

Alicia Fox-Lenz

The Union between *The Two Towers* and the Twin Towers: Contemporary Audience Reception and the influence of war on *The Lord of the Rings*

The Lord of the Rings is a fundamentally war-derived work of literature, although vastly different from other literature written during the the World Wars. Within the repeating history of Britain and Tolkien's family during the Wars, one sees similarities to his legendarium's cyclical narrative. Although famously disliking "conscious and intentional allegory" (Letters, 145) and stating directly "I do not think that either war ... had any influence upon [the plot]." (Letters, 303) this is likely Tolkien's "biological legend" (Fimi, 196) instead of reality. Birthed in war, Tolkien's works touch on a need for hope in the face of sacrifice for populations undergoing tragedy such as America after the terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001. I study the effect of the World Wars on Tolkien's life and legendarium, as well as closely follow the audience reception of his novel, *The Lord of the Rings* pre- and post-9/11 in the United States.

By day, Alicia Fox-Lenz is a graphic designer in Atlanta. By night, she is focusing a life-long passion as a graduate student at Mythgard Institute focusing on Tolkien Studies.



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