

UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLOMOUCI  
FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA  
KATEDRA ANGLISTIKY A AMERIKANISTIKY

Adéla Koblíhová

**Medievalist man-made space in *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire***

Bakalářská práce

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Elizabeth Allyn Woock, Ph.D.

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Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně a uvedla jsem veškeré použité podklady a literaturu.

V Olomouci dne: .....

Podpis.....

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## Abstract

**Name and surname:** Adéla Koblíhová

**Department, faculty:** Department of English and American Studies, Faculty of Arts, Palacký University

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The built environment in the worlds of fantasy books is undoubtedly one of the most memorable parts of said books to the readers. Fantasy literature and world-building has been steadily gaining academic attention. However, when it comes to academic research in the specific area of man-made spaces in fantasy, there seems to be a gap. The built environment in fantasy is often mentioned simply in connection to maps or the progression of the narrative, with very little analyses diving deeper into the role of space in the system of world-building. The aim of this thesis is therefore to analyze and better understand the impact of man-made space in fantasy literature by the means of analyzing two of its most successful examples: Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*. Furthermore, because both these fantasies share a medieval-like setting, the analysis is further narrowed to medievalist man-made space, in order to provide a conclusion applicable to this popular branch of fantasy.

The thesis is divided into a theoretical and a practical part. The theoretical part of the thesis highlights the need of context and the role of humans in spatial analyses within the dynamic framework of spatiality studies, which is applicable to literary places as well as real-life places. The connection between humans and the built environment is therefore applied to fantasy world-building. The practical part of the thesis then uses these findings to analyze the medievalist man-made spaces of *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire* in connection to the books' characters and cultures. The analysis presents several ways in which the built environment is used in the books to add depth to individual characters as well as to whole groups of characters. In other words, the analysis provides evidence of the built environment having an impact on the world-building, besides only being positioned on fantasy maps or specifically moving the story forward.

**Key words:** J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*, George R. R. Martin, *A Song of Ice and Fire*, world-building, interdisciplinarity, spatiality, medievalism, fantasy, character, culture, man-made space

## Anotace

**Jméno a příjmení:** Adéla Koblihová

**Katedra, fakulta:** Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky, Filozofická fakulta, Univerzita Palackého

**Název práce:** Medievalist Man-Made Spaces in *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire*

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Člověkem zbudované prostředí tvoří pro čtenáře velkou část zapamatovatelnosti fantasy světů. Fantasy literatura a tvoření fantasy světů se sice v posledních letech těší rostoucí pozornosti v akademické sféře, nicméně v této specifické oblasti existuje mezera. Pokud je v rámci analýzy fantasy literatury člověkem zbudované prostředí zmíněno, je často zmíněno pouze ve spojitosti s rozmístěním na mapě, či ve spojitosti s postupem děje. Velmi málo analýz se věnuje do hloubky pouze těmto prostředím a jejich postavení v kontextu tvoření fantasy světa. Cílem této bakalářské práce je proto hlubší analýza člověkem zbudovaného prostředí za účelem lépe porozumět tomu, jak toto prostředí zapadá do systému světa vytvořeného v rámci fantasy literatury. Tato analýza se bude zabývat dvěma z nejúspěšnějších děl tohoto žánru: Tolkienovým *Pánem prstenů* a Martinovou *Písní Ledu a Ohně*. Protože jsou obě tyto fantasy série zasazeny do prostředí podobajícího se středověku, bude analýza dále zúžena na středověké prostory za účelem vyvození závěrů, které mohou být přínosné pro toto populární odvětví fantasy literatury.

Práce je rozdělena na teoretickou a praktickou část. Hlavním účelem teoretické části práce je pozvednout nutnost kontextu a roli člověka v analýzách prostoru v rámci prostorových studií a následně tuto spojitost aplikovat na proces tvoření světů ve fantasy literatuře. Praktická část práce poté využívá těchto poznatků a aplikuje je na samotnou analýzu. Středověké, člověkem zbudované prostory v *Pánu prstenů* a *Písní Ledu a Ohně* jsou tedy zkoumány ve spojitosti s postavami a kulturami, které se v těchto světech objevují. Analýza poukazuje na existenci hned několika způsobů, kterých je za pomoci zbudovaných prostor využito pro vytvoření komplexnějších postav a kultur v rámci zde zkoumaných fantasy světů. Jinými slovy, tato bakalářská práce dokazuje, že člověkem zbudované prostředí má na vytvoření uvěřitelného a komplexního fantasy světa vliv, který nekončí pouze jejich umístěním na mapě nebo jejich bezprostřední rolí v postupu děje.

**Klíčová slova:** J. R. R. Tolkien, *Pán prstenů*, George R. R. Martin, *Píseň Ledu a Ohně*, tvoření fantasy světa, interdisciplinarita, prostorové vědy, středověk, fantasy, postava, kultura, člověkem zbudovaný prostor

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	8
1. Spatiality Studies.....	10
1.1. Introduction.....	10
1.2. The Spatial Turn.....	10
1.3. Interdisciplinarity .....	13
1.4. Conclusion.....	15
2. Medievalism .....	16
2.1. Introduction .....	16
2.2. Medievalism and Interpretation .....	16
2.3. Duality of the Middle Ages.....	18
2.4. Conclusion.....	20
3. World-building in Context of Fantasy and Man-made Spaces .....	22
3.1. Introduction .....	22
3.2. World-building in Fantasy Literature.....	22
3.3. Interconnectedness of World-building.....	24
3.4. Conclusion.....	26
4. Medievalist Man-made Spaces in Connection to Character.....	28
4.1. Introduction .....	28
4.2. Emotions and Senses.....	29
4.3. Limitations and Behavior.....	34
4.4. Self-opinions and Man-made Space.....	38
4.5. Conclusion.....	45
5. Medievalist Man-made Space in Connection to Society and Culture .....	47
5.1. Introduction .....	47
5.2. History in Connection to Society and Culture .....	47
5.3. Social Hierarchy Projected onto the Built Environment.....	52
5.4. Conclusion.....	57
Conclusion .....	58
Resumé.....	60
Bibliography .....	63

## Introduction

This thesis will analyze medievalist man-made spaces in the context of the world-building of J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*. This shall be done with the help of the research of spatiality studies. The primary aim of the thesis is to establish the role which these types of places play in the building of the fantasy worlds of these two influential sagas.

As will soon become clear, the matter of space is a complex and interdisciplinary one, whether the analysis be of real-life places or invented ones. Spatial analyses cannot provide a satisfactory result unless context is considered. The context of the analysis of spaces in the present thesis is narrowed down to medievalist man-made spaces, with a special focus on their connection to people. Despite thus narrowing the research, the scope of the thesis is inevitably still rather wide, with plenty room for possible future elaboration, as this particular area is simultaneously one which has not been researched very much so far.

Analyses in the field of spatiality studies have been increasingly gaining attention thanks to a phenomenon called the spatial turn, which will be explained in this thesis. There is a growing and a very dynamic body of research within the framework of spatiality at the present time. A similar growing body of research also concerns fantasy literature, which used to be considered not fit for academic attention. Furthermore, Tolkien and Martin are authors with one of the strongest associations with the fantasy genre at present, and the body of research surrounding their work seems to only continue to grow as well. These two authors have helped immensely in popularizing the genre for their generations and will likely continue to be one of the most influential fantasy authors for even more generations to come.

It is rather interesting then, that during my own research I have come across little to no academic attention being paid to the built environment of their meticulous invented worlds. It is curious, because many papers on Tolkien or Martin at least mention the highly memorable fantasy worlds, the maps, and the way in which the focus on this spatial element of the world-building has changed or at least popularized the genre. Nevertheless, there seems to be a lack of any deeper focus on the element of space in these papers besides what seem to be only brief mentions. This thesis shall, therefore, attempt to begin to fill this gap, or at the very least highlight the potential of this type of research, as the

spatial aspect of these two fantasy worlds is highly memorable and also undoubtedly a part of the success of the books.

Analyses of space tend to be highly dynamic thanks to the wide variety of contexts in which space figures, which is the reason why this thesis is narrowed in the way already outlined. Because my research often pointed to the connection between the built environment and people, this is the context in which the medievalist man-made spaces will be analyzed here, in the hopes of providing an in-depth look on what spaces can reveal about characters in a way which is beneficial to the world-building, or in turn on how characters influence spaces in a way which likewise creates depth in the fantasy world.

For the purposes of providing a thorough analysis of the problematic mentioned above, the thesis is divided into a theoretical part and a practical part. The theoretical part contains three chapters. The first chapter shall introduce the field of spatiality studies, with a special focus on their interdisciplinary nature, as that is an aspect which permeates the whole thesis. The second chapter will be concerned with medievalism and its two distinct manifestations exemplified by *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire*. The third chapter shall then examine fantasy world-building and draw a connection between the interdisciplinarity of spatiality studies and the tendency of good world-building to emulate the real world in many aspects, including the interconnected nature of the world, of which space is a part.

The practical part then contains two more chapters. The fourth chapter of the thesis analyzes examples from the books of medievalist man-made space informing and being informed by individual characters in a way which makes the narrative more engaging, and the world feel more authentic. The fifth and last chapter considers medievalist man-made spaces of the books in connection not to individual characters, but to groups of characters, or in other words societies, cultures, or races, with a goal similar to the fourth chapter.

# 1. Spatiality Studies

## 1.1. Introduction

This thesis makes use of the findings of the field called spatiality studies. This chapter shall therefore focus on explaining what spatiality studies are. Building mostly on Robert T. Tally Jr.'s influential book *Spatiality*, this chapter will introduce some of the key ideas of spatiality studies which the thesis will be further built on in the following chapters.

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section of this chapter will be concerned with the emergence of spatiality studies through the so-called spatial turn in the humanities. Special focus will be placed on putting the rise of academic research within spatiality into historical context in order to discuss the possible reasons for its emergence, and likewise in order to highlight its dynamic growth and potential.

The second section will then focus on the interdisciplinary nature of spatiality studies and, in connection to this, the focus will be shifted to the inherent need to put analyses of space into context, and in turn to put analyses into the context of space. The context can vary across disciplines; however, it cannot be completely omitted. This applies to analyses of real-life spaces as well as to invented ones, which is why this thesis will also consider space in context. The exact parameters of the context for this analysis shall be further elaborated on in the following chapters.

## 1.2. The Spatial Turn

The emergence of spatiality studies follows the so-called spatial turn, or in other words the shift of focus in the humanities towards space. A shift of focus towards space implies that the focus of academical research was elsewhere before. In this case it was mostly time, as will be explained in the following paragraphs.

It is of course in place to mention that the world is not black and white, and one can hardly ever draw a rigid line between two subsequent literary movements or two historical periods. The same applies to this case. The spatial turn implies a general tendency and can hardly be traced back to a single piece of academic writing to mark as its beginning (or its ending). Nevertheless, the change is attested in many works of literature and literary criticism.

The source which was indispensable for me during the research of the emergence of the spatial turn and spatiality studies is a book conveniently called *Spatiality* by Robert T. Tally Jr, an authority on the topics of literary representations of space and research in the field of spatiality studies. As far as the spatial turn goes, Tally explains that the change and rise of awareness of space happened during the twentieth century, and as one of the possible reasons states that the shift happened perhaps as a contrast to modernist tendencies in literature, in which time seemed to be a more interesting and frequent object of study and use.<sup>1</sup> This is an uncontroversial statement, seeing that many modernist literary works did indeed explore the dimension of time more than that of space.

Tally links the modernists' interest in time primarily to the influence of Freud's psychoanalysis, especially Freud's discovery that an investigation of the patient's personal history often reveals an event from the past as a potential source of the problem.<sup>2</sup> This event may be big or small, in fact the patient may not even be aware of it or its impact. Repressed or not, however, the event still influences the patient's wellbeing, making him in a way trapped in his personal timeline.

This is overall a rather temporal and internal point of view, and one which influenced many modernist writers, especially those writing psychological novels. As Tally goes on to explain: "These works, although epic in their scope, might be considered spatially circumscribed because of this intense focus on the psychological interiority of the narrator or protagonist."<sup>3</sup> The famous stream-of-consciousness method was also used to highlight the internal world of the protagonist or narrator, rather than describing the outside world. This is of course not to say that the modernist works are completely devoid of space, and likewise this is not to lower their value in any way. It is, however, apparent that before the spatial turn, there indeed was a focus on time rather than space, and on the internal rather than the external.

It could be concluded then that the shift of focus towards space happened simply as a way of stepping out of modernist tendencies. However, Tally does not stop here and instead explains in his book various reasons for what might have triggered the spatial turn. Apart from simply reacting to modernist works, the most prominent of the reasons

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<sup>1</sup> Robert T. Tally Jr., *Spatiality* (2012, Routledge), The New Critical Idiom (London; New York: Routledge, 2012), 34.

<sup>2</sup> T. Tally Jr., 35.

<sup>3</sup> T. Tally Jr., 35.

are, perhaps unsurprisingly, the World Wars. The Wars shook the population in many ways, however, in connection to the spatial turn, Tally elevates the following one:

“Certainly the massive movements of populations—exiles, émigrés, refugees, soldiers, administrators, entrepreneurs, and explorers—disclosed a hitherto unthinkable level of mobility in the world, and such movement emphasized geographical difference; that is, one’s *place* could not simply be taken for granted any longer. The traveller, whether forced into exile or willingly engaged in tourism, cannot help but be more aware of the distinctiveness of a given place, and of the remarkable differences between places.”<sup>4</sup>

Tally introduces the curious idea of rising mobility in connection to the heightened perception of space as something which contributed to the spatial turn after the Wars. It is a reasonable claim, seeing that a traveler can verifiably undergo the so-called culture shock, based entirely on perceiving differences in various aspects of how people live compared to how they live where the traveler is from. After the Wars, according to Tally, the mobility of the people was at a high level, and therefore the problematic of geographic and cultural difference, displacement and perception of space was increasingly more present in peoples’ lives and therefore found its way into contemporary literature, similarly to how Freud’s advancement in individual psychology found its way into modernist literature.

Thanks to these changes in the world after the Wars and thanks to the rising and changing perception of space in peoples’ lives and literature connected to it, space gradually ceased to be thought of as simply “a backdrop or setting for events.”<sup>5</sup> Or, as Barney Warf and Santa Arias agree in their introduction to the book *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary perspectives*, thanks to the spatial turn space began to be considered of equal importance as time, and as something which not only reflects, but has an active part in the human life and social relations.<sup>6</sup> In short, an active role has been ascribed to space, compared to the more passive one it used to have, and this new perception of space is reflected in literature as well as in academic research.

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<sup>4</sup> T. Tally Jr., 13.

<sup>5</sup> T. Tally Jr., 119.

<sup>6</sup> Barney Warf and Santa Arias, “Introduction: The Reinsertion of Space into the Social Sciences and Humanities,” in *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 1.

Even though there is no set date or a year in which the spatial turn took place, as well as no single reason why it happened, its occurrence during the twentieth century is attested in the rise of academic research in the matters of space and its literary representations. Through the spatial turn emerged spatiality studies, and space gradually began to be seen as playing an active role in peoples' lives, and the literary representations of space have thus gained more attention as well.

These literary representations of course do not stop at real-life places but continue to imaginary places as well. Both Tolkien and Martin produced their fantasies simultaneously with the rising prominence of space in literary and cultural criticism. I will not try to prove a direct causal link between the rise of spatiality and the writing process of *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire*, as that would most probably be impossible. Instead it will perhaps suffice to say that in both sagas, there is an unquestionable intention placed on the spatial element of the fantasy worlds, perhaps best exemplified by the use of maps in both sagas and their integration into the narrative. The intention on the spatial element will be further analyzed in the practical part of the thesis.

### **1.3. Interdisciplinarity**

The spatial turn fluently evolved into the field of spatiality studies, which has opened the door to more thorough analyses of spaces and their literary representations. However, the work within the field may appear rather inconsistent when looked at from a distance. The reason is that space requires to be analyzed not in isolation, but in context. This context can take many forms and cross various academic disciplines, which then makes spatiality studies inherently interdisciplinary, and seemingly inconsistent.

This inconsistency is, however, rather proof of the dynamic nature of spatiality studies. The fact that the context of the spatial analysis can vary gives rise to many different results of academic writing. The content of the previously mentioned book *The Spatial Turn*, edited by Barney Warf and Santa Arias, exemplifies this dynamism. The book contains eleven essays, each of which takes a slightly different point of view and redefines what spatiality means within the framework in which the authors are working. To name a few, Jeffrey Kopstein's essay "Geography, post-communism, and comparative politics" explores spatiality in connection to political science, specifically in the context of the fall of the Soviet Union. John Corrigan takes a completely different point of view in his essay "Spatiality and religion," in which he explores how religious spaces connect

“the material and the theological.”<sup>7</sup> Joan Ramon Resina analyzes the representations of space in film through a case study in his contribution titled “Documentary as a space of intuition: Luis Buñuel’s *Land Without Bread*.” A case study is also used by Pamela Gilbert in her essay “Sex and the modern city: English studies and the spatial turn,” however this time, space is explored in the context of its literary representations and connected to the influence these representations have on people and the places outside of the text. The diversity of the essays points toward the interdisciplinary nature of spatiality studies as a reason for there being such a dynamic body of research.

This diversity also entails one other important idea, which is that space cannot be analyzed in isolation but needs to be analyzed in context. It is an idea which links all works under the umbrella of spatiality studies, and which, in a smaller scale, also links together the essays included in *The Spatial Turn*:

“What gives these essays coherence, what unites them as a common point of departure, is the insistence that no social or cultural phenomenon can be torn from its spatial context, that geography is not some subordinate afterthought to history in the construction of social life, that no meaningful understanding of how human beings produce and reproduce their worlds can be achieved without invoking a sense that the social, the temporal, the intellectual, and the personal are inescapably always and everywhere also the spatial.”<sup>8</sup>

As mentioned before, space both produces and is a product of culture and social relations. It plays an active role in the lives of individuals and groups who both have an impact on it and are influenced by it. It therefore follows that space should be analyzed not in isolation, but in connection to these other elements as well, seeing that the relationship between them often seems to be reciprocal. Warf and Arias further elaborate on this topic, claiming that space is important “not for the simplistic and overly used reason that everything happens in space, but because *where* things happen is critical to knowing *how* and *why* they happen.”<sup>9</sup> By this the authors once again highlight the need to consider the spatial element in practically any analysis of the *things* that *happen*. In other words, many analyses of seemingly unrelated things or events will not produce a full picture unless the spatial element is a part of said analysis. And, because space tends

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<sup>7</sup> Warf and Arias, 9.

<sup>8</sup> Warf and Arias, 7.

<sup>9</sup> Warf and Arias, 1.

to be in a reciprocal relation with its context, then inversely essentially no spatial analysis is complete without considering the context of the space in question.

This need to put space into context translates perfectly into my upcoming analysis of the places of *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire*. As will be elaborated on in the following chapters, fantasy world-building tends to imitate the real world in many respects, therefore the need to put space into context applies in these fantasy worlds as much as in the real one. Based on the findings above I will analyze medievalist man-made spaces within the context of other aspects of the world-building of the novels (namely in connection to characters and groups of characters) in order to explore how this space impacts the fantasy worlds. This will allow me to get a more thorough look at the role of medievalist man-made spaces in these fantasy novels.

## **1.4. Conclusion**

Spatiality studies is a relatively young and dynamically evolving field of study. It surfaced thanks to the spatial turn, which is, in other words, the shift of focus towards space across the humanities. The spatial turn happened during the twentieth century, most probably as a reaction to the changes brought by the World Wars.

The research done within spatiality studies is inherently interdisciplinary, as space is something which humans both shape and are shaped by in many areas of their life. Spatiality finds its way into political science, anthropology, theology, film studies, history, and of course, pertinent to this thesis, literary studies. Despite this diverse body of research, there is one thing which connects all of it under the umbrella of spatiality studies: the need to put space in context and inversely to put everything in the context of space.

In the practical part of this thesis, space (in this case narrowed to medievalist man-made space) will be analyzed within the context of the world-building of *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire*. Specifically, it will be put into the context of the characters and groups of characters in the books. Inversely, the characters and groups of characters will be put into the context of medievalist man-made spaces, as one way of this relationship cannot be satisfactorily analyzed without the other.

## 2. Medievalism

### 2.1. Introduction

The presence of medievalist man-made spaces in both *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire* is entailed by the medieval-like setting of the books. The choice of this setting is not as straight-forward as may seem, as there are various ways in which an author can insert the Middle Ages into a fantasy book. The specific nuances of the medievalist setting are the focus of this chapter. The aim of the chapter is to put the medievalist setting of both mentioned fantasies into a wider context and point out the differences between the two settings and the effect they have on the world-building.

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section will explain why *medieval* does not equal *medievalist* or in other words why popular depictions of the Middle Ages, for example in fantasy literature, are only interpretations of the Middle Ages and it is therefore problematic to argue for the realism of such depictions, even though this sometimes happens. Building on Shiloh Carroll's book *Medievalism in A Song of Ice and Fire and Game of Thrones* and on Diebold's article "Medievalism," the confusion between the two terms shall be addressed and explained by considering historical context and the changing idea which people have about what is *medieval*.

The second section will build on this distinction and introduce two of the most prevalent ways in which the Middle Ages are depicted and interpreted in literature in a *medievalist* way, following mostly the terminology presented by Carroll in her book. This section will furthermore demonstrate that Tolkien and Martin each use one of these two modes of treating the Middle Ages in their works, which informs many smaller decisions regarding the world-building of the novels and can affect both the descriptions of man-made spaces and the way in which the characters interact with these spaces.

### 2.2. Medievalism and Interpretation

Fantasy books set in the Middle Ages appear to be immensely popular. However, there seems to be a general misunderstanding of the authenticity and realism of the Middle Ages depicted in fantasies, and in other types of literature and popular culture as well. These depictions are, in fact, not *medieval* but rather *medievalist*.

The element which is crucial for the differentiation between what is *medieval* and what is *medievalist* is the element of interpretation. As Shiloh Carroll argues in her book *Medievalism in A Song of Ice and Fire and Game of Thrones*, the word “medieval” refers to the historical period known as the Middle Ages, but the word “medievalist” refers rather to “the interpretation of this era and its culture, literature, and modes of thinking.”<sup>10</sup> In other words, medievalism is concerned with how the popular culture represents, imagines, and influences the public view of the Middle Ages. Often, its findings have little to do with the reality of that time, which is why there is the distinction between the two terms. It follows that practically every piece of literature about the Middle Ages, that perhaps does not originate in the Middle Ages, is inevitably filtered through a point of view contemporary to both the author and the reader of a text, and it is therefore essentially impossible to authentically recreate the Middle Ages.<sup>11</sup> All the recreations inevitably end up being medievalist instead of medieval, because all recreations contain some level of interpretation of this historical period by people outside of it.

Nevertheless, often people may not be familiar with this distinction at all, and consequently might not realize that many things which are widely considered to be medieval are in fact *medievalist*. William J. Diebold elaborates on this topic in his article “Medievalism.” Diebold refers to Michael Camille’s book *The Gargoyles of Notre-Dame: Medievalism and the monsters of Modernity*, which is a study of the history of Notre-Dame’s gargoyles. Diebold is mainly concerned with the fact that the creation of the gargoyles dates back to the nineteenth century,<sup>12</sup> which he uses to demonstrate that the gargoyles decorating the cathedral are in fact not medieval, despite being largely based on medieval ones.<sup>13</sup> The fact that the public seems to think of said gargoyles as famous examples of *medieval* art, illustrates Diebold’s point that our perception of the Middle Ages is being controlled by things that do not necessarily originate from that historical period.<sup>14</sup> In other words, the gargoyles are only interpretations of the medieval ones. They are therefore not themselves medieval, but rather *medievalist*. However, they

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<sup>10</sup> Shiloh Carroll, *Medievalism in A Song of Ice and Fire and Game of Thrones* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2018), 8.

<sup>11</sup> Carroll, 13.

<sup>12</sup> William J. Diebold, “Medievalism,” *Studies in Iconography* 33 (2012): 250.

<sup>13</sup> Diebold, 250.

<sup>14</sup> Diebold, 250.

are often falsely thought of as being authentically medieval, and in peoples' minds they are added to their idea of what is *medieval*.

The fact that people often tend to accept non-medieval things as authentically medieval, and consequently shift their definitions of what is medieval, points back to the impact which interpretation has on the depictions of the Middle Ages in popular culture. With each different interpretation of the Middle Ages, or an aspect of the Middle Ages, our perception of the historical period changes, albeit in a small way. Nevertheless, these small things accumulate, making our ideas about the Middle Ages increasingly less *medieval* and increasingly more *medievalist*, sometimes even without us knowing, as in this case of Notre-Dame's gargoyles. Our ideas about the Middle Ages are therefore essentially based on their previous interpretations and on misinformation.

Coming back to the problematic of the Middle Ages in fantasy, based on the evidence which has been put forward, it is reasonable to conclude that the setting of both *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire* is *medievalist* rather than *medieval*. Apart from the obvious observation that both are works of fantasy, which is a genre speculative in its definition,<sup>15</sup> both sagas contain an element of interpretation in their Middle Ages. It would be problematic and misleading to argue for the realism of either of their use of the Middle Ages. Instead, the sagas provide two distinct ways of interpreting the Middle Ages, which shall be the subject of the following section.

### **2.3.Duality of the Middle Ages**

There is a long history of interpreting the Middle Ages because it has been happening essentially ever since they ended. It is therefore not surprising that there is more than one overall outlook on the historical era, or in other words, more frameworks of medievalism and more ways in which the Middle Ages can be depicted in literature. This section shall focus on two of the arguably most prevalent ones, because there is a connection to be drawn between them and the two sagas analyzed in this thesis.

The two ways of interpreting the Middle Ages in literature are based on how the perception of the Middle Ages changed throughout history. In *Medievalism in A Song of Ice and Fire and Game of Thrones*, Carroll names the first of the frameworks the "Dark Ages model" and the second one the "Chivalric Age model."<sup>16</sup> She explains that the

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<sup>15</sup> Carroll, *Medievalism in A Song of Ice and Fire and Game of Thrones*, 10.

<sup>16</sup> Carroll, 15.

former is influenced by how the Middle Ages were thought of during the Renaissance, while the latter interpretation has roots in the Victorian era.<sup>17</sup> Simply stated, the *Dark Ages model* treats the Middle Ages as a regressive, unforgiving, and a barbaric historical period. The *Chivalric Age model*, on the other hand, romanticizes the Middle Ages as a simpler time more connected to nature, a time of chivalric knights and epic tales. Joseph Young also recognizes this distinction in his article “The American Pratchett?: Muck and Modality in George R. R. Martin’s *Song of Ice and Fire*” when he claims that medievalism in literature can be used “to evoke either antique glamour or primitive barbarity.”<sup>18</sup> By the former, Young expresses much the same as Carroll does with the *Chivalric Age model*, and the latter can be translated to Carroll’s *Dark Ages model*.

These two fundamentally different ways of viewing the Middle Ages and representing them in a medievalist text can be translated to Tolkien and Martin’s approaches to their fantasies. Based on the information given above, the connection between the two sagas and Carroll and Young’s classification of medievalist texts becomes clear: both authors agree that Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* represents the *Chivalric Age model*, or the “antique glamour” in Young’s words, while Martin’s *A Song of Ice and Fire* leans heavily towards the *Dark Ages model*, or the “primitive barbarity.”

Although the sagas have not been written during the Renaissance or during the Victorian era, the distinction between their treatment of the Middle Ages is palpable and reflects their individual motivations. Tolkien had a rather romantic view of the Middle Ages, using the historical period as a means of escaping a reality, which to him was in some ways problematic, into a less complicated, non-industrial time.<sup>19</sup> Martin, on the other hand, is known to dislike this type of romanticized medievalism in fantasy, and went the other way. Young further addresses this by claiming that Martin “perpetuates a recognizable tradition of exaggerated squalor in medievalist literature.”<sup>20</sup> Instead of romanticized ideas about the Middle Ages, Martin incorporates into his books much more pessimism, along with moral ambiguity, filth, and brutality.

Recognizing this difference in the interpretation and depiction of the Middle Ages in *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire* provides my analysis with essential

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<sup>17</sup> Carroll, 9.

<sup>18</sup> Joseph Young, “The American Pratchett?: Muck and Modality in George R. R. Martin’s *Song of Ice and Fire*,” *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* Vol. 27, no. 2 (96) (2016): 296.

<sup>19</sup> Carroll, *Medievalism in A Song of Ice and Fire and Game of Thrones*, 6.

<sup>20</sup> Young, “The American Pratchett?: Muck and Modality in George R. R. Martin’s *Song of Ice and Fire*,” 296.

context. This is because these two forms of medievalism set the tone of the texts and are superordinate to many smaller, but equally important decisions in the world-building, of which medievalist man-made spaces are a part. Tally acknowledges the connection between the overall final form of the text and the representation of its spaces, stating that “the distinction among various modes of literary representation is closely tied to the different ways of seeing and representing these real and imagined spaces.”<sup>21</sup> In other words, the medievalist man-made spaces in the books are a part of the larger world-building. They influence and are influenced by the overall strategy of how the Middle Ages are interpreted.

Once again, the two sagas analyzed in this thesis differ in their choice of this overall strategy. The aim of analyzing both *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire* is therefore to provide an analysis of two distinct examples of two prevalent types of the medievalist setting. The analysis of both sagas beside each other may point towards differences in the depictions of places or characters traceable precisely to this duality of the Middle Ages in literature.

## 2.4. Conclusion

The Middle Ages presented in *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire*, and generally the depictions of the Middle Ages in literature not originating in said historical period, are *medievalist*, rather than *medieval*. Medievalism is concerned with the interpretations and recreations of the Middle Ages, which are inherently infused with contemporary points of view, and therefore cannot claim to be perfectly realistic.

Our perception of the Middle Ages has changed throughout history and keeps changing to this day. However, there are two recognizable and prevalent ways of treating and interpreting them. Carroll describes these ways as the *Chivalric Age model* and the *Dark Ages model*. The first model draws from the Victorians and their romanticization of the Middle Ages as a simpler and more desirable time in reaction to industrialization, whereas the second model treats the Middle Ages in a way similar to how they were perceived during the Renaissance: as a step backward, a regressive, barbaric, rather uniform period of time.

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<sup>21</sup> T. Tally Jr., *Spatiality* (2012, Routledge), 46.

These two models of interpretation of the Middle Ages can be translated to *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire*. The former leans into the *Chivalric Age model*, while the latter uses the *Dark Ages model*. Because both sagas use the medievalist setting in a distinct way, it is desirable to put the books into the context of these overall models of interpretation, because the choice of this larger strategy influences other decisions regarding the world-building, such as the depiction of places and the interactions of characters and places. Analyzing both sagas will therefore provide an examination which is more inclusive and point towards distinctions connected to the choice of one of these strategies.

### **3. World-building in Context of Fantasy and Man-made Spaces**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter's primary concern will be to demonstrate how the need of space to be examined in context, as outlined in the first chapter of this thesis, translates to the imaginary places in fantasy novels. Likewise, the two models of representing the medievalist setting, introduced in the previous chapter, will be put into the context of fantasy world-building. Both connections shall then be used to introduce the upcoming close reading and analysis of the role of medievalist man-made spaces in the fantasy worlds of *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire*.

#### **3.2. World-building in Fantasy Literature**

Fantasy world-building it is the act of building a fictional world. Although in practice, it is, of course, not as simple as that. It is a rather complex notion with many aspects, some of which will be the subject of the practical part of the thesis. Successful attempts at world-building in fantasy produce memorable and valuable books, while the unsuccessful ones may leave the reader wondering about the inconsistencies of the world and thus hinder the experience or enjoyment of the book.

World-building is now a rather common term in discussions of fantasy literature, and there seems to be a general agreement that the consistency and development of the imaginary world tend to be one of the most prominent appeals of the genre, as for example the co-author Barry Trott explains in the article "Core Collections in Genre Studies: Fantasy Fiction 101."<sup>22</sup> It is increasingly more common to see works of fantasy become more and more detailed, often including actual visual maps for the readers to orient themselves in the meticulous geography of the fictional world (which is the case for both Tolkien and Martin). In short, attention to world-building in fantasy is highly desirable and noticeable.

Over time, this increasing attention to world-building has made fantasy books become progressively longer. As the Tolkien scholar Richard C. West argues, this means

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<sup>22</sup> Charlotte Burcher et al., "Core Collections in Genre Studies: Fantasy Fiction 101," *Reference & User Services Quarterly* Vol. 48, no. 3 (Spring 2009): 227.

the creation of voluminous sagas, surpassing even the limits of a trilogy, which nevertheless leaves the author with more than enough space to thoroughly paint and explore the imaginary world.<sup>23</sup> Both Tolkien's and Martin's work can be considered to belong here, because both sagas pay great attention to world-building, and the amount of detail put into depicting their worlds makes them rather extensive.

The positive reception and memorable quality of the invented worlds of Tolkien and Martin once again imply that the readers of fantasy tend to appreciate a highly detailed, well-crafted fantasy world, even (or especially) if that entails long books. According to "Core Collections in Genre Studies," these appreciated details are even synonymous with world-building, and world-building is synonymous with building authenticity in fantasy.<sup>24</sup> Simply stated, the more details the reader receives about the fantasy world, the more likely the fantasy world is to feel authentic. And the more authentic the reader perceives the fantasy world to be, the more successful the world-building becomes. The aspect of authenticity when it comes to world-building is therefore a crucial contributor to the success of the world-building.

It bears repeating that world-building is the more successful the more authentic the reader *perceives* the fantasy world to be. I have argued in the previous chapter that the question of authenticity or realism when it comes to fantasy, or specifically the medievalist setting in fantasy, is inherently flawed, as it is the nature of medievalism to explore not the objective reality of the Middle Ages, but the various interpretations and changes in the perception of the Middle Ages. Likewise, the phrase *realistic fantasy* seems to be an oxymoron because it is in the nature of the genre to work with things which could hardly happen in our reality.<sup>25</sup> Carroll further addresses this point and explains that the readers of fantasy want "a sense of verisimilitude, a "feeling" of authenticity but not necessarily true realism."<sup>26</sup> During the discussion of the authenticity of a fantasy world, it is therefore necessary to keep in mind that what is meant is precisely this *feeling of authenticity* instead of *true realism*.

One of the most productive ways of creating this feeling of authenticity within a fantasy world is by implementing details and aspects from the real world, which the reader

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<sup>23</sup> Richard C. West, "Where Fantasy Fits: The Importance of Being Tolkien," *Mythlore* Vol. 33, no. 1 (125) (Fall/Winter 2014): 26.

<sup>24</sup> Burcher et al., "Core Collections in Genre Studies: Fantasy Fiction 101," 228.

<sup>25</sup> Carroll, *Medievalism in A Song of Ice and Fire and Game of Thrones*, 10.

<sup>26</sup> Carroll, 16.

may find familiar and even relatable. Tally even claims that no work of fantasy can get by without at least some ties to the real world.<sup>27</sup> A similar idea is also expressed in the article “Medievalism in Contemporary Fantasy: A New Species of Romance” in which the authors explain that fantasy might be primarily about imagination and invention, but there are always some connections to our reality.<sup>28</sup> Pointing out these ties to reality is not intended to criticize authors for not having enough imagination to create a world untied to what we know. On the contrary, it is to argue that, apart from the obvious economic reasons, the book would possibly not be as enjoyable for the reader without having something they know to hold on and relate to; be that well-crafted characters or engaging environments.

The attention to world-building and authenticity is palpable in both *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire* because there is a clear intention placed on creating a consistent and engaging imaginary world by the authors. Tolkien and Martin are both able to create a feeling of authenticity largely by rooting their fantasy worlds in aspects of reality, be it by creating relatable and complex characters or by inventing a setting which works with widely recognized and familiar interpretations of the Middle Ages. The nuances of these exemplary cases of world-building will be further analyzed in the practical part of the thesis.

### **3.3. Interconnectedness of World-building**

There is another area to consider when discussing the feeling of authenticity of a fantasy world. This area concerns the way in which the fantasy world is interconnected. It has been discussed above that essentially every piece of fantasy literature has some connections to reality in order to make it relatable or feel authentic. In other words, many details in a fantasy novel will try to imitate the real world to achieve a higher level of the perceived realism. The interconnectedness of the real world is one of these details which is often imitated in fantasy books, including the two sagas under examination in this thesis.

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<sup>27</sup> T. Tally Jr., *Spatiality* (2012, Routledge), 147.

<sup>28</sup> Mladen M. Jakovljević and Mirjana N. Lončar-Vujnović, “Medievalism in Contemporary Fantasy: A New Species of Romance,” *Imago Temporis: Medium Aevum*, 2015, 100, <https://doi.org/10.21001/itma.2016.10.03>.

This interconnectedness of the world can be rephrased to the need of placing everything into some context. This problematic was already elaborated on in the first chapter about spatiality studies and applies here as well. In the real world, it is often problematic to take things out of context and try to analyze or use them in isolation without considering said context. Since literature, even literature belonging to the fantasy genre, aims to reflect the real world to some extent,<sup>29</sup> it follows that the decisions which go into literary world-building share this sense of interconnectedness and need for context. One example of this might be the two models of depicting the Middle Ages proposed by Carroll and discussed in the previous chapter about medievalism. Once again, the choice of either the *Chivalric Age model* or the *Dark Ages model* influences many smaller decisions regarding the world-building. The depiction of the world, its places, characters, societies, beliefs, and the dynamics between them, must be consistent with the initial choice of the overall strategy (i.e. with the bigger context), and diverge perhaps only intentionally.

Of all the aspects which impact the world-building, this thesis focuses specifically on man-made space in connection to characters and groups of characters. It has now been discussed several times that the research of spatiality studies is interdisciplinary, and that space needs to be put into some context. In other words, to look at the use of man-made spaces in the books more profoundly, it is imperative to analyze the spaces in connection to other aspects and details which constitute the world-building. Following Tim Cresswell's definition of "place" as a location which has been made meaningful by people,<sup>30</sup> I argue that analyzing places in connection to the characters of the books as well as its whole societies is a satisfactory starting point, seeing that the connection between space and people is rather intuitive and highlighted often in spatiality studies. These relations do not necessarily have to move the story forward, but they are important for the world-building, because they can give the readers the much desirable details about the fantasy world, which can increase the feeling of authenticity and perhaps the overall enjoyment of the book.

Once again, the analysis of the medievalist man-made spaces in the worlds of *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire* in this thesis shall therefore be considered

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<sup>29</sup> T. Tally Jr., *Spatiality* (2012, Routledge), 42.

<sup>30</sup> Tim Cresswell, "Introduction: Defining Place," in *Place: A Short Introduction*, Short Introductions to Geography (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 7.

through the connections these spaces have to individual characters and groups of characters. These two layers of analysis are also somewhat similarly outlined in the article “The Built Environment and Spatial Form” by Denise L. Lawrence and Setha M. Low:

“As expressions of culture, built forms may be seen to play a communicative role embodying and conveying meaning between groups, or individuals within groups, at a variety of levels. The built environment may also act to reaffirm the system of meaning and the values a group finds embodied in the cosmos.”<sup>31</sup>

The article discusses the real-life built environment but can nevertheless be translated into fantasy world-building as well. The authors highlight the role of space in conveying meaning between people and groups of people. In the case of fantasy world-building, this transmission of meaning happens as well, and adds another level of depth to the fantasy world based on the already mentioned notion of creating a feeling of authenticity by imitating the real world. The exact forms of how this is present in the books shall be focused on in the two following chapters. The fourth chapter of the thesis will therefore consider how man-made space is used to reflect and convey information about what Lawrence and Low refer to as “the individuals within groups,”<sup>32</sup> or in other words individual characters. The fifth chapter shall then analyze the ways in which man-made space reflects and conveys information “between groups,”<sup>33</sup> or in other words the various races, societies or Houses present in the novels.

### 3.4. Conclusion

This chapter pointed out the popularity of world-building in fantasy with particular attention to the subtle but important role of imitating reality in the imaginative process. Even though (medievalist) fantasy, as argued in the previous chapters, essentially cannot ever claim to be truly realistic, there is a certain feeling of realism and authenticity which is desirable and attainable through adding details and emulating certain aspects of the real world to create relatability and depth. The successful insertion of details about the world, which create this feeling of relatability and authenticity, into the narrative, constitutes good world-building.

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<sup>31</sup> Denise L. Lawrence and Setha M. Low, “The Built Environment and Spatial Form,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 19 (1990): 466.

<sup>32</sup> Lawrence and Low, 466.

<sup>33</sup> Lawrence and Low, 466.

One of the aspects of reality which is imitated in fantasy, and which this chapter focused on, is the interconnected nature of the world. Building on spatiality studies and their claim that space influences and is influenced by many aspects of peoples' lives, this chapter introduced the same argument into the spatial analysis of the fantasy novels in question. In other words, the need of analyzing space in context is applicable to the spaces of the fantasy novels as well because the interconnectedness of the world tends to be imitated in fantasy novels to aid world-building. Lastly, also following spatiality studies and the intuitive connection between space and humans, this chapter introduced the two areas of the upcoming analysis: medievalist man-made spaces in connection to individual characters and in connection to certain groups of characters.

## 4. Medievalist Man-made Spaces in Connection to Character

### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter shall consider medievalist man-made spaces in *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire* in the context of individual characters. It has already been stated several times in this thesis that fantasy literature tends to imitate the real world in many things, and that the connection of people to the spaces of the world is one of them, and is therefore applicable to the spaces of the fantasy novels and the characters appearing there. Furthermore, the connection of characters to places can take various forms to achieve various effects, all of which ultimately serve the narrative in some way and the world-building in general. This chapter will explore several of these uses and effects.

The chapter is divided into three sections, each of which analyzes a slightly different use of the medievalist man-made spaces in connection to individual characters. The first section builds on Tally's *Spatiality* and Jenefer Robinson's article "On Being Moved by Architecture" in order to analyze how medievalist man-made spaces are described and perceived by the characters' senses in connection to the emotional reactions the places elicit in the characters, as these perceptions and reactions provide valuable insight into who the characters are, and thus create depth in the narrative.

The following section will explore the limitations and opportunities which the medievalist man-made places in the books present to the characters. The section builds mainly on Lawrence and Low's arguments from the already mentioned article "The Built Environment and Spatial Form," especially on their claim that the built environment influences peoples' behavior. Similarly to the first section, this section will connect these behavioral requirements presented to the characters to how the characters react to them in a way that is consistent with their background and builds their personalities further.

The last section will focus on how individual characters derive meaning from and reflect their identities onto the places of the world around them, following Cresswell and Tally's research. Special focus will be put on how characters perceive their surroundings when they feel that they either do belong there, or on the contrary that they do not. The section will likewise argue that the personal views of characters, being crucial parts of the narrative, are also crucial in creating depth within the fantasy world by adding details and opinions to the complex system of the meanings of certain man-made spaces.

## 4.2. Emotions and Senses

Perhaps the most salient way in which characters are connected to places in terms of creating depth and contributing to the world-building is manifested through the means of emotional reactions to said places. These reactions can inform the reader about their values and mindsets and even put certain characters in contrast, all of which is important to create the feeling of authenticity in the narrative and by extension in the fantasy world.

The ability of architecture to elicit reactions from people is not a new or a fantasy-only one. On the contrary, research into this area already exists. For example, Jenefer Robinson in her article “On Being Moved by Architecture” sets out to analyze the impact of movement on our emotional experience of the built environment. She argues that the built environment can “arouse actual emotions”<sup>34</sup> in people. Robinson of course focuses on real-life architecture in her article. However, a similar thing happens with architecture in literature as well, based on the previously elaborated argument that literature imitates the real world in many respects. The difference is that with literary representations of literature, the author of the text must achieve to evoke these emotional reactions through a text and often does so through the eyes and the emotions of the characters.

In *A Game of Thrones*, there is an instance in which the stables of King’s Landing are used to deepen the contrast between the characters of the Stark sisters Sansa and Arya. The girls are staying in King’s Landing with their father, who has been appointed the Hand of the King, and because Sansa is betrothed to prince Joffrey. While Sansa spends her days romanticizing her betrothed and thinking about songs, tourneys and noble knights, Arya spends her time attending what is referred to as “dancing lessons,”<sup>35</sup> where in reality she learns to know her way around a sword. The lessons don’t end at swordplay, however, as her teacher makes her do tasks to increase her strength, awareness, and speed, such as catching the cats of King’s Landing or blindfolding herself.

During this time Sansa learns from her friend that Arya has been seen “walking through the stables on her hands.”<sup>36</sup> This is of course one of the tasks assigned to Arya by her dancing teacher, and no one else expect Arya and the teacher know the meaning of such a task. Sansa, upon learning what Arya has been seen doing in the stables, glosses

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<sup>34</sup> Jenefer Robinson, “On Being Moved by Architecture,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 70, no. 4 (November 2012): 348, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6245.2012.01526.x>.

<sup>35</sup> George R. R. Martin, *A Game of Thrones, A Song of Ice and Fire, Book One* (New York: Bantam Books, 2011), 472.

<sup>36</sup> Martin, 474.

over the action itself, and instead expresses her dislike of the stables by referring to them as “the smelly places full of manure and flies.”<sup>37</sup> The fact that Sansa does not seem to care about what her sister is doing, implies that she is not surprised, even though she does not know the purpose of Arya’s actions. However, it does not imply that she agrees, which is a point strengthened by the expression of her view on the stables.

Instead of focusing on a simple disagreement of Arya’s questionable actions, the author chose to express the situation rather by the means of space. In other words, rather than expressing Sansa’s values using only a reaction to Arya’s actions, her values are expressed by her thinking that stables are no place for a lady like her. The stables therefore elicit an emotional reaction from Sansa: while Arya does not seem to mind them, Sansa dislikes them. These reactions are consistent with the actions of both the girls: Arya walking through the stables on her hands, and Sansa effectively keeping her distance from the stables and spending her time in the Red Keep with her friend instead. This is a minute detail in the narrative of *A Game of Thrones*, and perhaps does not have any immediate impact on how the story unfolds; however, it creates depth within the fantasy world by having its characters react and interact with its places. In particular, space is used here as a vehicle for expressing the contrast between characters of Sansa and Arya.

Another example of evoking an emotional response to a place through the eyes of a character presents itself in *The Return of the King* when the wizard Gandalf and the hobbit Pippin arrive to the city of Minas Tirith. Pippin sees the great stone city for the first time and his feeling of awe is palpable as they come near it and as they traverse it on their way towards the Citadel. The reader learns that Pippin “gazed in wonder”<sup>38</sup> and even “cried aloud”<sup>39</sup> upon seeing the Tower of Ecthelion for the first time.

Pippin’s reaction is predictable and can even be said to be dictated by the way the city and especially the Citadel and the Tower are built. It is consistent with Robinson’s article, in which she explains:

“There are certain features of architecture that appeal to universal features of human existence. Even without knowing the history or function of a Gothic cathedral, given the kind of biological creatures we are, we cannot experience the lofty spaces of York Minster without feeling small. And even without

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<sup>37</sup> Martin, 474.

<sup>38</sup> J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Return of the King*, *The Lord of the Rings*, Part 3 (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2020), 751.

<sup>39</sup> Tolkien, 751.

knowing the full import of Daniel Liebeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin, as we move through its constricted passages and dungeon-like spaces, it is inevitable that we feel uncomfortably constrained.”<sup>40</sup>

Minas Tirith is described in a way which implies its grandeur and nobility. It is therefore predictable that a place like this would elicit feelings of awe and smallness. And even though the reader, along with Pippin, learn that the condition of the city is in fact getting worse every year, it does not stop the hobbit from thinking that it is “vaster and more splendid than anything that he had dreamed of.”<sup>41</sup> In other words, no matter the decaying state of the city, its architecture is still capable of evoking the emotional reactions which it was likely built to evoke in the first place.

The feeling of awe which Pippin experiences in the example is based on *seeing* Minas Tirith for the first time. However, in her article, Robinson also highlights the importance of other senses besides sight to appreciate the built environment to the fullest.<sup>42</sup> Tally also mentions this problematic in *Spatiality*. He agrees that “the space under consideration may not be perceived by vision alone, but also by smell, or sound”<sup>43</sup> and that “although the visual register dominates geography, the other senses are almost as important as sources of the meanings humans attach to and associate with places.”<sup>44</sup> Tally therefore not only acknowledges the need to use more senses to appreciate architecture, but puts other senses besides sight essentially on the same level when it comes to the connection which people have to places and from which people derive the meanings of these places. Many authors know this and use this in the descriptions of their places, including both Tolkien and Martin.

One such example of using more senses in connection to man-made spaces has already been elaborated on in this section. This is the example of the stables and especially Sansa’s reaction to them in *A Game of Thrones*. Sansa’s dislike of the place is expressed through her sense of smell and given as perhaps the most literal reason for her opinion. In other words, for Sansa, the thing she associates the most with stables is their unpleasant smell. In short, stables smell bad and are dirty, therefore it is no place for a noble lady like Sansa, therefore she does not like to go there. This detail then shapes the meaning

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<sup>40</sup> Robinson, “On Being Moved by Architecture,” 342.

<sup>41</sup> Tolkien, *The Return of the King*, 752.

<sup>42</sup> Robinson, “On Being Moved by Architecture,” 337.

<sup>43</sup> T. Tally Jr., *Spatiality* (2012, Routledge), 142.

<sup>44</sup> T. Tally Jr., 142.

she attaches to the place and influences the position of the stables in her values and her worldview. The passage informs the reader that stables in Martin's fantasy world smell bad and present it as the reason for Sansa's negative opinion of them.

*A Clash of Kings* has a few passages which play especially with sound and hearing in a similar way. In a chapter from Bran Stark's point of view, the reader learns that his and his brother's pet wolves are confined after attacking one of the wards who are living with the Starks. Bran cannot see the wolves, but he can hear them, because they howl through days and nights. Bran explains that he can hear them sometimes as if they were close and sometimes as if they were far away, because the stone walls of Winterfell are said to play "queer tricks with sound."<sup>45</sup> It is likewise described that at times, due to the echoes, it sounds like there are many more wolves instead of only the two.

A parallel situation is expressed later in the book, this time concerning the castle Harrenhal through the point of view of Arya Stark, Bran's sister. The castle is almost empty, much as Winterfell is at the point in the narrative referred to in this instance. In both cases this is because most of the inhabitants of the respective castles have gone away to war. Despite the absence of howling wolves, hearing is used in the case of Harrenhal as well, to emphasize the feeling of emptiness which Harrenhal in its present state evokes:

"Sometimes the stones seemed to drink up noise, shrouding the yards in a blanket of silence. Other times, the echoes had a life of their own, so every footfall became the tread of a ghostly army, and every distant voice a ghostly feast."<sup>46</sup>

This passage is, once again, written from the point of view of Arya, and therefore describes how she perceives her surroundings. It underlines the palpable silence, which is unusual to Arya now that the castle has been left almost empty. The passage likewise describes how lively the castle can feel at times, despite being empty, thanks to the echoes, similarly to how Winterfell plays with echoes and sounds in the previously elaborated Bran's passage.

The two examples share many similarities. There is a similar reference to the stones of the castle and the echoes as the two factors of these sonic anomalies which the characters perceive in both Winterfell and Harrenhal. In both instances these descriptions

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<sup>45</sup> George R. R. Martin, *A Clash of Kings, A Song of Ice and Fire, Book Two* (New York: Bantam Books, 2011), 72.

<sup>46</sup> Martin, 679.

are designed to express what such large castles like Winterfell and Harrenhal are like when left almost completely empty. In particular, the passages imply that these places can appear to be quite menacing due to the tricks the walls play with sounds and echoes. Both examples therefore use sound and hearing to engagingly describe the man-made surroundings in which the characters find themselves.

Another matter connected to these descriptions of empty castles is the way in which the characters in question react to what they perceive. As stated before, both passages make the empty castles appear rather menacing and haunting. It is curious, then, that in both cases, the young Starks express indifference, instead of fear or at least uneasiness. In Bran's chapter, it is explained that essentially everyone left at Winterfell was bothered by the wolves' howling, and that "only Bran did not mind."<sup>47</sup> Similar thing happens in Arya's chapter, where her character and her reaction is also put in contrast with another character who reacts more predictably: "The funny sounds were one of the things that bothered Hot Pie, but not Arya."<sup>48</sup> The reactions of Bran and Arya Stark diverge from the claims made by Robinson and elaborated on through the example of Pippin seeing Minas Tirith for the first time. Bran and Arya do not react in a way which can be said to be dictated by the way in which their surroundings are described. However, the reactions of Bran and Arya diverge intentionally, as they again provide the reader with details consistent with the backgrounds and values of the characters.

Because Bran and Arya are siblings, their backgrounds in this context are similar, which contributes to their similar reactions. Bran has a strong connection to the castle. Indeed, he has spent his entire life there. In addition, he knows the castle in a way not many do, because he spent a considerable amount of his time climbing its stone walls before he fell and lost all feeling in his legs. Furthermore, he is a Stark, and he is very aware of that. He knows the wolf is the symbol of house Stark. All these factors constitute his bond to the castle and prevent him from being scared or bothered by the wolves' howls bouncing off the stone walls. Arya is not bothered by the sounds and echoes of Harrenhal perhaps because she is also a Stark and she has spent the first years of her life in Winterfell, which, judging from the evidence in Bran's chapter, is similar in this respect.

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<sup>47</sup> Martin, 72.

<sup>48</sup> Martin, 679.

She is used to the tricks which the castle walls play with the sounds of Winterfell, and therefore is not surprised when she is faced with a similar situation in a different castle.

These short parts of the text build on the background, contribute and are consistent with the characters of Bran and Arya. Apart from showing a parallel between the two almost empty stone castles using sound and hearing, these passages also provide a parallel between the two Stark siblings. This is done by expressing their reactions to the sonic anomalies happening in the castles. The reactions of the siblings intentionally deviate from the reactions of the other characters in order to highlight certain qualities of the Stark siblings.

The emotions of characters and their reactions in connection to places are a way of informing the reader about the characters and creating depth through adding details to the fantasy world. It is common for these reactions to be elicited by the visual aspect of the built environment, as was Pippin's reaction upon seeing Minas Tirith. However, other senses are arguably just as important and just as used to paint the picture of the spatial frame for the reader, as exemplified by the parallel passages about the castles Winterfell and Harrenhal. Using more senses than just sight is what people naturally do, therefore it is only logical for the author to emulate this using his characters. Framing the descriptions in this way helps the reader imagine what it would be like to "be there,"<sup>49</sup> thus creating the feeling of authenticity through the connection of the human element to the built environment.

### **4.3.Limitations and Behavior**

Another way in which space can be connected to characters is by directly or indirectly influencing their behavior. This can be based on many factors, ranging from the layout of the built environment, through the background knowledge and perspectives of characters, all the way to social or symbolic constructs connected to the places (which are to be discussed in the following chapter).

This section shall focus firstly on the layout of the built environment as a reason for a change of behavior, and secondly on the element of the individual characters, in particular on how their different perspectives interact with the built environment and the limitations which the built environment faces them with. Lawrence and Low touch on

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<sup>49</sup> Cresswell, "Introduction: Defining Place," 8.

this problematic in their article “The Built Environment and Spatial Form,” saying that the relationships between people and man-made spaces are “interactive,”<sup>50</sup> because “people both create, and find their behavior influenced by, the built environment.”<sup>51</sup> In other words, people build and change their surroundings to accommodate their behavior, or in turn find their behavior influenced by their surroundings.

The connection between the built environment and the behavior of people is, once again, not a new or a controversial one. Lawrence and Low, for one, elaborate on this topic further by describing how people adapt their environment to suit their behaviors and needs, but also how they themselves are able to adapt their behavior to suit their environment, “especially when it presents limitations.”<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, the previously mentioned Jenefer Robinson expresses a similar idea as Lawrence and Low do, but sees people adapting their behavior based rather on what the built environment provides (be that something good or bad), instead of focusing on what it forbids or discourages.<sup>53</sup> Despite this different framework of thought, both articles can essentially be said to express a similar claim: that certain types of architecture invite certain kinds of behavior and people are apt to accommodate their behavior accordingly.

This connection is, once again and for the same reason expressed several times before, repeated, and imitated in books to help them create a feeling of authenticity, as shall be exemplified in the following paragraphs. The medievalist man-made environment in the books can invite certain types of limitations or behavioral requirements. Expressing these limitations or requirements provides the built environment with an additional level of detail, which can be incorporated into the narrative, once again, by the means of the human element and therefore provide information about the place and the characters at the same time. Simply stated, the incorporation of these limitations or requirements, which come with certain built spaces, into the narrative, can be used to deepen a character by making him either conform to these behavioral requirements, or by making him defy them.

Early on in *A Game of Thrones*, the reader learns about Jon Snow and his place in society. As an illegitimate child of Eddard Stark, he is treated differently than his Stark half-brothers and half-sisters. During a banquet following the arrival of king Robert

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<sup>50</sup> Lawrence and Low, “The Built Environment and Spatial Form,” 454.

<sup>51</sup> Lawrence and Low, 454.

<sup>52</sup> Lawrence and Low, 460.

<sup>53</sup> Robinson, “On Being Moved by Architecture,” 342.

Baratheon at Winterfell, Jon is not allowed to sit next to the Starks but sits on the other side of the hall instead. This is a clear limitation presented to him in this situation, but one which he accepts. However, there is more to his reaction to this limitation. The legitimate children of Ned Stark are not allowed to bring their wolves into the Great Hall. Jon brought his wolf, however, because “there were more curs than Jon could count at this end of the hall, and no one had said a word about his pup.”<sup>54</sup> It is not said whether Jon was specifically asked to keep his wolf out of the hall as well, therefore it is hard to determine whether he consciously defies the limitation set upon him here. Perhaps one side of the hall invites and forbids certain behaviors, while the other one invites and forbids others. Although what can be said is that Jon uses his position in the hall, which may seem limiting at first glance, to his advantage, and even thinks of himself as fortunate in that situation. Jon accepts his position at the far end of the Great Hall and instead of complaining about it he finds advantages. He adapts his behavior as is necessary for the place and situation he is in but tries to get the most of it either way.

During this short passage, the reader learns about both the place and the character. It is common for Martin to put a darker twist on his medievalism (staying consistent with the *Dark Ages model* of interpreting the Middle Ages), and by describing the scene of a banquet from the point of view of someone who is seated at the far end of the hall fits this perfectly. In addition, the character is one whose point of view the author will continue to use throughout the novels, and this scene helps to introduce his background and outlook on life at this point in the narrative.

A different view on the limitations which come with a certain place is exemplified in *The Two Towers*, when Aragorn, Gandalf, Legolas, and Gimli arrive to Eorlas and are stopped before entering Meduseld, the Golden Hall of king Théoden. The guard at the door requires them to “lay aside [their] weapons before [they] enter.”<sup>55</sup> They are, simply stated, forbidden to enter the Hall and meet the king unless they give their weapons away. It is a clear limitation which comes with a certain place, similarly to the limitation presented to Jon Snow in the previous example. This time, however, only some of the characters are as quick to accept the limitation as Jon Snow did.

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<sup>54</sup> Martin, *A Game of Thrones*, 52.

<sup>55</sup> J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, *The Lord of the Rings*, Part 2 (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2020), 510.

It can be said that each of the characters presented with this limitation reacts differently. Legolas hands his weapons to the guard rather compliantly and only asks that they be treated with respect and caution. Aragorn, however, expresses reluctance to give away his sword, not necessarily out of disrespect, but rather because the sword in question is a very important one and Aragorn does not want it to fall into the wrong hands. Gimli shares Aragorn's stance towards the limitation and refuses to give away his axe. Before the situation escalates, Gandalf steps in and hands over his sword while expressing that even though Théoden's demand is needless, it would be undesirable to refuse and quarrel, when there are more pressing matters at hand. Following this, both Aragorn and Gimli finally decide to give their weapons away as well, and all the characters are allowed to enter Meduseld. All characters therefore accept the limitation and accommodate their behavior to be able to enter Théoden's hall in the end, despite having doubts and despite each of them reacting slightly differently to being presented with the limitation.

The reactions of the individual characters upon being faced with this limitation are not to be dismissed, however, even though the outcome is essentially the same for all of them. These reactions add depth to who the characters are and are consistent with what the reader has come to know about them until this point in the narrative. Legolas is an Elf and adhering to Tolkien's representation of Elves in *The Lord of the Rings*, he is respectful and noble; therefore he does not see a reason to defy this restriction and hands over his weapons obediently. Aragorn is slowly coming to terms with being Elendil's heir and with the role he must play in the unfolding events. The sword, being made again from Elendil's, is a crucial part of this developed sense of identity. He is aware of his importance and of the symbolism of the sword, and therefore does not want to put it out of his sight. However, similarly to Legolas, Aragorn is not one to raise his sword unless necessary, therefore in the end he is willing to settle the matter calmly and step back. Gimli, however, is a little more hot-tempered and quicker to threaten the guard at the door when the disagreement presents itself. It is only after Aragorn steps back that Gimli agrees to hand over his axe as well. Lastly, Gandalf acts as a conciliator. He is a wise character who always seems to be busy during the novels, therefore he recognizes the needlessness of prolonging the situation and allowing it to escalate. Therefore he steps in before it has a chance to do so, allowing the characters to proceed into Théoden's Hall without losing any more time and energy.

It should nevertheless be mentioned that Gandalf, somewhat similarly to Jon Snow bringing his wolf into the Great Hall of Winterfell, ends up bending this limitation to his advantage a little. Gandalf convinces the guard of Théoden's hall to let him keep his staff on the grounds that he is old and needs it for support. However, for Gandalf, because he is a wizard, the staff is "more than a prop for age"<sup>56</sup> and is in fact central to how the following events of the novel unfold. It can therefore be said that Gandalf, similarly to Jon Snow, accepts the limitation presented to him, but finds an advantage in it.

All the characters discussed in this section are faced with a limitation which a certain place entails. Jon Snow, if he wishes to attend the banquet, is required to sit at the very end of the Great Hall of Winterfell. Legolas, Aragorn, Gimli, and Gandalf, if they wish to enter the Golden Hall of Edoras, must hand over all their weapons. While Legolas is the only one to accept the limitation without further thought, Aragorn and Gimli accept it only after a brief disagreement. And while Gandalf and Jon Snow accept the requirements respectfully, they find a way to take advantage of their situation in some way. These passages of the novels provide examples of different approaches of characters to accommodating their behavior according to what is demanded of them in connection to a certain place. The small nuances in the reactions of individual characters are perceived by the reader and contribute to the complexity of the characters. In addition, by creating these boundaries and limitations for the characters to deal with, the fantasy world gains relatability complexity as well.

#### **4.4. Self-opinions and Man-made Space**

This last section of the chapter will focus on a connection between character and medievalist man-made space which is perhaps the most character-driven out of every set of examples given until this point. It is the personal connection which the character either has or on the contrary does not have to a place. In other words, this section shall focus on characters identifying with their surroundings, or in turn feeling like they do not belong.

It is true that this connection often has little to do with the layout of the space or with the emotions which the place is supposed to evoke in the characters. However, even in this instance, the role of space is an undeniable one, because "the author of a narrative produces the world through the narrative, thereby rendering it meaningful."<sup>57</sup> In other

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<sup>56</sup> Tolkien, 511.

<sup>57</sup> T. Tally Jr., *Spatiality* (2012, Routledge), 54.

words, by representing the space in question through the opinions and feelings of individual characters, who are central to the narrative and have an impact on it, the reader receives a relatable insight into the psyche of the character, while at the same time receiving information about the place which can be added to its identity, or its meaning, and which helps establish its position in the complex fantasy world.

The notion of meaning when it comes to places is a complex one. However, in this case, I explore the meaning of a place in the context of how the characters perceive it, as this may be the main input the reader receives apart from a simple description. According to Cresswell, place is a “meaningful location,”<sup>58</sup> the meaning of which is created by people. I therefore argue that by learning what certain places mean to different characters, the reader can get not only into the minds of the characters, but also get a wider perspective on the complex notion of what the meaning of the place is within the fantasy world. As the meaning of a place in the real world is a mosaic of history, change, opinions, and emotions, so can the meaning of an invented place be. In fact, adding this extra layer of a highly character-driven look on spaces again contributes to the complexity of the fantasy world and therefore to the feeling of authenticity and overall world-building.

Perhaps the strongest connection a character can have with a place in terms of its perceived meaning is when the character identifies with the place or uses its state to describe his own state. One such example concerns Bran Stark during a particular passage in *A Clash of Kings*. After Theon Greyjoy’s near destruction of Winterfell, Bran, his younger brother Rickon, the stableboy Hodor, the wildling Osha and the siblings Meera and Jojen Reed manage to run away and save their lives. After their successful escape, Osha and Rickon separate from Bran, Hodor and the Reeds for safety purposes. Bran, Hodor and the Reeds are planning to travel beyond the Wall, into the unforgiving wild in search of Bran’s destiny, the three-eyed raven. When Bran takes one last look on Winterfell, the castle where he spent his whole life, he reflects:

“Beyond, the tops of the keeps and towers still stood as they had for hundreds of years, and it was hard to tell that the castle had been sacked and burned at all. *The stone is strong*, Bran told himself, *the roots of the trees go deep, and under the ground the Kings of Winter sit their thrones*. So long as those

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<sup>58</sup> Cresswell, “Introduction: Defining Place,” 7.

remained, Winterfell remained. It was not dead, just broken. *Like me*, he thought. *I'm not dead either.*"<sup>59</sup>

This point is a turning one for the character as well as for the castle. Until this point in the narrative, much of Bran's chapters concern him being resentful and sad towards his situation and express the difficulty he is having with coming to terms with his disability. This passage shows one of the first times Bran feels hopeful since his accident, and he expresses it by the means of comparing himself to the place which made him feel both good and bad. A place where he grew up and lost the use of his legs. A place which then got almost destroyed itself but is still standing strong.

Theon Greyjoy, on the other hand, represents a somewhat complementary example when it comes to his connection to Winterfell. While Bran literally and metaphorically moves on by leaving Winterfell, Theon tries to leave it behind by force and reinstate his identity as a Greyjoy (after growing up as Eddard Stark's ward among the Starks), by sacking and burning the castle. Unfortunately, Theon ultimately succeeds only in connecting his name and identity even stronger to the place in a negative sense. His attempt to heroically take control of Winterfell and reinstate his identity as a proud member of house Greyjoy therefore results in essentially the opposite outcome. He succeeds in taking over the castle, however, he does so in defiance of the orders he was given. Consequently, he is not welcomed or praised by anyone, not even his family, whose approval he craves. He manages only to leave the castle in ruin, drive out the last of the Starks, and in the end, he is tricked cruelly by Ramsay Bolton, essentially becoming his slave. Instead of being his path to fame and approval, Winterfell became the symbol of his downfall.

Theon Greyjoy pays for his ego and for the destruction he brought to Winterfell. He learned a hard lesson through the tricks and torture of Ramsay Bolton, and at one point in *A Dance with Dragons*, he finds himself back in Winterfell. Here he finally admits to himself that "The nearest thing to a home that remained to him was here, amongst the bones of Winterfell."<sup>60</sup> After this, he directly compares himself to the state of the castle: "*A ruined man, a ruined castle. This is my place.*"<sup>61</sup> A similar comparison to the one Bran

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<sup>59</sup> Martin, *A Clash of Kings*, 968.

<sup>60</sup> George R. R. Martin, *A Dance With Dragons*, A Song of Ice and Fire, Book Five (New York: Bantam Books, 2012), 589.

<sup>61</sup> Martin, 589.

makes, perhaps. However, Theon does not look on the bright side. Where Bran's part informs us that he has some hope for himself in the future while leaving Winterfell, Theon here conforms to his hopelessness by staying.

In both examples, Winterfell plays a unique role in allowing the reader to investigate the thoughts of the characters. It works particularly well because both the characters have a strong connection to the place. Bran, of course, because it is his home, he is a Stark and grew up there. Theon is a Greyjoy but has grown up with the Starks of Winterfell as the ward of Eddard Stark, therefore the castle can be considered his home as well, but at the same time it is the embodiment of his struggling identity. Winterfell is, in other words, a strong aspect of the identities of both Bran Stark and Theon Greyjoy, and their self-opinions reflected onto the castle provide the reader with details about the characters and the castle with a more tangible presence within the fantasy world thanks to its complex incorporation into the narrative through the characters.

This relationship and comparison of characters with space can work in the opposite way as well. In other words, instead of the character identifying with his surroundings on a personal level like Bran and Theon do, the character can exhibit feelings of not belonging. The character in question is therefore unable to identify with his surroundings, and instead of noticing the similarities, he notices the differences. I pair these complementary relationships together in this section because they play a similar role when it comes to man-made spaces in world-building: they provide an insight into the minds and opinions of the characters, while also providing new perspectives on the built environment as they become infused with the meaning which the characters give it.

One such example of a character feeling out of place is Pippin in *The Return of the King*. At one point he is asked whether he can sing by Denethor, the steward of Minas Tirith. Pippin answers that he can, but that his people "have no songs fit for great halls and evil times,"<sup>62</sup> by which he can be said to imply his feelings of not belonging. He is reluctant to sing, because he feels that the songs he knows, the songs which are close to him and the hobbits, do not belong in such a place as the Tower Hall of Minas Tirith, seeing that the songs of the hobbits are usually concerned with describing simple things in a rather optimistic manner.

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<sup>62</sup> Tolkien, *The Return of the King*, 807.

As stated before, the self-opinions which characters reflect onto their surroundings reflect the backgrounds of the characters. Pippin is humbled by the events of which he has been a witness since leaving the Shire. He realizes the seriousness of the situation and becomes increasingly more self-conscious. During the journey to Minas Tirith, Pippin gains perspective and cannot help but see the contrast between how carefree the life in the Shire was before starting on the journey, and what the outside world deals with. When he is asked to sing, this contrast manifests itself by Pippin's realization that he knows only songs applicable to his carefree life in the Shire, and no songs applicable neither for such a grand hall, nor for such a dark context as a brewing war.

This passage plays on the background of not only Pippin, but on Denethor's background as well, which creates a contrast, with a clear reference to the spatial aspect of it. Denethor answers that as someone who has lived this close to Mordor and its shadow for a long time, he would like to "listen to echoes from a land untroubled by it."<sup>63</sup> Denethor therefore does not see a problem with the different nature of the songs of the hobbits and would even welcome to hear the songs of the Shire, where the threat of Mordor was not as apparent as in the land he knows and inhabits.

The opinion on belonging or not belonging therefore differs between the two characters based on their backgrounds. Consistent with Tally's argument that the world of the narrative becomes meaningful thanks to being incorporated in the narrative,<sup>64</sup> by expressing this difference through the different lands from which the characters come (and specifically through the songs typical for these lands), the geography of the world becomes more grounded and gains importance and nuance, as it becomes more strongly connected to the characters who take part in the narrative. Especially in Pippin's case, the reader is able to understand better how unsure he feels in his present surroundings thanks to this being expressed by comparing his present surroundings to the Shire.

*A Song of Ice and Fire* contains examples of characters feeling out of place, too. One such example concerns Jaime Lannister, who is, during the events of *A Storm of Swords*, named the Lord Commander of the Kingsguard. This promotion requires him to move into the highest floor of the White Sword Tower, which contains the Lord Commander's apartments. Jaime moves to his new accommodation and waits for the other brothers of the Kingsguard in the common room, or the Round Room. It is described

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<sup>63</sup> Tolkien, 807.

<sup>64</sup> T. Tally Jr., *Spatiality* (2012, Routledge), 54.

to the reader that almost everything in the Tower is white, because white is the symbolically pure color of the Kingsguard. This includes the walls, the wool hangings on the walls or the shield-shaped table. Jaime looks around the Round Room and focuses on the chair designated for the Lord Commander at the head of the shield-shaped table. He reflects on the Lord Commanders who had come before him and thinks: “How could the Kingslayer belong in such exalted company?”<sup>65</sup> Although Jaime is a character who in most situations appears to be rather light-hearted and says many things in an ironic manner, in this situation, there is uncertainty in his mind. This uncertainty is better understood when Jaime’s story up until this point is considered.

Jaime has returned to King’s Landing after battling in the War of the Five Kings, after being captured, released, then captured and released again. He struggles with his return, not only because the trouble along the way left its mark on his appearance, to the point that “half the court no longer seemed to know him,”<sup>66</sup> but primarily because he lost his sword hand. As a knight of the Kingsguard from a young age, the sword in his hand was an extension of him, and an undeniable part of his identity, which he now lacks. Despite all of this he is appointed the Lord Commander. Jaime feels as though he does not belong in the position he has risen to. His feeling of not belonging stems from the loss of his hand and thus his identity. He sees himself as incompetent without his sword hand and is afraid that he will not command the respect needed for this position now that he has lost the skill for which he was always praised.

Even though Jaime knows better than to expect that every Lord Commander before him was as honorable and noble as the pure white color of the Tower is supposed to symbolize, he still feels out of place. The loss of his hand wounded his dignity and confidence at a deep level, and to him constitutes a bigger stain on his identity than the fact that he is a Kingslayer. In Jaime’s mind, a large part of what the position of the Lord Commander of the Kingsguard, and indeed a knight in general, entails, is not being infallible and noble but being skilled with the sword. This is why he feels like he does not belong into the Lord Commander’s chair in the Round Room.

In short, the place in this passage serves as a vehicle for providing the reader with an inward look on the character. Of course, the qualities of a Lord Commander do not

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<sup>65</sup> George R. R. Martin, *A Storm of Swords*, A Song of Ice and Fire, Book Three (New York: Bantam Books, 2011), 913.

<sup>66</sup> Martin, 913.

begin and end at his ability to wield a sword, but this is what Jaime projects on the position, the chair in the Round Room and the Lord Commander's quarters. Through the character's unique look on his surroundings based on his personality and past events, the reader receives a more engaging insight into his psyche, while also learning about the appearance and the intended symbolism of the place connected to the character's opinion of it. This dynamic depiction of the place and the thoughts of the character make the narrative feel more organic and the built environment incorporated stronger into the context of the fantasy world.

A somewhat parallel example of feeling out of place concerns Sansa Stark in *A Storm of Swords*. At this point in the narrative, Sansa has survived many events which humbled her initial romantic notions of what her life as a noble lady would be. She effectively became a hostage to the Lannisters following her brother Robb's going to war against the Lannisters, and her father Eddard's execution. Sansa was treated horribly by Joffrey, who she thought was to be her gallant prince. Shortly after her betrothal to Joffrey was called off, Sansa was married against her will to Tyrion Lannister. She then managed to escape King's Landing in the chaos following Joffrey's death during the wedding feast. Concealing her identity, she is at this point at the mercy of the Lord Petyr Baelish and her aunt Lysa Arryn in the Eyrie.

Sansa wakes up one morning and realizes that the castle is covered in snow. She decides to go into the garden. She opens the door and stops to take in the beauty of the white color covering the ground and the castle towers and she reflects: "*A pure world, [...] I do not belong here.*"<sup>67</sup> The reasoning in this example is rather intuitive, when Sansa's background up until this point in the narrative, outlined in the previous paragraph, is considered. Sansa has gone through many traumatizing events, which radically altered her whole view of the world. At the beginning of the narrative she was innocent and full of ideals, and then she might have reacted completely differently. However, at the present point in the narrative she has a much more pessimistic view of the world. The view of the castle garden covered in fresh snow triggers within her a feeling of impurity she perceives in herself based on how cruelly her child innocence has been taken away from her.

Similarly to Jaime and the Round Room, the garden of the Eyrie is used here to convey Sansa's opinion about herself based on her character development. And likewise

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<sup>67</sup> Martin, 1100.

similarly to Jaime, Sansa too has lost parts of her identity which were important to her. She was full of dreams and wanted nothing more than to be a lady to her prince but was betrayed in the cruelest ways possible. She remains courteous and polite, however, inside she is not as innocent as she used to be, not as pure. Therefore, she perceives the beauty of the fresh fallen white snow on the castle grounds as something of which she is not deserving anymore. The garden of the Eyrie acts as a vehicle for providing the reader with information about Sansa's opinions about herself, once again incorporated into the narrative in an engaging way.

It has been established through the examples in this section that the matter of belonging or not belonging is largely character-driven. In other words, much of this connection is based on how the characters feel about themselves. However, the role of space is even in these instances an undeniable one. Because the built environment is closely associated with humans, and the places in literature are explored by the means of the narrative, the examples in this section present a profound and interactive way of intertwining these places with the characters, providing unique perspectives on the places, and making them memorable, and in turn making the characters in question complex and relatable. It is, in conclusion, another dynamic way which can be used to create the feeling of authenticity in a fantasy novel by the means of medievalist man-made space.

## **4.5. Conclusion**

The importance of well written characters in a work of fantasy is unquestionable, and an author uses many techniques, some more subtle than others, to give the reader enough information about said characters and their development throughout the narrative to make them interesting, complex, and relatable. Having a lively, believable populated world is a goal for many (if not all) fantasists. One of the ways of achieving this is thanks to space. This chapter has, in its three sections, demonstrated various methods used in *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire* to connect medievalist man-made space to the characters of the novels in order to enrich the world-building.

The first section analyzed the emotional reactions which characters have to the built environment of the novels, building mainly on Jenefer Robinson's article about the ability of architecture to elicit emotions. The section also pointed out the importance of the consistency of these often small details in order to deepen the characters and stay true to their background or development. In addition, the effects of other senses than sight

have been examined in the connection to these emotional reactions. The examples demonstrated that the reactions of characters (be they predictable or contradictory) to medievalist man-made spaces in the novels play a prominent role in making the fantasy novels feel as authentic as possible.

The second section introduced Lawrence and Low's argument of regulating one's behavior based on the built environment. Once again, the complexity and diversity of the characters in the novels can be exemplified by the means of the reactions of the characters to limitations connected to certain spaces. In other words, my research has shown that putting characters into spaces which require them to accommodate to certain behavioral requirements, presents an opportunity for the characters to react authentically, whether it be by conforming or by defying said limitations. The reader therefore gains more insight into who the characters are thanks to finding out how they treat the rules of the spaces around them.

The last section referred to Tally's and Cresswell's arguments that the meaning of a place is in its majority created by people and that in the case of literature, the places of the fantasy world are explored through the narrative, and therefore inevitably through the characters. The section took those arguments a step further and analyzed examples of characters projecting their self-opinions and personal meanings on their surroundings. Furthermore, the section explored this problematic in two complementary ways. Firstly, the focus was placed on examples where a certain character identifies himself with his surroundings, and secondly, the focus shifted to examples where the character feels like he does not belong in the place where he finds himself to be. The examples altogether demonstrated that while this is a highly character-driven situation, it is also another way for the author to engage the built environment into the narrative seamlessly and make it memorable for the reader, while at the same time acting as a gateway into the unique minds of the characters.

## **5. Medievalist Man-made Space in Connection to Society and Culture**

### **5.1.Introduction**

The previous chapter dealt with medievalist man-made spaces in connection to individual characters. This chapter shall shift the focus to how medievalist man-made spaces fit into the world-building of the novels in connection to groups of characters. In other words, this chapter of the thesis will analyze how medievalist man-made spaces are used in the novels to demonstrate and represent different cultures, races, Houses or otherwise defined groups of characters, because the ways in which these examples are incorporated into the fantasy world cannot be satisfactorily addressed when the focus is placed only on individuals.

The first section of the chapter will explore the element of the history of the fantasy world in connection to society and culture, and how it is expressed by the means of man-made spaces. Following the findings of Tally, Warf and Arias, and in addition Franco Manni's article "Real and imaginary history in *The Lord of the Rings*" and Martha C. Sammons' book *War of the Fantasy Worlds*, the manner in which history is incorporated into the built environment and ultimately into the narrative through space shall be explored, with a special focus on the process of change which medievalist man-made spaces undergo under the influence of different cultures.

The second section of this chapter will then consider social hierarchy in connection to the built environment. Once again building on Tally and Lawrence and Low, the layout and overall form of man-made space will be put into the context of the social organization within the societies of the novels. Furthermore, the symbolic connection between certain spaces and certain societal positions or titles shall be analyzed in this section as well. In other words, this section will demonstrate examples of how social hierarchy can be communicated through medievalist man-made space.

### **5.2.History in Connection to Society and Culture**

One useful way employed in literature, especially fantasy literature, to make the world more believable and feel more authentic, is to invent history for this world. This section shall therefore focus on the history of the fantasy worlds of *The Lord of the Rings* and *A*

*Song of Ice and Fire*, particularly on the history connected to societies, cultures, or races, while considering how it can be incorporated into the narrative through medievalist man-made spaces.

Both sagas are in touch with the rich history of their worlds. The approach to the history of the fantasy world has been theorized extensively especially in Tolkien's case. It is well known that to Tolkien, "the integrity and roundedness of the world of the novel, with its spaces, its histories, its languages and its inhabitants, are of paramount importance,"<sup>68</sup> as for example Franco Manni argues in his article "Real and imaginary history in *The Lord of the Rings*." Furthermore, Tolkien, instead of simply writing a fantasy saga set in a faraway fantasy world, approached his novels almost as through a historian's point of view. As Martha C. Sammons argues in her book *War of the Fantasy Worlds*, in Tolkien's mind, through the novels he is "reconstructing a world that once existed in collective consciousness."<sup>69</sup> This is likewise a part of the reason for his heightened attention to realistically depict history as a part of the world-building.

The history of the fantasy world, as essentially any other aspect of the world-building, needs to be incorporated into the narrative of the books in a way that is useful and effective for the world-building in order to appear realistic. Manni in his article addresses this problematic again specifically in Tolkien's case. He explains that the manner in which history is implemented into the narrative of *The Lord of the Rings* often includes subtle cues which lead into brief mentions of historical elements of the fantasy world. Manni further explains that "these past events are never expounded fully, but only glimpsed partially."<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, he acknowledges that this "creates an 'effect of depth' that gradually augments the appearance of reality in the imaginary world that is described."<sup>71</sup> In other words, Manni claims here that the way in which history is subtly incorporated into the narrative of *The Lord of the Rings* creates what he calls the effect of depth, but what has already been introduced in this thesis as the feeling of authenticity.

My analysis is focused on how this history appears in the narrative through man-made spaces. In *The Lord of the Rings* specifically, the connection of culture and the built environment is often expressed through the change which a space undergoes under the

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<sup>68</sup> T. Tally Jr., *Spatiality* (2012, Routledge), 152.

<sup>69</sup> Martha C. Sammons, *War of the Fantasy Worlds: C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien on Art and Imagination* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010), 122.

<sup>70</sup> Franco Manni, "Real and imaginary history in *The Lord of the Rings*," *Mallorn: The Journal of the Tolkien Society*, no. 47 (Spring 2009): 29.

<sup>71</sup> Manni, 29.

influence of other cultures, whether the change be a positive or a negative one. This is consistent with creating the feeling of authenticity and emulating the real world in fantasy world-building, as buildings rarely remain exactly as they were first built in real life as well. Instead, according to Matthew H. Johnson, they are a subject of constant change, and therefore the result we see is rarely a building in its originally intended form.<sup>72</sup> In other words, buildings in real life have history and they reflect the changes made to them through time, therefore buildings in fantasy tend to also have history, and inserting this history into the narrative adds depth to the fantasy world.

To exemplify both Manni's explanation of Tolkien's use of references to history, and Johnson's argument of changing places, I shall use a passage from *The Two Towers* concerning the city of Ringwraiths, Minas Morgul. The two hobbits Frodo and Sam follow their guide Gollum and trust him to lead their way into Mordor in a stealthy way. On their way they pass the city of Minas Morgul. The passage describing the city moves immediately into informing the reader about its history, and therefore incorporates a piece of history into the narrative in a similar way which Manni puts forward in his article.

The description of the history of Minas Morgul in this passage also exemplifies Johnson's notion of a place reflecting the changes which it undergoes. The reader learns that this city used to be called Minas Ithil and used to belong to Gondor, before falling into the hands of Mordor. The contrast between Minas Ithil and Minas Morgul is vividly described here. Whereas Minas Ithil used to be "fair and radiant"<sup>73</sup> with marble walls glowing like moonlight, Minas Morgul feels much more sinister. Instead of shining like the moon, the light radiating from the walls of the city now is "paler indeed than the moon ailing in some slow eclipse [...], wavering and blowing like a noisome exhalation of decay."<sup>74</sup> Simply stated, Minas Ithil used to look a certain way, which reflected the society of Gondor. After the city fell into the hands of Mordor, the overall form of it may have remained, but the culture of the land transformed it into something reflecting them. The reader learns about the change which the city underwent under the influence of a different culture, which allows him to gain a new perspective on it and learn a piece of the history of the fantasy world.

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<sup>72</sup> Matthew H. Johnson, "What Do Medieval Buildings Mean?," *History and Theory* 52, no. 3 (October 2013): 388, <https://doi.org/10.1111/hith.10675>.

<sup>73</sup> Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, 705.

<sup>74</sup> Tolkien, 705.

The change of Minas Ithil to the more sinister Minas Morgul is not the only instance in which the change of place is used to point out different cultures and history. A much less pessimistic example appears in *The Fellowship of the Ring*. The passage in question describes the history of hobbit architecture, while referencing the influence of Elves and Men, but highlighting the innovations of the Hobbits to build long, low houses with thatched or turf roofs in “the early days of the Shire,”<sup>75</sup> instead of grand towers. Furthermore, it addresses later changes, influenced by the Dwarves or again by the Hobbits’ own innovations, to arrive at the point of the present state of hobbit architecture.

In this portion of the text, the element of history does not need to be questioned, as the whole passage discusses the progress of hobbit architecture over time. Instead I shall point out the fact that the reader learns about the development of the hobbits’ way of living, but also learns the context and the influence of other races and their cultures on the way the Hobbits live, thus exemplifying that “space is also deeply historical, grounded in the developing modes of production and susceptible to conflicting processes.”<sup>76</sup> However, the reader also learns about the Hobbits and their personal touches on their built environment, such as the round windows and doors, which solidifies the individual identity of the Hobbit society to the reader, providing the group with depth and the feeling of authenticity. The history of built environment is thus once again incorporated into the narrative and informs the reader about the colliding cultures and their impact on the appearance of said built environment.

*A Song of Ice and Fire* possesses rich history of the fantasy world as well. Even though the sources used in this section mostly discuss Tolkien’s work, their arguments are applicable to this saga as well, seeing that Martin often deploys strategies of implementing the history of the fantasy world into the narrative, which are similar to the one described by Manni in his article and introduced above. In other words, Martin also uses various cues in the text to make brief mentions of the past in order to provide the fantasy world with depth and a feeling of authenticity. One such example concerns Bran Stark. In *A Game of Thrones*, the reader is introduced to Bran’s character by almost immediately learning that he loves to climb the walls of Winterfell. His climbing is used to point out small details about the history of the castle:

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<sup>75</sup> J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, *The Lord of the Rings*, Part 1 (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2020), 7.

<sup>76</sup> T. Tally Jr., *Spatiality* (2012, Routledge), 117.

“Most of all, he liked going places that no one else could go, and seeing the grey sprawl of Winterfell in a way that no one else ever saw it. It made the whole castle Bran’s secret place. His favorite haunt was the broken tower. Once it had been a watchtower, the tallest in Winterfell. A long time ago, a hundred years before even his father had been born, a lightning strike had set it afire. The top third of the structure had collapsed inward, and the tower had never been rebuilt.”<sup>77</sup>

Bran’s climbing (that is, before he falls and is prevented from doing it any longer) is used as a means of exploring the castle for the reader in a way which is more engaging than mere description. In this passage, Bran’s climbing is specifically used to inform the reader about a part of the history of the castle, namely about the broken watchtower. This is consistent with Manni’s arguments about using well-implemented references to the history of the fantasy world in the narrative. Thus incorporated into the narrative, it makes the place feel more interesting and material, despite only existing within the confines of the text. And while this passage does not quite discuss the history of a place in the manner of the examples provided from *The Lord of the Rings*, it still creates depth in the fantasy world by allowing the reader to learn about a certain part of the past of the castle.

The passage also shows that the past of the castle is very much still a part of the present, seeing that the broken tower has been neither rebuilt nor replaced by a different structure. The broken watchtower remains unrepaired likely not because of a lack of resources or interest, as it is described that Ned Stark sometimes “sent ratters into the base of the tower, to clean out the nests they always found among the jumble of fallen stones and charred and rotten beams.”<sup>78</sup> The space is therefore still being taken care of to some degree. It likely remains unrepaired because there is simply no need for it to be repaired at the present time. In other words, the state of the tower can be said to reflect the present needs and requirements of the Starks, as the built environment does.<sup>79</sup> Instead of the castle changing under the influence of different cultures in the manner of the previous examples, it is rather the needs and requirements of the Starks which have changed and which are therefore reflected on the appearance of the castle and on the way it is treated. This small

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<sup>77</sup> Martin, *A Game of Thrones*, 81.

<sup>78</sup> Martin, 81.

<sup>79</sup> Lawrence and Low, “The Built Environment and Spatial Form,” 483.

detail can therefore go a long way in providing the built environment with identity and likewise show how its inhabitants influence it.

In conclusion, the ways in which the history of the fantasy world is incorporated into the narratives of *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire* are numerous. In narrowing the analysis down to exploring how history ties into medievalist man-made spaces in a way that reflects culture and society, my research has shown that *The Lord of the Rings* produces this connection often by the means of describing the change which places undergo based on the influence of the distinct cultures of Tolkien's world. *A Song of Ice and Fire*, on the other hand, often uses slightly different approaches, and in the example provided in this section focuses rather on the changing needs of the long-term inhabitants of a place.

### **5.3.Social Hierarchy Projected onto the Built Environment**

As Tally explains in his book, the spatial turn, apart from bringing attention to the role of space in the lives of individuals and in reflecting differences between cultures, also brought attention to the “spatial organization *within* societies.”<sup>80</sup> Space in connection to societies has of course been the focus in the previous section as well, however, where the previous section mainly focused on history in connection to the differences between societies, this section shall focus precisely on this organization within societies (in other words on social hierarchy) expressed through man-made space. The aim of this section is to demonstrate that status differences within the societies of the novels can be elaborated on by being connected to certain spaces, based on their symbolic connections to certain positions in social hierarchy.

In the previous chapter, one of the sections analyzed how built spaces can present limitations for the behavior of a character, which the character can either choose to conform to or defy based on his background, opinions, and values. That section was partly built upon the arguments of Lawrence and Low. I shall once again refer to their article in this section, because next to the problematic just remembered here, the authors also discuss the ways in which “architecture becomes a vehicle for the representation of status differences.”<sup>81</sup> Apart from explaining how these status differences manifest in the used materials, shapes and sizes of the built environment, the authors also touch on the

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<sup>80</sup> T. Tally Jr., *Spatiality* (2012, Routledge), 14.

<sup>81</sup> Lawrence and Low, “The Built Environment and Spatial Form,” 463.

symbolic reality which they connect to representing social hierarchy.<sup>82</sup> This shall be the primary focus of this section, as based on my research I find that medievalist fantasy literature often makes use of symbols and themes which are familiar to the readers and work effectively to express the author's intentions,<sup>83</sup> and medievalist social hierarchy can undoubtedly be said to belong to these familiar symbolic things. A reader picking up a fantasy book set in the Middle Ages will most probably expect there to be some kings, princes, princesses, or knights. Similarly, the reader may expect a king to live in a castle and sit on a throne. Both *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire* make use of the above-mentioned medievalist social hierarchy in their medievalist societies, even though they may do so to various ends, to various degrees and in various ways.

Despite the slight differences of the uses of social hierarchy in the novels, the underlying symbolic realities connected to social hierarchy through space show similarities. The passages exemplifying the use of social hierarchy in connection to man-made space to be presented in this section often do so by using the symbolic associations of certain buildings to certain titles or positions in the hierarchy. Furthermore, the symbolism of the place is often narrowed down to a certain area, such as the designation of the space around the table during a feast, or the above mentioned king and his throne.

In *A Clash of Kings*, the reader follows Jon Snow and the men of the Night's Watch north beyond the Wall with the aim of investigating recent disappearances of several members. The Watch makes a stop at Craster's Keep. As Jon reflects, it is no keep at all, but rather just a low long hall of a man who lives beyond the Wall. Craster is a friend of the Watch, despite his questionable reputation and morality, because he provides hospitality to the rangers of the Watch when they come and ask for it. The members of the Night's Watch are indebted to Craster for providing at least some of them with the warmth of his fire, and they are encouraged by the Lord Commander to be respectful towards Craster under his roof.

The social hierarchy can be said to temporarily change in this situation. On the south side of the Wall, the Lord Commander of the Night's Watch is the higher authority for the other members. However, Craster creates his own rules on the north side of the Wall, and the Watch respects those rules for the sake of the hospitality which Craster

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<sup>82</sup> Lawrence and Low, 463.

<sup>83</sup> Jakovljević and Lončar-Vujnović, "Medievalism in Contemporary Fantasy," 114.

provides. In other words, during the situation in question, Craster is hierarchically placed even above the Lord Commander, and this detail is expressed to the reader by the means of the spatial organization of Craster's Keep:

“Craster sat above the fire, the only man to enjoy his own chair. Even Lord Commander Mormont must seat himself on the common bench, with his raven muttering on his shoulder.”<sup>84</sup>

The hierarchy of the group in this situation is expressed by where the characters are sitting. The passage is written in a way which would make the reader expect for the Lord Commander to have his own seat, because he is hierarchically higher than the brothers of the Night's Watch and has similar privileges at Castle Black. However, here he does not, because this is a house of a man living in the wild beyond the Wall, to whom the Watch is indebted, and therefore respects his rules under his roof. Only Craster as the master of the house gets the privilege of a designated seat which is in some way different to the seats of others, although in this case it is only a matter of chairs and benches, instead of kings and thrones.

Expressing a position within the social hierarchy by seating is not uncommon to *The Lord of the Rings* either. For instance, *The Return of the King* sees Denethor as the ruler of Gondor with his seat in Minas Tirith. However, Denethor is not a king, he is formally a Steward. This distinction in the hierarchical positions is once again expressed by the means of designated places to sit. And this time, it indeed is a matter of kings and thrones:

“At the far end upon a dais of many steps was set a high throne under a canopy of marble shaped like a crowned helm; [...]. But the throne was empty. At the foot of the dais, upon the lowest step which was broad and deep, there was a stone chair, black and unadorned, and on it sat an old man gazing at his lap.”<sup>85</sup>

The king of Gondor has a beautiful throne, however, there is no king of Gondor at this point in the narrative, because Denethor is only a Steward, which is why the throne is empty. Denethor sits in his own stone chair, respecting in this situation his position in the social hierarchy. Once again, social hierarchy is hinted at by the treatment of space, especially by its symbolic associations to the hierarchical positions within the society.

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<sup>84</sup> Martin, *A Clash of Kings*, 359.

<sup>85</sup> Tolkien, *The Return of the King*, 754.

A similar example to this one can be found in *A Game of Thrones*. In the passage in question, Ned Stark has left Winterfell and went to King's Landing, and his oldest son Robb therefore assumes some of Ned's duties in Ned's absence. Ned Stark is not a king, but he is the Lord of Winterfell, which is the highest authority connected to the place. When Robb hosts a feast for the visiting brothers of the Night's Watch in the Great Hall of Winterfell, he does not occupy the seat at the head of the table, because this would be the seat designated for the lord of Winterfell. The seat is left empty in respect of Ned Stark's authority and absence. Despite Robb filling his father's place in some respects during his father's absence, Robb does not yet possess the title of the Lord. Similarly to Denethor leaving the throne empty, Robb therefore also symbolically leaves the designated place at the head of the table empty. Robb himself then sits to the right side of the empty seat, in the place of honor, as a substitute lord of the castle. These symbolic details expressed by the means of the layout and treatment of man-made space go a long way in providing the reader with information about the traditions and the organization of the societies in the novels.

It has already been touched on in this section, however, that the connection between social status and a symbolic seat is not the only way in which social hierarchy is expressed in the novels. *A Song of Ice and Fire* for example works skillfully with the notions of a man-made space (as a whole) being connected to a certain title. This association shall perhaps be best exemplified on the relationship between the Tower of the Hand and the title of the Hand of the King.

During *A Clash of Kings*, Tyrion Lannister is named the Hand of the King (the king's counsellor) in the absence of his father Tywin. According to tradition, whoever is the Hand of the King must move into living quarters designated to this position: The Tower of the Hand. In other words, being appointed the Hand requires Tyrion to take up residence in the Tower of the Hand. Later in the narrative, during the Battle of the Blackwater, Tyrion is severely wounded. Upon recovering a little, he discovers that his father had returned during the battle and therefore has assumed once again the role of the Hand of the King, which means that he has also taken up residence in what until this point were Tyrion's quarters in the Tower of the Hand. In other words, once Tyrion ceased to be the Hand of the King, he was required to vacate the Tower of the Hand for the next person to take up the title.

This passage establishes the adherence to traditions of a place being connected to a certain title or a position in the social organization in Martin's fantasy world. According to Lawrence and Low, buildings act as symbols which "condense powerful meanings and values; they comprise key elements in a system of communication used to articulate social relations."<sup>86</sup> In this instance, the whole Tower of the Hand acts as a symbol connected to a certain position in the social hierarchy, and as such therefore reflects the traditions and values of the society. Tyrion has been moved out of the Tower of the Hand practically immediately after his father returned, without anyone informing him or giving him time to heal, because that is how the tradition goes.

Furthermore, the symbolic nature of the Tower of the Hand possesses meaning which can be "manipulated by political actors for a variety of purposes in different situations."<sup>87</sup> The most prominent purpose of such political manipulation presents itself in *A Feast for Crows*. Cersei Lannister is becoming increasingly more paranoid following the death of her son Joffrey and her father Tywin, both of which she sees as Tyrion's fault. She ultimately decides to burn the Tower of the Hand to the ground. As she does so, she reflects:

"Cersei thought of all the King's Hands that she had known through the years: Owen Merryweather, Jon Connington, Qarlton Chelsted, Jon Arryn, Eddard Stark, her brother Tyrion. And her father, Lord Tywin Lannister, her father most of all. *All of them are burning now*, she told herself, savoring the thought. *They are dead and burning, every one, with all their plots and schemes and betrayals.*"<sup>88</sup>

Cersei fancies that all the king's Hands she knew and despised are burning along with the Tower, and therefore that she symbolically punishes them for the wrongs they have done or might have done. A large part of what Cersei perceives in the symbol of the Tower therefore reflects her personal background and character. However, this is not what the focus of this section is. I instead point out the more general political nature of this act, which is Cersei destroying the Tower based on the symbolic connection between the title and the place. This connection is a part of the shared knowledge of the characters and a recognized tradition within the society of the fantasy world. Cersei uses the destruction

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<sup>86</sup> Lawrence and Low, "The Built Environment and Spatial Form," 466.

<sup>87</sup> Lawrence and Low, 466.

<sup>88</sup> George R. R. Martin, *A Feast for Crows*, A Song of Ice and Fire, Book Four (New York: Bantam Books, 2011), 261.

of the Tower to send a everyone the message that she does not need a Hand, and therefore to demonstrate her power. Once again this is an example of conveying symbolic meaning through man-made space in a way which is more engaged with the fantasy world and placed deep into its context.

The entire interplay of the title of the Hand of the King with the place where the person possessing this title stays is built on similar grounds as the previous set of examples in this section: that space and spatial organization is often symbolic and reflects the social organization of a given culture, or at least the given situation. In turn, man-made spaces are used in this way to effectively convey information about the relationships within societies to the reader in order to add depth to the imaginary world by making it livelier and more complex.

## **5.4. Conclusion**

This last chapter of the thesis considered the role of medievalist man-made spaces through the point of view of society and culture. Its main concern was, in other words, to explore how the medievalist man-made spaces in *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire* are used in connection to the various societies and cultures in a way that aids the world-building of the novels and creates a feeling of authenticity.

The first section of the chapter focused on the impact of history on the societies and cultures of the novels. The examples provided in this section demonstrated the skillful incorporation of history into the narratives of the novels through medievalist man-made spaces. The section demonstrated that the examples from *The Lord of the Rings* focused on the change of the built environment under the influence of various cultures, while the example from *A Song of Ice and Fire* focused more on the histories and changing needs of the Houses rather than necessarily on merging distinct cultures.

The second section took a different point of view and examined how social hierarchy is expressed by the means of medievalist man-made space. The analyzed examples demonstrated that both *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire* make use of the symbolic nature of a designated seat for a person of higher authority, which is left empty in the absence of said authority as a way of showing respect. Furthermore, the link between the Tower of the Hand and the title of the Hand of the King in *A Song of Ice and Fire* was used to demonstrate the symbolic nature of an entire building being designated for a person in a certain position in the social hierarchy.

## Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to analyze medievalist man-made spaces of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*, with a special focus on the role which these spaces play in the world-building of the novels. While addressing the interdisciplinarity of spatiality studies and similarly the interconnectedness of the world-building, which tends to imitate the real world in many respects even in fantasy, the analysis was narrowed to researching the effects which the spaces have when connected to individual characters or certain groups of characters.

The thesis was divided into a theoretical part and a practical part. The theoretical part introduced spatiality studies and mainly the need of space to be analyzed in some context in order to provide a satisfactory spatial analysis. Attention was then paid to medievalism and especially to the role of interpretation in the depictions of the Middle Ages in literature. Firstly it has been established that what is *medievalist* is not necessarily realistically *medieval*, precisely because medievalism presents interpretations of the Middle Ages instead of their realistic recreations. Secondly, this information was applied to the setting of *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire* by outlining the fundamental difference between the two, based on two of the most prevalent overall ways of interpreting and recreating the Middle Ages in literature. The following chapter was concerned with fantasy world-building and mainly put forward the claim that despite both sagas belonging to the fantasy genre, the fantasy worlds share many aspects with the real world, because this helps the fantasy world build relatability and a feeling of authenticity. One of the aspects which explained to be often imitated in fantasy is the interconnectedness of the world and therefore the need to consider the spaces of the fantasy worlds in context. For the purposes of this thesis, the medievalist man-made spaces have been analyzed in the practical part of the thesis in the context of the characters and groups of characters in the novels, as already mentioned.

My analysis in the practical part of the thesis has demonstrated the existence of such incorporation of medievalist man-made space into the world-building thanks to characters or societies, and in fact has shown multiple ways in which it can be achieved. Medievalist man-made spaces have been shown to elicit individual emotional reactions from characters, which can either be mostly dictated by the space itself with some inclusion of a character's opinion, or on the contrary be mostly character-driven and largely based on the character's self-opinion. Medievalist man-made spaces have likewise

been shown to facilitate the incorporation of different cultures, races and Houses in a way which is subtle but engaging. Space is used as a cue for providing information about the history of said groups of characters or about their traditions and, because both sagas use the medievalist setting, their social hierarchy. To sum up, during the practical part of the thesis, it has been demonstrated that there exist many subtle roles which space plays in the mosaic of the successful world-building of *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire* and that some of them can be expressed by considering them in the context of characters or societies of the fantasy worlds.

By setting its focus on the built environment in the fantasy worlds, the thesis presented a topic not elaborated on very much yet, and hopefully demonstrated its potential. Despite providing an insight into this mostly unexplored area of research, however, a more in-depth analysis of the same problematic seems to be possible, too, as it is apparent that this thesis could have been much longer. It has been stated before that despite the narrowing of its topic, its scope was still rather broad and perhaps too ambitious. There is, in short, potential for further research within this problematic of man-made spaces in connection to fantasy world-building, either in a similar context to the one which this thesis explores, or perhaps through a different point of view altogether.

## Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá středověkými, člověkem zbudovanými prostory a jejich rolí ve fantasy světech Tolkienova *Pána Prstenů* a Martinovy *Písně Ledu a Ohně*, za použití poznatků z prostorových věd. Cílem práce je zkoumat, jakým způsobem přispívají tyto prostory v průběhu knih k lepšímu vykreslování fantasy světa a jeho postav, a tudíž jak přispívají k jeho celkové zapamatovatelnosti a zajímavosti.

Analýzy v rámci prostorových věd jsou v posledních letech na vzestupu, stejně tak jako analýzy fantasy literatury. Stále rostoucí je také počet akademických prací zabývajících se specificky Tolkienovou či Martinovou tvorbou. To za daných okolností dává smysl, vzhledem k tomu, že díla obou autorů jsou velice populární a významné pro svůj žánr. Co je nicméně zarážející je skutečnost, že specificky člověkem zbudovaným prostorům je v těchto pracích věnována často pouze mizivá pozornost. Mnoho prací sice zmiňuje vliv, který má pečlivě vymyšlené prostředí na tyto dva populární a zapamatovatelné fantasy světy (často tedy ve spojitosti s použitím map), nicméně málo z nich se člověkem zbudovanými prostory zabývá do větší hloubky. Snahou této bakalářské práce je proto věnovat těmto prostorům onu hlubší pozornost a poukázat na zatím z velké části nevyužitý potenciál této oblasti výzkumu.

První kapitola práce je věnována již zmíněným prostorovým vědám. Čtenář je seznámen s jejich vznikem, vzestupem a podstatou. Zvýšená pozornost je věnována skutečnosti, že prostorové vědy stojí na křižovatce mnoha disciplín a jsou tedy interdisciplinární. V návaznosti na tento poznatek je zvýrazněna důležitost kontextu v rámci analýz prostoru. Žádná analýza prostoru, ať už jde o literární podobu místa v reálném světě, či o místo kompletně vymyšlené a přítomné pouze v textu, se neobjede bez zasazení do kontextu. Tento kontext může být vzhledem k interdisciplinaritě prostorových věd různorodý, nicméně musí být do jisté míry přítomný. Má práce konkrétně zkoumá vzájemný vliv postav a člověkem zbudovaných prostor ve výše zmíněných knihách. Kontext je tedy do jisté míry přítomný i v mé analýze prostor.

Druhá kapitola poté seznamuje čtenáře s vyobrazením středověku ve fantasy literatuře a v literatuře obecně. První část kapitoly je věnována vysvětlení hranice, která existuje mezi tím, co je autenticky středověké, a tím, co je středověkem pouze inspirováno. Středověké zasazení obou fantasy sérií zkoumaných v této práci patří totiž do druhé z těchto skupin. Druhá část kapitoly na tento poznatek navazuje a představuje dva převažující způsoby, kterými je v literatuře a populární kultuře vyobrazeno ono

zasazení do středověku. Prvním způsobem je poněkud zromantizované vyobrazení středověku jako doby rytířů, králů a ušlechtilosti. Tento postup je často připisován *Pánu prstemí*. Druhý způsob vyobrazení středověku je zcela opačný. Vykresluje tuto dobu totiž jako dobu brutální, barbarskou a temnou, což je postup naopak připisován Martinově *Písni Ledu a Ohně*. Tato kapitola práce tedy odlišuje různé styly vyobrazení zasazení do středověku, které oba autoři zvolili, a které poté mohou mít vliv na mnoho menších rozhodnutí v průběhu psaní a tvorby světa, ať už se jedná o samotný příběh, o chování postav, či o způsob vyobrazení prostředí.

Třetí kapitola se zabývá tvorbou fantasy světů a spojuje zde dosud nabyté poznatky o důležitosti kontextu a prostoru až po vyobrazení středověku. Čtenář je seznámen se skutečností, že tvorba fantasy světů z velké části spočívá v imitaci světa reálného, přestože se jedná o fantasy literaturu. I ta nejvynalézavější fantasy literatura je totiž do jisté míry založena na pravidlech reálného světa, protože přímo to často dává světu nádech autentičnosti, který je u čtenářů často žádaný a oslavovaný. Tendence fantasy světů imitovat aspekty světa reálného je také například důvodem, proč jsou poznatky z prostorových věd dobře aplikovatelné i zde. Člověkem zbudovaný prostor je totiž i ve fantasy knihách zasazen do kontextu, který rovněž může být různorodý. Závěrečná část kapitoly se tedy věnuje specifikaci kontextu, který je zvolen v této konkrétní práci, tedy zkoumání středověkých prostor ve spojitosti s postavami a skupinami postav v knihách.

Následující dvě kapitoly poté představují praktickou část této bakalářské práce. Jinými slovy se tedy zabývají samotnou analýzou *Pána prstemí* a *Písni Ledu a Ohně* za využití teoretických základů z předchozích kapitol.

Čtvrtá kapitola práce se soustředí na středověká, člověkem zbudovaná místa specificky ve spojitosti s individuálními postavami. První část kapitoly předkládá příklady z knih, kde středověká místa působí na emoce a smysly individuálních postav, a dává tedy čtenáři informace jak o samotném místě, tak o oné postavě, což vytváří již zmíněnou hloubku a pocit autentičnosti ve fantasy světě. Druhá část kapitoly se nese v podobném duchu. Tentokrát jsou však zkoumány restriktce, které s sebou určitá místa nesou, a reakce postav na ně. Třetí část se potom naopak zabývá restrikcemi, které nemusí středověké místo pro postavu opravdu představovat, ale které na sobě postava ve spojitosti s místem sama vnímá. Jinými slovy jsou tu představeny situace, kdy se postava cítí, že do nějakého prostoru nepatří, či naopak, že právě pouze sem patří. Všechny

příklady uvedené v této kapitole poukazují na onu spojitost mezi postavami a člověkem zbudovanými prostory v rámci tvorby autenticky vyznívajícího fantasy světa.

Pátá kapitola se zabývá středověkými místy specificky ve spojitosti se skupinami postav, jinými slovy tedy zkoumá různé skupiny, kultury či rasy v kontextu těchto prostor. První část kapitoly se věnuje tomu, jak se do člověkem zbudovaných prostor promítá historie různých skupin obyvatel fantasy světa. Samotná podoba budovy, či poukázání na její historii, poskytne čtenáři mnoho informací o fantasy světě a dělá ho tak komplexnějším. Druhá část kapitoly se posouvá k problematice sociální hierarchie a k tomu, jak je tato hierarchie řešena pomocí prostoru. V knihách se konkrétně často vyskytuje symbolika v zasedacím pořádku, která odráží hodnoty dané skupiny postav, a má přímý vliv na rozestavění a využívání daného místa. Sociální hierarchie je navíc velmi často nedílnou součástí fantasy knih zasazených do středověku a zařazením této symbolické roviny do kontextu fantasy světa nabírá tento svět opět na komplexnosti a autentičnosti.

Analýza provedená v této bakalářské práci tedy poskytuje hned několik způsobů, kterými jsou člověkem zbudované středověké prostory využity ve spojitosti s postavami a skupinami postav k vytvoření komplexního, zajímavého a zapamatovatelného fantasy světa zasazeného do doby inspirované středověkem. Tolkienův *Pán prstenů* a Martinova *Píseň Ledu a Ohně* jsou pro tuto analýzu použity jako dva významné, ale zároveň v některých aspektech odlišné příklady fantasy literatury zasazené do středověku. Práce tedy rovněž poukazuje na nutnost konzistence a kontextu ve tvorbě fantasy světů, a především na to, že člověkem zbudovaná místa jsou nedílnou součástí této rovnice, přestože v akademických pracích bývají opomíjeny.

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