

Please cite this paper as follows:

Alishiri, H., Moradi, H., Asadi Amja, F. (2025). A cultural study of Diaspora and its Role in the Formation of Identity in The Lord of the Rings. *International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, 13 (52), 135-144. <https://doi.org/10.71962/jfl.2024.1130217>

Review Paper

A cultural study of Diaspora and its Role in the Formation of Identity in The Lord of the Rings

Hadiseh Alishiri¹, Hossein Moradi^{2*}, Fazel Asadi Amjad³

¹Department of Language and English Literature, Karaj Branch, Islamic Azad University, Karaj, Iran

hadisalishiri@gmail.com

²Department of Language and English Literature, Karaj Branch, Islamic Azad University, Karaj, Iran

moradi.hossein@gmail.com

³Department of Foreign Languages, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran

asadi@khu.ac.ir

Received: May 17, 2024

Accepted: July 19, 2024

Abstract

In this paper, the researcher aims to demonstrate that the fantasy world, much like the real world, is deeply affected by racial tensions and cultural diversity. The central claim of the study is that the conflicts, struggles, and battles represented in the selected literary works are not merely fantastical events, but are rooted in experiences of diaspora, dislocation, and cultural plurality. These tensions emerge as characters attempt to negotiate belonging within unfamiliar or contested social and geographical spaces. In many instances, the characters either struggle to adapt to new environments or fail to reconcile their inherited identities with the demands of their surroundings. To examine these processes, the study adopts Stuart Hall's theory of identity as its primary theoretical framework, emphasizing identity as fluid, constructed, and contingent. Focusing on *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, the research identifies dislocation as a dominant and recurring theme that shapes character development and narrative progression. Characters often inhabit regions where they are physically present but socially marginalized, resulting in exclusion and misrecognition by others. This lack of acceptance produces an enduring sense of alienation and uncertainty regarding self-definition. Consequently, many characters come to perceive themselves as hybrid subjects positioned between cultures, races, or moral worlds. The notion of hybrid identity thus becomes

central to understanding their internal conflicts and external interactions. Such hybridity manifests in contradictory traits, loyalties, and affiliations. Overall, the study reveals how fantasy literature functions as an allegorical space for exploring real-world issues of displacement, identity fragmentation, and cultural negotiation.

Keywords: *Culture, Fantasy world, Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit, Identity and Diaspora.*

در این مقاله، پژوهشگر قصد دارد نشان دهد که دنیای فانتزی نیز همانند دنیای واقعی، از مسائل نژادی و تنوعات فرهنگی رنج می‌برد. بعلاوه، ادعای اصلی این مقاله بیان آن است که تنش‌ها و نبردهایی موجود در رمان‌های منتخب، نتیجه دیاسپورا (جوامع دور از وطن)، جابجایی و تنوعات فرهنگی هستند، زیرا شخصیت‌ها تلاش می‌کنند خود را با شرایط وفق دهند یا در این انطباق با شکست روبرو میشوند. در پژوهش حاضر، از نظریه هال به‌عنوان چارچوب اصلی استفاده شده است. در آثار انتخاب شده، «ارباب حلقه‌ها» و «هابیت»، ایده جابجایی مفهوم غالب در میان شخصیت‌های داستان است. شخصیت‌ها ممکن است به منطقه خاصی که در آن زندگی میکنند تعلق نداشته باشند و توسط سایر شخصیت‌ها مورد پذیرش قرار نگیرند. از این روی، آن‌ها درباره هویت خود دچار سردرگمی می‌شوند و خود را به‌عنوان پدیده‌های هایبرید (دوگانه) تلقی می‌کنند. این بدان معناست که در این مجموعه‌ها مفهوم هویت هایبرید در میان چندین شخصیت مشهود است. در نتیجه، شخصیت‌ها دارای ویژگی‌های مختلفی هستند که ممکن است متناقض باشند.

کلمات کلیدی: فرهنگ، دنیای فانتزی، ارباب حلقه‌ها و هابیت، هویت و دیاسپورا

Introduction

George R. R. Martin (1948) can be considered a prosperous American author whose works in the area of sci-fi type and fantasy are extraordinary and have brought him popularity and notoriety. The start of his profession was set in 1977, and *A Song of Ice and Fire* (1966) could be considered his most prominent work. The novel is made of various books and has been distributed from that point forward. Until the present time, five books have been composed and in 2011, the novel was adjusted into an effective series. Martins' works could stand out enough to be noticed by various ages from various societies, and like Tolkien (1892-1973), he is viewed as a capable author. Notwithstanding, according to basic perspective, a few critics may have scrutinized the credit of Martins' works, and they would not concur with the substance of what he has written in his book.

Martin's works can be set apart as refined with complex storylines, intriguing characters, incredible discourse, and ideal speed of occasions. A portion of his works have a solid feeling of trouble. His characters are regularly dismal and they are not content with their own life. Besides, Martin's accounts are loaded up with shrewd characters: Saints to feel cheerful and feel miserable for them; the evil characters are derisive, yet more than that, to acknowledge (and, possibly, to consider the dull sides of our own personality); miscreants to make the readers believe that generally key and profound human alarm, the one to which there is no answer. It is not covered up and no way why he is so prosperous. Martin's characters appear genuine to him paying little mind to their race, and he thinks of them with such inclination that they go genuine to the reader.

George Martin has made the examples of Westeros, packed with solid characters who view the world through various characters, and once in a while supernatural eyes. All through his compositions, the reader can relate to the characters, and he can live with the boldest creatures. The reader can see sufficient reality of the human condition in every one of them to have feelings of affection or disdain. Martin utilizes chronicled and abstract references and resonances, with a beguilingly open utilization of kind customs, to make the reader's expectations. Martin is simply



maybe darker in writing of fantasy genre, or from awfulness or chronicled story composing, allowing him the opportunity to change class administrators and redirect similar standards that he at first might appear to guard.

The main objective of this paper is to investigate the cultural issues and home concepts in the fantasy world by studying *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, the following questions are answered:

1. How do cultural conflicts in post-colonial societies result in shaping the identity of the characters in the selected works?
2. How do the notions of "other" and "otherness" affect the characters of the selected works in both political and psychological scopes?
3. How do the selected novels depict the process of hybrid identity formation?
4. What factors influence characters' involvement in the transcultural conversation between the host cultures and the diasporic community in the selected works?

Literature Review

In "The Brutal Cost of Redemption in Westeros", Susan Vaught acclaims the ethical intricacy of *A Song of Ice and Fire* when contrasted with the "fantasy effortlessness" of *The Lord of the Rings*, wherein the ideas of "good" and "fiendishness" are explained to the limit, while the previous highlights a cast of characters who are not one or the other "irreproachably great" nor "irredeemably abhorrent". Vaught depicts Martin's characters as "harmed, imperfect, and plagued by overpowering feelings or interests that contort their gallant goal" (Vaught, 2012). In contrast to different pundits, nonetheless, Vaught is mindful so as to consider Westeros a flippant world with no moral norms, accepting rather that the ethical guidelines in the Seven Kingdoms are unique, not missing. As to the arrangement of the characters, the analyst expresses: "This insight seems to emerge from the way that characters can only with significant effort be arranged into fixed classifications of "good" or "fiendishness" in light of goals, character qualities, activities, coalitions, or results" (Vaught, 2012).

In "Of Direwolves and Gods", Andrew Zimmerman Jones inspects the fanciful idea of divine beings, wizardry, legendary animals, and predictions in Westeros, and the assorted suppositions that Martin's different characters create about these ideas. Jones specifies the advertised at this point at last baffling appearance of the Stark kids' dire wolves, differentiating the prophetic, powerful impression of their appearance to their inevitable dissolving into the story's experience, a change which purposely frustrates the reader (Zimmerman Jones, 2012).

In "A Sword without a Hilt", Jesse Scoble acclaims Martin's wise interpretation of the idea of enchantment in his series rather than other "customary dreams" scholars like Robert E. Howard, J. R. R. Tolkien, and C. S. Lewis, who are known for their "regularly old hat yarns of mythical people, midgets, orcs, and trolls." Martin's rendition of wizardry is all things being equal "extraordinary, strange, and perilous" Unlike the old duty ex-machina capacity of sorcery in conventional dream stories, Martin's enchantment "comes at an exorbitant cost. It is perilous, regularly unimaginably so." truth be told, as Scoble takes note of, the most fundamental standard of enchantment in *A Song of Ice and Fire* is that "it can't be dealt with effectively and consistently requests an excessive cost" (Scoble, 2012).

In "Petyr Baelish and the Mask of Sanity", Matt Staggs investigates the psychopathological person of Petyr "Littlefinger" Baelish, drawing from the earth-shattering work of the specialist Hervey Cleckley's *The Mask of Sanity* to recognize four of the most well-known characteristics related with a maniac which are additionally obvious in Baelish's person: "a background marked by taking part in criminal conduct, practically zero sympathies for casualties, the failure to frame compelling passionate connections, and an absence of true regret for one's activities" (Staggs, 2012). The writer states: "Baelish is certifiably not a typical individual: he is a sociopath, and this



makes him an unsettlingly gifted player in the game. Littlefinger has no enthusiastic tragic flaws, generally in light of the fact that he doesn't have any genuine feelings... they expect that Littlefinger works by the very standards that they do" (Staggs, 2012).

In "A Different Kind of Other", Brent Hartinger concentrates on *A Song of Ice and Fire* according to the viewpoint of its untouchables, praising Martin's "shockingly enormous number of significant characters who are viewed as weirdos, if not inside and out monstrosities." Among the rambling cast of pariahs, Hartinger makes reference to "sex dissidents like Arya, Brienne, and Varys; no less than two impaired characters, Bran and Donal; the overweight Samwell; Jon, a jerk; various gay men, including Renly and Loras" (Hartinger, 2012).

Method

The domain of cultural studies can be understood as an interdisciplinary or post-disciplinary field of inquiry that explores the production and inculcation of culture or maps of meaning (Barker, 2004). The theoretical terms are notions that have been deployed in the various geographical sites of cultural studies and which form the history of the cultural studies tradition as it emanated from the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies and augmented across the globe from the 1960s onwards (Barker, 2004). Cultural studies are constituted by an arranged way of speaking about objects (which cultural studies brings into sight) and cohere around key concepts, ideas, and issues that include articulation, culture, discourse, ideology, identity, popular culture, power, representation, and text (Barker, 2004).

Elucidating the boundaries of cultural studies as a coherent and unified regularity with precise genuine notions and methods that differentiate it from other regularities is difficult. Cultural studies have been, a multi-disciplinary field of the probe which obscures the boundaries between itself and other 'subjects' (Barker, 2004). According to Barker, cultural studies extract significant notions from other theoretical realms amongst which have been Marxism, structuralism, poststructuralism, and psychoanalysis. Currently, lots of cultural studies work is centered on the question of how the world is socially constructed exclusively with the themes of 'difference' and identity (Barker, 2004).

As Barker states the predominant field of cultural studies can be understood as an investigation of culture, as constituted by the meanings and representations generated by human signifying practices, and the context in which they arise, with a distinct interest in the relations of power and the political consequences that are innate in such cultural applications. Cultural Studies is not physics, it is not sociology, and it is not linguistics, regardless of drawing upon these subject areas. There are several thinkers whose ideas are significant in the field of cultural studies and Stuart Hall can be regarded as one of the significant figures in this field.

For Hall, what differentiates cultural studies from other subject areas is its connections to concepts of power and politics and explicitly to the necessity of social and cultural change. In this perspective, Cultural Studies is a body of theory carried out by thinkers who are concerned with the emergence of theoretical knowledge as a political practice (Barker, 2004). Thus, cultural studies is concerned with those practices, institutions, and systems of classification that grant a population to acquire particular values, beliefs, competencies, and routines of life. Subsequently, Cultural Studies strives to develop ways of thinking about culture and power that can be employed by agents in the quest for change (Barker, 2004).

Identity

Identity is a 'natural' and 'eternal' quality emerging from within a self-same and self-contained individual or collective issue. However, more recent and critical narratives have been inclined to adopt an anti-essentialist attitude and to underline the socially constructed position of



all identities (Bennett et al., 2013). Then according to these authors identities are considered to be established in particular social and historical contexts, to be strategic fictions, having to respond to shifting status, and therefore subject to continuous transformation. The clear point is that identities cannot be self-sufficient: They are indeed incepted through the play of differences, instituted in and through their multiple associations with other identities. This perspective implies that an identity has no clear positive meaning, but derives its dissociation from what it is not, from what it excludes, from its place in a field of differences (Bennett et al., 2013).

Therefore, in these writers' view, the question of identity – both individual and collective – has become progressively noteworthy over the last decades as an outcome of the social and cultural metamorphoses corresponding to globalization. In the eyes of certain spectators, the multiplication of transnational cultural movements represents work to destabilize settled and established identities. It has been perceived that the national frame, in which people's identities are constructed and the sensation of their lives is made, has been remarkably challenged. There has been the sensation that societies are becoming more culturally fragmented, yet at the same time being increasingly exposed to the homogenizing consequences of global markets (Bennett et al., 2013).

Identity from a Political Perspective

As Chris Barker in *The SAGE Dictionary of Cultural Studies* (2004) explicates: Identity politics is concerned with the making and maintenance of cultural rights for those persons making identity claims within society and culture. Acceptance of anti-essentialist arguments about identity within cultural studies leads to an understanding of identity politics as the forging of 'new languages' of identity with which to describe ourselves. This is allied to actions aimed at changing social practices, usually through the formation of coalitions where at least some values are shared (Barker, 2004).

Identity as a Created Project

The idea of identity as a project referred to the continuous evolution of narratives of self-identity relating to our realizations of the past, present, and hoped-for future. Albeit cultural theory now apprehends identities as being fragmentary or multiple; in everyday life we continue to describe ourselves regarding a narrative of the self (Barker, 2004).

Identity as a Multiple Phenomenon

According to Barker, this idea refers to the speculation of different and potentially opposing identities at different times and sites which do not establish an integrated coherent self. That is, persons are best realized as being formulated not of one but of various, heterogeneous identities that are not unified into a cohesive 'self'. As yet, we sense that we have a permanent, stable identity from birth to death. This is because we construct a unifying story or narrative of the self. Here identity does not imply an essence of the self but rather a set of continually transforming subject positions where the principles of difference around which cultural identities could shape are multiple. They include identifications of class, gender, sexuality, age, ethnicity, nationality, political position (on numerous issues), morality, religion, etc., and each of these discursive positions is shifting. No single identity can, it is discussed, function as an overarching organizing identity, rather, identities shift according to how subjects are addressed or represented. Hence, we are constituted as fractured, with multiple identities articulated into a new unity (Barker, 2004).

Identity as a Political Structure

According to Procter, the attitude on identity that Hall takes at the end of "The Meaning of New Times" (1989) is not simply a political substitute to that embraced by Thatcherism. It is also part



of a more radical endeavor to think beyond the structures correlated with traditional 'identity politics. The concept of 'identity politics emanates in the late 1960s and 1970s and is connected to new social movements in North America and Western Europe such as the women's liberation movement and the emergence of black consciousness. Traditional identity politics elucidates itself in terms of an absolute, undivided commitment to, and recognition of, a specific community; a group that displays a united diagram through the exclusion of all others (Procter, 2004). Phrases such as 'it's a black thing', and 'it's a women's thing' carry the clues of traditional identity politics in that they imply a group identity that is unified through exclusion. This kind of identity politics, built on a rigid, inflexible cohesion, has solidity and was particularly prosperous in placing black, women's rights on the political schedule. Nonetheless, such identity politics also has built into it definite problems (Procter, 2004).

Cultural Identity and Diaspora

In the famous essay "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", Stuart Hall elucidates identity and relates it to the diaspora. Defining the cultural practices and forms of representation that have the black subject at their center, he believes that they put the concept of cultural identity in question. He posits his ideas on identity to explain that identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. He remarks: Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a 'production', which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation. This view problematizes the very authority and authenticity to which the term, 'cultural identity', lays claim (Hall, 2015).

According to Hall, there are two different ways of thinking about 'cultural identity'. The first one recognizes 'cultural identity' as one shared culture, a kind of collective 'one true self' which is hidden inside many other imposed 'selves' that people with a shared history and ancestry preserve in common (Hall, 2015). The second and different view of cultural identity, from Hall's standpoint, identifies that, alongside many points of similarity, there are crucial details of deep and considerable differences that constitute 'what we really are' or 'what we have become' (Hall, 2015).

Results

Home and Dislocated Self

According to Hall, "identity" is the result of the struggle and reconciliation process in which the subject confronts discourse power; It is also the subject's self-imagination under discourse power control. The self-narrative, according to Hall, is the source of the approval of identity. Even if some parts of the identity that are woven into a story partially exist in the imagination (and symbolism), the effects of discourse, material, or politics of the process would never be damaged, even though the process's essence is doomed to be fictional. As a result, the identity is always partially or at least partially constructed in the imagination. Hall "articulates" many of his generation's theories in "identity" politics; Foucault's theory of Power and Discourse ought to be the most significant of these. Clearly, when Foucault reveals and, reprimands the control of talk/control over the majority, he does exclude himself from the controlled masses. In a similar vein, Hall intends to use his "identity politics" to expose and criticize the control of Western mainstream (white) culture over average-colored immigrants, despite the fact that he does not consider himself to be controlled. As a result, it is not appropriate to correlate the evolution of Hall's "identity" with his own identity politics (Hall, 2015).

Perhaps the most well-known Hobbit is Frodo Baggins; surpassing his cousin and mentor Bilbo Baggins, who was the first Hobbit to become famous worldwide, both in the Middle-earth world and among Tolkien's readers. The fact that Frodo is the Ringbearer reveals that he is a



rather isolated character: Due to the Ring's corrupting influence, his journey to Mordor is distinct from the War's most significant events. Finally, the agony of a veteran, an expat child, or a world-weary traveler returning home to find oneself so altered that it no longer feels like home is personified in Frodo. Of course, Frodo is not the only one who has been affected by the Road. However, Frodo's experience of non-belonging dates back further, so the challenge of re-entry is significantly more difficult for him than it is for his peers.

Identity and Dislocation

Bilbo frequently asserted that there was only one Road; that it resembled a large river: Every door had its springs, and every path was a branch of it. Going out of your door, Frodo is a risky business, he used to say. Frodo's physical journey away from the Shire is intertwined with his gradual detachment from it. "You step into the Road, and if you don't keep your feet, there is no knowing where you might be swept off to..." (FR72). Frodo's internal processes and the distance traveled are also marked by milestones at locations reached. Frodo's emotional ties to the Shire have been broken by the time he reaches Rivendell, allowing him to form new alliances: specifically, sign up to be the Ringbearer and continue to travel further away from the Shire. This is in part due to Frodo's inner development, which is illustrated by a series of encounters. His perspective on the world and, consequently, the quest shifts when he meets Tom Bombadil and Goldberry in the Old Forest. He now sees things that are much older and more powerful than the Ring or its Master (Chance, 2002). Frodo gains courage in the Barrow; enough to fight for his friends and his own survival, calling for assistance rather than giving in to timidity or despair (Chance, 2002). In Bree Frodo is confronted with a decision to put his trust, his mission, and the existence of his companions in the possession of a more bizarre, further extending his usual range of familiarity (Chance, 2002). As Frodo adjusts to better face the big world, these milestones mark the natural changes that he experiences:

I refer to this as the fading as a distinct type of development: Frodo's character declines as a result of the damaging effects of the Ring and the traumatic experiences he experiences. It eats away at Frodo's already fractured identity and somewhat stunted social skills, making it harder and harder for him to connect and, as a result, to feel like he belongs, which eventually leads him to leave Middle-earth entirely. The incident at the Weathertop, in which Frodo is poisoned and wounded by the Wrath King's knife, kickstarts the fading process. Frodo is forever altered by the near-death experience, cutting him off from his previous existence psychologically, symbolically, and (meta-)physically. The knife wound's stench "becomes systemic, and even Elrond is unable to completely remove it. Until the end of his time in Center Earth, Frodo keeps on having torment a sign of his distinction and otherness.

Politics, Home, and Identity

The subject old enough acquires additional importance because of Aragorn's relationship with Arwen Undomiel, the most youthful girl of Elrond. Arwen, like all of the Elves, is practically immortal; whereas, despite being given "a span thrice that of Men of Middle-earth," Aragorn and his family are unquestionably mortal and even comparatively short-lived. Arwen is a Half-Elven descendant who has the option of choosing a mortal life over an eternal one. She would become "like a mortal woman" (Chance, 2002), and her soul's connection to Arda would be severed. Her decision is truly final in the time they are in, at the end of the Age. Regardless of whether she was to lament her decision, as she quickly does at Aragorn's deathbed. There is no longer a route to the West. I must indeed endure the Doom of Men, whether I choose to or not, as there is currently no ship that would carry me there: the devastation and silence (Chance, 2002), Elrond put a condition on their marriage because he was afraid he would never be reunited with his daughter:



My son, (...) there is a shadow between us." It might have been planned that way so that the Men's kingship could be re-established following my demise. Along these lines, however, I love you, and I share with you: that Arwen Undómiel will not sacrifice the grace of her life for a lesser cause. She will not wed anyone other than the King of both Arnor and Gondor. Therefore, even though our victory may cause me only sorrow and separation, but you may experience some temporary joy. Oh no, my son! At its conclusion, I worry that the Doom of Men may appear difficult to Arwen (Chance, 2002).

Aragorn's quest to reclaim the throne is driven by the conflict of interests caused by their shared love for Arwen. Aragorn must first reclaim his ancestral homeland(s), which he has long since lost, in order to be with the woman he wants to live with. He must defeat Sauron, the manifest evil whose very existence poses a serious threat to their future home's safety and continued existence.

Home and Construction of Self

The fact of the matter is that for every time a person no longer feels at home in their own home, there are more times, places, and people in which it occurs. According to Melinda Meija, the fact that people continue to build homes and make themselves at home is not negated by the flaws and imperfections of home. The caustic theory-heavy draft became something exploratory as a result of the shift in perspective from the so-called "problem of home" to the study of its continued existence, or "process of home," (Meija, 2014), with each chapter taking on its own shape and direction. While the researcher continued to pay close attention to the differences between home (as an idea, a place, and a feeling) and belonging (as multiple facets), the main focus of the analysis shifted to figuring out the "whys" and "hows" of it. The researcher has discovered not only the underlying principles of a healthy home but also possible solutions with which the sense of home and belonging could be achieved or regained and, more importantly, sustained even in the face of past, present, and future dislocation during the process of identifying the underlying issues that caused the aforementioned disconnect.

A return to home marks the end of *The Lord of the Rings*. This finishing isn't, notwithstanding, an unequivocally shut one. The LOTR's Appendices, which are contained within the book's covers, and a plethora of subsequent publications continue the story of Middle-earth beyond the book's pages. Despite the noticeable shift in style from narrative to documentary, the transition between "Grey Heavens" and "Appendix A" contributes to overall continuity, and I would argue in part because of it. In fact, I theorize that it is the combination of said "historicity" (Chance, 2002), and the fantastic – the abundance of detail ripe for analysis safely contained within a secondary world – that sustains the continued interest in Tolkien-studies, particularly of applied and/or interdisciplinary readings such as those attempted here.

The rise and fall of kingdoms, races, buildings, and individuals are chronicled in LOTR's lore, which is comprised of records, stories, memoirs, poetry, artifacts, and landmarks; that, in addition to the nuanced care with which Tolkien observes the passing of the seasons in nature, establishes ephemerality as an indisputable, observable, and even commonplace feature of life. Time has an effect on even the simplest and strongest representations of home, like the Dwarven halls carved into the mountains' bedrock. Valinor, incidentally, is not either. The more extensive work of Tolkien clarifies that while eliminated from the human domain by the greatsundering, Valinor is still important for creation and thusly dependent upon the standard of time, however considerably more permissive. It may be an "asterisk-Eden a place of origin still somehow strangely caught up within it," (Kelly), and serve as a counterpoint to Middle Earth's mundane mortal existence, but it is not the Christian Heaven. However, the Elves and their connection to Valinor do represent the existential and spiritual aspect of ephemerality. A notable resemblance to Christian tradition can



be found in their dual existence, which involves a constant tug-of-war between their deep-seated attachment to Middle-earth and the call of Valinor, the promised but sometimes unattainable land. Despite the fact that Tolkien's imagery is more naturalistic than theological.

Discussion and Conclusion

The Lord of the Rings has been consistently nominated as the greatest book written in the 20th century. In this paper, the aim of the research was to investigate the construction of cultural identity and diaspora the characters of *Lord of the Rings*. Researcher has discussed the concepts of diaspora and home in two works of Tolkien's including *The Lord of the Rings* and *Hobbit*. Homes in the LOTR and Hobbit universe are as numerous and diverse as the characters and creatures that live there. In the future works, the focus will be on some of the notions of ecocriticism such as cultural ecology and anthropocentrism. However, ecocriticism has other disciplines such as environmental justice and deep ecology that remain open to trace them in the selected novels. In addition, applying other approaches, such as psychoanalysis, to the novels could also be beneficial, since when searching for the purpose of this study, many interesting issues on the novels and discussions can be read.

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Biodata

Hadiseh Alishiri She has been studying, teaching, and researching English language and literature for more than 15 years. She is currently a PhD candidate at the Islamic Azad University, Karaj Branch, Karaj, Iran. Her field of interest is cultural studies, postcolonial literature, and sociological criticism.

Email: hadisalishiri@gmail.com

Hossein Moradi is an assistant professor in English literature at the Islamic Azad University, Karaj Branch, Karaj, Iran. He has published journal papers, presented at different international conferences, and supervised more than 50 master’s degree theses and PhD dissertations. He has been an outstanding researcher in various years.

Email: moradi.hossein@gmail.com

Fazel Asadi Amjad is a professor of English literature at the Kharazmi university, Tehran, Iran. He has supervised more than 50 master’s degree theses and PhD dissertations His field of interest is Romantic Studies, Philosophy and Literature, Islamic Mysticism, and Translation of Islamic Texts. He has published many articles and books in the fields mentioned. In addition, he has presented several articles at international and national conferences. He was Distinguished Researcher of Foreign Languages Department in 2005.

Email: asadi@khu.ac.ir



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