treatment of the enslaved. Still, they cannot entirely escape the master/slave relationship making the abuses possible; thus, alternate meanings continue to emerge.

While anti-slavery is not necessarily a form of anti-racism, a failure to oppose racialized forms of slavery is very much a failure of anti-racism. Looking at these works in their mutual context, we see only Tolkien's works taking a broad stance against "actual" slavery. It endorses unpaid servitude only when necessary by circumstances or insisted upon by those serving. Even then, such loyalty is richly rewarded (although not as payment for services but as grateful hospitality and in making the servant an heir to the master's wealth). *Star Wars* takes a similarly broad stance against slavery, save that it has a blind spot for enslaving inorganic beings (droids), effecting an endorsement of slavery along racial lines. Regardless, such slavery is not wholly naturalized, and there are hints about droid resistance to their forced servitude. *Harry Potter*, on the contrary, distinguishes between acceptable and unacceptable slavery on strictly racial lines, and various beings have predispositions to servitude, naturalizing their enslavement. The use of Willing Slave tropes, even with the non-enslaved, is troubling from an anti-racist perspective. To quote Jackie Horne, it is "too likely to play into wish-fulfillment fantasies only too common in our own world that other races or nationalities desire to serve our needs" (101). The dominance of such representations represents a severe weakening of anti-racism regarding slavery in *The Lord of the Rings*. It constitutes a grave failure of the same in the world architecture of *Star Wars* and an even more severe failure in *Harry Potter*.

### 5.3.4 Particularist Anti-Racism: “Duties ill-befitting the dignity of my race. . . I am not a house-elf.”

In the final type of producerly engagement discussed here, works may display a form of anti-racism and then vilify it. Whereas diversity management fails to meet some goals in these works and anti-slavery adopts both pro- and anti- stances, “particularist anti-racism” is outright rejected, and rightly so. This rejection is similar to the works’ take on strategic essentialism, except that particularist anti-racism does not reveal virtues, however reluctantly. Strategic essentialism does. Their producerly aspects lie only in whether they are read as a critique of anti-racism in general or simply of a particular type of anti-racist hypocrisy.

Ghassan Hage uses the term “particularist anti-racism” to describe an anti-racism that Hage sees exemplified by many institutional actors in present-day Israel and “white populations in Europe, the USA, Canada, and Australia” who make claims about “reverse racism” (127). This anti-racist approach is less concerned with countering racism in general than with racial discrimination directed at oneself or one’s group. According to Hage, individuals employing this approach “don’t mind racism as such” and “often are happy to dispense racism themselves” (127), but they instead focus on anti-racism for their benefit. This self-interested anti-racism is anti-racism in name only. It aims not to overturn unjust hierarchies but to secure one’s position within them, using anti-racist methods as a means to that end. Most forms of this anti-racism emerged after the early successes of other anti-racism, often tied to the “white backlash” that developed from the 1960s and solidified in concepts of reverse racism from the 1980s onward (Hughey “White” 722–23).

The only characters who openly engage in this type of anti-racism in any of the works are the goblins of *Harry Potter*, especially Griphook. Griphook makes numerous claims about wrongs done to goblins by wizards, demanding redress and seeking to reclaim goods he sees as being stolen from goblins (primarily via differences in goblin and wizard property laws). He leaves Gringotts when dark wizards take over, insisting that “I recognize no Wizarding master” (*Deathly* 296). He objects to Voldemort’s rise to power in terms of objecting to racism, telling the protagonists, “As the Dark Lord becomes ever more powerful, your race is set still more firmly above mine! Gringotts falls under Wizarding rule, house-elves are slaughtered, and who amongst the wand-carriers protests?” (*Deathly* 488) Of all the objections to Voldemort’s rule that Griphook could make, he chooses to focus on

the oppression of non-humans (the takeover of Gringotts and the slaughter of house-elves) and racial injustice (“your race is set still more firmly above mine”).

Nonetheless, Griphook’s goals and methods reveal a certain degree of hypocrisy. His supposed concern over the slaughter of house-elves never results in action on behalf of house-elves, for example. Despite this slaughter and the fact that opposing Voldemort would prevent further deaths for house-elves, Griphook resists becoming involved, declaring it “a wizards’ war” (*Deathly* 296). He only takes action when it serves the interests of goblins, leaving Gringotts when wizards take it over and helping Harry and his friends when it offers the chance to reclaim Gryffindor’s sword for goblins. He betrays them once he has it. He proves to be “unexpectedly bloodthirsty, laughed at the idea of pain in lesser creatures, and seemed to relish the possibility that they might have to hurt other wizards” (*Deathly* 509). Other goblins, such as his traveling companion Gornuk, reflect his attitude. Gornuk left Gringotts after being asked to take on “Duties ill-befitting the dignity of my race,” saying he was “not a house-elf” (*Deathly* 296). His statement reveals a shared loyalty to the hierarchical status of goblins and a belief in house-elves’ racial inferiority. Ron refers once to “goblin stories. . . about how wizards are always trying to get one over on them” (*Deathly* 506), which suggests that Griphook’s use of anti-racist discourse for his gain is not unique to him.

*Harry Potter* shows a keen awareness of this hypocritical form of anti-racism, which it displays through Griphook and other goblin characters. It establishes an alternative narrative on anti-racism by showing how anti-racist rhetoric can combine with racism and self-serving hypocrisy. Direct references to “race” appearing only in cases like these invites interpretation that takes Griphook and Hermione as representative of anti-racism in general. Still, as I have demonstrated, *Harry Potter* engages on many levels with anti-racism, constantly exposing the limits, contradictions, and possibilities written into each form. This context opens the alternative reading above of Griphook’s as an expressly particularist anti-racism, one well deserving of criticism but not representative of anti-racism as a whole.

As this chapter has established, *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *Star Wars*, and *Harry Potter* engage with anti-racism on many levels. These engagements reveal the producerly aspects of the works, as various gaps and reluctant contradictions reveal the weaknesses and limitations of their preferred approaches or open them up to

alternative readings by ideologically determined audiences. Those prone to guerrilla approaches will find ample resources to resist a given text's dominant world architectural framework. Nonetheless, one cannot ignore the ideological frameworks of the world architecture, for the text constitutes the resources employed in that resistance and thus, in part, defines its parameters.

The works favor relativist anti-racist approaches over universalist anti-racist approaches regarding non-humans. Such use reveals the weaknesses of relativist anti-racism, and some are openly critical of certain varieties of anti-racism. When universalist approaches appear, they focus on humans rather than group distinctions among non-humans. These approaches are susceptible to the tendencies of “colorblindness” in *Harry Potter*, but only in minor ways. Its relativist differences, at least, are not distanced from the language of real-world racism. Even so, the works vary significantly in employing each form of anti-racism. *Harry Potter* makes the most heavy-handed use of anti-Nazi anti-racism, for example, characterizing the villainous groups as bigoted compared to the egalitarian and anti-racist heroes. However, just as concerns about anti-Nazi approaches to anti-racism in the real world, it substitutes opposing the evil, racist groups for efforts to overcome bigotry and discrimination. At the same time, it takes the weakest anti-slavery stance, opposing slavery only when it does not fall along approved racial lines. Intragroup diversity appears more profoundly in the earlier works than in *Harry Potter*. Still, none seem to engage with the anti-racist rationale for intragroup diversity, only with the market-driven ones, which came to the fore with diversity management. They market racial inclusiveness as beneficial for the organization and ignore possible benefits to subordinated groups. This trend, along with the use of the Willing Slave trope, “plays into wish-fulfillment fantasies only too common in our own world that other races or nationalities desire to serve our [presumably White Western] needs” (Horne 101). It positions members of subordinated groups as useful without concerning how those groups might benefit. Along with relativist anti-racism, these approaches serve to check off anti-racism while leaving the hierarchy intact, if not reinforcing it.

At the same time and to a higher degree than the other works, *Harry Potter* satirizes several forms of anti-racism, from general activist agendas (through Hermione’s S.P.E.W. efforts) to diversity management and particularist anti-racism. *Harry Potter* also takes a much more cynical approach to racial tolerance, while *Harry Potter* and *The Lord of the Rings* show strategic essentialism in a bad light. *Harry Potter* reflects the post-Cold War “paradigms of pessimism” (Torres and Kyriakides VIII).

Its engagements reflect the growing unease about what anti-racism is, an attitude especially pronounced in the post-civil rights era. It casts anti-racist activism as an “intolerant tradition” (Bonnett 161) out to “stir things up” (Bonnett 165), even while the works make a pronounced effort to counter racism through other means. *Harry Potter* also makes the most stringent and overt engagement with universalist anti-racism. It curiously locates the most anti-anti-racist sentiments and the most progressive anti-racism within the same texts. The strategies are most distinct between internal human divisions and the human/non-human divide. Regardless, *Harry Potter’s* criticism of some forms of anti-racism is not a recommendation of universalism over relativism. The text satirizes Hermione’s efforts precisely *because* they are universalist, denying the genuine differences in house-elf desires. It reserves universalism exclusively for human divisions.

Each of these positions reluctantly reveals opposing voices. In a producerly layering of conflicting meanings, the works leave space so that, for example, a reader pre-disposed to anti-racist activism may find reaffirmation of their position in the text of *Harry Potter*. Meanwhile, readers suspicious of anti-racism can even more easily find a narrative supporting their worldview. Still, this does not mean the texts are entirely open. A proponent of Neo-Nazism will find few resources and considerable opposition in the same text for generating a favorable reading. Popular producerly texts such as these have an openness that extends across a broad range of mainstream positions. They thus open themselves up for acceptance by as large a portion of the populace as possible. Simultaneously embracing relativism and universalism in different ways, with both essentialism and anti-essentialism, and condemning only the most extreme racist practices comprise only a few of the ways these texts maintain their ideological accessibility. Relative to Fiske’s claim that popular culture “cannot be radical” (*Understanding* 149), works like these can be as radical as they like. However, they must also make room for a wide range of more moderate perspectives, allowing those troubled by radicalism to bypass it at their leisure. Tolkien’s works make this clear with their ahead-of-their-time appeal to racial tolerance, as does *Harry Potter’s* past-its-time pro-slavery narrative. A close reading of world architecture reveals the dominant messages *and* the resources available for producing alternate interpretations.

## 6 CONCLUSION

On the one hand, hearkening back to the definition of racism described in chapter one, one might be tempted to boil down the various chapters of this thesis into a single, final question: “Are *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *Star Wars*, and *Harry Potter* racist?” If one accepts a definition of “race” that refers to varieties of intelligent creatures rather than varieties of humanity, then the answer must be an unequivocal yes. The world architectures include ideological frameworks that posit the existence of “races,” which are discrete, hereditary, and meaningful regarding many features. The usual features of racism, including determinism and social hierarchies, visibly extend therefrom. If one insists on a definition of “race” that restricts it to varieties of human beings, one *might* decide to answer “no.” However, such an answer would require significant qualification, especially in Tolkien’s works and least so in *Star Wars*. The biggest of those qualifications would lie around human races and sub-races in Tolkien’s work, with at least a few deterministic features among Númenoreans, and Whiteness across all the works, creating distinctions among groups, including White and BIPOC humans.

On the other hand, one might try to take the question in another direction, asking whether the works are *anti-racist*. To this, one might also answer “yes,” regardless of how “race” is defined, yet the anti-racism of each piece is not wholly unproblematic. The forms of anti-racism employed include many shortcomings, which the works occasionally highlight and never fully conceal,<sup>190</sup> even if they do not always acknowledge them as such. The works also contain many significant failures of anti-racism, one of the most striking of which is how the later works (*Star Wars* and *Harry Potter*) endorse the practice of slavery along distinctly racial lines. The anti-racism they employ is generally insufficient to fully counteract the patterns of race, racial determinism, and racial hierarchies found in the same.

---

<sup>190</sup> This should be contrasted with the example of *Trolls: World Tour* from the beginning of chapter five, which film completely avoids displaying any potential shortcomings to its anti-racist strategy. Critiquing the anti-racism of *Trolls* requires looking outside the text, but the shortcomings of the anti-racisms of *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *Star Wars*, and *Harry Potter* can be illustrated with examples from the works themselves.

Answering either question so succinctly involves a vast oversimplification of the nuanced ideological engagements of each of these works. The world architectures of each coexist with a wide array of ideological frameworks, which intersect and overlap in a myriad of complex ways. Anti-racism builds upon the assumptions of racism in these works. Nevertheless, it also modifies and refines those assumptions, creating exclusions and exceptions, opening avenues for resistance and opportunities for alternative readings, and filling the texts with a diversity of productive contradictions and unexpected synergies. Tolkien's hierarchies engage in a dialog between his Great Chain of Being and the natural hierarchies of Whiteness, while his works skirt traditional notions of intellectual superiority and inferiority. The original *Star Wars* trilogy offers enterprise and freedom from determinism to White women and non-White men, even while reinforcing White men's heroism and implicit superiority, as they alone endure agony and struggle with metaphysical darkness. *Harry Potter* places essentialism and anti-essentialism side-by-side, supporting both while critiquing each as it manifests outside its designated social sphere.

These widely-distributed works from White authors offer a limited glance into the vast menagerie of speculative fiction. However, that glance is enough to reveal sophistication and nuance in the ideological engagements that bear broader investigation. Using speculative elements in the world architecture of these works allows for rich and rewarding encounters with various ideologies and artistic agendas. It opens new possibilities for studying literature, allowing us to tease out precious details about the aims and assumptions of their world architectures. One can imagine, indeed *speculate*, about what sorts of insights and treasures a study of a broader scope, including more marginal works and the works of authors with more racially "marked" identities, might bring. Of course, one need not write fiction about fiction.

Nonetheless, this study has already provided many insights. Comparing the world architecture of these works to the ideological frameworks of racism has helped to show an ongoing dialogue between the two. Contrary to earlier claims that racism in speculative fiction inherits from an older tradition, the works reveal an ongoing connection to contemporary racisms, side-by-side with older forms. Thus Tolkien's works have explicit hierarchies, complex taxonomies, and strong determinism. By contrast, *Harry Potter* and *Star Wars* have more muted hierarchies and simpler taxonomies. Their determinism is weaker and less foregrounded. Beliefs about the



effects of interracial ancestry become steadily more progressive in the fantasy works, even while remaining founded on determinism. *Harry Potter*, meanwhile, engages with non-human differences in a way strongly reminiscent of “new racism.”

At the same time, each work resists or negotiates contemporary discourse remarkably, diverging from mainstream positions. Tolkien’s works gravitate toward the more egalitarian positions of their time while muting or rejecting intellectual hierarchies. *Star Wars* engages with contemporary debates surrounding links between racism/anti-racism and capitalism, socialism, authoritarianism, and democracy. It links anti-racism with democratic capitalism and racism with authoritarian socialism. This link is an inversion of the picture painted by contemporary Soviet propagandists, who advertised Western democratic capitalist racism. It also counters the stance of contemporary Westerners who sought to discredit anti-racists by linking their claims with socialism. Such a position also flatters colorblind perspectives, reinforcing a vision in which domestic inequality is no more, turning attention to the external enemy. *Harry Potter* includes more explicit intellectual hierarchies and profound psychological differences not often referenced in later discourse.

Whatever progressiveness each may entail, the works continue to normalize beliefs and social relationships that contribute to real-world discrimination. The portrayals employed for non-humans in these works are the same as those ideologies have (and continue to) apply to real-world humans. These fictional (in both senses) traits provide an ongoing motivation for inequality, marginalization, and violence. As argued in chapter one, using such traits in fiction highlights the appeal of a society ordered around such traits. It continues to provide an incentive for those seeking to order real societies the same way. Employing these traits in popular works thus directly contributes to real-world inequality.

I have also shown how Whiteness operates in the works through normativity, enterprise, gendered portrayals, color-coding, and reproductive anxieties. Patterns in the language show the text normalizing the position of some groups more than others, predominantly White human males and maiar. Similar normalizing patterns appear with enterprise and gendered portrayals, as different groups are marked as White to different degrees by each trait.

The works also challenge patterns of idealized White femininity and its association with disempowerment. Most of Tolkien’s idealized White women are

superlatively beautiful but superlatively passive. Tolkien's work allows the beauty standard to extend equally, if rarely, to dark hair but always ties it to white skin. Through Eowyn, however, Tolkien allows a merger of idealized White femininity and agency. Eowyn's descriptions merge the language of White femininity with desire and martial prowess from her first introduction to the moment of her greatest battlefield triumph. She sets a precedent for empowered, beautiful White women, which would be influential in much later speculative fiction. *Star Wars* makes such a presentation its norm, with similarly idealized women who act as strong agents. *Harry Potter* pushes the furthest, however. It not only extends the patterns of idealization to non-white skin (while keeping it centered on blonde hair, white skin, and blue eyes). It also divorces the pattern from issues of empowerment. If Eowyn's example declares that women can be strong and beautiful, *Harry Potter's* women remind us that women need not be beautiful to be strong.

Analysis of droids in the *Star Wars* original trilogy and prequels builds on these themes to reveal anxieties over sex and reproduction in the works. R2-D2 and C-3PO are constructed as superlatively White and contrasted to the non-Whiteness of the battle droids. Comparing them shows how Whiteness intertwines with reproductive anxieties. Contrasts in their means of production resonate with dominant discourses about quickly reproducing non-Whites swamping and overwhelming slower-producing Whites. The mass-produced battle droids reenact swamping fears as they overwhelm the Jedi in the arena battle scene, while the head-swapped C-3PO reinforces the mind-body separation that characterizes the White/non-White divide.

Whiteness establishes a graded hierarchy in each of the works I study here. These conform to the otherwise noted hierarchies, except Whiteness's hierarchy places humans above elves. This latter contradiction necessitates the elves' departure at the end of *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien's elves cannot be the superiors of humans as described. The only way to maintain the illusion of their superiority is to have them depart Middle Earth to a place humans cannot follow. Some resistance also appears with house-elves and droids. While not at the top of the hierarchy, the texts ascribe them more traits of Whiteness than expected from their position in a slave class. Other groups have their position in the hierarchy reinforced through the unspoken traits of Whiteness. "Whiter" groups are allowed to naturally assume their place as superiors to those who are less "White." This trend is especially noteworthy for building on the hierarchies noted in chapter three and marking them to include

distinctions *among* humans, not just between humans and different non-human groups. It more clearly places White male humans ahead of BIPOC male humans and White female humans. BIPOC female humans remain wholly marginal in the rare cases they appear at all.

The texts further reinforce the hierarchy between White and BIPOC humans by color-coding among some groups. Among centaurs in *Harry Potter* or humans and orcs in *The Lord of the Rings*, darker pigmentation corresponds to relative evil and lighter skin to relative moral goodness. This pattern directly links moral alignment and lightness of skin and hair, further reinforcing the White over BIPOC hierarchy. Moreover, in stories where the forces of “light” battle forces of “darkness,” any slippage between moral and racial light and dark run the risk of racializing the entire narrative. *Harry Potter* better resists this racializing of the central conflict than Tolkien’s works by placing most dark-skinned humans on the side of “light.” Nevertheless, it veers into dangerous territory in allowing centaurs to be thus coded, and none of the works show a contrary trend, with pigmentation running opposite to the light-dark moral spectrum.

Finally, my dissertation provides insights into the producerly encoding of anti-racism. Each of the texts engages intimately with numerous forms of anti-racism. These engagements provide a fertile ground for investigating how diverse, sometimes conflicting ideological meanings can encode in the same work. Generally, the works favor relativist approaches for dealing with non-humans and universalist approaches for dealing with humans, as non-humans have more explicitly described racial traits. Practice-oriented approaches show how the works can hyperfocus (anti-Nazi anti-racism), estrange methods from goals (diversity management), encode contradictory positions (anti-slavery), or outright reject certain forms (particularist anti-racism).

As the works make each of these engagements, they allow producerly openings whereby guerilla readers may find opportunities for other readings and interpretations. Voices appear contrary to the dominant messages, for example, and while the world architecture may be against those voices, readers are free to single them out and sympathize with them. In other cases, details remain unmarked or open to interpretation. For example, *Harry Potter* ascribes no traits to traditionally racialized groups of humans, nor does it lead BIPOC characters to follow traditional stereotypes. Even so, it does not deny the existence of those traits or give enough

time and focus to BIPOC characters to specifically counter the stereotypes. Readers prone to assuming traditional patterns of racialization, and those who are not, can equally read *Harry Potter* without having their beliefs challenged. In another example, the works can encode two directly opposing positions and then apply them to different groups. In this way, all the works oppose slavery, but all use the Willing Slave trope to rationalize the heroes' access to loyal, unpaid labor. Further, *Harry Potter* and *Star Wars* allow some forms of slavery, defining whom one can and cannot ethically enslave on distinctly racial lines. Readers can thus freely embrace pro-slavery or anti-slavery messages based on reading these texts, depending entirely on where they focus.

These openings to multiple readings form a prerequisite for the works' popularity. These works ensure their ideological openness to a broad spectrum of readers by encoding numerous positions across and beyond the mainstream. This pattern likely extends well beyond the positions on racism, anti-racism, and Whiteness I study here. Further research is needed to understand how the works engage with other ideological frameworks. As additional insights appear into how popular works maintain their ideological openness, we will begin to see a clearer picture of the mechanics of ideology and world architecture. Even further research will be required to understand how these different possible readings are accepted and negotiated by readers through individual interpretation and the creation of transformative works, such as fanfiction. Additionally, these themes may be negotiated differently in other works. Future scholarship must investigate alternate modes of ideological engagement through less popular works, works in other media, works other than by White authors, less prototypical works of speculative fiction, and works entirely outside the genre.

Having come so far, we are now much better equipped to address the question raised in the introduction. When the narrator describes Harry as feeling “as distant” from his classmates “as though he belonged to a different race” (*Order* 754), is racism a factor in the sentiment? It should be clear by now that it is, and very much so. Although the narrator refers to differences between humans and groups of non-humans rather than other humans, the text constructs those differences within a racial framework. Moreover, it joins a long tradition in speculative fiction of constructing non-human identities in racial terms. At the same time, *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *Star Wars*, and *Harry Potter* distinguish (with increasing clarity over their time of publication) between speculative “races” and “race” as the real-world

social construct among humans. Each work tends to resist or ignore the latter, even as it uses it to construct the former. This producerly complexity and countless others open the texts to readers, allowing for guerilla readings, which might allow them to parse the narration of Harry's feelings differently: as untroubling because it does not refer to humans. Of course, this would be a *guerilla* reading, deliberately ignoring some evidence (in this case, the entirety of my analysis from chapter three) and favoring others. Still, considering the perspective of normativity offers yet another opportunity for interpretation. The description of Harry's feelings is notable for how it positions Harry. In the passage, Harry is the one who "belongs to a *different* race." Harry experiences many such bouts of estrangement while at Hogwarts, but it is notable that the text should express the last and most significant of these in racial terms. Harry's estrangement becomes so great that the text can only express it by describing Harry as belonging to a "different" (i.e., non-normative, marked, implicitly non-human or non-White) race. One can thus read the text as linking Harry's alienation to the alienation experienced daily by those whose identities society constructs as marginal. This analogy acknowledges the social constructedness of race and is a fitting reminder that the themes I discuss here are more than abstract concepts. Each has a genuine and meaningful impact on the lived experiences of real people of all skin tones. Although some are privileged, none of us is free from race, and this is as true for intelligent non-humans as it is for us in the real world. True, race is a social fiction, but like speculative fiction, that fiction has the power to shape the minds and experiences of those who encounter and internalize it. Fictional worlds, like race, matter, even when they do not exist.

## 7 WORKS CITED

- Anderson, Mark. *From Boas to Black Power: Racism, Liberalism, and American Anthropology*. Stanford University Press, 2019.
- Apfelbaum, Evan P, et al. "Racial Color Blindness: Emergence, Practice, and Implications." *Current directions in psychological science: a journal of the American Psychological Society*. 21.3 (2012): 205–09.
- Aptheker, Herbert. *Anti-Racism in U.S. History: The First Two Hundred Years*. Greenwood Press, 1992.
- Appiah, Kwame Anthony. "Racisms." in *Anatomy of Racism*. Edited by David Theo Goldberg. University of Minnesota Press, 1990, pp 3–17.
- – –. "The Case for Capitalizing the B in Black." *The Atlantic*, June 2020. [www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/06/time-to-capitalize-blackand-white/613159/](http://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/06/time-to-capitalize-blackand-white/613159/)
- Arata, Stephen D. "The Occidental Tourist: Dracula and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization." *Victorian Studies*. 33.4 (1990): 621–45.
- Balint, Peter. "The Importance of Racial Tolerance for Anti-Racism." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 39.1 (2016): 16–32.
- Barker, Martin and Julian Petley. *Ill Effects: The Media/Violence Debate*. Routledge, 2002.
- Beaglehole, Ernest, et al. "The Race Question." UNESCO, 1950.
- Benedict, Ruth. *Race and Racism*. Routledge, 1943.
- Bernardi, Daniel. *Star Trek and History: Race-Ing Toward a White Future*. Rutgers University Press, 1999.
- Berndt, Katrin. "Hermione Granger, or, A Vindication of the Rights of Girl." in *Heroism in the Harry Potter Series*. Edited by Katrin Berndt and Lena Steveker. Ashgate, 2011, pp 159–76.
- Bhagchandani, Umesh. "Who is the Richest Star Wars Cast Member in 2022? Net Worths, Ranked – From Ewan McGregor and Hayden Christensen Reprising Roles in Disney+'s Obi-Wan Kenobi, to Harrison Ford and Natalie Portman." *Style*. 4 June, 2022. <https://www.scmp.com/magazines/style/celebrity/article/3180180/who-richest-star-wars-cast-member-2022-net-worths-ranked>
- Bland, Lucy. "British Eugenics and 'Race Crossing': A Study of an Interwar Investigation." *New Formations*. 60 (2007): 66–78.
- Bonnett, Alastair. *Anti-Racism*. Taylor & Francis Group, 2000.

- Borgman, R. A. M., et al. "Statement on the Nature of Race and Race Differences." or "Statements of 1951." in *Four Statements on the Race Question*. UNESCO, 1969.
- Borstelmann, Thomas. *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena*. Harvard University Press, 2001.
- Brackmann, Rebecca. "'Dwarves Are Not Heroes': Antisemitism and the Dwarves in J.R.R. Tolkien's Writing." *Mythlore*. 28 (2010): 85–106.
- Brattain, Michelle. "Race, Racism, and Antiracism: UNESCO and the Politics of Presenting Science to the Postwar Public." *American Historical Review*. 112 (2007): 1386–1413.
- Brooker, Will. "Readings of Racism: Interpretation, Stereotyping and The Phantom Menace." *Continuum*. 15.1 (2001): 15–32.
- Brooks, Dwight E. and Lisa P. Hébert. "Gender, Race, and Media Representation." *Handbook of Gender and Communication*. 16 (2006): 297–317.
- Brown, Anthony. "From Subhuman to Human Kind: Implicit Bias, Racial Memory, and Black Males in Schools and Society." *Peabody Journal of Education*. 93.1 (2018): 52–65.
- Bucholtz, Mary. *White Kids: Language, Race, and Styles of Youth Identity*. Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Burnett, Joshua Yu. "'Vine Head,' 'Snake Lady,' 'Swamp Witch': Racialized Othering in Nnedi Okorafor's Zahrah the Windseeker." in *Race in Young Adult Speculative Fiction*. Edited by Meghan Gilbert-Hickey and Miranda A. Green-Bartteet. University Press of Mississippi, 2021, pp 187–203.
- Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces, Commemorative Edition*. Princeton University Press, 2004.
- Cancelmo, Cara and Jennifer C. Mueller. "Whiteness." in *Sociology*, Oxford University Press, 2019.
- Carrington, André M. *Speculative Blackness: The Future of Race in Science Fiction*. University of Minnesota Press, 2016.
- Chapman, James and Nicholas J. Cull. *Cinema and Society: Projecting Tomorrow: Science Fiction and Popular Cinema*. I.B.Tauris, 2013.
- Chernenko, Vladimir. "Novye modeli agressii." *Sovetskii Ekran*. 7 (1983): 16–17.
- Chew, Jonathan. "Star Wars Franchise Worth More Than Harry Potter and James Bond, Combined." *Fortune*. 24 December, 2015. [fortune.com/2015/12/24/star-wars-value-worth/](http://fortune.com/2015/12/24/star-wars-value-worth/)
- Cherland, Meredith. "Harry's Girls: Harry Potter and the Discourse of Gender." *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*. 52.4 (2009): 273–82.
- Cole, Mike. *Racism: A Critical Analysis*. Pluto Press, 2016.
- Crozier, Gill and Jane Davies. "'The Trouble is They Don't Mix': Self-Segregation or Enforced Exclusion?" *Race Ethnicity and Education*. 11.3 (2008): 284–301.

- Curthoys, Ann. "The Magic Of History: Harry Potter And Historical Consciousness." *Agora*. 49.4 (2014): 23–31.
- Desloge, Nick. "Star Wars: An Exhibition in Cold War Politics." in *Sex, Politics, and Religion in Star Wars: An Anthology*. Edited by Douglas Brode and Leah Deyneka. Scarecrow Press, 2012, pp 55–62.
- De Witt, Douglas Kilgore. "Difference Engine: Aliens, Robots, and Other Racial Matters in the History of Science Fiction." *Science Fiction Studies*. 37.1 (2010): 16–22.
- Dresang, Eliza T. "Hermione Granger and the Heritage of Gender." in *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter: Perspectives on a Literary Phenomenon*. Edited by Lana A. Whited. University of Missouri Press, 2002, pp 211–42.
- D'Souza, Dinesh. *The End of Racism*. Free Press, 1995.
- Donovan, Leslie A. "Middle-earth Mythology: An Overview." in *A Companion to J. R. R. Tolkien*. Edited by Stuart D. Lee. John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2014, pp 92–106.
- Duncan, Rebecca. "From Cheap Labour to Surplus Humanity: World-Ecology and the Postapartheid Speculative in Neill Blomkamp's District 9." *Science Fiction Film and Television*. 11.1 (2018): 45–72.
- Dyer, Richard. *White: Twentieth Anniversary Edition*. Routledge, 2017.
- Ekman, Stefan and Audrey Isabel Taylor. "Notes Toward a Critical Approach to Worlds and World-Building." *Fafnir: Nordic Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy Research*. 3.3 (2016): 7–18.
- Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*. Directed by David Yates, Warner Bros. Pictures and Heyday Films, 2016.
- Feagin, Joe, et al. *White Racism: The Basics*. Routledge, 2001.
- Fielder, Leslie. "Come Back to the Raft Ag'in Huck Honey." *Partisan Review*. June 1948.
- Fimi, Dimitra. *Tolkien, Race, and Cultural History: From Faeries to Hobbits*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Firchow, Peter E. "The Politics of Fantasy: The Hobbit and Fascism." *Midwest Quarterly: A Journal of Contemporary Thought*. 50.1 (2008): 15–31.
- Fiske, John. *Media Matters: Race and Gender in U.S. Politics*. University of Minnesota Press, 1996.
- - -. *Understanding Popular Culture*. Taylor & Francis Group, 2010.
- FitzGerald, David and David Cook-Martín. *Culling the Masses*. Harvard University Press, 2014.
- Flotmann, Christina. *Ambiguity in Star Wars and Harry Potter: A (Post)Structuralist Reading of Two Popular Myths*. transcript Verlag, 2013.
- Ford, Richard T. *Racial Culture: A Critique*. Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Frazier, E. Franklin. *Black Bourgeoisie: The Rise of a New Middle Class in the United States*. The Free Press, 1957.



- Fredrickson, George M. *Racism - A Short History*. Princeton University Press, 2002.
- — —. *Big Enough To Be Inconsistent: Abraham Lincoln Confronts Slavery And Race*. Harvard University Press, 2008.
- Furedi, Frank. “How Sociology Imagined ‘Mixed Race.’” in *Rethinking Mixed Race*. Edited by David Parker and Miri Song. Pluto Press, 2001, pp 23–41.
- Garcia, J. L. A. “Philosophical Analysis and the Moral Concept of Racism.” *Philosophy & Social Criticism*. 25.5 (1999): 1–32.
- Gardner, Howard. “Cracking Open the IQ Box.” *The American Prospect*. 1995. [prospect.org/article/cracking-open-iq-box](http://prospect.org/article/cracking-open-iq-box)
- Gilbert-Hickey, Meghan and Miranda A. Green-Barteet. “Introduction.” in *Race in Young Adult Speculative Fiction*. Edited by Meghan Gilbert-Hickey and Miranda A. Green-Barteet. University Press of Mississippi, 2021, pp 3–11.
- Gilroy, Paul. “One Nation Under a Groove.” in *Anatomy of Racism*, edited by David Theo Goldberg. University of Minnesota Press, 1990, pp 263–72.
- Goldberg, David Theo. “Introduction” in *Anatomy of Racism*. Edited by David Theo Goldberg. University of Minnesota Press, 1990, pp xi–xxiii.
- Gordon, Andrew. “Star Wars: A Myth For Our Time.” *Literature/Film Quarterly*. 6 (1978): 314–26.
- Goselin, Peter Damien. “Two Faces of Eve: Galadriel and Shelob as Anima Figures.” *Mythlore*. 6.3 (1979): 3–4.
- Green, William H. “Where’s Mama? The Construction of the Feminine in The Hobbit.” *The Lion and the Unicorn*. 22.2 (1998): 188–95.
- Guglielmo, Thomas A. and Earl Lewis. “Changing Racial Meanings: Race and Ethnicity in the United States, 1930–1964.” in *Race and Ethnicity in America: A Concise History*. Edited by Ronald H. Bayor. Columbia University Press, 2003, pp 167–92.
- Haddix, Marcelle. “Black Boys Can Write: Challenging Dominant Framings of African American Adolescent Males in Literacy Research.” *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*. 53 (2009): 341–343.
- Hage, Ghassan. “Recalling Anti-Racism.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 39.1 (2016): 123–33.
- Hale, Sierra. “Postracial Futures and Colorblind Ideology: The Cyborg as Racialized Metaphor in Marissa Meyer’s Lunar Chronicles Series.” in *Race in Young Adult Speculative Fiction*. Edited by Meghan Gilbert-Hickey and Miranda A. Green-Barteet. University Press of Mississippi, 2021, pp 111–27.
- Hall, Stuart. “What is this ‘Black’ in Black Popular Culture?” in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*. Edited by David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen. Routledge, 1996, pp 468–78.
- Hansen, Katherine Strong. “The Fairy Race: Artemis Fowl, Gender and Racial Hierarchies.” in *Race in Young Adult Speculative Fiction*. Edited by Meghan Gilbert-Hickey and Miranda A. Green-Barteet. University Press of Mississippi, 2021, pp 35–53.

- Harmon, James M. J. "Forbidden Forests and Forbidden Spaces: Reevaluating 'The Other' in Harry Potter." in *Legilimens!: Perspectives in Harry Potter Studies*. Edited by Christopher E. Bell. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013, pp 33–42.
- "Harry Potter – History of the Books." Hypable. *Hypable Media*. Internet Archive Wayback Machine. 2017. [web.archive.org/web/20170906134322/https://www.hypable.com/harry-potter/book-history/](http://web.archive.org/web/20170906134322/https://www.hypable.com/harry-potter/book-history/)
- "Harry Potter to be Translated into Scots." *JKRowling.com*. Internet Archive Wayback Machine. 28 June, 2018. [web.archive.org/web/20170731000042/https://www.jkrowling.com/harry-potter-translated-scots/](http://web.archive.org/web/20170731000042/https://www.jkrowling.com/harry-potter-translated-scots/)
- Hartigan, John. *Racial Situations*. Princeton University Press, 1999.
- Helfenbein, Robert J. "Conjuring Curriculum, Conjuring Control: A Reading of Resistance in Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix." *Curriculum Inquiry*. 38.4 (2008): 499–513.
- Heschel, Susannah. "The Slippery yet Tenacious Nature of Racism: New Developments in Critical Race Theory and their Implications for the Study of Religion and Ethics." *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*. 35.1 (2015): 3–27.
- Ho, Elizabeth. "Asian Masculinity, Eurasian Identity, and Whiteness in Cassandra Clare's *Infernal Devices* Trilogy." in *Race in Young Adult Speculative Fiction*. Edited by Meghan Gilbert-Hickey and Miranda A. Green-Barteet. University Press of Mississippi, 2021, pp 147–64.
- Hodge, John. "Equality: Beyond Dualism and Oppression." in *Anatomy of Racism*. Edited by David Theo Goldberg. University of Minnesota Press, 1990, 89–107.
- Horne, Jackie C. "Harry and the Other: Answering the Race Question in J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter." *The Lion and the Unicorn*. 34.1 (2010): 76–104.
- Howe, Andrew. "Star Wars in Black and White: Race and Racism in a Galaxy Not So Far Away." in *Sex, Politics, and Religion in Star Wars: An Anthology*. Edited by Douglas Brode and Leah Deyneka. Scarecrow Press, 2012, pp 11–23.
- Hsu, Hsuan L. *The Smell of Risk: Environmental Disparities and Olfactory Aesthetics*. New York University Press, 2020.
- Hughey, Matthew. "White Backlash in the 'Post-Racial' United States." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 37.5 (2014): 721–30.
- . "Hegemonic Whiteness: From Structure and Agency to Identity Allegiance" in *The Construction of Whiteness: An Interdisciplinary Analysis of Race Formation and the Meaning of a White Identity*. Edited by Stephen Middleton, David R. Roediger and Donald M. Shaffer. University Press of Mississippi, 2016, pp 212–33.
- "Human." RetroMUD. *RetroMUD*. <http://www.retromud.org/#racexml?race=human>
- Huxley, Julian and A. C. Haddon. *We Europeans; a Survey of Racial Problems*. Kraus Reprint Corp., 1970.

- Jefferson, Tony. "What is Racism? Othering, Prejudice and Hate-Motivated Violence." *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*. 4.4 (2015): 120–135.
- Jenkins, Henry. "‘Cultural Acupuncture’: Fan Activism and the Harry Potter Alliance." *Transformative Works and Cultures*. 10 (2012): 59.
- Jones, Gwyneth. "Aliens in the Fourth Dimension." in *Speaking Science Fiction: Dialogues and Interpretations*. Eds. Andy Sawyer and David Seed. Liverpool University Press, 2000, pp 201–13.
- Jones, Patrice. "Roosters, Hawks and Dawgs: Toward an Inclusive, Embodied Eco/Feminist Psychology." *Feminism and Psychology*. 20.3 (2010): 365–80.
- Joo, Hee-Jung Serenity. "Racial Impossibility and Critical Failure in W.E.B. Du Bois’s *Darkwater*." *Science Fiction Studies*. 46.1 (2009): 106–26.
- Kaufman, Roger. "Homosexual Romance and Self-Realization in *Star Wars*." in *Sex, Politics, and Religion in Star Wars: An Anthology*. Eds. Brode, Douglas, and Leah Deyneka. Scarecrow Press, 2012, pp 115–32.
- Kalra, Virinder S and Nisha Kapoor. "Interrogating Segregation, Integration and the Community Cohesion Agenda." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. 35.9 (2009): 1397–1415.
- Keevak, Michael. *Becoming Yellow*. Princeton University Press, 2011.
- Kellner, Rivka Temima. "J. K. Rowling’s Ambivalence Towards Feminism: House Elves—Women In Disguise—In The ‘Harry Potter’ Books." *Midwest Quarterly*. 51.4 (2010): 367–385.
- Kelly, Erin, and Frank Dobbin. "How Affirmative Action Became Diversity Management: Employer Response to Antidiscrimination Law, 1961 to 1996." *The American Behavioral Scientist* 41.7 (1998): 960-84.
- Kenny, Lorraine Delia. *Daughters of Suburbia: Growing Up White, Middle Class, and Female*. Rutgers University Press, 2000.
- Kettler, Andrew. "Race, Nose, Truth: Dystopian Odours of the Other in American Antebellum Consciousness." *Patterns of Prejudice*. 55.1 (2021): 1–24.
- Korpua, Jyrki. *Constructive Mythopoetics in J. R. R. Tolkien’s *Legendarium**. 2015. University of Oulu. Doctoral Dissertation.
- Lakoff, George. *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind*. University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Lawrence, Stefan. "Racialising the ‘Great Man’: A Critical Race Study of Idealised Male Athletic Bodies in Men’s Health Magazine." *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*. 51.7 (2016): 777–99.
- Lee, Jo-Anne. *Situating Race and Racism in Time, Space, and Theory*. McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005.
- Lev, Peter. "Whose Future? *Star Wars*, Alien, and *Blade Runner*." *Literature Film Quarterly*. 26.1 (1998): 30.

- Lewis, Amanda E. “‘What Group?’ Studying Whites and Whiteness in the Era of ‘Color Blindness.’” *Sociological Theory*. 22.4 (2004): 623–46.
- Linnaeus, Carl. *Systema Naturae Sistens Regna Tria Naturae in Classes et Species Redacta, Tabulisque Aeneis Illustrata*. Theodorum Haak, 1756.
- Lloyd, Catherine. *Discourses of Anti-racism in France*. Ashgate, 1998.
- Lloyd, David. “Race Under Representation.” *Oxford Literary Review*. 13.1–2 (1991): 62–94.
- Loke, Jaime. “Public Expressions of Private Sentiments: Unveiling the Pulse of Racial Tolerance through Online News Readers’ Comments.” *Howard Journal of Communications*. 23.3 (2012): 235–52.
- Loponen, Mika, *The Semiospheres of Prejudice in the Fantastic Arts: The Inherited Racism of Irrealia and Their Translation*. 2019. University of Helsinki, Doctoral Dissertation.
- Lynch, Gordon. *Understanding Theology and Popular Culture*. Blackwell, 2004.
- MacMaster, Neil. *Racism in Europe, 1870-2000*. Palgrave Macmillan Limited, 2001.
- MacNeil, William P. “‘Kidlit’ as ‘Law-And-Lit’: Harry Potter and the Scales of Justice.” *Law & Literature*, 14.3 (2002): 545–564.
- Mammone, Andrea. “The Eternal Return? Faux Populism and Contemporarization of Neo-Fascism across Britain, France and Italy.” *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*. 17.2 (2009): 171–92.
- Martin, Catherine Ann and Farida Fozdar. “The Master’s Tools: Media Repurposing of Exclusionary Metaphors to Challenge Racist Constructions of Migrants.” *Discourse and Society*. 33.1 (2022): 56–73.
- Maza, Luisa Grijalva. “Deconstructing the Grand Narrative in Harry Potter: Inclusion/Exclusion and Discriminatory Policies in Fiction and Practice.” *Politics & Policy*. 40.3 (2012): 424–43.
- McDowell, John C. *Politics of Big Fantasy: The Ideologies of Star Wars, The Matrix and The Avengers*. McFarland, 2014.
- Meagher, Timothy J. “Racial and Ethnic Relations in America, 1965–2000.” in *Race and Ethnicity in America: A Concise History*. Edited by Ronald H. Bayor. Columbia University Press, 2003, pp 193–240.
- Memmi, Albert. *Racism*. University of Minnesota Press, 2014.
- Mendlesohn, Farah. “Crowning the King: Harry Potter and the Construction of Authority.” in *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter: Perspectives on a Literary Phenomenon*. Edited by Lana A. Whited. University of Missouri Press, 2002, pp 159–81.
- Mercer, Kobena. *Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies*. Routledge, 1994.
- Merlock, Ray and Kathy Merlock Jackson. “Lightsabers, Political Arenas, and Marriages for Princess Leia and Queen Amidala.” in *Sex, Politics, and Religion in Star Wars: An Anthology*. Edited by Douglas Brode and Leah Deyneka. Scarecrow Press, 2012, pp 77–88.

- Meyer, David S. "Star Wars, Star Wars, And American Political Culture." *Journal Of Popular Culture*. 26.2 (1992): 99–115.
- Middleton, Stephen. "The Battle over Racial Identity in Popular and Legal Cultures, 1810–1860." in *The Construction of Whiteness: An Interdisciplinary Analysis of Race Formation and the Meaning of a White Identity*. Edited by Stephen Middleton, David R. Roediger, and Donald M. Shaffer. University Press of Mississippi, 2016, pp 11–43.
- Miles, Robert. *Racism*. Routledge, 1989.
- Miller, David, et al. *The Circuit of Mass Communications*. Sage, 1999.
- Moghari, Shaghayegh. "Representation of Angel-in-the-House in *Bleak House* by Charles Dickens." *Journal of Humanistic & Social Studies*. 11.2 (2020): 47–63.
- Montagu, Ashley. *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race*. Columbia University Press, 1945.
- Morrison, Toni. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. Picador, 1993.
- Mukhopadhyay, Carol C., et al. *How Real is Race? A Sourcebook on Race, Culture, and Biology, Second Edition*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2013.
- Murphey, Dwight D. "Robotics: A Route to the Survival of Advanced Societies?" *The Journal of Social, Political, and Economic Studies*. 32.4 (2007): 397–420.
- Murphy, Anne. "Whiteness." *Sixth Formations*. 9.2 (2013): 249–51.
- Mutz, Diana C. "Harry Potter and the Deathly Donald." *PS, Political Science & Politics*. 49.4 (2016): 722–29.
- Nama, Adilifu. *Black Space: Imagining Race in Science Fiction Film*. University of Texas Press, 2008.
- Natov, Roni. "Harry Potter and the Extraordinariness of the Ordinary." in *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter: Perspectives on a Literary Phenomenon*. Edited by Lana A. Whited. University of Missouri Press, 2002, pp 125–39.
- Nelson, Jacqueline and Kevin Dunn. "Neoliberal Anti-Racism: Responding to 'Everywhere but Different' Racism." *Progress in Human Geography* 41.1 (2017): 26–43.
- Nexon, Daniel H. and Iver B. Neumann. "Introduction: Harry Potter and the Study of World Politics." in *Harry Potter and International Relations*. Edited by Daniel H. Nexon and Iver B. Neumann. Rowman and Littlefield, 2006, pp 1–23.
- Norton, Michael I., et al. "Color Blindness and Interracial Interaction: Playing the Political Correctness Game." *Psychological Science*. 17.11 (2006): 949–53.
- Novitz, David. *Knowledge, Fiction & Imagination*. Temple University Press, 1987.
- Olsen, Corey. "Poetry." in *A Companion to J.R.R. Tolkien*. Edited by Stuart D. Lee. John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2014, pp 173–88.
- Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. Routledge, 1994.

- Oziewicz, Marek C. *Justice in Young Adult Speculative Fiction: A Cognitive Reading*. Routledge, 2015.
- Paradies, Yin C. "Defining, Conceptualizing And Characterizing Racism In Health Research." *Critical Public Health*. 16.2 (2006): 143–57.
- — —. "Whither Anti-Racism?" *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 39.1 (2016): 1–15.
- Patell, Cyrus R. K. "Star Wars and the Technophobic Imagination." in *Myth, Media and Culture in Star Wars: An Anthology*. Edited by Douglas Brode and Leah Deyneka. Scarecrow Press, 2012, pp 169 – 83.
- Patil, Sangita. *Ecofeminism and the Indian Novel*. Routledge, 2020.
- Paul, Heike. *The Myths That Made America: An Introduction to American Studies*. transcript Verlag, 2014.
- Peucker, Mario and Rauf Ceylan. "Muslim Community Organizations – Sites of Active Citizenship or Self-Segregation?" *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 40.14 (2017): 2405–25.
- Philo, Greg. *Seeing and Believing: The Influence of Television*. Routledge, 1990.
- Pielke, Robert G. "Star Wars Vs. 2001: A Question of Identity." *Extrapolation*. 24.2 (1983): 143–55.
- Pierce, Andrew J. "The Myth of the White Minority." in *Shades of Whiteness*. Edited by Ewan Kirkland. Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2016, pp 107–17.
- Pollock, Dale. *Skymalking: The Life and Films of George Lucas*. S. French, 1990.
- Potterglot. "The List." Potterglot. *Potterglot*. [www.potterglot.net/the-list/](http://www.potterglot.net/the-list/)
- — —. "Bloomsbury Provides a Number!" Potterglot. *Potterglot*. 19 January, 2017. [www.potterglot.net/bloomsbury-provides-a-number/](http://www.potterglot.net/bloomsbury-provides-a-number/)
- Powell, Ryan. "Loïc Wacquant's 'Ghetto' and Ethnic Minority Segregation in the UK: The Neglected Case of Gypsy-Travellers." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. 37.1 (2013): 115–34.
- Ramadan, Tariq. *The Quest for Meaning: Developing a Philosophy of Pluralism*. Penguin, 2010.
- Ramaswamy, Shobha and J. Sundarsingh. "The Lord of the Rings: Galadriel, the Light of Middle Earth." *Language in India*. 10.1 (2010): 234–40.
- Rasmussen, Birgit Brander, et al. *The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness*. Duke University Press, 2001.
- Rattansi, Ali. *Racism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Rebollo-Gil, Guillermo, and Amanda Moras. "Defining an 'Anti' Stance: Key Pedagogical Questions about Engaging Anti-Racism in College Classrooms." *Race Ethnicity and Education*. 9.4 (2006): 381–394.
- Rieder, John. "Embracing The Alien: Science Fiction In Mass Culture." *Science Fiction Studies*. 9.1 (1982): 26–37.

- Rix, Zara. "Fore-fronting Race and Law: Ambelin Kwaymullina's *The Interrogation of Ashala Wolf* and Challenging the Expectations for Idealized Young Adult Heroines." in *Race in Young Adult Speculative Fiction*. Edited by Meghan Gilbert-Hickey and Miranda A. Green-Bartlett. University Press of Mississippi, 2021, pp 237–55.
- Roberts, Adam. *Science Fiction*. Taylor & Francis Group, 2006.
- - -. "Women." in *A Companion to J. R. R. Tolkien*. Edited by Stuart D. Lee. John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2014, pp 473–86.
- Robinson, Jonnie. "Caribbean English." BL.uk *British Library*. 2019. [www.bl.uk/british-accent-and-dialects/articles/caribbean-english](http://www.bl.uk/british-accent-and-dialects/articles/caribbean-english)
- Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*. Directed by Gareth Edwards, Lucasfilm, 2016.
- Roine, Hanna-Riikka. *Imaginative, Immersive and Interactive Engagements: The Rhetoric of Worldbuilding in Contemporary Speculative Fiction*. 2016. University of Tampere, Doctoral Dissertation.
- Rosch, Eleanor. "Natural Categories." *Cognitive Psychology*. 4.3 (1973): 328–50.
- Roth, Lane. "Bergsonian Comedy and the Human Machine in Star Wars." *Film Criticism*. 4.2 (1979): 1–8.
- Rowling, J. K. *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. Scholastic, 2013.
- - -. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. A&C Black, 2013.
- - -. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. Bloomsbury, 2014.
- - -. *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. Pottermore Limited, 2012.
- - -. *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. A&C Black, 2013.
- - -. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. Bloomsbury, 2013.
- - -. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. Turtleback Books, 2013.
- Ruane, Abigail E. and Patrick James. *The International Relations of Middle-Earth: Learning from The Lord of the Rings*. University of Michigan Press, 2012.
- Rubey, Dan. "Star Wars: Not so Long Ago, Not so Far Away." *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media*. 18 (1978): 9–14. Accessed from [www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC18folder/starWars.html](http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC18folder/starWars.html)
- Rusli, Serla. "The Charts that Show how the UK Loves Harry Potter." *The Telegraph*. Internet Archive Wayback Machine. 26 June, 2017. [web.archive.org/web/20171004015807/www.telegraph.co.uk/books/news/data-show-uk-loves-harry-potter/](http://web.archive.org/web/20171004015807/www.telegraph.co.uk/books/news/data-show-uk-loves-harry-potter/)
- Russell, John G. "Darkies Never Dream: Race, Racism, and the Black Imagination in Science Fiction." *CR: The New Centennial Review*. 18.3 (2018): 255–77.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. Penguin, 1978.
- - -. "Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims." in *Anatomy of Racism*. Edited by David Theo Goldberg. University of Minnesota Press, 1990, 210–46.

- Sandars, Diana. "Astonish Me." *Australian Screen Education*. 33 (2003): 50–55.
- Sharma, Sanjay. "Crash – Towards a Critical Pedagogy of Whiteness?" *Cultural Studies*. 24.4 (2010): 533–52.
- Shaw, Tony and Denise J. Youngblood. *Cinematic Cold War: The American and Soviet Struggle for Hearts and Minds*. University of Kansas Press, 2010.
- Shippey, Tom. *The Road to Middle-Earth*. Allen & Unwin, 1982.
- Smedley, Audrey and Brian D. Smedley. "Race as Biology is Fiction, Racism as a Social Problem is Real: Anthropological and Historical Perspectives on the Social Construction of Race." *American Psychologist* 60.1 (2005): 16–26.
- Smith, Mark M. *How Race Is Made: Slavery, Segregation, and the Senses*. The University of North Carolina Press, 2006.
- Solo: A Star Wars Story*. Directed by Ron Howard, Lucasfilm, 2018.
- Solomos, John and Les Back. *Racism and Society*. Macmillan, 1996.
- Star Wars*. Directed by George Lucas, Twentieth Century Fox, 1977.
- Star Wars, Episode I: The Phantom Menace*. Directed by George Lucas, Lucasfilm, 1999.
- Star Wars, Episode II: Attack of the Clones*. Directed by George Lucas, Lucasfilm, 2002.
- Star Wars, Episode III: Revenge of the Sith*. Directed by George Lucas, Lucasfilm, 2005.
- Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back*. Directed by Irving Kirshner, Lucasfilm, 1980.
- Star Wars Episode VI: The Return of the Jedi*. Directed by Richard Marquand, Lucasfilm, 1983.
- Star Wars, Episode VII: The Force Awakens*. Directed by J. J. Abrams, Lucasfilm, 2015.
- Star Wars, Episode VIII: The Last Jedi*. Directed by Rian Johnson, Lucasfilm, 2017.
- Star Wars, Episode IX: The Rise of Skywalker*. Directed by J. J. Abrams, Lucasfilm 2019.
- Stepan, Nancy Leys. "Race and Gender" in *Anatomy of Racism*. Edited by David Theo Goldberg. University of Minnesota Press, 1990, 38–57.
- Sterling-Folker, Jennifer and Brian Folker. "Conflict and the Nation State: Magical Mirrors of Muggles and Refracted Images." in *Harry Potter and International Relations*. Edited by Daniel H. Nexon and Iver B. Neumann. Rowman and Littlefield, 2006, pp 103–26.
- Storey, John. *An Introduction to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*. University of Georgia Press, 1998.
- Štrkalj, Goran. "A Terminology for Human Variation Studies: Defining 'Racialism,' 'Racial Hierarchism' and 'Racism.'" *Mankind Quarterly*. 50.1–2 (2009): 127–37.
- Suvin, Darko. *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre*. Edited by Gerry Canavan and Peter Lang. GmbH, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2016.
- Tally, Robert T. Jr. "Let Us Now Praise Famous Orcs: Simple Humanity in Tolkien's Inhuman Creatures." *Mythlore*. 29.1/2 (2010): 17–28.



- . *Spatiality*. Taylor & Francis Group, 2012.
- Tasker, Yvonne. *Spectacular Bodies: Gender, Genre and the Action Cinema*. Taylor and Francis, 1993.
- Taylor, Chris. *How Star Wars Conquered the Universe: The Past, Present, and Future of a Multibillion Dollar Franchise*. Basic Books, 2014.
- Telegraph Reporters. “Look at the Size of That Thing!': How Star Wars Makes its Billions.” *The Telegraph*. Telegraph.co.uk. 4 May, 2016. [www.telegraph.co.uk/films/2016/05/04/look-at-the-size-of-that-thing-how-star-wars-makes-its-billions/](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/films/2016/05/04/look-at-the-size-of-that-thing-how-star-wars-makes-its-billions/)
- Telotte, J. P. “‘The Dark Side Of The Force’: Star Wars And The Science Fiction Tradition.” *Extrapolation*. 24.3 (1983): 216–26.
- “The Human Race for Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) Fifth Edition (5e) – D&D Beyond.” D&D Beyond. *D&D Beyond*. [www.dndbeyond.com/races/human](http://www.dndbeyond.com/races/human)
- Thomas, Ebony Elizabeth. *The Dark Fantastic: Race and the Imagination from Harry Potter to The Hunger Games*. New York University Press, 2019.
- Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Hobbit*. HarperCollins, 2001.
- . *The Lord of the Rings*. HarperCollins, 1995.
- Torres, Rodolfo, and Christopher Kyriakides. *Race Defaced: Paradigms of Pessimism, Politics of Possibility*. Stanford University Press, 2012.
- Turner, Jimmy. “Ethereal Beauties and Embodied Sexualities: Women and the Articulation of Brazilian Whiteness.” *Przegląd Kulturoznawczy*. 34 (2017): 573–86.
- Trolls: World Tour*. Directed by Walt Dohrn, Dreamworks Animation, 2020.
- Unzueta, Miguel M., and Brian S. Lowery. “Defining Racism Safely: The Role of Self-Image Maintenance on White Americans’ Conceptions of Racism.” *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*. 44.6 (2008): 1491–97.
- Urquidez, Alberto G. “Jorge Garcia and the Ordinary use of ‘Racist Belief.’” *Social Theory and Practice*. 43.2 (2017): 223–48.
- Vezzali, Loris, et al. “The Greatest Magic of Harry Potter: Reducing Prejudice: Harry Potter and Attitudes Toward Stigmatized Groups.” *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*. 45.2 (2015): 105–21.
- Vink, Renée. “‘Jewish’ Dwarves: Tolkien and Anti-Semitic Stereotyping.” *Tolkien Studies: An Annual Scholarly Review*. 10 (2013): 123–45.
- Wanberg, Nicholas. “Noble and Beautiful: Universal Human Aesthetics in C. S. Lewis’s *The Chronicles of Narnia*.” *Fafnir – Nordic Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy Research*. 1.3 (2014): 7–18.
- Warner, Marina. *From the Beast to the Blonde*. Chatto & Windus, 1994.
- Warren, J. Karen, and Dunane L. Cady. “Feminism and Peace: Seeing Connections.” *Hypatia* 9.2 (1994): 4–20.

- Westman, Karin E. "Specters of Thatcherism: Contemporary British Culture in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter Series." in *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter: Perspectives on a Literary Phenomenon*. Edited by Lana A. Whited. University of Missouri Press, 2002, pp 305–28.
- Williams, Bronwyn T. "Action Heroes and Literate Sidekicks: Literacy and Identity in Popular Culture." *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*. 50.8 (2007): 680–85.
- Winant, Howard. "Behind Blue Eyes: Whiteness and Contemporary U.S. Racial Politics." in *Off White: Readings on Power, Privilege, and Resistance*. Edited by Michelle Fine, Lois Weis, Linda C. Powell and L. Mun Wong. Routledge, 1997, pp 3–16.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigations*. Macmillan Publishing Comp. Greenwood Publishing Group, 1998.
- Wrede, Patricia C. *The Enchanted Forest Chronicles*. Hmh Books for Young Readers, 2003.
- Yeğenoğlu, Meyda. *Islam, Migrancy, and Hospitality in Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
- Young, Helen. *Race and Popular Fantasy Literature: Habits of Whiteness*. Routledge, 2016.



